

Chapter 2

Customs and Courtesies

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Part I General

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Customs and Courtesies (C&C) plays an important part in all Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps (the HKACC or the Corps) activities and they contribute to build up the sense of discipline, the 'Esprit de Corps' and mutual respect for every individual in the Corps. There is a fine line separating Customs from Courtesies but each is rooted from the same source – respect between two individuals for each other. C&C must be observed by all members of the HKACC.
- 1.2 The same C&C extended by members to HKACC Officers are also extended to –
- (a) Officers of the Hong Kong Sea Cadet Corps (HKSCC), the Hong Kong Adventure Corps (HKAC) and other Uniform Groups in Hong Kong¹;
 - (b) Officers of the rank of Inspector (or equivalent) and above in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Disciplined Services and Auxiliary Services²;
 - (c) Officers of the People's Liberation Army; and
 - (d) Officers of the armed forces of friendly nations.
- 1.3 Acts of courtesies are not marks of inferiority or servility. Rather, they are indications that one person appreciates the position, responsibilities and right of another. C&C not only foster camaraderie and comradeship between individuals, but also instill unit pride and sense of belonging.
- 1.4 C&C work both ways for juniors and seniors in the HKACC. The courtesy paid to a senior is an acknowledgment of the responsibility and authority of his/her position. The courtesy shown to a junior is an acknowledgment of his/her essential role as a member of a team. Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers, Instructors and Cadet Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) are responsible for supervising and directing their subordinates to properly observe C&C.

¹ Including Auxiliary Medical Service Cadet Corps, Civil Aid Service Cadet Corps, Hong Kong Red Cross, Hong Kong St John Ambulance Brigade, Scouts Association of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association, The Boy's Briagde Hong Kong, The Girls' Brigade Hong Kong, Hong Kong Road Safety Patrol, Association of Hong Kong Flag-guards, and Hong Kong Army Cadets Association.

² Disciplined Services include Hong Kong Police Force, the Fire Services Department, the Correctional Services Department, the Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department and the Government Flying Service. Auxiliary Services includes Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force, Civil Aid Service, Auxiliary Medical Service and Government Flying Service Auxilairst Section.

2 Customs and Courtesies – An Overview

- 2.1 **RESPONSE** – is one of the most important qualities of a member. One must give prompt and proper response or answers to questions from his/her superior. Silence is meaningless. A member should respond to a superior in three basic ways in a loud and clear voice:

“YES SIR /MA’AM (OR PROPER ADDRESS)”

“NO, SIR / MA’AM (OR PROPER ADDRESS)”

“I DON’T KNOW, SIR /MA’AM (OR PROPER ADDRESS)”

- 2.2 When a fault has been pointed out by the superior or unable to perform a task, a member should declare loudly and clearly:

“NO EXCUSE, SIR / MA’AM (OR PROPER ADDRESS)”

He/she should not offer any explanation unless requested.

- 2.3 A superior’s order is ordinarily accepted without question.
- 2.4 A superior’s word like "I wish" or "I desire" has all the force of "I order you".
- 2.5 The place of honour is at the **RIGHT**. A junior walks or sits to the left. A guest at a dinner party is seated at the right of the host.
- 2.6 HKACC members should greet a lady with a slight bow or a salute. The uniform cap should not be tipped or raised in greeting.
- 2.7 HKACC members should escort a lady by walking on her right so that he can salute with his right hand.
- 2.8 One must learn to **OBEY** before **COMMAND**.
- 2.9 Personal appearance must be exemplary at all times.
- 2.10 A member with the highest rank in a group has the privilege of being the first to choose the seat, food and drink.
- 2.11 Official channel of approach and communication is through **CHAIN OF COMMAND**. It should be observed and followed by all members of the Corps.
- 2.12 When addressing a specific officer (especially by subordinates), one should normally address Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers as "SIR / MA’AM", while others with his/her surname with rank, such as Flight Sergeant CHAN, Corporal CHEUNG, etc. For Officer Cadets and Officer Trainees, one should address them with their proper Surname, such as Mr LEE or Ms CHAN.

3 Restrictions and Norms

3.1 Do not :

- behave in any way which might defame the Corps.
- use HKACC uniform, emblem or title for any commercial purposes.
- use or display HKACC uniform, emblem or title in political activities.
- criticize the Corps in front of non-members. If you feel an improvement can be made, submit a suggestion to your superior through the proper Chain of Command.
- bypass the Chain of Command.
- criticize your colleagues in front of the others.
- drink alcoholic beverages in uniform whilst on duty
- smoke or chew gum in uniform.
- solicit contributions for presents to those in higher positions, or accept a present from anyone who has a subordinate position.
- put your hands in the pockets of uniform trousers.

