

2051 19th Alberta Dragoons RCACC



FTX Supplemental Information



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Introduction

Welcome to the **2051 19th Alberta Dragoons!** As part of the Canadian Cadet Program, one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences your cadet will take part in is the **Field Training Exercise (FTX)**. This guide will provide answers to many of the common questions parents and cadets might have before attending an FTX. From what to pack, to how transportation is arranged, to what your cadet will be doing over the weekend, we aim to make sure everyone feels prepared and confident.

What is an FTX?

An FTX, short for **Field Training Exercise**, is an outdoor training event where cadets get the chance to apply the skills they learn during regular weekly meetings. These weekends are packed with hands-on activities that teach practical survival techniques, leadership skills, and teamwork. Each FTX is a blend of adventure and learning, offering cadets the chance to grow and challenge themselves in a fun, outdoor environment.

The Army Cadet Program runs three main types of FTXs:

- **Bivouac FTX:** Focuses on basic survival skills, like building shelters, starting fires, and using tools. Cadets learn bushcraft and the fundamentals of living in the wilderness.
- **Trekking FTX:** Involves long hikes where cadets practice navigation, map reading, and the use of compasses and GPS. It emphasizes fitness and teamwork as cadets journey through different terrains.
- **Winter FTX:** Offers training in winter survival, where cadets learn how to stay warm, build snow shelters, and handle the challenges of winter weather in the field.

Why are FTXs Important?

FTXs are an essential part of the **Army Cadet Program** because they give cadets the opportunity to put theory into practice. While weekly training covers the basics, FTXs allow cadets to experience real-world challenges in a controlled environment. By working together in small teams, cadets learn leadership, self-reliance, and problem-solving. These exercises are designed to build confidence and resilience, helping cadets grow not just as individuals but as members of a team.

Another important aspect of FTXs is fostering an appreciation for the outdoors. Cadets will experience camping, hiking, and navigating through natural environments while learning how to respect and protect the wilderness.

Participation in FTXs is a required part of the cadet program, but more than that, **they're often the highlight of a cadet's experience.** These activities are a chance for cadets to bond, gain new skills, and create memories that will last a lifetime.



Standard Personal Kit for Field Training Exercises (FTX)

The specific kit list for each FTX may vary depending on the type of exercise, the length of the activity, and the weather conditions. It's important for both cadets and parents to review the official kit list provided by the **Training Officer** prior to the FTX weekend. Make sure to check the weather forecast ahead of time to ensure your cadet packs appropriately.

Sample Kit List: *This is a placeholder—always use the official list issued for the specific FTX.*

1st LAYER (Next to your skin)	Personal Hygiene Kit
<input type="checkbox"/> underwear <input type="checkbox"/> undershirts <input type="checkbox"/> long underwear (top & bottom) <input type="checkbox"/> socks (synthetic, silk NO cotton socks, they are cold when wet!)	<input type="checkbox"/> Soap <input type="checkbox"/> Facecloth <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush & toothpaste <input type="checkbox"/> Hand towel <input type="checkbox"/> Shaving kit, as required <input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene products, as required
2nd LAYER (inner layer)	Miscellaneous
<input type="checkbox"/> outdoor pants (FTU, wool pants, sweatpants, NO jeans) <input type="checkbox"/> outdoor shirts (FTU, wool shirt, synthetic shirt) <input type="checkbox"/> sweater (wool, fleece) <input type="checkbox"/> long-sleeve shirt <input type="checkbox"/> wool socks	<input type="checkbox"/> Notepad & pencil <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight / headlamp <input type="checkbox"/> Day pack <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle / camelbak (min 1L) <input type="checkbox"/> Travel mug/cup
3rd LAYER (outer layer)	Extras
<input type="checkbox"/> jacket suitable for the season <input type="checkbox"/> toque, hat <input type="checkbox"/> gloves, mittens <input type="checkbox"/> Sturdy outdoor boots with ankle support <input type="checkbox"/> Extra footwear suitable for outdoor wear	<input type="checkbox"/> Small pocketknife with locking blade (under 6 inches total length) <input type="checkbox"/> Small personal survival kit
Corps Issued Items (temporary issue to cadets for the duration of the FTX)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag & liner <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping pad / air mattress <input type="checkbox"/> Backpack / Rucksack <input type="checkbox"/> Winter parka (when required) <input type="checkbox"/> Mukluks (winter boots) (when required) <input type="checkbox"/> Half-shelter (when required)	<input type="checkbox"/> Rain pants (when required) <input type="checkbox"/> Rain jacket (when required) <input type="checkbox"/> Field equipment (as required) <input type="checkbox"/> Rations (Meals, snacks, beverages) + All required FTX training equipment



