

Cadet Orientation Flights Parent's FAQ

The Cadet Orientation Flight Program introduces youth to general aviation through hands-on orientation flights in single engine aircraft and gliders. The program's motto describes what cadet flying is all about: "Safe, Fun, Educational." The primary goal of the Civil Air Patrol cadet orientation flight program is to share with cadets the thrill of flying. There are 5 free flights available in a powered aircraft, and each flight has an educational purpose that is guided by a training syllabus. The goal is to complete the syllabus objectives in a flight lasting about an hour in duration. Actual flight time will depend on local conditions. The program is limited to current CAP cadets under 18 years of age.

This is a typical Orientation Flight Day: we have two or three cadets in the aircraft, and we fly from Bellingham to a nearby airports such as Skagit, Arlington, Concrete, Orcas Island, or Friday Harbor. Each cadet will fly one leg of the journey, while covering the syllabus training objectives. After we land, we switch seats to allow the second cadet to fly to a second airport. There we switch seats again, and the third cadet flies us back to Bellingham. If there are no time pressures we sometimes stop in at a sandwich shop located near the airport to have some lunch and to discuss the flight and aviation in general.

FAQs:

1. Q: When does the flight depart Bellingham? A: Depending on the number of cadets who sign up for Orientation flights, we can conduct one and maybe two departures. The cadets and pilot usually meet around 0900 at the General Aviation building. After a brief discussion, cadets (and parents too if they wish) proceed to the aircraft to preflight it and get it ready. There is about 1 hour of discussion and preflighting (inspecting) the aircraft on the ground before departure from Bellingham Airport. Parents are welcome to participate in this inspection. The first departure is usually planned for around 1000, returning around 2:00 pm. During the summer we have time for another departure at about 2:30.
2. Q: When does the flight return to Bellingham? A: The pilot plans about one hour for each leg of the flight, plus time on the ground and refueling. An estimate for planning purposes is that 3 cadets can fly and return in about 4 hours after the initial departure from Bellingham. After we return there is a short debriefing. We plan to return before sunset.
3. What are some of the things that can delay return to Bellingham? A: passenger sickness, weather, mechanical problems, stopping for lunch, etc.
4. What happens if the return time is delayed? A: Our procedures require that a person (called the Flight Release Officer) monitors the progress of each leg of the flight. The FRO will have information on the whereabouts of the flight. The FRO can be reached via phone at the number provided below. The cadets are encouraged to call their parents if they are delayed in returning, out of consideration for arranging a pickup time. The pilot carries a cell phone and will return calls after landing, but will not answer calls during a flight.
5. How would weather or a mechanical problem delay a flight? A: Weather that can change quickly is a real issue in the Pacific Northwest. Every O-flight schedule is subject to weather - we need a cloud ceiling of 2500 feet or higher, and 3 miles visibility or better. Pilots check the aviation weather forecast to decide if and where

they will fly, but even short term forecasts can be wrong. If we fly to an airport and the weather closes in, we cannot proceed with the flight. The pilots who contribute to our Orientation Flights will take no unreasonable risks with the flight or the cadets. This conservative approach can mean that a flight into certain weather conditions - which might be perfectly legal to fly according to the FAA and CAP regulations - could be delayed or cancelled due to a pilot's personal conservative approach to weather. A cadet's previous flight experience also matters. A flight on a windy day might be postponed if the cadets are new to aviation or prone to airsickness. The same flight might launch if I know the cadets are OK with some turbulence. The aircraft is carefully checked for mechanical performance before every takeoff and any indication of a problem will ground the flight.

6. What happens if there is an extended delay due to weather or mechanical problem?
 A: The remote possibility is that we could be grounded for an extended period. *In my 2 years of more than 100 Orientation Flights, a long delay has never happened to me. But I prepare for the possibility.* If we are grounded due to weather or mechanical problem, we could be at a distant airport and need some alternate way back to Bellingham. Our first step is to let the FRO and parents know where we are, that we're safe, and the reason for the delay. The second step is to make a plan on how and when we will return. This could involve staying overnight in a motel waiting for weather to clear up, or taking a rental car/ferry/bus, or being fetched by a generous parent. The out-of-pocket costs associated with these transportation alternatives are not covered by the Air Force, but are shared equally among the pilot and cadets.
7. We showed up and my flight got cancelled for bad weather. What now? A: If we get grounded at Bellingham Airport rather than at a distant airport, it's all part of the adventure of being a young person, and hopefully teaches something about risk assessment and decision-making. We will reschedule the flight for a better day.
8. Because there is a remote possibility of an extended delay, how should parents prepare their cadets? A: The pilot can cover the costs of a motel, food, ferry and bus fare, but cadets should bring some meal money plus any critical medications.

Flight Information for the day:

Your Pilot Is:	Your Flight Release Officer Is:
<input type="checkbox"/> 1Lt. Randy Smith - 360-296-3543 <input type="checkbox"/> 1Lt. Ralph Black - 360-739-4160 <input type="checkbox"/> Lt. Col. Jim Laird - 360-739-2703 <input type="checkbox"/> Lt. Col. Arnie Glassberg - 850-377-9760 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Lt. Col. Joel Martin - 360-739-5041 <input type="checkbox"/> 1Lt. Ralph Black - 360-739-4160 <input type="checkbox"/> Lt. Col. Jim Laird - 360-739-2703 <input type="checkbox"/> _____