

8 August 2011

## **Community Recreation Association (CRA) Membership Implementation**

Todd Sharpe, Personnel Support Programs Manager, loc 5554

As you may have heard, Personnel Support Programs (PSP) will be implementing a Community Recreation Association Fee. The proceeds from this membership will go towards supporting existing Sports and Recreational activities for the Suffield Community. I felt it was important to ensure accurate information was available to the community and to help you understand why the Commander CFB Suffield has opted to implement the CRA fees.

First I will give you some background to put the membership fee into context, and then, through a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) I hope to answer all of your questions and concerns.

### **Background**

There are two types of funds that support the Morale and Welfare of the military community in Suffield. The first is Public Funds. These are government funds downloaded to PSP through the Base Commander to support several items. From PSP's standpoint, they are funds earmarked to support the troops and among other things, address their fitness and health, esprit décor, and operational effectiveness. It is recognized by the Canadian Forces that if military personnel are fit and healthy, they are better soldiers, sailors, and airmen/women.

The second source of funds is Non- Public Funds. Non-Public Funds (NPF) have existed since World War II. The first NPF outlets were messes and canteens for soldiers serving on the war front. Typically NPF is self- generated funds at the Base level.

The Canadian Treasury Board guidelines state, "A reasonable level of goods, services, and recreational facilities should be available to CF personnel in their areas of service. Where those levels are inadequate, the Department's responsibility as an employer is to ensure their availability where practical and desirable through a system of Non-Public Fund organizations." Through this mandate, NPF activities have evolved to include Clubs and Activities, Messes, Retail Services (CANEX), and Special Events- all of which are intended to support the morale and welfare of the CF community.

All of these activities cost money to operate and for the most part must be self sustaining. The pot of money that funds all of these activities is called Base Fund. This money pays for: staff wages (lifeguards would be one example), subsidizing programs like minor hockey, the library, and bowling alley, buys equipment that is available for sign out, and a host of other items that would be considered "recreation". It also allows community



members to enjoy events like the Canada Day Celebration or the upcoming Ralston Rodeo at virtually no cost. There are several sources of money that contribute to the Base Fund, but the single largest source in Suffield is CANEX Royalties. A percentage of sales at your local CANEX stays in Suffield. For years, the Suffield Base Fund was flush with money due to the large royalties it received from CANEX. This enabled PSP to offer a high level of programs and services to the Suffield Community at greatly reduces prices- in some cases absolutely free! Unfortunately, over the last ten years or so, CANEX royalties have dipped to approximately a quarter of what they once were. In the mean time, costs to operate the wide array of recreation activities and facilities that the Suffield community enjoys have steadily increased. We can no longer continue to operate in this manner.

The CFB Suffield Recreation Centre is the hub for Base sports and community recreation activities. Currently all community members have access to fitness sports and recreation facilities at no charge. Out of necessity, the Base Commander must now levy a small fee for access to these facilities. This fee will help offset costs like lifeguard wages and equipment purchases, and allow the community to enjoy the low cost of programs it has come to expect. Military members will continue to have access to the Fitness and Sports facilities for free. However, if a military member wishes to utilize other services such as fitness classes, aquatics, recreation programs, workshops, and the like, he or she must also be a CRA member to enjoy the discounted rates available. All other members of the Suffield community must be a CRA member to access the sports and recreation facilities (the obvious exception to this is if a user is a registered participant in an established program eg. Swimming lessons).

This is probably a good jumping off point to begin the FAQ's that will probably answer most of your questions.

1. **Why is this CRA fee being implemented?** As outlined above, the Base Commander is no longer able to offer the same level of programs and services to the community due to increased costs over the years and less money being generated by the NPF sources of funding highlighted above. This year, community recreation programs, the pool, sports, and the arena combined are projected to fall short by \$298,000 (as a side note, CFB Suffield is the only Base in Canada that does not have a CRA fee of some sort).
2. **I thought BATUS gave PSP funding to cover these costs?** BATUS is extremely generous in the manner they support PSP in delivering morale and welfare programs and services to the Suffield community. However, there are areas they are able to support and areas they are not.
3. **Who must buy a membership?** The straight answer is that no one is obligated to purchase the CRA membership. However, with the exception of the military

member, anyone wishing to use the Fitness, Sports, or Recreation facilities must be a CRA member. The only exception, I suppose, would be an individual who has registered and paid for a program (think swim lessons, rec hockey, LEP). He or she would be entitled to access the facility during their program only.

