

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTORS, FIELD OPERATIONS
DIRECTOR, PRE-CLEARANCE OPERATIONS

FROM: Acting Executive Director, Operations
Office of Field Operations

SUBJECT: Professionalism Musters

Professionalism is the responsibility of all CBP employees, and as managers, we have a special role in ensuring the highest standards are upheld. While performing the important responsibilities entrusted to CBP, all employees are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful and helpful manner. This includes interacting with fellow workers as well as members of the public. To assist you in sending a strong and unified message about this vital topic, the Office of Field Operations has created weekly muster topics to provide guidance on professionalism.

Attached are several muster topics spanning a period of eight weeks. Each topic includes guidance on how to present the information to your CBP employees. The top of each attachment includes the scheduled dates for presenting the information.

Musters are now a daily requirement. The professionalism briefings must be presented as part of your regular daily briefings. It is expected that each topic will be repeated throughout the week as many times as necessary to reach all employees. Field Office and Port managers will continue to have discretion to determine the most appropriate time for the briefings on each shift.

Please remember to maintain appropriate records to document each muster. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Lynn Fallik, Director, Field Liaison Division at (202) 344-3661.

Adele Fasano

Attachments

Weekly Muster

Week Of Muster: One (August 8-14, 2004)
Topic: Professionalism Overview
Reference Materials: None
Headquarters POC: Allison Suliveras (202) 927-0226
Message: Importance of A Professional World Class Organization

All of us have heard as CBP officers that we must be professional but what exactly does this mean? Professionalism incorporates a myriad of elements and when fully understood and applied will establish CBP Into a world Class Law Enforcement organization.

The Webster definition and one we fully support, states: "professionalism is: characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of the profession";

- "exhibiting a courteous conscientious and generally business like manner in the workplace"
- a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive preparation".

In order to be successful in carrying out our primary Anti-Terrorism and traditional missions, CBP Officers must conduct themselves in a professional manner in all interactions. Professional behavior extends to all areas of our environment, both on and off duty, as well as our interactions within CBP and with our external/internal stakeholders and general public.

Elements of Professionalism include:

Appearance - attire, personal grooming
Etiquette-applying social /official prescribed practices (respectfulness)
Demeanor- Appropriate behavior, display of outward manner (attitude)
Communications- Verbal/Nonverbal language
Conduct- Taking responsibility for actions on /off duty
Environment- overall workplace (presentable, organized, suitable)
Discretion-Latitude of choice within legal bounds

Next Steps:

- Future musters will address each element of professionalism as a separate muster topic.
- Unprofessional behavior will not be tolerated at any level within the CBP organization.
- Supervisors and Managers have also been put on notice that we will operate under a zero tolerance environment for any incidents involving unprofessional behavior.
- Each employee will be held accountable for being a professional. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.

Weekly Muster

Week of Muster:

Three (August 22-28, 2004)

Topic:

Professional Communication

Reference Materials:

Successful Manager's Handbook 8th Addition Published by Personnel Decisions International and *The Leader's Handbook, A Guide to Inspiring Your People and Managing the Daily Workflow* by Peter R. Scholtes; *Coaching For Peak Employee Performance* by Foster and Seeker and *Tongue Fu!* By Sam Horn.

Headquarters Contact:

Allison Suliveras (202) 344-2655

Message:

Basic communication expectations in CBP -
When communicating with the traveler

To be successful in CBP means we communicate with our customers and co-workers in a manner that creates a professional and respectful work environment. Good communication requires applying a combination of our attitudes and effective methods to really succeed. The old cliché, "It is not what you say but how you say it" holds true today as in the past. What are the communications basics we expect by CBP Officers to use with the traveling public?

Verbal

- For first entry international/border stations greet with a "Hello, Welcome Home" or "Welcome to the United States" or "Welcome to (specific location)
- Address people by Mr., Mrs. Miss and last name.
- When requesting documentation, use words like "if you could", "would you please", or "may I have..." rather than "you'll have to" or "you need to" or "give me" which sends an abrupt command or order. Suggested wording implies a more polite way to get customers to comply and meet the needs of the situation.
- Keep your voice level steady even when exasperation sets in and patience is thin.
- When transaction is complete, say "Thank you." Other positive phrases are encouraged but not mandatory such as, "Enjoy the day", "Have a nice visit" etc.

Non-Verbal

- Use eye contact upon greeting and when saying good bye as traveler has completed the transaction and moves on.
- Initially smile when greeting people as they present their documents for review.
- Practice good posture by not slouching or leaning on desks or stations.

Every employee of CBP has reason to be proud of this organization. When communicating with the public, it is expected that all employees will consistently communicate courteously and respectfully following basic interactive guidelines for all transactions. These kinds of behaviors are professional behaviors and important to CBP traditions and continued successes.