FTX Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Every year, several new cadets experience their first trip away from home without a family member. This can be exciting but also nerve-wracking. To help ease concerns for both cadets and parents, we've compiled answers to some of the most common questions about FTX weekends.

What does FTX stand for?

FTX stands for **Field Training Exercise**. It's a military term for outdoor training that applies the skills cadets learn during the year. Like many things in the military, it's an acronym that you'll hear often.

What is the purpose of the FTX? Is there any cost?

The purpose of an FTX is to give cadets the chance to put into practice the lessons and skills they've been learning during weekly training sessions. These exercises are critical to developing the leadership, survival, and team-building skills that the cadet program aims to foster.

There are three types of FTX that Army Cadets participate in:

- **Bivouac FTX:** Focuses on bushcraft and survival skills, such as building shelters and learning how to live outdoors.
- **Trekking FTX:** Involves hiking and navigating through unfamiliar terrain, teaching cadets to use maps, compasses, and GPS systems.
- **Winter FTX:** A cold-weather exercise designed to develop winter survival skills, including staying warm and safe in harsh conditions.

These exercises are considered **mandatory training** and are an essential part of the Cadet program. As such, all cadets are expected to attend. The great news is that there is **no cost** to participate in FTX weekends, as they are fully funded by the **Department of National Defence (DND)**.

How does my cadet get to the FTX?

All cadets will meet at the **Local Headquarters (LHQ)**, or as otherwise instructed, at a specified time. From there, they will be transported to the FTX site via a bus provided by DND. A staff member will accompany the cadets on the bus to ensure they arrive safely.



On the last day of the activity, cadets will be brought back to the LHQ for **parental pick-up**. Before cadets are dismissed, all equipment issued during the FTX must be returned and accounted for.

Be sure to check the return time as it can vary depending on the activities planned for the weekend.

What should my cadet bring to the FTX?

A detailed **Kit List** will be issued for each FTX. Generally, cadets will need:

- Appropriate outdoor clothing, including extra socks, gloves, and a toque for warmth.
- **Cadet Parka** (if issued), or other suitable outerwear for the conditions.
- Personal hygiene items and toiletries.
- A sturdy pair of boots (if they haven't been issued combat boots yet).
- **Issued Army Sleeping Bag**, liner, and sleep mat will be provided by the cadet corps.

It's important to note that cadets' personal kit will be exposed to the elements and could get dirty or damaged. Avoid packing anything valuable or easily ruined by outdoor conditions. Please also remember that **jeans** and parts of the **DEU uniform** (like parade boots) are **not allowed** on FTXs.

If your cadet has not yet received their **Field Training Uniform (FTU)**, they can wear appropriate civilian clothing for the trip.

What should my cadet NOT bring to the FTX?

To maintain a safe and focused training environment, cadets are **not allowed** to bring the following:

- Alcohol, drugs, or medications not prescribed to the cadet.
- Weapons of any kind (including knives and other dangerous items).
- Tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and similar substances.
- Any items deemed dangerous or inappropriate for the field.

Any prohibited items found will be confiscated for the duration of the exercise, and **military or civilian police** may be called in cases involving illegal items.

Cell phones and other electronic devices are not recommended. Senior cadets may carry phones for emergencies during specific activities, but generally, cell service is poor in the field.