3.2 Stand in front of a superior unless invited to sit.

3.3 Be punctual.

3.4 There is no personal friendship in the HKACC as far as C&C are concerned. During official HKACC activities, all members are to observe proper C&C regardless of how well they know one another.

3.5 When a superior enters the room, all persons of lower rank should stand or sit attention immediately until the superior directs:

"(SIT) EASY" or "AT EASE"

or until he/her leaves the room. Normally, the **FIRST** one who sees the superior should call out:

"(SIT) ATTENTION"

in a loud and clear manner to alert other members. However, when a superior enters a room used as an office, workshop, recreation room or classroom in which activities are in progress, those at work, play or lesson are NOT required to come to attention unless addressed by that superior.

4 Reporting

- 4.1 When reporting to a superior, a member should come to attention two paces in front of the superior, salute (where appropriate) and say:

"SIR / MA'AM or (or proper address),

[Rank & Name] REPORTING AS ORDERED,

SIR / MA'AM / (or proper address)."

in a loud and clear voice. If the superior is engaged, wait until he/she acknowledges you before reporting.

- 4.2 When entering/ leaving a room with a superior present, a member should stand at attention outside (in case of entering)/beside (in case of leaving) the door and face the superior, knock the door three times and say:

"SIR / MA'AM or (or proper address),

**[Rank & Name] REQUESTS PERMISSION TO ENTER / LEAVE
THE ROOM,**

SIR / MA'AM / (or proper address)."

and remain outside/beside the door until told to enter/leave.

- 4.3 When leaving a superior **outdoors**, stand to attention (**salute** where appropriate) and say **"SIR / MA'AM or (or proper address),** in a loud and clear voice. When the superior has responded or returned your salute, make an about turn and leave.

- 4.4 When reporting to an superior in charge of a formation, stand two paces in front of him/her and say:

"SIR / MA'AM / (or proper address),

[Rand & Name] REQUESTS PERMISSION TO JOIN THE TEAM,

SIR / MA'AM / (or proper address)."

- 4.5 When reporting to or being addressed by another cadet of superior rank, the cadet should come to attention.

5 The Cadet Pledge

- 5.1 "I pledge that I will serve faithfully in the Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps, and that I will attend meetings regularly, participate in unit activities, obey my superiors, wear my uniform properly and advance my training rapidly so that I may be of service to my community and my fellow citizens."

6 Definition of Discipline

- 6.1 “Discipline is that mental attitude and state of training which renders willing obedience and proper conduct instinctive under all conditions. It is founded on respect for and loyalty to all properly constituted authorities.”

7 Relative seniority of HKACC uniformed members

Category	Rank	Proper Address
Air Officer	Air Commodore	Sir/ Ma'am
Senior Officers	Group Captain	
	Wing Commander	
	Squadron Leader	
Junior Officers	Flight Lieutenant	
	Flying Officer	
	Pilot Officer	
Warrant Officer		Sir/ Ma'am
Instructors	Sergeant Instructor	Sergeant
	Instructor	Instructor
Trainees	Officer Cadet/ Officer Trainee*	Mr/ Miss
	Recruit Instructor	Recruit Instructor
Cadet Senior Non-commissioned Officers (SNCO)	Cadet Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer
	Cadet Flight Sergeant	Flight Sergeant
	Cadet Sergeant	Sergeant
Cadet Junior Non-commissioned Officers (JNCO)	Cadet Corporal	Corporal
	Cadet Lance Corporal	Lance Corporal
Cadets	Staff Cadet#	Leader^
	Senior Cadet#	
	Leading Cadet#	
	First Class Cadet#	
	Basic Cadet	
	Recruit Cadet	

**(Officer Trainees below the age of 21 are considered as Senior Members for the purpose of determining seniority)*

(if not a Cadet Non-commissioned Officer)

^(when placed in the position of a Team Leader)

PART II Saluting and Compliments

8 Introduction

- 8.1 A salute is a sign of loyalty to the HKACC. Saluting to a Commissioned Officer is also indirectly a salute to the HKACC as the former has his/her authority derived from the Executive Board's Commission.
- 8.2 The manner in which salutes are given and acknowledged is an indication to the standard of discipline. It is naturally distasteful to any officer that, from slackness in saluting, his own unit or, worse still, the service to which he has the honour to belong, should be looked upon by others as a 'disorganized rabble'.
- 8.3 It is the responsibility of all members to ensure that saluting is carried out correctly and smartly at all times.

