PREAMBLE
TO THE AMERICAN LEGION CONSTITUTION

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES
TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

To uphold and defend the Constitution
of the United States of America

To maintain law and order

To foster and perpetuate a
one hundred percent Americanism

To preserve the memories and incidents
of our associations in the Great Wars

To inculcate a sense of individual obligation
to the community, state and nation

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses

To make right the master of might

To promote peace and goodwill on earth

To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of
justice, freedom and democracy

To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship
by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.
The Four Pillars of Service of The American Legion

Still Serving: It's Who We Are

In 1919, The American Legion was founded on four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth. Each of these pillars encompasses a variety of programs that benefit our nation's veterans, its service members, their families, the youth of America and ordinary citizens. These programs make a difference in hundreds of thousands of lives each year.

Our organization's positions and programs are guided by resolutions passed by American Legion National Convention delegates, and committee and commission members who represent 2.6 million wartime veterans and their families. These programs, and the men and women who take the time to perform them, are what allow The American Legion to make a difference locally, and on the state and national levels.

It's who we are and what we do.

I. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
   - Flag Protection
   - Illegal Immigration
   - Voter Registration and Participation
   - Boy Scouts
   - The Pledge of Allegiance

II. National Security
   - Strong National Defense
   - Military Quality of Life
   - Homeland Security
   - Foreign Relations
   - Full Accounting of POW/MIAs
   - Operation Comfort Warriors

III. Americanism
   - Flag Protection
   - Illegal Immigration
   - Voter Registration and Participation
   - Boy Scouts
   - The Pledge of Allegiance
   - Establishment-Clause Lawsuits

IV. Children & Youth
   - Catastrophic Illness
   - Intellectual Disabilities
   - Immunization
   - Family Integrity
   - Media Violence
   - Drug Abuse
   - Child Sexual Exploitation
THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA

MISSION STATEMENT

The American Legion Department of Indiana enriches Hoosier lives through veteran advocacy, community service, and youth character development.

VISION STATEMENT

The American Legion Department of Indiana will be the most respected and influential veterans organization in the state – advocating for its fellow service men and women and improving its communities.
POSITIONING STATEMENT

The American Legion Department of Indiana is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization, continuing a legacy of devoted service for and by Hoosier veterans, through veteran advocacy and investments in the local community.

BRAND PROMISE

Supporting veterans through advocacy; enriching communities through service.

"VETERANS SERVING VETERANS"
Manual of Ceremonies

Adopted by The American Legion in 1921

Much of the information provided in the Manual of Ceremonies has its roots in long-time tradition and usage. The practices adopted by The American Legion may not be the same as those used by other groups or organizations, but it does not mean the Legion is right and others are wrong.

1. The ceremonial services of The American Legion must be conducted with the solemnity befitting the dignity of this organization.

2. No one shall be admitted during opening, initiation or closing ceremonies of a meeting.

3. Comrades shall be careful never to pass between the flags and the station of the commander.

4. A member entering the hall after the meeting has begun shall advance to the center of the room, salute the colors and be seated.

5. Any member desiring to be excused from the hall while the meeting is in progress — except during a prayer, the obligation or period of silence — shall advance to the center of the room, salute the colors and leave.

6. All officers are instructed to memorize their parts between the dates of their election and installation. It shall be the duty of each officer to memorize that portion of the ritual assigned to that particular office, and the printed ritual should not be read during any ceremony.

7. The national colors and post flag, when in position, should be in position at either side and just in advance of the commander’s station. The national colors are on the right of the commander and the post colors on the left when facing the audience, even though the commander is on a platform and the flags are posted on the ground level.

8. Each officer shall be equipped with the official overseas cap and with the proper official badge of the respective office. Such badges may be purchased in sets by the post or singly by the individual officer through Emblem Sales.

9. Legionnaires standing in silent tribute in memory of departed comrades during meetings or ceremonies will face the U.S. flag. According to Resolution No. 33, passed by the National Executive Committee in May 1971, The American Legion “shall, at functions within Legion buildings and at all levels, cease all activities whatsoever” for a period of 60 seconds as a tribute to comrades who have passed on and in honor of those now serving. The minute of silence shall be preceded by an appropriate announcement and message, if desired.

10. In addressing an officer of The American Legion, preface the title with the word “Comrade.”

11. This Manual of Ceremonies is designed with the idea of flexibility and may be adapted to conform to requirements covering all divisions of The American Legion. Therefore, whenever necessary, the words “post,” “county,” “district,” “division,” “department” or “national” may be inserted to fit a specific occasion.
Wearing the American Legion cap, uniform and regalia

1. The Legion cap, uniform or regalia should be worn by its members only when in attendance at official Legion meetings or ceremonies, as official guests at patriotic or other civil functions, or by individuals when officially representing The American Legion on public occasions. For all ceremonies, the uniforms adopted by a department are recommended. However, an official American Legion cap, dark blue or black civilian coat, dark trousers, white shirt, black four-in-hand tie, black shoes and socks make an attractive uniform. A Legionnaire is considered to be in uniform if wearing an official American Legion cap. Therefore, it is not proper to wear a Legion cap while eating a meal at an official American Legion or civic luncheon or dinner.

2. The cap should be worn in a place of worship only by the guard of honor, color guard and commander of the same while in marching order or standing guard. When one is seated, the cap should be removed.

3. Posts marching in formation into a place of worship should uncover at the door, hold the cap with the right hand over the heart until arriving in the pews and commanded to take seats, and remain uncovered during the entire service. At the close of the service, upon command, the post shall rise, hold the cap with right hand over the hearts, march out of the place of worship, and recover after marching through the door. Note: The cap should be held over the heart as one approaches the casket, and is not at any time worn in a place of worship except by the guard of honor, color guard or commander of same while in marching order or standing guard.

4. Legionnaires not in formation will uncover upon entering the place of worship, remain uncovered during the entire service and re-cover after leaving the place of worship.

5. At the graveside, the cap should be held in the right hand over the heart during the entire service. In cold and inclement weather, the cap should not be doffed.

6. In meetings, the cap should be worn except during the Pledge of Allegiance, prayer and while standing in silent reverence in memory of departed comrades, when it should be held with the right hand over the heart.

7. A Legionnaire wearing a cap should behave in proper accordance as to salutes, etc., the same as if wearing a military uniform. If not wearing a cap, observe ordinary rules of etiquette for civilian dress.

8. Female Legionnaires should wear their caps in the manner prescribed for women in the armed forces. This is suitable for most situations, but taste and common sense should prevail. By American Legion tradition, a female Legionnaire may leave her cap on during the Pledge of Allegiance, the national anthem, prayer and meals.

9. Legionnaires wishing to attach decorations and/or other official insignia to their caps are advised of a National Executive Committee resolution on the subject, excerpted below.

Official American Legion caps

The following regulations standardize the use of lettering, insignia, etc., on the official American Legion cap, as based on Resolution No. 58, adopted by the National Executive Committee, April 30-May 1, 1964.

Post caps (members and officers) – All blue, piped in gold and lettered in gold with optional basic lettering (Style 1 or Style 2), and additional lettering and restrictions as indicated below:

(a) Style 1 – Post numerals at right front between piping and front crease. Department name in full on left side beneath emblem. Lettering on emblem side to be in straight line. Example: “20” (at right front) – “Illinois” (on left side beneath emblem).

(b) Style 2 – Post numerals at right front between piping and front crease. Town name in full and department abbreviated on left side beneath emblem. Lettering on emblem side to be in straight line. Example: “20” (at right front) – “Minneapolis, Minn.” (on left side beneath emblem).

(c) Style 2 – Shall not be used when the post town is not physically located within the recognized geographic and/or postal boundaries of the department of which the post is a member. Example: Stuttgart, Germany, a part of the Department of France. Such a post may place its location and country on the right side of the cap, if desired. Example: “B” (at right front) – “France” (on left side beneath emblem) – if desired, “Munich, Germany” (on right side).
(d) Where additional lettering is desired, it must be on the right side of the cap. Lettering restricted to name of post, such as “J.S. Jones,” or officer title, such as “Commander” or “Past Adjutant.” Where present or past officer cap insignia or badges are used in place of embroidered titles, these must be on right side of cap.

(e) Consecutive membership insignia, membership stars and/or decorations (authorized American Legion or military services) must be attached to the right side of cap. Fraternal or civil organization insignia cannot be used on American Legion caps.

(f) Names or nicknames of individual members cannot be used on caps.

(g) An individual member placing an order directly with Emblem Sales must provide the member ID number.

Restrictions

(a) The left side (emblem side) of any American Legion cap cannot contain other than the official American Legion emblem, and lettering as set forth previously in this resolution for post, county, district, department or national caps.

(b) No member of any organization, such as drum and bugle corps, bands and so forth, sponsored by any post or intermediate organizations between the department and post levels, or by any department, shall wear the overseas caps having the color, or combination of colors, authorized for the sole use of county, district, department or national officers, when the members of uniformed groups are not appearing in the full uniform of their group.

Official badges

Campaign ribbons, medals and official American Legion badges shall be worn three inches below the point of the shoulder and above the left breast pocket, centered. However, medals and ribbons are not to be worn together. Badges of other fraternal organizations are not to be worn on uniforms except when attending functions of such organizations. No other badges or insignia are to be worn.

Official badges consist of the Legion emblem suspended by an American Legion ribbon from a bar naming the office held: commander, past commander, vice commander, chaplain, adjutant, finance officer, sergeant-at-arms, judge advocate, service officer, treasurer, athletic officer, historian and executive committee. The metal ornaments for the ribbons should be pinback so they can be passed from officer to officer at installation.

How to organize a ritual team

STEP 1 The post commander appoints a captain to organize a team. It will be the captain’s duty to recruit, train and assume complete responsibility for organizing and training the team. Discretion should be used in selecting team members. They should make the Manual of Ceremonies their American Legion bible. Much of the team’s success depends upon selection of a competent captain and sergeant-at-arms. The team will look to these officers for leadership. The team captain and members should be of commanding appearance and personality, and able to impress upon candidates and audience the importance and solemnity of the ceremony.

