

Case Study: CMC Circumventing an Order

Description:	Unit CO, XO, and Command Master Chief (CMC) disregard wing commander's zero tolerance policy for alcohol abuse during working hours. CO and XO are relieved and reassigned while CMC is taken to Captains' Mast.
Background:	Influenced by the tragic death of his brother due to a drunk driver, wing commander instituted a policy requiring sobriety tests each morning prior to work. Anyone that recorded more than .000 BAC was to be written up as unfit for duty and taken to NJP. At the conclusion of this case, regional commander (RADM) directed an informal investigation into the behavioral failings involved.

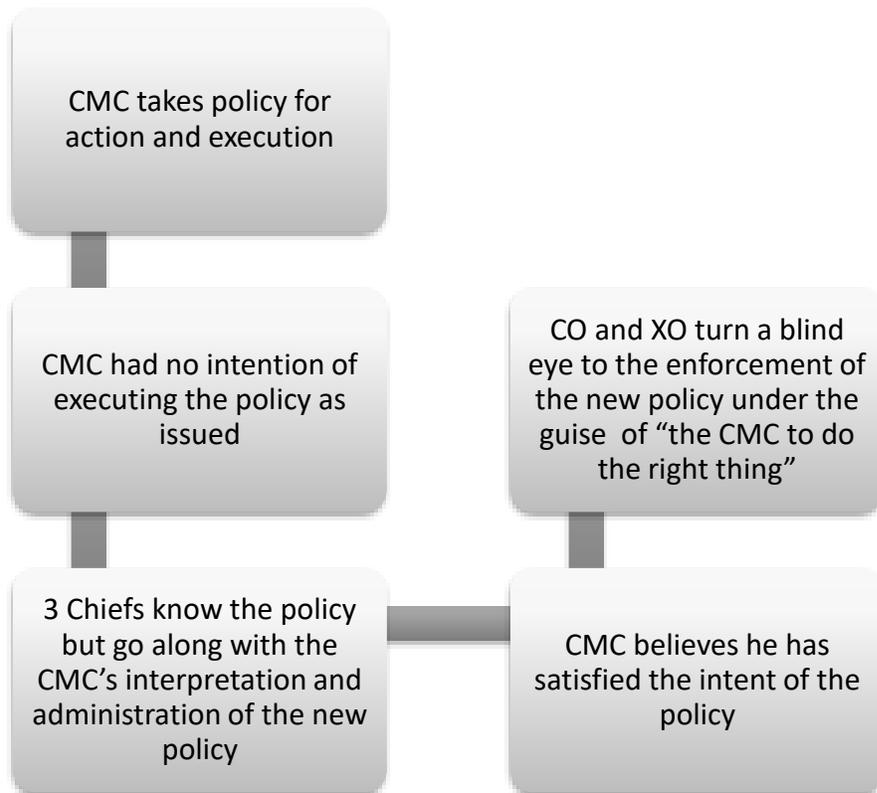
Findings:

1. Wing commander ordered that a daily BAC test be given to all wing personnel upon arrival at work.
2. Unit CMC took exception to the policy and informed the CO and XO that he would administer the command's adherence.
3. CO and XO both believed the policy was an over-reaction and did not oversee or show interest in the CMC's administration.
4. CMC was assisted by three CPOs in the mess who also agreed with him. They established internal guidelines that were different from wing commander's direction. Instead of a .000 floor, they established .05 as first criteria for action. Sailors producing .05 to .07 were to be sent home and charged leave. Sailors producing .08 and above were to be written up as unfit for duty.
5. Program proceeded for four months and the unit only had one sailor written up as unfit for duty. Since unfit for duty was the only criteria for reporting, the CMC, CO and XO believed their interpretation was correct.
6. The wing commander's duty office received an anonymous tip concerning the unit's interpretation of policy.
7. CO, XO and CMC were summoned to the wing commander's office where they admitted that the unit policy was different than directed.
8. Both officers were relieved of their responsibilities and the CMC was

charged with direct disobedience of a lawful order.

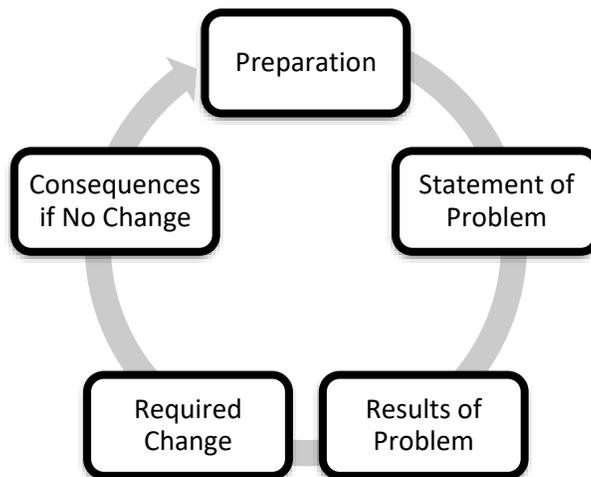
Facilitation Questions:

1. Diagram the thought-to-action chain for the CMC.
2. What do you think about the wing commander's policy? Was it a smart thing to do?
3. What should the CO/XO and CMC have done if they disagreed with it?
4. Have you ever experienced what you considered a harsh, unfair, or unwise policy? What was it and what was the result?
5. Are the three Chiefs that assisted in the administration of the policy guilty of anything?
6. How would you have handled this situation if you were the CMC?
7. How would you have handled this situation if you were one of the other chiefs in the command?



Social Constructive Confrontation Discussion:

1. The first opportunity for constructive confrontation is internal. In this case, the CMC would benefit from a constructive confrontation with himself. He is having issues with the policy from higher authority and needs to determine what the appropriate way forward is, not the emotional way forward.
2. A next opportunity for confrontation might come from a friend or colleague. These “on-lookers” often know about or strongly suspect inappropriate behavior. In this case, the fellow chief petty officers could have intervened. Have you ever been in such a situation? Approaching a friend or co-worker in such a situation is difficult. You might totally agree that the policy is flawed, but the course you take about that disagreement needs to be thought through. Before you approach the friend, you must try to separate the disagreement with the policy from the actions being pursued. This could be very difficult and you would have to be sure that real, negative consequences were likely. Using the case study, your own observations, or a hypothetical example, how would you realistically handle such a confrontation? Look at the wheel below for a template.



Preparation:

1. Put yourself in the position of one of the chief petty officers privy to the CMC's scheme. His behavior concerns you and you plan to intervene. What does this step mean to you? How would you prepare? In what setting would this type of confrontation best take place?

Statement of Problem:

1. What is the problem (or likely result) of the misbehavior? What problem is it for you? What problem is it for the unit, etc.?
2. How would you state this to the CMC?
3. How do you anticipate the CMC to respond? What are you listening for and how would you refute it?

Results of Problem:

1. Using the example, what are the likely results or negative outcomes from the problem and how would you state that to the CMC?
2. Listen.

Required Change:

1. What change in behavior do you want to see? How would you state that?
2. Listen.

Consequences If No Change:

1. Hopefully, by this point in the confrontation you are having a discussion and not a shouting match. The understanding of consequences would be something that both of you agree to vice you listing them.

Case Conclusions:

1. What main points did you take from this case study?
2. What are your concerns as a facilitator with this case study?