9 Whom to Salute

- 9.1 Members of and below the rank of Warrant Officer should salute to ALL Commissioned Officers and Officers of equivalent and superior rank in organisations stipulated in paragraph 1.2. They should never salute to those of the rank of Warrant Officer and below.
- 9.2 While Junior Officers should salute to Officers of the rank of Squadron Leader and above, as well as Officers of equivalent and superior ranks in organisations stipulated in paragraph 1.2. They should NOT normally salute to each other unless under the following circumstances::
- A junior salutes to a superior officer in acknowledgment of an order given personally on parade.
 - A junior salutes to an officer senior in rank on entering and leaving the latter's office.
 - Notwithstanding the above, Junior Officers are still required to pay appropriate compliment (e.g. stand at attention, "eyes left/right") to other Junior Officers who are superior in rank.
 - Officers of the rank of Squadron Leader and above should salute their superiors, and Officers of equivalent and superior ranks in organisations stipulated in paragraph 1.2.
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10 How to Salute

- 10.1 Members are to salute with the right hand, longest way up, shortest way down. If physically unable to do so, they are to salute with the left hand.
- 10.2 When a number of members are sitting or standing together, the most senior member is to face the superior and call the whole party to attention before saluting. It is the responsibility of the most senior member to salute.
- 10.3 When a number of members are walking together, they are all to salute when passing or overtaking a senior officer, except when they are marching as a party.
- 10.4 When members are marching as a party, the commander is to give the command:

“EYES – RIGHT / LEFT”

and the commander salutes. When a party passes an armed sentry, compliments are to be paid as stated above, but if the sentry is unarmed, no compliments are to be paid

- 10.5 When a subordinate sees a superior approaching, he/she will stand to attention, face the superior and salute when the latter is about three paces away. The subordinate can resume a normal posture after the salute has been returned or about five paces after the superior has passed.
- 10.6 When headdress is not worn or when a member is carrying anything other than firearms (including drill purpose rifles) which prevents him/her from saluting, the member is to stand to attention when a superior passes by. If the member is walking, he/she is to turn his/her head smartly towards the superior.
- 10.7 Members not in uniform do not salute but will render an appropriate greeting instead. However, when a subordinate in uniform recognizes a superior in civilian clothes, the former will salute.
- 10.8 Commissioned Officers are to return salutes made to them. When returning salutes, they should look in the direction of the persons saluting to them. When a number of members are together, it is the responsibility of the most senior member present to return the salute. If the senior member fails to see the salute, it is the duty of the next senior member in the party to acknowledge it.
- 10.9 Officers in civilian clothes should acknowledge a salute in a proper manner (e.g. by nodding) or by raising the hat, if worn.

11 General Salute

- 11.1 On the command “**GENERAL SALUTE**”, all Commissioned Officers are to salute on the word of command “**SALUTE**” (or other appropriate commands when arms are present). Other members are to stand to attention.
- 11.2 If a band is in attendance, the band is to play the appropriate salute and the salute is to be discontinued on the last note of music. Otherwise, the salute is to be maintained for a period of five seconds.

12 During the Playing of the National Anthem

- 12.1 When the National Anthem or a foreign anthem is played, all personnel in uniform, and not under the orders of an Officer commanding a parade will stand at attention, face the direction of the music and salute. If in civilian clothes they are to remove headdress, if worn.
- 12.2 If the anthem is played during a ceremonial parade, Officers on a parade in Review order, under the orders of the Officer Commanding the parade, will salute.
- 12.3 When the anthem is played within a building, members of all ranks wearing uniform are to stand to attention and remove headdress.
- 12.4 When a party of cadets is on the march and the anthem is played the commander of the party is to halt them and he is to salute.
- 12.5 When a party is halted, the commander of the party is to call them to attention, and he is to salute during the playing of the anthem.
- 12.6 On other occasions when there is no parade, or on occasions which are not of a service nature, officers will face the band and if in uniform wearing headdress, will salute.

13 During the Hoisting or Hauling Down of the HKACC Ensign

- 13.1 When the HKACC Ensign is being hoisted or hauled down, members within view of the ensign or within hearing of the trumpet calls or whistle blasts, are to stand to attention and face the flagstaff. Commissioned Officers will face the flagstaff and salute.

14 Funerals

- 14.1 Members passing or being passed by a service or civil funeral will salute the coffin or urn containing the remains of the deceased. The commander will give the “eyes right (or left)” and salute.

15 Colours and Standards

- 15.1 Members passing or being passed by parties with uncased colours or standards are to salute to the colour or standard. They are to halt and face the colours before saluting. Cased colours are not saluted. (Examples of colours / standards are: The HKACC Colour, Wing Standards, Squadron Standards, Guildons and Colours of Army regiments and other uniform groups.) National Flags are NOT Colours.