STEP 2 Permanent parts should be assigned and members instructed to memorize these parts. Six members will be required for the initiation team. In calling a tryout or audition meeting, the best qualified should be selected. Each candidate should read part of the manual to denote clarity of voice, enunciation, expression and meaning. Additional candidates should be assigned roles as substitutes or stand-ins for regular members.

STEP 3 Train the team through practice. Teams should practice an entire ceremony at each meeting, including marching into the hall, military movements on the floor, presentation and introduction of the team, the posting of members to their respective stations, and proper handling of initiation candidates for initiation.

STEP 4 The team’s first appearance should be on home grounds. Actual initiation of new members will usually give the new team confidence to present their work at other local posts.
Color guard procedure

Advancing colors

A color guard numbering at least four forms at the rear of the meeting room in a rank or file, whichever best suit the occasion, facing the commander’s station.

In forming a rank, the national colors are to the right of the post colors and the two guards are on the respective flanks. In forming a file, the national colors are second in file, preceded by the rifle guard and followed respectively by the post colors and rifle guard.

To properly form the guard, the following sequence of commands may be used: “Fall in – dress right dress – ready front” – “right (or left) shoulder arms” – color bearers should assume the position of carry or any other suitable position at this command – “forward march.” These commands put the guard in a forward motion.

Upon arriving at a position from two to 12 feet in front of the commander’s station, the following commands should be issued: “Guard halt – post colors.” The bearer of the nation’s colors steps in the direction of the flag receptacle to the right of the commander’s station, halting and facing front upon arriving in front of same. The bearer of the post’s colors steps in the direction of the flag receptacle to the left of the commander’s station. The rifle guards assume the position of “port arms,” which is a position of readiness. The next command should be “place colors.” Colors are placed by stepping forward with one foot and placing the colors in their receptacles, making sure the top ornament on each respective flag is facing the assemblage. The color bearers then return to the position of attention. The next command should be “present arms.” Rifle guards should render the prescribed salute with their pieces, and color bearers should render a right-hand salute. (The post’s color bearer should either face the national colors or turn his or her head toward the U.S. flag while saluting.)

The next command sequence should be “right shoulder arms” (color bearers recovering from hand salute on same) and “assemble march” (color bearers may face the center and step off respectively in the direction from which they came and assume their positions in the formation facing the rear of the meeting room). Rifle guards may execute an about-face on command and be prepared to move out on the next command with guard intact.

The next command should be “forward march,” and upon arriving at the starting point, the guard should be halted with the command of “guard halt.” Then the guard may be commanded to “fall out.”

Retrieving colors

Retrieving the colors may be executed in nearly the same manner except substituting the command “retrieve colors” for “post colors,” and giving the command “present arms” upon the color bearers’ arrival in front of their respective colors (color bearers will salute at that time).

The next commands are “right shoulder arms” (color bearers assume the position of attention) and “take colors” (color bearers put one foot forward to take the colors and assume the position of attention, after securing the same). The next command should be “assemble, march” (color bearers execute the same march as in returning from posting). Rifle guards will execute an about-face after the colors have arrived at their respective positions. The guard may be retired in the same manner as in posting, with the exception of the last command, “Dismissed.” The above commands may be used in either rank or file formation.

Consider adding more color and ceremony to the posting and retiring of the colors by including a bugler. In posting, “To the Colors” may be sounded immediately after the color guard commander orders “present arms.” In retrieving, “Retreat” may be sounded immediately after the command “present arms.”
Plan of post meeting room

This arrangement of a post meeting room is practical for the conduct of regular post meetings, permitting the post a great deal of flexibility in arrangement to its particular needs and/or physical limitations.
Plan of post meeting room for special ceremonies

For initiation of new members or installation of post officers, it is suggested that the post meeting room be arranged as shown above. The American Legion emblem should be in colors and about 20 inches in diameter. If made of glass, it should be illuminated from within, or by a light set above it if made of wood, cardboard or metal. The emblem should be illuminated at all times during all meetings. Emblems may be purchased through Emblem Sales.
REGULAR MEETING Opening ceremony

All officers should be in uniform, each wearing an official Legion cap and the official badge of office. The commander shall announce the meeting is about to open. Officers shall take their stations. The commander shall seat those present with one rap of the gavel, and the sergeant-at-arms shall close the doors of the meeting hall. The commander shall then give three raps of the gavel, and all who are present shall stand at attention.

Post commander: “The color bearers will advance the colors.” As the color bearers start to advance, the commander gives the command to salute.

Post commander: “Hand salute.” If a bugler is available, sound “To the Colors.” At its conclusion, the commander gives the command, “Two.” If no bugler is present, the command “Two” is given immediately after the colors have been posted.

Post commander: “The chaplain will offer prayer.” Post commander: “All members/guests in attendance shall remain standing with their cap removed and placed over the heart from the opening prayer, through the POW/MIA ceremony, and concluding with the Pledge of Allegiance.” In place of the following prayer, the chaplain may deliver one of the same length and general tenor.

Chaplain: “Almighty God, Father of all mankind and Judge over nations, we pray Thee to guide our work in this meeting and in all our days. Send Thy peace to our nation and to all nations. Hasten the fulfillment of Thy promise of peace that shall have no end. “We pray for those who serve the people and guard the public welfare, that by Thy blessing they may be enabled to discharge their duties honestly and well. We pray for our comrades that by Thy help they may observe the strictest justice, keep alight the fires of freedom, strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy, and preserve untarnished our loyalty to our country and to Thee. Finally, O God of mercy, we ask Thy blessing and comfort for those comrades who are suffering mental and physical disability. Cheer them and bring them the blessings of health and happiness. Amen.

” POW/MIA Empty Chair

Resolution 288, adopted at the Legion’s 67th National Convention, calls for designating “A POW/MIA empty chair at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America, as a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves to this vital endeavor!”
Closing ceremony

Post commander: “Is there any further business to come before the meeting? If not, the chaplain will lead us in memorial service.”

The commander gives three raps of the gavel, and the membership rises, uncovers and stands in silence.

Chaplain: “Our Heavenly Father, we deem this a fitting time to pay our respects to our departed comrades. As we stand with bowed heads in reverence to them, let us remember the good deeds they accomplished. Let us revere them as good soldiers who fought the good fight in a just cause. Let us silently pray for peace, the peace that passes all understanding. And let us in mind and soul consecrate our hearts and lives to the real America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, the America worth fighting for. As we stand in silence to our departed comrades, may we sincerely say, ‘May their souls rest in peace.’ Let us also remember the POWs and the MIAs still unaccounted for from the wars and conflicts. Amen.”

Post commander: “Cover.”

“Till we meet again let us remember our obligation to our country can be fulfilled only by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of The American Legion and its members. Let us be ever watchful of the honor of our country, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom and Democracy. The color bearers will retire the flag of our country.”

As the color bearers retrieve the colors, the commander shall give the command to salute.

Post commander: “Hand salute.”

As the color bearers reach the rear of the meeting hall, the commander says, “Two.”

Post commander: “I now declare this meeting of ____________ Post No. ____________ of The American Legion, Department of ____________ adjourned.”

The commander gives one rap of the gavel.
Commander

That you have ability is recognized by your election to the office of post commander. Now you must draw on your ability and past experience while developing new skills so that you will succeed in helping the post prosper. The charge you have accepted, commander, is broad and difficult. How you respond will determine to a large degree the standing of The American Legion among your associates and within the community. Your own ability, the support of district and department officers, the information in this guide, and the help you will get from the post officers who form your team will together make the performance of your job possible. As you look to the overall operation of the post, you’ll realize that you have stepped to another level. You may feel the step is too high, but as you proceed, following the suggestions and recommendations in this guide, you may find that your year as commander is the most rewarding of your life.

Planning post operations for the coming year
It’s a rare group of new post officers who take office without enthusiasm and a desire for a successful year. In the charge you accepted at your installation, you were entrusted with the supervision of the duties of all other post officers. This does not mean that you will discourage them from using initiative and developing new ideas. What it does mean is that you will be judged by their effectiveness. There are many ways to determine whether a post commander and their officers are enjoying a successful year. Judgments of the worth of a post are made by the members, the community, and by The American Legion itself. Like it or not, a gain or loss in membership is the measure most often used. Actually, the membership record is a reliable barometer of what your post is doing. An active post where the members enjoy themselves often creates a “word of mouth” membership campaign. The members are proud to belong. It’s natural for them to talk “Legion” to their friends, neighbors, relatives, coworkers and business associates. Since they enjoy belonging to the Legion, they want their friends to get in on a good thing, too. However, whether it shows or not, a great deal of planning has probably gone into every successful membership campaign. But before salespeople can sell a product, they have to have a good product – something people want and will value. Programs, social activities, the opportunity to make
is strictly for the benefit of the post and its members. When this happens, make sure that the public receives full value.

**Committee assignments**

Elected officers will be responsible for some of the activities and projects. Your appointed chairs will be in charge of others. Decide at the very beginning what is going to happen, when it is going to happen, and who is going to make it happen. Most of the assignments will be to carry on already established programs or activities. Handbooks, manuals, and brochures exist for all of the Legion’s premier programs: Boys State, American Legion Baseball, scholarships, and more (see pages 156-159). You and your adjutant have probably received copies from department headquarters already. These publications have information and ideas that your committee chairs need. Take them to the first planning meeting and turn them over to the proper people.

**Programs new and old**

No post can stand still. New programs are needed to maintain interest and, especially, to keep up with the times. Every new activity or program offers the opportunity to interest new people in joining the post. Inactive members can be turned into active members the same way. Just about every post has service programs and social activities that were started long ago and have become tradition. But organizations, like individuals, fall into ruts. Any program run exactly the same way year after year is going to grow stale. So, at your first planning meeting, take a look at the post’s programs and activities. Decide which need some changes or a new look. A program won’t happen, though, without someone to make it happen. Every program or activity needs to have a person in charge—usually a post officer or committee chair. If the selection is good, the program will succeed. Ask and, in fact, demand that each chairperson and officer build a timetable of events that can be fitted into an overall post calendar for your year.

**First post meeting**

At the first post meeting, expect others to compare you to previous commanders. This is the time to set the tone for the entire year. If changes are
new friends, even the post home itself — these are what a Legion salesperson has to sell.