Next Steps:

- Engage employees in interactive discussion about what else works when communicating with travelers entering the country.
- Discuss what happens when people perceive communication efforts are rude or lack courteous intent?
- Identify other nonverbal actions to be avoided?
- Reinforce the fact that each person will be held accountable for being a professional. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.

Weekly Muster

Week of Muster: Four (August 29-September 4, 2004)
Topic: Demeanor, Your Attitude Matters
Reference Materials: None
Headquarters Contact: Allison Sulveras (202) 344-2655
Message: The importance of poise, dignity & self-control

The importance of poise, sympathy, honest simplicity and self-control even under the most severe provocation cannot be over emphasized. Demeanor is defined as appropriate behavior, display of outward manner (attitude).

Professional demeanor in CBP includes the following:

- Being businesslike and considerate but never condescending or officious
- Using good English, never profanity, vulgarity or demeaning statements
- Being considerate, courteous and polite at all times
- Being patient and exercising self restraint even when facing verbal criticism or threatened by physical violence
- Being firm to control the situation
- Being frank, don't misinform nor leave grounds for a wrong impression
- Not repeating gossip, rumors, nor stating critical and personal remarks about fellow employees
- The technique of "putting yourself in the other persons shoes" before you take any action should be used in every situation.

Every employee of CBP has reason to be proud of this organization. The expected attitude for each of us is that of loyalty and helpful cooperation. There should exist a spirit of mutual helpfulness among all of us. Cooperative endeavors should also govern the relationship between all CBP employees and other agencies.

Next Steps:

- Engage employees in interactive discussion on what is/is not acceptable demeanor
- Identify the fallout of rumors and attacking individual persons
- Each person will be held accountable for being a professional. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.

Weekly Muster

Week Of Muster: Five (September 5-11, 2004)
Topic: Appearance
Reference Materials: CBP Personal Appearance Standards
Headquarters POC: Allison Suliveras (202) 344-2655
Message: Stress the importance of a professional appearance

The CBP Officer is the first contact with the travelling public entering the U. S. from abroad. In the Trade community we are tasked daily with customer interactions. First impressions become the lasting impressions. Consequently, your image reflects the acceptance of CBP as a World-Class Professional organization. This perception will impart respect by those who have experienced our services or will create a tarnished image.

A professional appearance includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Well groomed, clean and neat business attire, polished shoes
- Appropriate uniform (buttons, badges, ribbons must meet standards)
- No extremes or fads in personal appearance and attire (nails, jewelry, hair)
- Positive body language (correct posture, no slouching, leaning while doing your job)
- No social clustering of officers in public view

Next Steps:

- Engage employees in interactive discussion on what is /is not appropriate appearance.
- Stress guidance and standards, directives and local agreements
- Role play do's/don'ts (optional)
- Each employee will be held accountable for being a professional. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.

Weekly Muster

Week of Muster: Six (September 12-18, 2004)
Topic: Etiquette
Reference Materials:
Headquarters POC: Alison Suliveras (202) 344-2655
Message: Image, Impression and Impact

First impressions are lasting impressions. Whether it is a traveler from a weary flight, the trade community needing an entry cleared, the importing public or simply a passerby that may have an opportunity to observe you, the image you portray may form a lifelong view of CBP. In the passenger environment, you are the first impression. It is vital that you "mind your manners" and represent CBP in an exemplary way. We must be professional at all times, both on and off duty.

A key element of professionalism includes etiquette and how we deal with people. The dictionary definition of etiquette states: "It is the conduct or procedure required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life." For CBP, etiquette is defined as *simply saying and doing the right thing at the right time.*"

No matter who you are or what you do, the way you conduct yourself has a major impact on the organization and those with whom you interact. As CBP officers, you are evaluated by the image you project and the impact you have on the public. To be truly in control of your position and gain respect, you must take your image seriously. Etiquette is the outer expressions of your character and it plays a vital role in projecting the right image. As a professional, you must practice politeness and decorum in order to be accepted as a world-class professional organization. How you present yourself and the substance of your communication speaks volumes about your credibility. Body language and appearance speaks to the world without saying a word.

Elements of etiquette include:

- Empowerment – Authority, credibility, confidence and competence
- Soft skills – How you present yourself, your grooming, your body language
- Style – Communication, influence, behavior and power to create a positive and memorable impression and impact
- Electronic etiquette (phone conversations, conference calls, voicemail, mobile phones, email)

You can make the difference! Go the extra mile to shape an image that you and the world can be proud to know. Our tradition starts here with a smile and a welcome.