What about inspections and searches?

During an FTX, cadets may be subject to inspections of their sleeping accommodations, luggage, kit, or equipment. These inspections are supervised by Canadian Armed Forces members and serve several purposes:

- To ensure that cadets maintain cleanliness and order.
- To check that cadets have the required equipment in good condition.
- To confirm that cadets do not possess any prohibited or unauthorized items.

Searches for contraband or illegal items will only be conducted by **Military Police** or local law enforcement as needed.

What happens if my cadet needs to take medication?

Cadets who require regular medication should pack their medication in its original container, with clear dosing instructions, and bring only the necessary amount for the weekend. Upon arrival at the FTX, the medication will be handed over to the designated **Medical Officer (Med-O)**, who will administer it according to the instructions.

If a cadet has “on-demand” medications, like an **EpiPen** or **inhaler**, they will keep these with them throughout the activity.

Does my cadet need to bring their Health Card?

No, cadets are not required to bring their Health Card in case of an emergency. Upon enrolment, we collect this information and input it into our system. For each activity, we bring an **emergency binder** that contains key information such as Health Care Number, allergies and other medical limitations, emergency contacts, and more. This ensures that we can respond quickly and effectively in case of an emergency.

What happens if a cadet gets injured or falls ill during an FTX?

Safety is always a top priority during an FTX. If a cadet becomes injured or falls ill, the **Medical Officer (Med-O)** or a qualified first-aidier on staff will assess and treat the cadet on-site. In more serious cases, the cadet may be transported to a local medical facility.

Parents or guardians will be contacted immediately in the event of a significant illness or injury. The **emergency binder**, which includes all medical information, will ensure that staff have quick access to a cadet's health records and emergency contacts.



What if my cadet gets homesick?

Homesickness can happen, especially for cadets who are new to being away from home. Our approach is to help them stay **busy** and engaged in the daily routine. Keeping cadets focused on activities and participating in group tasks typically helps them adjust and forget about being homesick.

Senior cadets and staff are trained to recognize signs of homesickness and provide support. We encourage cadets to get involved with their peers, which usually helps them feel more comfortable and connected.

What should cadets expect when they arrive at the FTX site?

Upon arrival at the FTX site, cadets will immediately begin preparing for the weekend's activities. This includes:

- Setting up **shelter**: Depending on the type of FTX, cadets may sleep in tents, temporary shelters, or even shelters they build themselves during survival training.
- Organizing personal kit: Cadets will ensure their gear is properly stored and that essential items like rain gear and water bottles are easily accessible.
- Briefings: Cadets will receive a briefing on the weekend's objectives, safety protocols, and the schedule of activities.

The goal is to ensure that cadets are organized and ready to begin their training as soon as possible.

What is the daily routine on the FTX?

Cadets usually wake up around **0630 hours** and start the day by doing their daily ablutions (getting washed, dressed, etc.). After that, they prepare their own meals in tent groups. This task is spearheaded by the **senior cadets**, who lead their peers with **staff supervision** to ensure everything runs smoothly. Once breakfast is finished, cadets begin their training for the day based on the approved training plan for the weekend.

Throughout the day, cadets participate in various outdoor and leadership activities, which help develop teamwork, resilience, and new skills. "**Down time**" generally occurs after dinner, giving cadets the chance to relax, bond with each other, and reflect on the day's events.

In the evening, a "**Night-X**" or night exercise is usually organized, which combines lessons learned with fun challenges. This activity is often planned by the senior cadets and serves as a team-building event. Afterward, the cadets enjoy a "**Mug-up**", which is a snack time featuring hot chocolate before bed. By **2200 hours**, cadets are usually settled in for the night.



The senior cadets take turns maintaining the **fire picket** during the night. This involves keeping the fire going and making sure lanterns are on, but it's also an important safety feature. The fire picket ensures someone is always awake to monitor the camp and notify staff if any cadet requires assistance during the night.