**Post executive committee**

Early on, you will discover that running even a small post is more than a one-person job. This is why the post constitution provides for a full group of post officers, as well as an executive committee. They are elected to do specific jobs. It's up to you to get them to work together for the good of the post. Start by calling an early meeting of your officers and executive committee. This can happen even before you are installed. Invite the outgoing post commander and adjutant to attend. Before the meeting, you and your adjutant should know what post records are on hand, where they are kept, and how to use them.

**Budget and fundraising**

Anyone who asks people to attend a meeting should do them the courtesy of preparing an agenda — and doing it in advance. One of the first things on the agenda for this first gathering of new post officers should be money — your post’s budget. The officers need to know what income is expected for the year and how it should be spent. You’ll have a good chance of staying out of money troubles if you follow these three general principles: First, make your dues high enough to meet fixed, administrative costs: postage, stationery, department dues, and in some cases, rent. These are costs that every post must meet to stay in business. Second, if the community is to benefit from an American Legion project, don’t hesitate to solicit the community for funds — for example, an American Legion Baseball team, a community playground or a swimming pool. The post will actually add to its reputation with such projects, but a full public accounting needs to be made of all funds received and of how they are spent. Third, don’t ask the public to give in the name of charity for any project that will be of benefit primarily to Legionnaires. A businessman may donate to send a young man to Boys State, but he probably wouldn’t care to give money to buy a new cooler for your bar. Sometimes it is necessary to raise funds from outside for something that
going to be made, start now. The basic framework for any post meeting is found in the Manual of Ceremonies. By following the prescribed ritual and order of business, even a person who has never before presided over a meeting can do an adequate job. As a new commander, you might feel self-conscious about running a formal meeting, particularly in a post that has gotten away from the Manual of Ceremonies. Don’t. The American Legion is a respected organization, and its meetings should be suitably formal and impressive. No time is saved by omitting parts of the ritual. Meetings, of course, can and should vary. But by following the prescribed ritual and order of business, you should be able to complete your agenda in no more than one hour.

**Agenda**

While the Manual of Ceremonies provides the framework or the skeleton for a meeting, the commander’s agenda is what puts meat on the bones. Your agenda for the first and each succeeding meeting should list the exact committees scheduled to report. But before putting a chairperson’s name on the agenda, ask that person if he or she is ready to report. This is an easy way to see if the chairperson is doing the job. If not, a little encouragement, a few suggestions or perhaps some prodding might be in order.
Adjutant

The adjutant has the same position in the post as the secretary of any other organized body, and a bit more. Like the first sergeant of a company, post activities revolve around the adjutant. Most posts find it wise to retain a good adjutant in office over a period of years. The adjutant may well provide continuity in the post. While the commander’s duties are largely inspirational and executive, an adjutant’s duties are administrative. The commander navigates the ship, but the adjutant is the engineer who runs the ship’s machinery. The adjutant is the personnel officer and personal point of contact for individual members of the post. He or she maintains membership records and minutes of meetings, checks up and assists the work of the other officers and committees, and publishes official orders, announcements and instructions. Because all post records should be in the adjutant’s custody, for easy access, it is to his or her interest to develop a comprehensive filing system. The adjutant is primarily concerned with ways and means and, by virtue of a key position, can add effectiveness to all post activities. The office involves a great deal of work, and it is strongly recommended that some degree of compensation be paid the adjutant, particularly in large posts.

Suggestions for the new adjutant

The only indispensable qualifications for the job of adjutant are honesty and willingness. The adjutant should purchase a set of post account books from Emblem Sales. They require no special knowledge of bookkeeping. He or she should go through all the post records at the first opportunity. The constitution, minutes of meetings, and reports of officers and committees will give insight into the post’s policies and traditions. Communications from department headquarters will bring the adjutant up to date on instructions. The Post Adjutant’s Manual has full instructions on the handling and processing of the automated membership card system and other duties. Every adjutant should have a copy.

**A separate Adjutants manual describing the duties in detail is available. Every Post is given one at the start of the year!**
Welcome to myLegion!

myLegion.org is a FREE website designed to connect members of The American Legion to their Post and Department leadership.

myLegion includes a site at each level of the organization:

Members - allows members to view information on file at National Headquarters, view messages and events published through the department and post.myLegion sites, and network with other myLegion members using networking tools.

Departments - provides membership information, reports and electronic membership tools such as data change forms for all posts and squadrons within their department.

Posts/Districts/Counties - provides Legion and SAL information for all members in their post. Allows post to submit member data change forms and Consolidated Post Reports electronically. Upload post image, newsletter, message, and calendar. Create membership listings, view members renewing online, search for members who have expired or are members of the department headquarters post, and chat with other officers discussing veterans issues and sharing membership ideas.

Click here to take a quick tour of myLegion features at each level.

Create a FREE myLegion site:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Click Here</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available for Legion members only.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>Click Here</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available for department staff only.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Posts/Districts/Counties</th>
<th>Click Here</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available for American Legion Posts, Districts and Counties only.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to creating a Post/District/County account, an Authorization Form must be completed and submitted to National Headquarters for processing.

myLegion Post Officers Portal

Post requests enter your Department and Post below and select Continue to proceed with the Post authorization form. District/County requests must print and complete the District authorization form and mail or fax it to National Headquarters for processing.

Select a Department: *** select Department ***

4-Digit Post Number: ex: 0001, 0253, AU01

District/County Authorization Form

Continue
First vice commander

In the majority of posts, a first and second vice commander are elected, with membership the primary concern of the first vice commander. Frequently, the success or failure of the membership record during his or her year determines the chances of advancing to the office of commander the next year. In a few posts, one or two membership go-getters will secure the majority of dues, but the possibility of death, illness or a change of residence makes for a weak foundation on which a vice commander and the post are staking the post’s future. While each post is different, any membership campaign should cover certain fundamentals. Look at the methods used in the past. Were they successful? Do they need updated? Have new procedures been developed to improve the plans now being used? In a successful post, a new commander is going to contact the post officers and committee chairs immediately after election to schedule a meeting where they can lay out a general plan of operation for the entire year. This is when the membership plan should also be decided.

The four W’s of planning

* **WHERE** – Where do you want to go? What’s the objective? (Or, for a membership campaign, how many members do you want?)

* **WHAT** – What steps have to be taken to reach the objective?

* **WHO** – Who’s going to do what has to be done in each step necessary to reach the goal?

* **WHEN** – When is the work going to be done? Only you and the members of your post know where you want to go, or how many members you want. But the steps to get there are much the same in every post. If you can answer the following questions for your post and for your membership campaign, you have your job analyzed and know what steps to take to reach your goal: * Mailed dues notices will bring in about 85 percent of your current members’ renewals. Who is going to contact those who do not respond? * How are dropouts to be reinstated? * How are you going to contact prospective members? Who’s going
to contact them? How will new recruits be brought into the post? ♦ What publicity will be needed? ♦ Who can be counted on to work at membership? ♦ What awards or special recognition will be given? ♦ What special events can be tied in with membership, such as Veterans Day, team competition, contests with other posts, the Legion birthday, etc.?

Other duties

Membership may be the primary assignment of a first vice commander, but during a normal Legion year, the first vice commander will have many other duties. He or she should become familiar with the ceremonial protocol for regular meetings. He or she will most likely have to conduct one or more meetings during the year. Knowing how to prepare a meaningful and fruitful agenda is very important, as well as good experience. The vice commander must be ready to fill in for the commander at a moment’s notice.

Second vice commander

The second vice commander is responsible for building an “I like my post because ...” atmosphere in which Legionnaires have fun while doing the work of the Legion. The commander depends on the second vice commander to help run the programs that spice up meetings and attract attendance. The social calendar should be filled months in advance with activities that will bring out the active members, as well as those who are just card-carrying Legionnaires. One of the second vice commander’s first duties should be to contact other veterans and civic groups to see that each patriotic holiday and observance receives the attention it deserves. He or she will be concerned with the pageantry so closely associated with the Legion. The second vice commander may not be in charge of the color guard or firing squad, but must promote it. He or she might not be part of the initiation team, but should make sure one is functioning. In the pursuit of “justice,” the second vice commander is concerned with the welfare of all fellow veterans, and thus is interested in the work of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee. Likewise, the second vice will know how the Economic Committee is functioning.
**Finance officer/treasurer**

The finance officer/treasurer must be a person of proven integrity and experience in handling financial affairs. The post depends on finance, just as any other organization, and will do well to accept expert advice in formulating and administering its financial policy. The finance officer/treasurer usually serves as the chair of the finance committee and is in charge of all receiving and disbursing of post funds. The post adjutant, in all matters relating to finance, should carry on the work in close correlation with the finance officer. Both officers must be covered by adequate bond. Department headquarters should be consulted for blanket bond arrangement. Post accounting forms are designed to meet the requirements of Legion posts in maintaining a correct and permanent membership and finance record. Because of their simplicity, they require no special knowledge of bookkeeping or accounting. Every post adjutant and finance officer/treasurer should insist upon being provided with a set of forms to save time and money for the post. Consult the Emblem Sales catalog for prices and detailed descriptions, or go online to emblem.legion.org. Be prompt in remitting national and department dues, along with the department record card, to department headquarters. Note all payments and other transactions on the post membership register.

**Service officer**

A good service officer should be retained. The value of a post service officer increases with length of service. As the service officer’s reputation grows, so will the prestige of the organization in your community. The job calls for a competent and dedicated person, preferably one who lives and works nearby and is readily available to those needing assistance. He or she is responsible for bringing to the attention of all veterans and their dependents the rights and benefits granted them by law – law The American Legion helped craft. The service officer must know how to access and utilize the expert services available through Legion channels and other community agencies. The job requires timely submission of information to full-time professionals so that every veteran and his or her dependents are adequately represented. The service officer’s report should be
post historian on graves registration work and inspire the post to see that graves are decorated on Memorial Day. Besides officiating at post members’ funerals when requested, the chaplain can also be of service to their bereaved families. The chaplain may also chair the post’s Veterans Administration Voluntary Services (VAVS) Committee, which coordinates volunteer work at nearby VA facilities. The American Legion’s “Service to God and Country” handbook, available through department headquarters, offers guidance for the post chaplain and religious emphasis committee.