4. **What will a CRA membership cost?** Those wishing to buy a CRA membership will fall into one of three categories:

Regular Member

Canadian Regular Forces, Class A, B or C Reservists, Foreign Armed Forces.

Ordinary Member

DND Civilian personnel including casual employees under full time contract to DND or NPF, NPF or MFRC Employees, Full time employees of DRDC; Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, RCMP, other security forces, former Public Servants or NPF employees in receipt of a PSAC or NPF pension and Retired Canadian Military.

Associate Member

Non-affiliated Civilians and others not listed above.

Note 1: Family is defined as: the applicant, their spouse and children less than 18 years of age and residing at the applicant's permanent address.

Note 2: Spouse is defined as: legally married to, or living common law (6 months) with partner.

Note 3: A family member may only enjoy a CRA membership if the Base employee is a member ie. act as his or her sponsor.

CATEGORY	SINGLE	FAMILY
Regular	Month - \$6.00 Year - \$72.00	Month - \$10.00 Year - \$120.00
Ordinary	Month-\$10.00 Year - \$120.00	Month - \$15.00 Year -\$180.00
Associate	Month - \$35.00 Year - \$360.00	Month - \$62.00 Year -\$744.00

GST will be added to all prices.



5. **What is included with my membership?** Membership has its privileges!! CRA members will enjoy a host of benefits- some of which I can identify now and some of which are to be determined. First and foremost CRA members will be able to access the Fitness, Sports, and Recreation facilities. After the 15 October deadline, non-members will not be granted access. Secondly, CRA members will enjoy significantly discounted rates on programs and services. Thirdly, land and aquatics classes will be free of charge for members. Finally, another key benefit is that members will have access to equipment sign-out (while quantities last). For example, prior to this implementation, only CF personnel were entitled to sign out hockey equipment on a loan card. Now, assuming availability, others will have access to this type of service as well. There are several types of equipment on the horizon. Stay tuned!!
  
6. **What if I choose not to purchase a CRA membership for me or my family?** No problem! It is understandable that some community members enjoy only a select few of our programs. An individual always has the option of simply registering for the course of interest and paying the non-member price. Of course, with all of the benefits to come, we would certainly encourage you to become a member for the minimal fee. However, if you feel it is more cost-effective to remain a non-member, we respect that choice. Of course, the military member would still have access to the facilities if they remain a non-member.
  
7. **When does the new fee commence?** The new membership fee will be effective 12 September 2011. There will be a grace period to allow users to make their decision and as of 15 October 2011, facility restrictions will be in effect. The biggest reason PSP will commence selling membership as of 12 Sept is to give those registering for programs an opportunity to enjoy the member rates for those programs. If an individual chooses not to purchase the CRA membership now, they are still welcome to join us at a later date, but would pay the non-member price for their programs until such time as he or she becomes a CRA member.
  
8. **What is the difference between a CRA fee and a program fee?** The “CRA fee” is the monthly or annual fee (your choice) you pay to access the Fitness, Sports, and Recreational facilities. This membership fee also entitles you to a host of benefits such as discounted programs, equipment sign-out, and many others still to come. The “program fee” is the fee an individual would pay to register and attend a recreational program eg. Swim Lessons or Minor Hockey. Of course, as outlined above, the program fees are significantly reduced for CRA members.
  
9. **Does this affect Community Recreation clubs?** No. At this time, one does not need to be a CRA member to be a Rec Club member. However, you will still

have to pay the Rec Club fee to register as member of the Club. Please consult your local recreation club for a fee schedule.

**10. What is the next step?** Beginning 12 September, come and visit our staff at the Recreation Centre and we would be happy to get you started. Remember, the Base employee must sponsor the family! Bring some banking information with you if you chose to pay monthly.