On Sunday, the routine is similar but includes **cleaning up the camp** and preparing to head home. Cadets help with packing their personal gear and communal supplies before boarding the bus.

What is the role of senior cadets during an FTX?

Senior cadets, often referred to as **NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers)**, play a significant role in ensuring the smooth operation of FTXs. Their responsibilities include:

- **Mentoring younger cadets:** Senior cadets help guide newer cadets by demonstrating skills, offering advice, and helping them adjust to life in the field.
- **Supervising activities:** Senior cadets often lead smaller groups during training activities. They provide instructions and ensure that each cadet is participating safely and correctly.
- **Maintaining discipline and safety:** NCOs are tasked with overseeing cadets during downtime, making sure everyone follows the rules and safety guidelines.
- **Acting as role models:** Senior cadets are expected to lead by example. They show initiative, respect, and the ability to handle challenges under pressure.

While senior cadets have a leadership role, all activities are supervised by adult staff to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

What do cadets eat on FTX?

Cadets are expected to have a **good meal on Friday** before leaving for the FTX, as no meal is provided that evening. For the rest of the weekend, cadets will eat **Meals Ready-to-Eat (MREs)**, which are complete, pre-packaged meals that contain more than 1,200 calories each to keep them energized.

The MREs come with a variety of entrees such as **Beef Ravioli, Chili, Spaghetti and Meatballs**, along with side dishes like Fried Rice, Hash Browns, and more. Breakfast options may include **Pork Sausage Patty** or **Apple Maple Oatmeal**, while desserts range from **Pop Tarts** to **Pound Cake**. Cadets will soon discover their favorites among the different options.

In addition to MREs, cadets are given fresh fruits, **granola bars**, and other snacks to maintain their energy levels. On occasion, if the conditions allow, a **fresh meal** may be prepared by the staff in the field.

Cadets are encouraged to eat all their rations to stay energized, as the physical activities can be demanding.



How are meals handled during an FTX?

Meals are an important part of keeping cadets energized and ready for the day's activities. There are typically two main ways food is provided during an FTX:

1. **Field Kitchens:** In many FTXs, a mobile kitchen is set up on-site, where meals are prepared and served to cadets.
2. **Pre-packaged Rations:** On some exercises, cadets will be issued **Meals Ready-to-Eat (MREs)**, also known as military rations. These are ready-to-eat meals that can be heated up in the field and provide all the necessary nutrients for the day.

Cadets are encouraged to bring **snacks** that align with their dietary needs but must avoid bringing perishables or junk food that could spoil or attract wildlife.

If a cadet has any dietary restrictions, these must be communicated ahead of time to the **Training Officer** so that accommodations can be made.

Where will my cadet be sleeping?

Cadets typically sleep in **tents**. Tent groups are organized to fit **6 to 10 cadets** depending on the size of the equipment available. Cadets are segregated by sex within the tents, ensuring privacy and comfort. Senior cadets lead each tent group, offering guidance and maintaining discipline.

While staff do not share sleeping areas with the cadets, they remain close by and are readily available in case of emergencies or to address any concerns during the night. The campsite is organized so that staff can monitor the area effectively, and the **fire picket** system ensures that help is available at all times.

What if I need to contact my cadet?

In the event of an **urgent matter at home**, you can contact your cadet by reaching out to the **Officer in Charge (OIC)** of the FTX. The OIC's contact information is provided as part of the **Operations Order (Ops Order)**, which is distributed before the exercise. If you need to communicate with your cadet during the exercise, this is the best way to do so.

The OIC will then ensure that your message reaches your cadet promptly.

Contact Information

For further questions or concerns regarding FTX weekends, feel free to reach out to us:

- **Commanding Officer (CO):** Captain Stephanie Russell - stephanie.russell@cadets.gc.ca
- **Training Officer (Trg O):** CI Charles Bernatchez – charles.bernatchez@cadets.gc.ca

We look forward to making this experience rewarding and enjoyable for your cadet!