**Sergeant-at-arms**

The sergeant-at-arms knows how to arrange the meeting hall and assists the post commander and adjutant in preliminary arrangements for meetings, including leading the color detail during presentation and retirement ceremonies. He or she is the expert on flag etiquette and should know proper flag display and procedures in operating a meeting. The sergeant-at-arms should also play a leading role in the post color guard, burial detail and other pageantry. The sergeant-at-arms is the logical person to chair a welcome committee, which can have a tremendous influence on the post’s image, membership and relationship with members. Every Legionnaire wants to feel part of the group, particularly the new Legionnaire attending his or her first few meetings. The sergeant-at-arms must make certain new members are welcomed, introduced and made to feel they are important to the post. The welcome committee also encourages present members to attend meetings and advises the commander on who should be acknowledged.

**Historian**

The work of post historian is cumulative. It is wise to leave it in the hands of one person as long as it’s being handled well. The office is a suitable position for a past post commander. There should be close cooperation between the post adjutant and the historian. The former works with the records on matters of current interest, the latter on matters of historical interest. The post historian should also keep in touch with the department historian and be prompt in answering inquiries. An annual report should be made to the department historian just
standard part of every meeting. Beyond the post, The American Legion maintains a full staff of appeals representatives in Washington. A small mobile staff of field representatives provides a constant flow of information concerning conditions in VA hospitals, domiciles and regional offices. Other Legion representatives assist veterans who petition Department of Defense boards for review of less than fully honorable discharges or dismissal from the military. They also help veterans obtain deserved decorations and medals. Department service officers can provide necessary claims forms. Additional information comes through department publications, National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation bulletins, memorandums and VA pamphlets. Many departments conduct training schools for post service officers to add to their knowledge and contacts, and all have trained service officers in VA regional offices and hospitals. With most of today’s veterans population composed of those who served during the Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the work of the post service officer continues to be vital. Even more than older veterans, these men and women are likely to not be fully versed in veterans benefits and programs. Meanwhile, older veterans need advice on how to integrate possible benefits into their retirement plans. Dependents should be visited as soon as feasible after a veteran’s death. Every Congress considers legislative matters of importance to veterans and to The American Legion. Working in cooperation with the post legislative committee, the post service officer can aid in the post’s support of the national organization’s efforts.

**Chaplain**

The chaplain need not necessarily be a clergyman, but must be a person capable of moral and intellectual leadership and one who gives dignity and respect to the office. The chaplain should be in close touch with the commander and other post officers of the post, and should attend all meetings of the post executive committee. The leadership in many post activities belongs by right to the chaplain, and when this office is filled by the right person, the post’s usefulness to the community only increases. The Manual of Ceremonies (see Section 2) gives an important place to the chaplain in the conduct of meetings, the observance of patriotic occasions, funeral services and dedication ceremonies. At all these events, the chaplain is the moral leader. The chaplain should cooperate with the
before the department convention. Copies of whatever is printed concerning the post should be deposited in local and state libraries, as well as in the post and department archives. This will prevent complete loss of valuable records through fire or other calamity, as well as provide material for those looking for information about the Legion. An outline for a one-year post narrative history and yearbook is provided in the appendix (see pages 145-154). The post historian should attend department conventions and make a point of knowing what historians of neighboring posts are doing. The department historian can advise post historians on department and national post history contests, historians associations, and materials that will assist in doing a better job.

**Judge advocate**

The primary duty of the judge advocate is to supply professional advice in the conduct of post business or to procure proper counsel. He is the guardian of the constitutional form of post government. Your judge advocate can also supply valuable assistance to other post committees and officers – to the service officer for legal advice, for example, and to the Americanism committee on matters relating to education and naturalization laws. Any post committee can benefit from the judge advocate’s contacts with local government officials. The judge advocate and legal committee are charged by the suggested post constitution with the duty of auditing post financial accounts. This should be done annually just before the election of officers or more frequently at their discretion.
INITIATION OF NEW MEMBERS
Short form

Every new member should receive some form of initiation. Where it is not practical to conduct full initiation ceremonies, the following short form has been authorized so all new members may take the obligation and receive proper introduction to the Legion.

The post commander or an appointed member, assisted by the post chaplain, who shall be seated at the right of the commander, shall conduct this ceremony.

Small U.S. flags, American Legion emblems, Legion publications and other appropriate items used in the regular initiation ceremony shall be presented by the officiating officers. Certificates of initiation are available from department headquarters. The Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Committee strongly recommends presenting such evidence of initiation.

Post commander: “We will now proceed with the initiation. The sergeant-at-arms will escort the following new members into the meeting hall and place them properly before the flag.”

Give the names of all those who are waiting. The sergeant-at-arms salutes the flag and, turning, receives the new members whose names shall be read.

Post commander: “You were privileged to serve your country during wartime. Because of this service, you are today privileged to join the great service organization, The American Legion.

“Unlike the armed forces in which you served, there is no distinction of rank among us. We are composed of members of every race, religion, occupation and political conviction. We maintain also strict neutrality on all questions concerning religion, politics and industrial strife.

“The American Legion cherishes four great principles: justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty. We are pledged to serve the disabled, the distressed, the widowed and the orphaned. We are devoted to the cause of service to the community, state and the nation.

“Are you now ready and willing to obligate yourself as expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion?”

Candidates: “I am.”

Post commander: “The members will stand at attention while the new members are being obligated.”

The commander gives three raps of the gavel, steps to the right and immediately next to the U.S. flag, raises his or her right hand, and addresses the new members.
Post commander: “Raise your right hand and repeat after me: “I, (here give your name), do solemnly pledge to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness; to all of which I pledge myself for God and country. I am not a member and do not subscribe to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government. Hands down.”

At the conclusion of the obligation, the commander resumes the designated station and seats members with one rap of the gavel. The chaplain arises and stands at a convenient location close to the emblem and calls the attention of the new members to it.

Chaplain: “There shines the emblem of The American Legion. It is your badge of distinction, honor and service. It stands for God and country, and the highest rights of men and women. Of its several parts, each part has a meaning. The rays of the sun that form the background are emblematic of the principles of The American Legion – for loyalty, justice, freedom and democracy will dispel the darkness of violence, strife and evil.

“The two gold rings around the field of blue bearing our name typify two of our four main objectives: rehabilitation of our sick and disabled comrades, and care for the children and youth of America. Within the rings is placed a wreath for remembrance of those who died that liberty might live. Upon the wreath is set a star reflecting the glory of victory and promising to the world perpetuation of those cardinal principles of our organization. Set upon the star are two bronze rings which typify the other two of our main objectives: a better and more loyal Americanism, and service to the community, state and nation.

“The inscription demands the wearer shall ever guard the sanctity of home and country and free institutions.”

The commander steps from the designated station and advances to the newly obligated members.

Post commander: “I welcome you to The American Legion. It is my privilege to present to you the American flag which is the emblem of freedom, a flag etiquette booklet and the emblem of The American Legion, which you may wear as a badge of democracy and a symbol of your devotion to further service.”

The commander returns to station and introduces each newly obligated member to the membership and requests the sergeant-at-arms to seat them with their comrades.
As an authorized provider of military funeral honors, The American Legion is the nation’s representative for this most hallowed event. The Legion’s dignified participation reflects the professionalism of our own service to the nation, and leaves a lasting impression on everyone present – a source of pride and support for the veteran’s family, friends and a grateful nation.

The guidelines above should be followed when The American Legion is assisting as an authorized provider. If The American Legion is conducting the ceremony without the presence of a military detail, established Legion protocol and tradition found in the Manual of Ceremonies may be followed in rendering honors to a veteran who served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

POST EVERLASTING

The American Legion service is nonsectarian. Therefore, it may vary in accordance with the religious beliefs of the deceased Legionnaire. The wishes of the family of the deceased, and of the officiating clergyman, should be respected. The casket is covered with a U.S. flag when closed or as it leaves the chapel or home. If the deceased served under an allied flag, that flag shall also be displayed near the casket.

The diagram above illustrates the proper position of flags, tables or stands used by officers participating in this ceremony. This equipment – with the exception of the brazier and stacked rifles, which are posted during the ceremony – should be put in place before the meeting opens.
Commander: “It is my sad duty to report that Comrade ________________ has been called from our midst, and gone to report to the Commander of all.”

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: “Before proceeding with other business of this meeting, we will conduct the Post Everlasting Ceremony for Comrade ________________.” Sergeant-at-arms, allow no one to enter or leave this room until the conclusion of this ceremony. All present will remain silent until the conclusion of this ceremony.”

Commander: “Sergeant-at-arms, you will place the brazier and stack the rifles before this rostrum, properly arranged for our Post Everlasting ceremony.”

The sergeant-at-arms salutes and gives the necessary commands to three rifle bearers and a comrade with the brazier. The commander returns the salute.

Sergeant-at-arms: “The equipment is properly arranged, comrade commander.”

Commander: “Sergeant-at-arms, you will retire the detail.”

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: “This moment is sacred with the almost visible presence of the one who has gone before. We come to honor the memory of one who offered his (her) life in the service of our country and who has now enrolled in that great spirit army, whose footfalls cause no sound, but in the memory of mankind, their souls go marching on, sustained by the pride of service in time of war. Because of them our lives are free; because of them our nation lives; because of them the world is blessed.

“May this service deepen our reverence for our departed comrades.”

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: “The adjutant will place an American Legion cap on the rifles in remembrance of Comrade ________________’s service to our country in the (Army / Marine Corps / Navy / Air Force / Coast Guard) of the United States.”

The adjutant places a cap on top of the stacked rifles. The commander waits until the adjutant returns, then gives three raps of the gavel.

Commander: “Sergeant-at-arms, lights out. Our comrade chaplain will offer prayer.”

Chaplain: “Our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom has transferred Comrade ________________ to the jurisdiction of Post Everlasting of The American Legion. May your soul rest in peace. Amen.”

Commander: “Comrade adjutant, enter the name of Comrade __________ in the record of members of (post name and number) who have transferred to Post Everlasting.”

The adjutant enters the name in a book provided for this purpose. The commander waits until the adjutant rises.
Commander: “Comrade adjutant, hand me the letter containing the service and Legion records of Comrade ________________, which we will transmit to Post Everlasting of The American Legion.”

