

Commanding Officer FAQ

(Version 1.0 January, 2011)

What is a Commanding Officer?

A commanding officer is the president of a local chapter of STARFLEET. They serve as the leaders and administrators of the chapter.

What are the responsibilities of a CO?

A CO is the leader and administrator of the chapter and may be involved with organizing chapter activities, administering policy, and developing chapter projects and operations. They are also ultimately responsible for chapter finances. The CO is required to keep the chapter's membership at or above the required ten member minimum and is required to file an MSR on a monthly basis.

What is an MSR?

The Monthly Status Report is filed every month by the CO with STARFLEET Operations. You can file it online (via the database or e-mail) or postal mail a physical copy. The MSR lists the name and current contact information of yourself and your XO, as well as a listing of all of your current STARFLEET members with non-expired memberships. You can list any promotions, citations, and chapter activities that occurred during the reporting period.

Where can I find an MSR form?

You may find the MSR form at www.sfi.org. It is located under **Chapter Support** in the **Document Center**. You may also file your MSR electronically using the STARFLEET Database at sfidatabase.org.

What do I include in my MSR?

Your MSR needs to include the name, registry, and address of your chapter. It also needs to include the current address and contact information for you and your Executive Officer. There are spaces to list any shuttles/shakedown vessels under your purview, as well as any member of your crew who graduated a STARFLEET Academy course, was promoted, received a commendation or award, and any activities the chapter or chapter member's participated in. You may also list any problems or concerns you have that you wish to make STARFLEET's leadership aware of so they may be addressed.

Why do I need to file a MSR?

STARFLEET's leadership wishes to know the accomplishments of your crew and chapter and it is an important channel for you to communicate with STARFLEET's leadership. It is also a good place to report problems or concerns so that they may be addressed.

Where do I send my MSR?

If you use the STARFLEET database, it is automatically submitted to the correct recipients. If you send the form via e-mail, be sure to send it to STARFLEET Operations at ops@sfi.org and to your Regional Coordinator at their contact e-mail. If you choose to postal mail your report, please send one copy to the address in the top right corner of the form and one copy to your Regional Coordinator's contact postal address. Allow extra time if you're in an area of the U.S. that often experiences mail delays, or if you're mailing from outside the U.S. Remember that you are responsible for getting your MSR in on time.

When do I send my MSR?

Your MSR should be received no later than the fifth day of each month. If sending via postal mail, please allow at least three business days (Mon-Sat) to arrive.

What do I do if a member is not getting their CO?

Use the **Problems, Questions and Concerns** section of the MSR. Be sure to include the SCC number of each member and their current physical address. Check to make sure the address the member provided to STARFLEET is their valid address according to the USPS or their local postal service. Note that their mailing address may not be the same as where they physically reside. Remember... the usps.gov web site can help validate U.S. addresses.

How do I change my chapter's contact information?

You may list the new information in the **Chapter Information** section at the top of the form. Please note that the information has changed in the **Problems, Questions and Concerns** section of the MSR.

How do I recruit for my chapter?

A good place to start is the **Recruitment Resources** section of the **Document Center**. You should also speak with your Regional Coordinator, other Chapter Commanding Officers in your region or area, and STARFLEET Operations Chapter Care staff. You can find their contact information in the **Staff Directory** under the **Department of Operations**.

How do I advertise my chapter?

One way is to hang flyers in bookstores or gaming stores, though it is important to always first speak with the management to both gain permission and to discuss any placement guidelines. Many local cable channels are required to carry free "Public Service Announcements" about events in the community. Electronic advertising on web forums and e-mail lists can also be effective but again, like physical stores, you should always first contact the forum or list administrators privately to get both permission and discuss any guidelines on how often you can post and what you can post.

Bobby is being mean to me. Can I kick him out of the chapter?

While STARFLEET cannot require you to accept or dismiss a member, such punitive actions at best maintain the "status quo" of bad feelings and often escalate. STARFLEET recommends working with your Regional Coordinator to try and come to a more effective and cooperative solution. Do note, however, that STARFLEET never condones harassment or misconduct, defined as behavior by one member perpetrated upon another member that would be construed as illegal under local, county, state, provincial, federal, or international law. If such harassment or misconduct is happening in your chapter, you must contact STARFLEET Operations and your Regional Coordinator immediately and report it. This is as much for your own personal safety and liability as it is for the member(s) being affected.

