

# All You Need to Know About Cadet Mail

## 1. Cadet's Mailing Address

Basic Cadet (Your Cadet's Name) (no nicknames or abbreviations)  
P.O. Box (Your Cadet's Box #, found on the outside of his or her Appointment Package)  
USAF Academy, CO 80841-(Your Cadet's Box #).

Example: Basic Cadet Jonathan Doe  
P.O. Box #####  
USAF Academy, CO 80841-#####

## 2. Sending Mail to Your Cadet during BCT

Begin sending cards and notes about three days before your son or daughter leaves for Basic Cadet Training (BCT) to ensure that he or she will have a letter or two at the first mail call. Place a stack of pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes at your son's or daughter's graduation party and encourage family members and friends to take a handful and write throughout the summer.

During BCT, write as often as you can – daily, if possible. Mail is a privilege during BCT, and the basics really appreciate hearing their name during mail call. The more you send, the better. Occasionally, enclose a few blank sheets of paper and some self-addressed, stamped envelopes. The basics receive a package of USAFA stationery, but many exhaust their supply quickly.

Parents who have “been there and done that” suggest the following:

DO use only white envelopes.

DO use flag or USAFA stamps.

Do NOT put anything on the envelope but the mailing address, return address, and a stamp.

Do NOT put candy, gum, pictures, or other items not allowed during BCT. Any contraband will put your son or daughter at risk of punishment.

DO enclose (after copying it onto your white writing paper or computer paper so it looks like part of the letter):

- \* comics from Sunday/weekday paper
- \* stories from Readers Digest or their favorite magazines
- \* news from your local paper
- \* humorous anecdotes, puzzles, or scanned and printed photos
- \* motivational stories and inspirational Bible verses

DO send funny greeting cards (\$1 or less). Exchange the colored envelopes for white envelopes.

DO keep letters light, upbeat and supportive.

DO encourage your basic to “hang on and hang in”!

The father of one Basic scanned photos of his son's friends, car, family, and pets into his computer, then printed each picture onto the front side of a postcard, wrote his message on half of the other side, and addressed on the second half. His son did a few extra push-ups, but he had pictures from home and a nice little bulletin board in his room.

Messages from cadets may be sparse, and their mood may fluctuate between happiness and homesickness. Be patient, be patient, be patient... You may not get any mail from them, or at best, a couple of letters hastily composed. If you don't receive much (or any) mail, remember that training (and sleep) comes first. They do get your letters, so WRITE, WRITE, WRITE, and encourage friends and relatives to WRITE.

### **3. Mailing Packages and letters after BCT**

Beginning on Acceptance Day, your son or daughter's new title is "C4C" (instead of "Basic Cadet"). The mailing address remains the same, as your cadet is assigned the same P.O. Box number for the next four years.

There is no limit to the number of packages he or she may receive, but remember that cadets have **very limited storage space**. If you send anything that's not edible, send very small amounts at a time. Anything edible will be shared with roommates (two) and other cadets. Any type of letter or postcard, in any type of envelope, may be mailed after BCT.

### **4. Acceptance Boxes**

Cadets can begin receiving care packages on Acceptance Day. Be sure to mark your Acceptance Box "HOLD FOR ACCEPTANCE DAY." Any boxes that arrive during BCT will be held at the Post Office or, even worse, retrieved by the basic's cadre. If the cadre retrieves the box, they will require your cadet to open it in front of them and then confiscate all of the food and "contraband." Try to schedule your Acceptance Box to arrive just a few days before Acceptance Day. (For more information, see attached information sheet, "What Is Acceptance Day?")

### **5. Sending Mail and Packages to USAFA**

The U.S. Postal Service is the best way to send almost everything while your cadet is at USAFA. U.S. Post Office boxes are located in Vandenberg Hall and are available to the cadets at no charge. Packages sent via U.S. mail are placed into large lockers (like those at a bus station or airport) with a lock. A numbered key is placed in the cadet's mailbox. He or she uses the key to open the locker and retrieve the package.

If the box won't fit into a locker, the Post Office will put a slip into the cadet's mailbox and hold the package for pick-up. Keep in mind, though, that the Post Office is located in Vandy (Vandenburg Hall/dorm). If a cadet lives in Sijan, it's a LONG run back to their room, and they can use only one hand to carry a package since they must keep their right hand free to salute.

**U.S. Postal Service Priority/Flat Rate Boxes:** These boxes are free and are shipped directly to your home! Order through the Postal Store on [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com). Most people use the 12"x12"x8" or smaller priority boxes. Some send mail and small treats in the cardboard USPS letter pouches for about half the cost. There is a fixed rate for mailing these boxes (currently \$8.10 for the 12"x12"x8"), so the more goodies you can pack in it, the more savings you will realize.

**Packages via UPS, Fed-Ex and Airborne:** Sometimes parents must send a package by UPS, FedEx, or another private carrier. These packages are delivered to the Package Stop in Arnold Hall (located adjacent to the food court area). Upon receipt, the Package Stop will email the cadet to let him/her know a package has arrived. There is a \$2.00 per package fee for this service. **The address to use for these carriers is: Cadet Name; 2302 Cadet Drive, Suite 12, Cadet's Post Office Box #; USAFA CO 80840-Post Office Box #.**