The commander then reads a letter.

Commander: “Comrade chaplain, transmit this letter containing the service and Legion records of Comrade ________________ to the adjutant of Post Everlasting.”

The commander hands the letter to the chaplain, who places it in the brazier; the record burns. NOTE: The record burned by the chaplain can be either a blank piece of paper or a typed document. Do not burn the deceased member’s post records.

Commander: “Bugler, sound Taps in memory of Comrade ________________ and in memory of all the comrades of Post Everlasting of The American Legion.”

The bugler sounds Taps.

Commander: “Sergeant-at-arms, turn on the lights.”

The commander raps the gavel once to seat members.

Commander: “Comrade adjutant, remove the hat. Sergeant-at-arms, remove the brazier and rifles.”

A Post Everlasting citation is available through Emblem Sales, providing the next of kin with a permanent service record and a tribute to the departed comrade.

Service and American Legion records should contain the member’s full name in full, date of birth, date of enlistment, service branch, rank, the theatre of war in which the member served, battles (if any), date discharged, date joined The American Legion, Legion activities (if any), Legion offices held (if any), and date of death. Note: Add or delete as the situation requires and as circumstances dictate.
This ceremony is suggested as part of a Flag Day observance. The post assembles outdoors at night. Members form two parallel rows about 20 feet apart, facing each other. Officers take up stations as shown in the graphic on page 89. A small fire is burning opposite the commander and beyond the rows of members.

**Sergeant-at-arms:** “Comrade commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable flags of our country for inspection and disposal.”

**Commander:** “Comrade sergeant-at-arms, advance with your detail and present the flags for disposal and inspection.”

The sergeant-at-arms calls the detail to attention. The detail forms at the post of the sergeant-at-arms, takes the flags to be inspected, marches abreast down center until opposite the second vice commander, turns right and halts two paces in front of the second vice commander. The sergeant-at-arms steps forward and salutes.

**Sergeant-at-arms:** “Comrade vice commander, we present these unserviceable flags for your inspection.”

**Second vice commander:** “Is the present condition of these flags the result of their usual service as the emblem of our country?”

**Sergeant-at-arms:** “These flags have become faded and worn over the graves of our departed comrades and the dead soldiers, sailors, and airmen of all our nation’s wars.”

**Second vice commander:** “Present these flags to the first vice commander for inspection.”

The sergeant-at-arms salutes, does an about-face, commands the detail “About face,” crosses behind the detail and takes post at its left, and commands “Forward march.” The detail marches to within two paces of the first vice commander, halts and proceeds as before.
Sergeant-at-arms: “Comrade vice commander, we present these flags which have been inspected by the second vice commander, for your further inspection.”

First vice commander: “Have any of these flags served any other purpose?”

Sergeant-at-arms: “Some of these flags have been displayed in various public places.”

First vice commander: “Present them for final inspection and dignified disposal.”

The sergeant-at-arms salutes, about faces, commands the detail “About face,” crosses behind the detail and takes position on its left, commands “Forward march.” The detail marches to center, turns left, halts within two paces of the commander, sergeant-at-arms steps one pace forward and salutes.

Sergeant-at-arms: “Comrade commander, we have the honor to present for final inspection and proper disposal these flags of our country.”

Commander: “Have these flags been inspected by the first and second vice commanders?”

Sergeant-at-arms: “They have.”

Commander: “Comrade second vice commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?”

Second vice commander: “Comrade commander, these flags became unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend they be honorably retired from further service.”

Commander: “Comrade first vice commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?”

First vice commander: “Comrade commander, since these flags have become faded and worn in a tribute of service and love, I also recommend they be fittingly destroyed.”

Commander: “Comrades, we have presented here these flags of our country which have been inspected and judged as unserviceable. They have reached their present state in a proper service of tribute, memory and love.

“A flag may be a flimsy bit of printed gauze or a beautiful banner of finest silk. Its intrinsic value may be trifling or great; but its real value is beyond price, for it is a precious symbol of all that we and our comrades have worked for and lived for, and died for — a free nation of free men and women, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practice of justice, freedom and democracy.

“Let these faded flags of our country be retired and destroyed with respectful and honorable rites and their places be taken by bright new flags of the same size and kind, and let no grave of our soldier, sailor, Marine or airman dead be unhonored and unmarked. Sergeant-at-arms, assemble the color guard, escort the detail bearing the flags and destroy these flags by burning. The members shall stand at attention.”
The color guard forms. The detail does an about-face. Preceded by the color guard, the detail marches down center to the fire. National colors cross over and take position on the right of the fire, facing the commander. Post standard takes position on the left of the fire. The detail lines up behind the fire, which is burning low.

Commander: “The chaplain will offer prayer.”

Chaplain: “Almighty God, Captain of all hosts and Commander over all, bless and consecrate this present hour. We thank You for our country and its flag, and for the liberty for which it stands. To a clean and purging flame we commit these flags, worn out in worthy service. As they yield their substance to the fire, may Your holy light spread over us and bring our hearts renewed devotion to God and country. Amen.”

Commander: “Hand salute.”

The color guard presents arms. The post standard is dipped. All officers and members, except the flag detail, salute. Members of the flag detail dip the unserviceable flags in kerosene and place them on a rack over the fire. The bugler sounds “To the Colors.”

Commander: “Two.”

The color guard resumes its station and the detail is dismissed. The color guard advances down the center and places colors. Members of the detail resume their places among the members.

Dignified disposal of unserviceable flags
Steps to a better post

Many times, new post officers are eager to do a job but lack the background or organization skills to complete their year. The following outline is a proven plan that can help organize a post, useful at all levels:

Step I Obtain post records and get new material from department headquarters to become familiar with the policies and traditions of the post, district, department and National Headquarters.

Step II Call an early meeting of your newly elected officers. Invite the outgoing commander and adjutant and other influential Legionnaires to meet with you.

A suggested agenda should include:
- **Budget**
  1. Old, and possibly new, sources of income
  2. Estimated expenditures
  3. Possible methods of financing selected programs with other than post funds
- **Assignments and outline of duties of elected officers**
- **Discussion of individual programs and committees to determine the following:**
  1. Qualifications and suggestions for committee chairs and members
  2. Established programs
  3. Possible new programs (use available handbooks and department material as guides)
  4. Program schedule
- **Discussion programs unique to your post**
- **Initiate study of the post and community for new programs, conduct post analysis**

Step III Activate committees.
- **Select chairperson and members**
- **Make personal contact with each chair to determine willingness to serve**
- **Arrange meeting of committees to formulate program**
- **Instruct chairmen on programs, available materials, post reports and more**
- **Build timetable for each committee to fit into the overall post calendar**

Step IV Coordinate with the post’s Auxiliary unit. Many programs depend on Auxiliary support to be successful.

Step V Conduct a post meeting
- **The first post meeting tends to set a pattern for the entire year.**
- **Work closely with the adjutant, officers and committee heads.**
- **Run a formal meeting, following the ritual in the Manual of Ceremonies.**
- **Post business should be attended to as briefly as possible.**
- **Know department and national material in advance and report items of interest to the membership.**
- **Committee reports should be brief and to the point.**
- **Consider qualified speakers at some or all meetings for briefings on some phase of Legion programs.**
- **Don’t neglect the social side.**
- **Announce the main business of the next meeting.**
- **Have the welcome committee established.**

Step VI Conduct a Public Relations Committee meeting.
- **Discuss ways and means.**
- **Formulate instruction to post officers and committee chairs on standard procedure for keeping the Public Relations chair and editor of your newspaper or bulletin informed.**
Step VII Plan for a more informed membership.
   a. Talks at post meetings
   b. Give everyone a job.
   c. Encourage enrollment and completion of The American Legion Extension Institute online.
   d. Pass on information.
   e. Publish a monthly post newspaper or bulletin.
   f. Acquaint active members with veteran benefits.

Step VIII Appoint a coordinating committee for patriotic observances.
   a. Work with standing committees, including younger members.
   b. Work with the entire community to recognize local active military personnel and all veterans.
   c. Include uniformed groups if available.

Step IX Give proper credit.
   a. Awards and citations
   b. Thank-you notes
   c. Recognition at meetings

Step X The voice of the Legionnaire and the post is only heard by active participation in meetings, whether district, department or national.
   a. Plan election of delegates as part of the post timetable.
   b. Attend district, department and national conventions and conferences.
   c. Present sound resolutions of concern to The American Legion.
   d. Report back to the post.

Step XI Follow standard procedures and schedule all year round. Plan post meetings three months ahead, and social activities six months ahead.

Step XII It is never too early to evaluate possible post officers for next year.

Post charters

Application forms for chartering a new American Legion post may be obtained from department headquarters. A temporary charter is issued first, and when the post's founders have demonstrated their ability to maintain a post over a period of no fewer than 90 days and have developed an efficient organization for furthering the Legion's work and ideals, they are eligible to receive a permanent post charter. Application forms for permanent charter may be obtained from department headquarters.

A post name must be adopted before a new post is issued a charter. Many posts choose to adopt the name of a departed comrade—a fitting memorial. If members do not wish to decide on a permanent name at the time the post is organized, it is recommended that a temporary name be adopted (for instance, the name of the town or county). This can be changed by resolution of the post membership when applying for permanent charter. A copy of the resolution, attested by the post commander and the post adjutant, should be attached to each copy of the application for permanent charter.

When a post with a permanent charter adopts a new name, a new permanent charter bearing the new name may be obtained upon written request through department headquarters. Such requests should be accompanied by duly attested copies of the resolution adopting the new name and by surrender of the old charter.

If a post loses its permanent charter through fire or other damage, a new one may be obtained by a written request to the department headquarters. The request should include an explanation of the facts surrounding the loss, signed by the post commander and attested by the post adjutant.
Charters for incorporated posts

Posts and departments that have incorporated since receiving their original charters need to obtain supplemental charters in their corporate capacity upon application to National Headquarters. This brings the legal incorporated status of the post into conformity with its charter status so that the incorporated post may avoid confusion over its proper name when dealing with the Internal Revenue Service.