Next Steps:

- All CBP officers will greet passengers with a smile and say "Welcome to the United States" or "Welcome Home" before starting the passenger process.
- When CBP employees interact with the public, the trade community and other entities, customer service will begin with a greeting (Good morning/afternoon/evening, how may I help you?)
- Customer service will end with an acceptable closure. (Ex: Is there anything else I can do to help you? Do you have any questions? It is a pleasure to serve you Ma'm/Sir. Have a nice day. Enjoy your stay.)
- CBP employees will be briefed at subsequent musters on the importance of greeting our customers and treating them with respect. (This should not be routine but a genuine act of professionalism; one where we believe in what we say.)
- Each employee will be briefed on proper telephone etiquette. Employees will identify themselves and the agency (Good morning/afternoon/evening, Customs and Border Protection. This is Officer or Ms./Mr. _____, may I help you or how may I help you?)
- Discuss telephone etiquette do's and don'ts (cell, office and voice mail).
- Each employee will be held accountable for being a professional. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Weekly Muster

Week of Muster: Seven (September 19-25, 2004)
Topic: Exercise of Discretion
Reference Materials: Exercise of Discretion – Additional Guidance Memo dated July 20, 2004, Immigration Policy and Procedures (IPP)
Headquarters POC: Allison Sulveras (202) 344-2655
Message: Exercising Discretion in the determination of admissibility

The law cannot cover every possible situation a CBP Officer encounters in the processing of travelers for admissibility. Officers are being asked to exercise discretion where appropriate, i.e., where the law permits. The application of discretion must be consistent with the Immigration and Nationality Act and statutory standards must be met. Discretion is to be applied on a case-by-case basis, while taking into consideration the totality of circumstances.

What exactly is discretion? What does it have to do with me? Discretion includes:

- Bringing your knowledge, skills and insight when making decisions to determine the nature of the alien's inadmissibility.
- Does it relate to National/Homeland security issues? Is it criminal in nature?

Entry must be denied when the alien:

- Poses a terrorist threat to the United States
 - Poses a potential threat of committing criminal or violent acts
 - Intends to unlawfully establish residence/ accept unlawful employment.
- Asking yourself is it a minor/technical violation? Does the case involve minor or inadvertent violations and apparent bona fide travel? Would refusal of admission involve detention or undue hardship?
 - Making personal contributions (judgment calls, exercising autonomy, and individual solutions). It is the courage to make your own evaluation of the situation, to voice your personal input, follow your conscience, and present the circumstances to your Supervisor.
 - Consider the totality of the situation and weigh all factors. Is there a compelling reason for allowing the alien into the United States? Put yourself in the alien's shoes. Would you not want the officer to consider all flexibility within the law? Compassion goes a long ways in applying

discretion. Making good virtuous choices consistently and applying your experience and wisdom will lead to a professional, impartial, well-thought-out determination.

- Not just making those "safe" choices or being "soft". Some forms of discretion include prudence, tactfulness, tolerance, empathy, being discreet, foresight and the ability to assess circumstances and situations. Be willing to challenge the status quo and to surface your belief in that the decisions being made affects not just lives, families, futures, but may leave a lasting positive or negative impression of CBP.

Next Steps:

- Use local scenarios of actual cases to engage line officers in determining appropriate discretionary actions.
- Engage line officers in discussions regarding the consequences of inflexibility or the lack of applying proper use of discretion (negative press, negative impression of CBP, disruption of family, and perceptions of disparate treatment or unprofessionalism).
- Each employee will be held accountable for performing his/her duties professionally. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Weekly Muster

Week Of Muster: Eight (September 28-October 2, 2004)
Topic: Workplace Environment
Reference Materials: USCPB- Office Safety/Ergonomics, July 19, 2004
OSHA 29 CFR 1910.22, OSHA 29 CFR 1910.37
Headquarters POC: Allison Suliveras (202) 344-2655
Message: Importance of a Professional Workplace Environment

The key to a professional workplace environment is one that is orderly and safe. This work is either conducted in open work areas or personal work areas such as offices and workstations. A clean and well-maintained workplace contributes to the image of a professional organization. This will also contribute to a work area that is safe, and free of pests. Additionally, these actions will reduce the risk of on the job injuries and promote a healthy, professional work environment.

The following contribute to a professional workplace:

- Common work areas or areas that can be accessed or viewed by the public will be professionally furnished and maintained
- Housekeeping - Keeping all areas organized, clean and neat
- Ensuring that your work area does not contain inappropriate material
- Ensuring that the outside of your work station is free of hanging material
- Maintaining food or perishables at your work stations (desks) in sealed containers
- Keeping staging areas and passageways clear and free of clutter

Professional behavior extends to all areas of our environment, from the way we act to the way we maintain our work areas.

Next Steps:

- Ask employees for other examples to enhance work areas.
- Conduct walkthroughs to ensure that work areas are professional and safe.
- Each employee will be held accountable for being a professional. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.