

Appendix A

Opportunity Training

(also known as hip-pocket training)

Opportunity training is conducted by squad, section, crew, detachment, or team leaders when unexpected training time becomes available. Opportunities occur when units are waiting for transportation, when scheduled training is postponed or completed early, or when there is a break in action during an FTX.

Opportunity training is also known as hip-pocket training. The term “hip pocket” derived from the trainer’s ability to carry opportunity training materials in his/her hip pocket. During unscheduled lulls in training, the leader can reach back into his/her hip pocket and pull out training outlines that allow him/her to fill a vacant time. For example, during an unscheduled break in an exercise—

- An artillery gun crew leader may conduct hip-pocket training on aircraft identification.
- A mechanized company vehicle track recovery crew chief could review recovery techniques for different vehicles.

Spare training time can also be used for sustainment or ancillary training. Hip-pocket training improves the trainer’s confidence in his/her ability to train and lets him/her make the best use of the available training time.

SELECTING TOPICS

Tasks performed during this type of training usually relate to, or are prerequisites for, other upcoming training, such as—

- NBC.

- First aid.
- Suicide prevention.
- Range estimation.
- Sexual harassment.
- Call for fire procedures.
- Camouflage techniques.
- Map reading.
- Information collection and reporting.

HIP-POCKET TRAINING STEPS

Leaders who execute hip-pocket training need to identify specific training objectives.

Step 1

Review training schedules, training directives, and on-the-job performance in order to identify hip-pocket training tasks. Discuss these tasks during training meetings. Consider the following:

- Look for prerequisite topics needed for other upcoming training.
- Look for topics identified as requirements in ancillary training directives.
- Attempt to break larger hip-pocket training topics down into smaller increments (approximately 15 to 30 minutes each).

- Identify topics that need minimal resources and equipment to train and that can be trained almost anywhere.

Step 2

Prepare a training outline. Plan for a 15- to 30-minute session. If needed, use more than one session.

Step 3

Announce the training. The specific date, time, and place cannot be given to Marines. However, they can be alerted that training is imminent. This allows them to prepare themselves mentally. Hip-pocket training is not limited to work station or garrison areas but is equally effective in a field environment.

Step 4

Conduct the training.

POINTERS

Leaders must conduct hip-pocket training effectively. Time limitations do not allow detailed, step-by-step explanations. However, commanders must plan and prepare for hip-pocket training as they would any other training. Some unit commanders specify topics for hip-pocket training during training meetings or as notes on unit training schedules. Some even make assignments to personnel so they may prepare for their lesson. Small-unit leaders must be ready to present hip-pocket training on any of these designated topics as time becomes available.