Organizational meeting

A tentative draft should be made of a post constitution before the organizational meeting (see pages 106-108). The person best fitted for the purpose among the organizers should call the meeting to order, outline its purposes, and point out the following facts:

- This meeting is called to organize a local post of The American Legion.
- The American Legion has posts in most U.S. county seats and many countries throughout the world.
- The American Legion includes veterans of World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf and the war on terrorism.
- Any soldier, sailor, Marine, airman, nurse, WAC, WAVE or SPAR of the United States who served honorably between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, June 25, 1950, and January 31, 1955, February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, August 24, 1982, and July 1, 1984, December 20, 1989, and January 31, 1990, or August 2, 1990, to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the U.S. government, and men and women whose service began during one of those periods and remain in service, are admitted.
- Fifteen members are usually required for the formal application for a charter; however, the actual minimum number is set by each department.
- Dues should be set sufficiently high to cover anticipated administrative expenses and collected either before or at the organizational meeting. Dues are collected annually and include national, department and, on occasion, district assessments.

The organizer should then call for nominations for a temporary chairman and secretary. Once elected, these officers will take charge of proceedings.

The suggested constitution should be discussed and the approved form adopted. Then the temporary chair should name a committee to consider a name for the post. (No post may be named in honor of a living person.) It is customary, but not necessary, to adopt the name of a local person who died in one of the world wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf or the war on terrorism. You may also use the names of a deceased veteran of each war.

A list should be compiled of those in attendance, including full name, name of the last organization with which they served, date of separation from military service and current local address. This information should be kept for the person elected adjutant.

The committee charged with finding a name for the post should then report and a name be adopted. The temporary chair should then ask for nominations for the following officers:

- Post commander
- Post vice commander
- Post adjutant
- Post service officer
- Post finance officer
- Post historian
- Post chaplain
- Post sergeant-at-arms

The newly elected officers should then assume their duties, and the new commander should immediately name the standing committees. The membership committee should be instructed to canvas for new members and secure blank applications. All original and new members should complete these as soon as they are available. Standard membership applications can be secured from the department or National Headquarters.
The original (white sheet) of the charter application should then be signed by the minimum required by the department constitution. These forms may be secured from any Legion post or department headquarters. It is preferable to have the officers sign first, in the order named above. When completed, the form should be turned over to the newly elected adjutant for recording the same names and addresses on the remaining two copies. All three copies should then be signed by the post commander, attested by the adjutant, and – together with an amount covering the dues of the department and the national organization for all names appearing on the application – be forwarded to department headquarters.

New posts

When the department-prescribed minimum number of eligible veterans has decided to form a new post, and they have the go-ahead from the county or district and department officers, set a time and place for an organizational meeting. Spread the word via local newspapers, email, websites, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Establishing a new post or reviving a dormant one is not difficult if a group follows certain steps. Determine first that The American Legion is not serving a particular community or neighborhood where there are sufficient veterans to support an active and growing post. Someone of stature from the district or the department must visit the area and find out where the community’s and veterans’ needs. This may take the form of a survey, asking where The American Legion might serve in connection with local schools and school programs, drug abuse and teen suicide prevention, Scouting, care for disabled or aging veterans, or the community’s need for volunteer groups such as the American Legion Auxiliary. Such a survey should certainly take into account the community’s recreational and social facilities.

Often, even while such a survey is in progress, you can go a long way toward achieving the second step, which is the recruitment of eligible veterans who have the ability and willingness to be the core group around which an American Legion post can be built. The local school superintendent or principal might suggest some names of those who would be interested. Federal employees are often eligible members. The local Scouting executive may also know some veterans who would see a new Legion post as a way to expand the Scouting program. Adults active in Little League or other youth baseball programs are usually interested in ensuring that there is an American Legion Baseball team and can be instrumental in assisting in the search for the necessary number of veterans to start a post. Other organizations, such as Lions or Kiwanis, may need the cooperation of an American Legion service officer to round out a program. Banks and other businesses are often interested in being represented in such a venture, particularly if the bank or business is headed by a Legionnaire from another post but has many employees living in the desired area. Also, National Headquarters can assist in identifying names and addresses of Legionnaires belonging to posts in other communities or other states who live within the boundaries where a new post is proposed.

Sometimes district officers will still lack a key person or group to form a new post. Make a list of places to look, starting with banks, insurance and real-estate offices, school principals, and local government.

Pay a visit to these places, explaining what you’re attempting and why you believe an American Legion post will be an asset to the neighborhood or community. At each stop, request the names of any veterans who might be interested in getting on the ground floor of a new American Legion post. Oftentimes, this method will produce one, two or three key people who can take the lead, locally, in forming the post. In a chain reaction of sorts, their friends and acquaintances will likely be a source of additional members.
In making the first contacts with a prospective new member or business, it is not necessary to offer a detailed explanation of the Legion. That can come later. Actually, a copy of *The American Legion Magazine* is a simple item of substance that makes the selling job easier. If the right people are recruited, only a small number are required to ensure the success of a new post. These people will do most of the recruiting among their friends, business associates and acquaintances. In fact, the job of finding the “nucleus” of a new post is simplified by drawing upon friends of Legionnaires in adjacent posts or district officers.

Several decisions must be made when starting a new post. Select a temporary name, set initial dues and, most importantly, identify three or four reasons why a new post is needed.

Two important reasons to organize a post are 1) to assist veterans and local families, and 2) to make the community or neighborhood a better place to live. However, these reasons should be spelled out in terms of programs that have meaning to area residents.

Once you have recruited the minimum number of eligible veterans necessary to start a post, conduct a brief organizational meeting to elect a temporary chairman and secretary. Then, there exists an organization that can set the date for a second meeting, where the procedures outlined in Article IX, Section 4, of The American Legion Constitution should be followed to organize a post. This group should make sure proper publicity is given to the second meeting, and that those Legionnaires who have volunteered to assist the new post during its formation and the first few crucial months — including a service officer — are in attendance.

The work of dedicated Legionnaires who unselfishly devote time and effort to assuring the success of a new post should not go unrecognized. For this purpose, the National Membership & Post Activities Committee issues "Pioneer Award" citations, which a new post can award at the time it receives a permanent charter to the individuals or posts most instrumental in its success. The department and districts should also give awards to those most active in establishing new posts.

Although the majority of posts are community-oriented, drawing their membership from a cross-section of the local population and carrying on such standard American Legion activities as they are capable of, there is room within the broader American Legion for a variety of specialized posts. There are highly successful luncheon-type posts, made up primarily of business and professional members. Others limit their membership to employees of a particular business or industry. There are doctors’ posts, nurses’ posts, and posts made up entirely of church members or federal employees. Some posts cater to veterans of a particular military outfit or those who were stationed in a particular country. Any area of interest or activity with which a group of veterans identifies itself can provide the reason for an American Legion post as well as the means of organizing it.

Regardless of the post’s type, there must be a legitimate, recognizable need to be served by establishing an American Legion post. Then, a core group of eligible members should be found or brought together, and they should be interested in taking the initiative to form a post. Finally, there must be help, encouragement and expertise from knowledgeable Legionnaires in a position to advise and inform the group.

**Step-by-step procedures**

When establishing a new American Legion post, a positive attitude is essential. Don’t say, “if we form a post.” It’s “when we form a post.” Remember, you’ll be providing a genuine service to the community and its veterans. The following steps can serve as a guide:

1. Determine the city, town, neighborhood or other identifiable area where veterans are without a readily available post.
2. Decide that a new post will be established to serve the selected area.
3. Communicate with the Legion’s department headquarters and, if necessary, the district commander. (Others may already be working to establish a post in the area.)
4. Find out from the department the minimum number of members required for a post charter.
5. At the same time, ask the department for an application for temporary charter, a copy of the *Post Adjutant’s Manual* and membership applications.
6. Select two or three projects that the new post can carry out to meet local needs or aspirations.

7. Contact key people in the community and get their approval for a new post, along with suggestions for possible leaders and members. Ask the mayor, police officers, fire department officials, the school superintendent, teachers, bank managers, real-estate agents, insurance agents, barbers and business owners.

8. Pick a key individual who can serve as the presiding person during organization. Look for leadership, talent, enthusiasm and stature in the community.

9. Pick a name for a post. (A post may not be named for any living person.)

10. Ask the department headquarters to assign a number to the post.

11. Establish post dues before the first organizational meeting, keeping them in line with neighboring posts.

12. Designate a secretary/treasurer to serve during the organizational period.

13. Open a bank account for the post. (Two signatures should be required on all checks.)

14. Start signing members. (Be familiar with eligibility requirements.)

15. Set a time and place for an organizational meeting.

16. Get the required number of signatures on the application for a temporary charter.

17. Notify all members in writing of the time and place of the organizational meeting.

18. Publicize the post's formation and organizational meeting through local press, social media, notices on shopping center bulletin boards and other outlets.

19. Check to make sure you have signatures of all members on the charter application and that the form is fully completed with necessary copies.

20. Do not overwhelm members and prospective officers with literature or too much information. Take it one step at a time.

21. Select one or two needed community projects. Emphasize how The American Legion can help meet the needs of veterans and the community.

Initiation and installation

This is a first-class social event that should be carefully planned with top department and district officers to properly initiate and install new members and officers.

1. Publicize the organizational meeting.

2. Temporary officers should preside (if it is a revitalization).

3. Key Legionnaires responsible for the post should be present.

4. Initiate new members.

5. Install officers.

Project Stay Active

Project Stay Active helps local posts maintain contact with members who move into your area. National Headquarters prints a summary of the veteran's membership on a 3x5 card, including both new and old addresses, the member's department, the post number, the number of continuous years, and the date the card was printed. If the member is a life member, it is noted. The card is printed in ZIP code order and mailed to department adjutants for distribution to the post most accessible to the member. This post is then asked to contact and welcome the member to the area. This is an ideal time to offer assistance and to invite the member to visit your post.

In many cases, the Legionnaire may wish to transfer membership to a post in the community. As may be expected, some of these Legionnaires are involved in temporary moves, some may have a life membership "back home," and others may have sentimental feelings toward their hometown post. However, many of them will be receptive to an offer to transfer to your post when asked.