How do I recommend someone for an award or promotion?

As CO, you have full authority to promote any member up to the grade of O-5 (Commander/Lt. Colonel). You also have full authority to design and implement an awards program for your chapter and its members. To recommend someone for promotion to the grade of O-6 (Captain/Colonel) or above, you will find the necessary forms in the **Promotions and Awards** section of the **Document Center**. To nominate someone for a Regional Award, contact your Regional Coordinator or the Regional Awards director (if applicable). The annual STARFLEET Award nominees are chosen from the Regional Award winners.

Our chapter never wins an award. Why not?

The most important requirement to win an award is to first be nominated. If your Region has an Award Director, contact them and request an award form as well as any relevant documentation. If the Director does not respond, or their response is unclear, do not hesitate to contact your Regional Coordinator and politely ask for assistance/clarification. If that does not work, contact the STARFLEET Awards Director at <http://www.lizsdesktop.com/sfiawards/>.

Once you have received the nomination form, it is important to put your best effort into writing the nomination. You are probably not the only member or chapter seeking this award in your Region. Even if your chapter/member's accomplishments are not as numerous as other's, a well-written nomination can be the difference between winning and not winning. Be clear and concise, but do not be brief for the sake of expediency. Ensure your spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct. Take the time to explain what this member's or your chapter's deeds mean to you, to those it affected, and to STARFLEET as a whole.

When you send in your nomination, ensure that it was received. Do not just assume it arrived. Politely contact the recipient and ask them to confirm it has been received and is properly completed.

I can't afford \$15. Can I renew in a couple of months?

Unfortunately, STARFLEET requires you and your members to maintain their membership status at all times. If necessary, set aside two dollars every month in an envelope so you are able to renew on time.

How detailed do my MSR's have to be about our events?

You may make it as detailed as you feel necessary. Some CO's just list the event and who attended. Others go into great detail, often using it as the basis for an article submission to the STARFLEET Communiqué.

If I can't log into the database, do I still have to submit an MSR?

Yes. If the database is unavailable, submit the form via e-mail or postal mail.

What is the helpdesk?

The STARFLEET Helpdesk is there to help direct you and your chapter's members to the information needed to answer their questions about STARFLEET, its policies, and procedures.

How do I file a helpdesk ticket?

Helpdesk tickets must be filed online. You can reach it from the main www.sfi.org site. Look for **Member Helpdesk** under **Resources** on the left-hand menu.

I don't have an Internet connection. Can I still run a chapter?

Absolutely. The Internet helps make running a STARFLEET chapter easier in some ways, but it is not required.

I don't like my Regional Coordinator. Can I change regions?

As with issues between the CO and chapter members, STARFLEET prefers that issues between the CO and the RC be worked out constructively. In such cases, you will work with STARFLEET Operations to try and come to a mutually satisfying conclusion. However, STARFLEET rules require that the chapter reside in the same Region as the Commanding Officer does. Therefore, the only way to change regions is for you to physically move to another Region or to relinquish your command and elect a new CO from your membership who lives in another Region, provided such members exist and they meet the requirements to serve as CO.

Our chapter is a Not-For-Profit group. Can I use STARFLEET's tax ID number for my chapter?

At this time, STARFLEET's Federal Tax ID number is reserved solely for STARFLEET headquarters use. If you feel it necessary to do so, you can obtain your own federal tax ID from the US Internal Revenue Service.

I'm an Admiral in another club. Can I transfer that rank to STARFLEET?

In general, STARFLEET does not recognize the rank a member earns in other Star Trek fan clubs. Rank in STARFLEET is in no small part a measure of one's accomplishments and involvement **within** STARFLEET. Exceptions may be made on an individual case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee. If you desire, you may contact them directly and make your case.

What resources are there for disabled members?

STARFLEET does maintain an Office of Equal Accessibility for those members who are physically or developmentally challenged. Contact information is available from the Office of the Vice Commander, STARFLEET vcs@sfi.org.

STARFLEET Commanding Officer FAQ written by Chris Wallace, Mark H. Anbinder and Johnathan Simmons. Based on an idea submitted by Chrissy Killian. If you have something you feel should be included, email ops@sfi.org and put CO-FAQ in the subject line.