

INSPECTOR GENERAL VISIT

PREPARING FOR AN IG VISIT

There are many ways to prepare for an IG formal inspection. Some are better than others. Since the inspection is announced 3 – 4 months in advance, there is ample time to prepare if you take a reasonable look at the time available and what you have to do. The following suggestions are offered as an effort to assist you in your preparations. Remember, the inspection process is a mandatory function that must be carried out in order for the CAP to continue operating.

WHAT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR

The IG team will conduct its inspection using the revised CAP worksheets (“Tabs”). Your SUI notice includes the URL of the website to download these worksheets. Using the checklist is the best tool for preparing for the formal inspection. This is like an open-book test. Look at the process by which the inspector will evaluate the questions. Fully providing the information requested. If you have a good program that is being well managed and the worksheet does not cover the subject, don’t overlook commenting upon the program. The worksheet has room for notes that you can enter.

You should also look at their last report and ensure that any and all discrepancies and write-ups have indeed been fixed, and if re-inspected, conform to current guidance and policy. You should also look at the past 2 to 3 years of evaluation reports as well as any staff assistance visits to ensure corrective action has been taken, and ensure that those write-ups are still closed out.

GET YOUR ATTITUDE RIGHT

Having the right attitude for the inspection will be important for you when the inspectors arrive. So let’s take a moment to think about the reason the team is coming.

The Inspector General is charged with the responsibility of looking at the way a unit performs its mission on a daily basis. We look for compliance with directives, effective management of resources, and the ability of the unit to do the job. We will conduct our inspection by asking questions, looking at checklists, and watching how your people and resources are used. They also take a hard look at our ‘military image’ -military courtesy, uniforms and compliance with all CAPR’s, CAPM’s, and directives. Before they are finished the inspectors will have examined how well you comply.

All this sounds a lot like harassment. But believe me, the IG team really wants you to do well. Before the inspection begins, each inspector assumes you have the best program in the command. All you have to do is show us that program and convince us that we were right. If your program complies with governing directives and the established inspection guidelines are safe and efficient, and are well managed, you’re well on your way to an outstanding rating.

No unit is expected to be perfect in its operation. Having problems is expected. But having those problems identified, documented, and solutions mapped out are a sign of good management. Having a system in place, which periodically identifies those problems, fixes them, and prevents them from happening again, is what the self-inspection program is all about.

The final part of having the right attitude is “selling”. Your attitude should say, “My program is the best in CAP. It covers all the bases and I think you need to tell everyone else about it.” Show pictures, charts, and whatever else you have so that they thoroughly understand how you operate. When you submit your documentation, include to notes on your high quality programs. That way they’ll remember it better when they start writing the formal report. You can even include prepared responses to all of the questions listed on the worksheets.

Remember, this is your opportunity to show off all the great work you've been doing since the last inspection. Having the right attitude will go a long way toward showing off your programs and attaining the rating you deserve.

HOW TO TREAT AN INSPECTOR

Whether the inspector views your work based only on documentation or if you have an opportunity to speak to the inspector, the first impression that you have on an IG inspector is important. It sets the tone for the entire time he/she is inspecting your particular area. That first impression may also affect other areas which your inspector is evaluating. If not handled properly, your first meeting may create a barrier, which both you and the inspector must actively overcome if there is to be a fair exchange of ideas. Clouding the air at the outset by a bad first impression will make the entire inspection difficult, as well as diminish your image as a competent professional.

Inspectors are people too! If you meet them personally, treat them as such and you'll both get started on the right foot. Being friendly is only common courtesy and they'll be thankful for that. After all, our inspectors have probably just traveled a couple hundred miles and may be suffering the effects of a little "prop lag." Give 'em a break! A genuinely friendly greeting and decent treatment will be well appreciated, and you may even learn some things to improve your program.

Greet your inspectors as they enter your area. Stand up as they enter the room, get out from behind your desk and shake hands. Offer a comfortable chair and coffee if available. This will set them at ease and keep at least one of their hands busy for a while! Close the door [if you have one] so distractions are minimized. Plan to start the conversation by explaining how your area functions, what your part of the operation is, and how you support the overall mission of the unit. Cover your program in enough detail to convince the inspector you know what you're doing, and emphasize the good things that you've done. This is the time to show off your pet program and your particularly efficient way of getting the job done. Having a piece of paper to give the inspector when he leaves will also increase your chances of his acknowledging those good programs when they later write their report. Then explain your problem areas, outlining what actions you've taken to fix your problems as well as how you're preventing those problems from happening again.

When the inspector begins asking questions, don't try to hide things. They are an expert in your field, have been doing this for years, have seen many other units, and already know some of your problems. Answer the questions truthfully and if it's obvious to you that the inspector has found something you've missed, listen, take notes, and see if you can fix the problem quickly. The most unprofessional and counterproductive thing you can do is to get defensive and begin arguing with the inspector.

Be receptive to the inspectors' suggestions. They have been around and whether they're espousing their own pet program or one they have seen at another unit, keep an open mind 'cause it may be a better way of doing business. Take notes, especially on whom authored the program, and then follow it up later. Remember, the inspectors really are here to help you improve your program: if they have a better mousetrap, let's get it! Treat them well---don't make it harder for yourself than it has to be.

LAST MINUTE PREPARATIONS

Prior to the team's arrival, spruce up your work areas and the people in them. Sweep up, wash up, and straighten up. A uniform inspection is in order while there is still time for the barbershop and tailor. Rehearse your IG in briefing, paying particular attention to what you are saying to the inspector.

Then remind your people and yourself the basic "Do's and Don'ts" when dealing with the IG. Don'ts: argue; try to fool the inspectors; hide things from them; build an adversary relationship. Do's: take the time to be personable with the inspector; be open and honest; receptive; show them what they ask for.

BE PROFESSIONAL!

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