Departments actively participating in Project Stay Active generally distribute the cards each month through district or county commanders.
Direct renewal notices

Beginning in July, National Headquarters mails direct dues renewal notices to current members. The member pays dues directly to the post. Each year, department headquarters mails a post data card to the post asking for the post’s dues amount and the address to which the member is to mail dues. As much as possible, posts should use a permanent mailing address – either a post office box or the address of the post home.

Some posts have members who should not receive renewal notices. In these cases, send a letter to department headquarters listing those members’ names, addresses and card numbers, signed by a post official and giving the post number, and they will not receive another renewal notice. Thereafter, the code letter “c” will appear in a column after the member’s ZIP code in the post membership register. Only one amount for post dues can be printed for each post. For example, National Headquarters cannot print “$30 until January 1, $35 after January 1.”

Posts that do not participate in the department program may be included in the next billing by filling out a post data card and sending it to department headquarters. Through department participation, additional notices are available. Scheduled renewal mailings are usually at no cost to departments or posts. All delinquent members will receive renewal notices in March; if still delinquent in May, an additional renewal may be sent.

Online renewals

Legionnaires can renew their membership online at www.legion.org/renew. Upon renewal, a member can print a temporary membership card to send to his or her post to receive a permanent membership card. Posts using myLegion.org can see which post members have renewed online. Otherwise, posts will be notified through their departments so that they can send membership cards.

Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) membership

These members pay a one-time fee or can utilize a time payment plan option to gain lifetime membership in The American Legion. These Legionnaires have voluntarily chosen to become Paid-Up-For-Life members under the national plan. A Legionnaire must be in good standing to become a PUFL member. To be in good standing, the member must have a valid membership card for the current Legion year. Obtain PUFL application forms from department headquarters, National Headquarters or online at www.legion.org/join/pufl.

Consolidated Post Reports (CPR)

Post adjutants are the key to how well The American Legion as a whole will be able to report to the American people its actual accomplishments for the past year.

Each post receives a three-part, snap-out CPR report form as the reporting year comes to a close. The first two copies go to department headquarters, and the third copy is to be retained by the post. All reports from a district’s posts should be sent to department headquarters on or before the June 15 deadline, or sooner if the department has set an earlier date.

The CPR form covers participation in the Legion's basic programs: Americanism, Children & Youth, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Economic and National Security. Other requested items are the number of funeral honors provided for deceased members, and whether the post sponsors a uniformed group or distributes a regular publication to members. Don’t be discouraged if the post doesn’t have something to report in every blank on the CPR. Very few posts have every Legion program. Many outstanding posts devote their energies and resources to just two or three programs or activities, more than justifying their existence.

Information from CPR forms is frequently shared with members of Congress, giving them a snapshot of the valuable community service provided by American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members.
Include details in narrative

Posts should confine answers to the allotted spaces. If they wish to go into a subject in further detail, include such information in a descriptive narrative attached to the report. This can cover a post’s accomplishments in program areas, including photos. Department Americanism and Children & Youth committees consider the work of a post in determining its qualification for national recognition.

By mid-August, National Headquarters expects to have a completed tabulation of all reports broken down and printed by department. The statistical totals will provide the foundation for The American Legion’s annual report to Congress, required by the Legion’s federal charter.

Once the post has completed the annual report, it may be surprising how much the post has accomplished. In addition to being the basis for good local news releases, the CPR also helps in the preparation of membership promotional material. And there’s always the possibility a post’s reports will result in national recognition for one or more of its outstanding programs.

myLegion.org

National Headquarters has a secure website to assist post officers in their day-to-day membership processing duties. To register, the post adjutant must first complete and submit an authorization form at www.mylegion.org.

- View member information for post and squadron data.
- Track members who have renewed online.
- Submit Member Data Form changes electronically, with the exception of adding new members, processing renewals and transferring members. Those three processes must continue to be transmitted to the department. All member data changes submitted electronically through myLegion are submitted to department headquarters in a weekly file from National Headquarters, eliminating the need to complete or mail paper forms for address changes, phone number updates, deceased notifications, etc.
- Generate rosters for current, expired, deceased and undeliverable members. Data is also available in CSV file format allowing users to work with the data in other applications.
- Submit Consolidated Post Report (CPR) electronically.
- Search for headquarters post and expired members in a specified area to help grow your post membership.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation (CWF)

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation (CWF) was created in 1954 to:

- Contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth through the dissemination of knowledge about new and innovative organizations and/or their programs designed to benefit youth.
- Contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth through the dissemination of knowledge already possessed by well-established organizations, to the end that such information can be more adequately used by society.

CWF’s primary source of revenue is members of the Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Eight & Forty. It also receives support from all levels of the organization – local, state and national.
To provide an incentive for giving on an annual basis, CWF has the Cornerstone Gift Club, which offers awards to individuals for their cumulative donations made during the current contribution year (June 1-May 31):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative donations</th>
<th>Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Century Club</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Partner</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Circle</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Ambassadors</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gold pin with amethyst
Gold pin with blue sapphire
Gold pin with one diamond
Gold pin with five diamonds

The “Children First” Gift Club recognizes posts for their cumulative donations:

| Caretaker | $500 | Bronze plaque |
| Advocate  | $750 | Silver plaque |
| Guardian  | $1,000 | Gold plaque |

Contributions
- All contributions are tax-deductible. Every check or money order ($5 or more) received is acknowledged by official receipt, which should be held for tax purposes.
- All contributions go directly into CWF. All overhead expenses are covered by separate funding.
- All cash contributions are acknowledged regardless of amount. Do not send cash through the mail.
- Contributions can be made directly to CWF. They do not have to go through department headquarters.
- Accurate records are kept of states, organizations and individuals sending in contributions. Correspondence is kept on file for one year, but computer records are maintained.
- Your department gets credit for your support on CWF’s national report to Congress.

Suggestions
- When a member of the post or unit passes away, suggest that contributions be sent to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation in their memory to provide meaningful grants that will help children.
- Make CWF a regular part of annual post activities by conducting a fundraiser.
- Mention CWF at post and unit meetings to make others aware of what it is and how it helps children.
- Start a collection of plaques to display in the post home.

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA)

Temporary Financial Assistance is the landmark program of the Legion’s National Commission on Children & Youth. Started in 1925 as a form of direct aid to children, TFA is still unique in the field of social work today.

Through TFA, a post can call upon the national organization to provide cash assistance to help meet the basic needs of veterans’ children when it is evident there are no other resources available to provide the required assistance. These payments, as indicated by the program’s name, are temporary, and this cash assistance is in the form of a grant.

The post and department are expected to make every effort to secure assistance for needy veterans’ children from its own resources, or those of other organizations or agencies within the community whose purpose it is to meet the need. Payments from the program may be made to, or on behalf of, the family for a variety of expenses necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the children involved.

A maintenance grant may be used for food, shelter (rent or mortgage payment, utilities and educational expense. It cannot be used for debts incurred prior to the date of application for TFA. Credit-card payments, bank notes (other than home mortgage loans), auto loans and other installment-type payments are considered to be “prior debts.” The only exceptions to this policy are utilities and shelter payments.
A medical grant requires a written statement from a doctor outlining the program, the treatment and the estimated costs. It may be used for medical care, surgery, dental care, pharmaceuticals, dietary needs, hospitalization, nursing and convalescent care, and other needs as specified.

A medical grant cannot cover previous expenses or care. A family must meet two criteria to be eligible:

- The veteran must have served a portion of active duty during one of these periods: August 2, 1990, to present (or the cessation of hostilities as determined by the U.S. government); December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; or December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946.

- There must be children in the home younger than 18 (younger than 21 if still in high school or physically handicapped). These children may be legitimate, stepchildren, legally adopted or illegitimate with necessary proof of relationship provided.

Note: The veteran does not need to be a member of The American Legion to receive assistance.

Requests for assistance must be submitted on an official application form, available from department headquarters. Each application has instructions to guide the local investigator through the procedure of filing. For more information about TFA, request a brochure from your department adjutant or the National Americanism and Children & Youth Division by calling (317) 630-1203 or sending an email to acy@legion.org.

National Emergency Fund (NEF)

The National Emergency Fund program is one of the best examples of “veterans helping veterans” through The American Legion. Since the NEF was re-established in 1989, the no-strings-attached disaster relief program has provided more than $9 million in direct financial assistance to thousands of Legionnaires and their families recovering from declared natural disasters.

Every post officer should understand how to prepare for disasters so that your post can provide immediate and responsive care to members affected.

Eligibility

There are no premiums to pay into the NEF program. Rather, grants are made to Legionnaires, SAL members and posts in need. The only requirements on their behalf are:

- Must be a current-year paid member of The American Legion or SAL
- Must be a member in good standing with their post or squadron
- Must have been a current member prior to the date of disaster

Only one grant per household can be considered. The NEF does not cover damages to automobiles, outbuildings (such as sheds and barns), and apartments or businesses. Nor are NEF grants to take the place of, or supplement, insurance compensation. They are intended solely to assist members if they lose, or are displaced from, their primary homes due to a declared natural disaster. Subsequently, incidents stemming from accidental fires in the home or faulty structural damages do not fall within the confines of the NEF.

Posts are eligible to receive grants from this fund, if damaged by declared natural disaster. The application must be supported by substantiating documentation that the post will cease to perform programs and activities in the community due to losses sustained.

How to apply

NEF grant applications may be obtained from department headquarters or National Headquarters at (317) 630-1330, or online at www.legion.org/emergency. The turnaround time for a grant depends on how soon the completed application is received at National Headquarters in Indianapolis.
At the very minimum, the NEF application should include:

- Copies of lodging, food, gas, clothing receipts
- Copies of estimates of damage
- Photographs of the damage
- Description of loss
- List of out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of displacement from primary residence

Failure to include this information could delay the grant. Supporting documentation cannot be returned.

Once the grant application is completed, it must be forwarded to department headquarters, where it is reviewed and damages are assessed. The department commander and adjutant determine the grant amount, which is not to exceed $1,500 for individuals and $5,000 for posts. They sign the application and forward it to National Headquarters, which makes final approval. National Headquarters issues a check to the member or post and forwards it to department headquarters for distribution.

All contributions made to the NEF are distributed directly to the Legionnaire or SAL member in need. There are no administrative or fulfillment costs. To learn how to donate, visit www.legion.org/emergency.