An exception to this is that members on parade at a service funeral, whilst in attendance upon the deceased, will not pay compliments to colours and standards forming part of the procession.

16 Boarding or Leaving Naval Vessels

- 16.1 When boarding or leaving any of naval vessels, members are to salute the quarterdeck.

17 Mechanical Vehicles

- 17.1 The rider of a pedal cycle (or motor) or a mechanical vehicle, is not to salute when the vehicle is in motion. On no account must the hands be removed from the handle bars or steering wheel. When the vehicle is stationary, the driver is to turn his head smartly towards the officer and the passenger will seat at attention.
- 17.2 Members are to salute the occupant of a vehicle flying a distinguishing flag and also, if no flag is being flown, when the vehicle carries plates identifying high government officials, e.g. the HKSAR Emblem (the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), “CJ” (the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal), “CS” (the Chief Secretary for Administration), “FS” (the Financial Secretary), “SJ” (the Secretary for Justice), “1” (the Commissioner of Police), or when they recognize the occupant as being entitled to a salute. Unoccupied vehicle will not be saluted.

18 Cenotaph

- 18.1 When passing the cenotaph in Central, it is courtesy to salute the cenotaph as a tribute to fallen heroes of the World Wars.

**Annex- Common Scenarios where
Customs and Courtesies are displayed**

Scenario	Action Taken
1. Member joins a Squad.	1. Members stands in the position of Attention three paces in front of the Commander-and says “[Rank & Name], requests permission to join the team, SIR / MA’AM (or proper address)”. 2. Commander says “Permission granted”. 3. Member responses “Thank you SIR / MA’AM (or proper address)”, marches to the rear of the corresponding rank and halt, turn to the left and step one pace forward.
2. Member Falls Out from a Squad	1. Member calls out “SIR / MA’AM (or proper address)”, at the same time stands in the position of Attention, steps one pace backward, turns to the right and marches out of the Squad.
3. Members Marches Past an Officer	1. When the team is about five paces from the Officer, the Commander calls out “Squad, By the Left/Right, Eyes – Left/Right” and the squad, except the marker, should turn their heads sharply to the left/right. The Commander makes a Left/Right Salute at the same time and greets the Officer “Good Morning/ Afternoon/ Evening, SIR / MA’AM”. 2. The Officer returns the salute accordingly. 3. When the last person of the team is about five paces away from the Officer, the Commander then calls out “Squad, Eyes - Front” and the squad should turn their heads sharply to the front when the last person of the team is about five. The Commander resumes marching movement at the same time.
4. Superior Enters a Room with Members staying inside	1. The member who first sees the superior (should be the leader of the team under normal situation) call out “(Sit) Attention”. 2. Superior enters the room and says “At Ease/ (Sit) Easy”.
5. Members Enter a Room with Superior inside	1. Members line up two-by-two outside the room, standing in the position of Attention. If possible, the members should ensure that activities in the room is not interrupted.

Scenario	Action Taken
	2. Leader stands next to the door in the position of Attention outside the room facing the superior, opens the door (knocks before and hold if necessary), knocks the door three times and calls out “SIR / MA’AM or (or proper address), Cadets request permission to enter the room, SIR / MA’AM or (or proper address)”. 3. Superior says “Permission granted”. Leader responds “Thank you, SIR / MA’AM (or proper address)” and all members enter the room.
6. Members Leave a Room with Superior staying inside	1. Depending on the situation, members either line up two-by-two in front of the door or stand in the position of Attention behind/ next to their seats. 2. Leader stands next to the door in the position of Attention, opens the door (hold if necessary) and knocks the door three times, turn facing the superior, and calls out “SIR / MA’AM (or proper address), Members request permission to leave the room, SIR / MA’AM (or proper address)”. 3. Superior says “Permission granted”. Leader responds “Thank you, SIR / MA’AM (or proper address)” and all members leave the room.
7. Summoning subordinate(s) to give a briefing.	1. Superior calls out “All [Rank] over here”. 2. The targeted member(s) response “Yes SIR / MA’AM (or proper address)”, and marches in double time to the location, stand in the position of Attention in front of the superior and form up a semi-circle facing the him / her with the most senior member standing on the right 3. Once formed up, the most senior member on the right steps one pace forward and says SIR / MA’AM (or proper address), reporting as ordered, SIR / MA’AM (or proper address)”. 4. Superior says “At Ease” and gives the briefing. 5. After the briefing, those being briefed stand in the position of Attention, turn about and marches to their original position.