

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility is being accountable for what you do or fail to do. NCOs are responsible to fulfill not only their individual duties, but also to ensure their teams and units are successful. Any duty, because of the position you hold in the unit, includes a responsibility to execute that duty. As an NCO, you are accountable for your personal conduct and that of your soldiers. Also, each soldier is individually responsible for his own personal conduct and that responsibility cannot be delegated. A soldier is accountable for his actions to fellow soldiers, leaders, unit and the US Army.

As a leader you must ensure that your soldiers clearly understand their responsibilities as members of the team and as representative of the Army. Commanders set overall policies and standards, but all leaders must provide the guidance, resources, assistance and supervision necessary for soldiers to perform their duties. Mission accomplishment demands that officers and NCOs work together to advise, assist and learn from each other. Responsibilities fall into two categories: command and individual.

Command responsibility refers to collective or organizational accountability and includes how well the unit performs their missions. For example, a company commander is responsible for all the tasks and missions assigned to the company; his superiors hold him accountable for completing them. Commanders give military leaders the responsibility for what their sections, units, or organizations do or fail to do. NCOs are therefore responsible to fulfill not only their individual duties, but also to ensure that their team and unit are successful. The amount of responsibility delegated to you depends on your mission, the position you hold and your own willingness to accept responsibility.

One point you need to get straight is that although a list of duties can be drawn up describing what is expected of you, it will not tell you how to do your job. For example, one of an NCO's duties is to enforce standards of military appearance. This means you are responsible for correcting soldiers who wear the uniform improperly and for teaching them the correct standards of appearance. It also means that you should inspect for proper and serviceability, clothing and equipment of your soldiers. Remember that you must set the example first and your soldiers will follow in your footsteps.

"Rank is a badge of responsibility..."

DA Pam 360-1 (1957)

Individual responsibility as a noncommissioned officer means you are accountable for your personal conduct. Soldiers in the Army have their own responsibilities. For example, if you write a check at the commissary, it is your responsibility to have sufficient funds in the bank account to cover the check. Individual responsibility cannot be delegated; it belongs to the soldier that wrote the check. Soldiers are accountable for their actions, to their fellow soldiers, to their leaders, to their unit and to the United States Army. As a leader you must ensure that your soldiers understand clearly their responsibilities as members of the team and as representatives of the Army.

"A leader does not 'choose' the best or most opportune time in which to lead. A good leader takes the challenge whenever and wherever it presents itself and does the best he or she can."

SMA Richard A. Kidd