**Sons of The American Legion (SAL)**

All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, along with male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon/Grenada, Panama, the Gulf War or the war on terrorism during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section I, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, are eligible for membership in Sons of The American Legion.

Since SAL eligibility begins at date of birth, a squadron’s activities and programs should be determined by age groupings of eligible members, the apparent needs of young eligibles, the community’s need for programs and activities that could be provided by SAL, and the capabilities of those serving as SAL leaders and advisers.

New members should be initiated with full ceremony. A member’s first impression is often the most lasting. Also, distribute copies of the SAL Squadron Handbook available when initiating new candidates. Two copies per squadron—one for the squadron commander, one for the squadron adjutant—are available from the department. Purchase additional copies from Emblem Sales at 888-453-4466 or online at emblem.legion.org.

**American Legion Auxiliary**

The mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of veterans, the military and their families. Through various programs, the Auxiliary also educates citizens, mentors youth, and promotes patriotism, citizenship, peace and security. Membership is open to wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, granddaughters and great-granddaughters of veterans who served during wartime; some Auxiliary members are veterans themselves.

- If an applicant is joining on her own service record, the Auxiliary unit to which she is applying for membership will be responsible for verification of her eligibility for membership.
- If applicant is joining on the basis of her relationship to a member of The American Legion, an officer of the post to which that relative belongs must certify the Legionnaire’s membership in that post.
- If an applicant wishes to join a unit or a post other than the one to which her Legionnaire relative belongs, the unit to which she is applying for membership should check the eligibility with the post of her relative.
- Under no circumstances, when eligibility is to be based on relationship to a deceased veteran, should an adjutant certify an application for membership without checking the veteran’s discharge papers to determine that the dates of service fall within the Legion’s eligibility time periods. The deceased veteran need not have been a Legionnaire for the applicant to qualify for Auxiliary membership.
Welcome to The American Legion Extension Institute. To take this online class, please login using your legion.org username and password, if you have one. If you do not have a legion.org username and password, please click on the Register button below to sign up and get started.

**Cost for member $4.95 Non member $9.95**
INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS
Short form

Where it is not practical to conduct the full ceremony for the installation of officers, the following short form may be conducted by an installing officer (a duly authorized representative of the department commander) who, after being introduced by the retiring post commander, proceeds as follows:

Installing officer: “The sergeant-at-arms will bring before me the newly elected officers of this post.”

The sergeant-at-arms presents the newly elected officers, standing in one row in front of the installing officer, with the new post commander to the right of the installing officer and the retiring post commander to the left of the installing officer.

Sergeant-at-arms: “I present to you the newly elected officers of this post, whose eligibility records for membership in The American Legion have been duly checked and authenticated.”

Installing officer: “My fellow Legionnaires, you have been chosen to fill the various offices of (post name and number). I know you will vindicate the trust that has been placed in you. I know you will fulfill every obligation required of you. Familiarize yourselves with the duties of your offices and carry out those duties with the same spirit from which arose The American Legion. The welfare and success of this post depend on you, as does the preservation of the integrity of The American Legion. Protect the good name of The American Legion with the people of our great nation; help them to know the Legion’s purposes and policies. Remember the tolerance that animates us as members; remember there is no rank among us for we all serve as equals. We all are aiming for the same goals – the ideals of justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty.

“Remember, too, the cardinal principles of The American Legion are the rehabilitation of all disabled veterans; care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call; care of those who now are suffering from wounds, disease and want; the education of our children; and service to the community, state and nation.

“Raise your right hand, say ‘I’ and give your names, and repeat after me.

‘I, _______________________, do solemnly pledge myself / to perform faithfully and impartially / the duties of the office of The American Legion / I am about to assume / and I further pledge / I am not a member of / and do not subscribe to / the principles of any group opposed to our form of government.’ Hands down.”

The installing officer will move to the left to address the retiring post commander.
Installing officer: “Commander _________________, you have just completed a year of service to The American Legion and to (post name and number). The records of the post indicate the quality of your service. It is my hope the things you learned about The American Legion and the experience you gained will always be available to those who follow you. On behalf of the department commander, I thank you for the splendid service you have rendered The American Legion.”

The installing officer moves to the right to address the newly elected post commander.

Installing officer: “To you, Commander _________________, are entrusted with very important duties. You must teach and protect the cardinal principles of The American Legion throughout your post. You are entrusted with the supervision of the duties of all officers of your post. The poor and troubled will come to you, and you must see no veteran is turned away without full justice.

“Loyalty to your post – to its membership – to the state and national organizations are obligations which you now assume. You are more than the presiding officer for meetings; you are guided by the constitution and the decisions of the post body. Yet the responsibility of the year’s programs is on your shoulders. You must initiate programs and carry them through to completion. You must familiarize yourself with the traditions of your post and The American Legion. By your sincere acceptance and earnest performance of these duties, may the trust your fellow Legionnaires have reposed in you be justified. “I extend to you the congratulations of the Department of _________________, and I wish you well as you assume the responsibilities of your office.”

The retiring post chaplain may offer a prayer for the guidance and success of the newly installed post officers.

The installing officer moves to the original position and asks all newly installed officers to face the members and guests in attendance.

Installing officer: “My fellow Legionnaires, I present to you the officers of your choice. I congratulate you on the selections you have made. You have chosen them. Now it is your duty to aid them in every way. Help them to keep The American Legion faithful to its principles and ideals.”

DEDICATIONS

The members of the post will assemble at the designated place in uniform, if such are available, with all officers wearing ceremonial badges and members wearing American Legion caps. They will march to the place of dedication. The commander, chaplain and the member designated to receive the gift will take their places on the platform with public officials and other guests. The post will assemble with the public.

Unless those who are to give the gift request otherwise, the commander will preside. A past commander or other member appointed by the commander will accept the gift on behalf of the post.

The program as outlined by the committee will be followed until the post commander is called upon to address the members of the post.
American Legion Department of Indiana
Post Officer Certification Form
Membership Year 20____-20____

Post No. ________ District No. ________

In Accordance With Article XI, Sec. 1, Constitution Of The American Legion Department Of Indiana, This Form Must Be Completed And Returned To Department Headquarters Not Later Than 30 Days Prior To The Convening Of The Annual Department Convention. Forward A Copy To Department Headquarters. Retain A Copy For Your Post Records. Please Type Or Print Clearly. Electronic copies (preferred method) must be forwarded to membership@ind Legion.org.

**NEWLY ELECTED POST OFFICERS**

**Commander**
- Name: __________________________
- ID#: __________________________
- Phone: __________________________
- Email Address: __________________________

**Adjutant**
- Name: __________________________
- ID#: __________________________
- Phone: __________________________
- Email Address: __________________________

**Membership**
- Name: __________________________
- ID#: __________________________
- Phone: __________________________
- Email Address: __________________________

**Service**
- Name: __________________________
- ID#: __________________________
- Phone: __________________________
- Email Address: __________________________

*Please be sure to include Member ID Number*  *All Membership mailings will be sent to the Post mailing address*

**POST COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.L. Riders</th>
<th>Girl Scouts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID #: ________ Name: ______________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A &amp; G</td>
<td>Golf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID #: ________ Name: ______________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALF Scholarship</td>
<td>Homeless Veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID #: ________ Name: ______________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>Jr. Shooting Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID #: ________ Name: ______________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling</td>
<td>Lafayette Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID #: ________ Name: ______________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy Scouts</td>
<td>Law &amp; Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID #: ________ Name: ______________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys State</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID #: ________ Name: ______________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children &amp; Youth</td>
<td>Nursing Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID #: ________ Name: ______________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CERTIFICATION**

We certify the above officers are eligible for membership. Each is a current member and entitled to serve as an officer in: 
Certified by: __________________________
Certified by: __________________________
Certified by: __________________________
Date: __________________________

Post physical address: __________________________
Post mailing address: __________________________
Post meets: __________________________
Post phone #: __________________________
Post fax #: __________________________
Post E-mail: __________________________
Post website: __________________________
Post Facebook URL: __________________________

Newly elected officers assumed duties on what date? __________________________ Post dues: $ __________________________
Are all officers who handle post finances bonded in accordance with the Department Constitution? __________________________
Name & Address of Bonding Company: __________________________
POST DELEGATE/ALTERNATE CERTIFICATION FORM
THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA
INDIANAPOLIS, IN
YEAR 20__-20__

IMPORTANT NOTE
In accordance with the Department By-laws and Constitution, this form must be completed and returned to Department Headquarters at least 30 days before annual convention. Please type or print clearly. Forward the white copy to Department Headquarters and retain the yellow copy for your post records. Electronic copies (preferred method) must be forwarded to membership@indlegion.org.

Post Name __________________ Post No. ____ District ______
Mailing Address ____________________________
City ____________________________ County ______

The above named post has elected the following DELEGATES and ALTERNATES who are 'current year' paid up members and otherwise in good standing, to represent it at the YEAR Convention of The American Legion, Department of Indiana (See Sec. 3, Art. 10, Department Constitution and By-Laws)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID NUMBER (Mandatory)</th>
<th>DELEGATE NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID NUMBER (Mandatory)</th>
<th>ALTERNATE NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: If you need additional space to list your Delegates and Alternates, submit on a separate sheet of paper and attach. All Delegates and Alternates shall be elected to the Department Adjutant at least thirty (30) days prior to the said Department Convention. Failure to return this form within the specified time may be cause for the Credentials Committee to refuse to seat Post Delegates and thereby causing the Post to lose their vote in the Convention session. Each Post shall be entitled to one (1) Delegate and one (1) Alternate for the first fifteen (15) members, two (2) Delegates and two (2) Alternates for fifty-one (51) members, three (3) Delegates and three (3) Alternates for one hundred and fifty-one (151) members and one (1) Delegate and one (1) Alternate for each additional hundred (100) members. Complete lists of Post Delegates, comprising the District delegation, will be mailed to the District Commanders prior to Convention.

Outgoing Post Commander __________________ Outgoing Post Adjutant __________________

THE MEMBERSHIP BOOKS WILL BE CLOSED 30 DAYS PRIOR TO CONVENTION TO COMPUTE DELEGATE STRENGTH