Sample Post Handbook
For
Our Post
Hometown, USA
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OUR POST

Welcome and Congratulations on your membership in The American Legion and Our Post. You now belong to our Legion family of over 4 million members! The American Legion is a powerful force in our nation. We hope your involvement will be a rewarding experience.

The American Legion began in 1919. It is the nation’s largest and most influential veterans service organization. All our American Legion Family, from The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and our American Legion Riders work together as patriotic Americans to serve America and her veterans.

Since our very first meeting in Paris, France The American Legion has maintained a vision for a Strong America. Our four pillars of service are: Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.

To the extent you are able, we hope you find ways to contribute to the proud future of Our Post. Our Post’s future will be defined in our service to our veterans, their families, our local communities, state and our great Nation. The future of our Post will be stronger and more rewarding because of your involvement.

As you become more involved in Our Post, you may have questions about The American Legion or Our Post. Just bring your questions to a Post officer, we will do our best to help you. We are devoted to “Mutual Helpfulness.”

POST MEETINGS

- Business Meeting: First Wednesday @ 7 p.m.
- Member Meeting: Second Wednesday @ 7 p.m.
- Social: Every Monday @ 5 p.m. (Except 3-day weekends.)
- Facebook Page: (https://www.facebook.com)
A SHORT HISTORY

Our Post in Hometown, USA was chartered by The American Legion on September 26, 1919, with 43 members. The first meeting was held on Thursday October 2, 1919 at the Old Hometown Hall. The original 1919 charter of our Post is framed and hangs on the wall in our Legion clubhouse, it lists the names of our charter members.

Our Post is over 300 members strong and growing. Our Post is an integral part of the greater Hometown community and a proud advocate for veterans on the local, state, and national level. Our local membership extends throughout the county.

LEGION UNIFORM What is the official uniform of The American Legion?
"A Legionnaire is in uniform if wearing an official American Legion Cap."

Why wearing your Legion Uniform in public? Legionnaires like us, seen in uniform doing the good work of The American Legion creates a positive image. This helps our community "see" The American Legion as an organization they want to support. It is a very important element of our public relations and marketing efforts.

There is no benefit to Legionnaires being invisible to the public as we do the good work of the Legion, so please expose yourself to the community as proud members of The American Legion, by wearing your uniform cap.
LEGION LANGUAGE AND Protocols

New Legionnaires often find the following information helpful:

- **MEETING CONDUCT.** Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, governs the conduct of Post meetings.

- **CEREMONY DIGNITY.** The ceremonial services of The American Legion are conducted with the solemnity befitting the dignity of this organization.

- **POW/MIA EMPTY CHAIR.** "A POW/MIA empty chair is placed 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."

- **GAVEL.** A chair’s gavel is a symbol of authority & ensures orderly meetings.
  - One tap is a message to the members:
    * To be seated following the opening ceremony
    * The completion of a business item, or
    * Following the announcement of adjournment
  - Two taps of the gavel call the meeting to order.
  - Three taps of the gavel are the signal for members to stand on the third tap.
  - A series of sharp taps is used to restore order at a meeting.

- **SILENT TRIBUTE.** Legionnaires standing in silent tribute in memory of departed comrades during meetings or ceremonies will face the U.S. Flag with Legion cap or hand held over their heart.

- **THE HAND CLAP.** This long held Legion tradition is a slow and rhythmic clapping of hands, much like the slow beat of a drum. The hand clap is used to welcome new members and guests when they are brought forward to be introduced and when leaving the lectern. This demonstrates respect for the individual being recognized.

- **PUFL stands for Paid-Up-For-Life membership.**

- **TRANSFERRED TO POST EVERLASTING** - refers to a Legionnaire who has died and transferred to the Post Everlasting.

- **Volunteers are Super! They are!**
  *Your Volunteer Time Has Value:* Volunteer time is now estimated to be worth over $24 per hour! Legionnaire volunteer time is even more valuable.

**WE ARE A LEGION OF SUPER VOLUNTEERS!**
Our Post Family

Our Post, as the parent organization, has three other important units in our local Legion family. They are:

American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Unit

Founded in 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary is the oldest member of the Legion Family of units and the most independent. The Auxiliary is a separate organization with their own legal and corporate identity.

Every Spring the Auxiliary promotes the red poppy as a symbol of the sacrifices our military have made, a symbol to open people’s hearts and inspire them to donate to this important fundraising program.

Meeting: First Wednesday @ 5 p.m.

Our Post Programs

Our post offers many outstanding programs that serve our community, veterans and youth. The Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Riders are both programs in Our Post that operate as subordinate units with their own leadership.

Sons of the American Legion (SAL) Squadron

Founded in 1932, Sons of The American Legion (SAL) squadron consists of boys and men of all ages whose grandparents or parents served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Meeting: First Monday @ 6 p.m.

American Legion Riders (ALR) Chapter

The American Legion Riders (ALR) are Legionnaires, who are also motorcycle enthusiasts. They all belong to the Legion, the Legion Auxiliary or the Sons of the American Legion. Legion Riders are well known for their charitable work.

Meeting: First Wednesday @ 5:30 p.m.
**TRAINING** [https://www.legion.org/training](https://www.legion.org/training)

Effective training is important to the success of our Legion. Quality training improves our ability to succeed by improving member involvement and operational performance. Training also helps teach organizational values and identify future post leaders. Conversely, the lack of effective training can lead to losing our focus on success and can limit our operational performance.

Many who accept leadership roles in The American Legion are often self-motivated by a desire to serve others and seek out training because they want to become stronger, better-informed leaders. Here are a few currently available training vehicles, most Legionnaires find helpful.

- **“THIS IS THE AMERICAN LEGION”** - is an excellent short video every member of our Legion Family should watch. This video is available on YouTube, at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfIQaYvsB8c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfIQaYvsB8c)

- **BASIC TRAINING** - is the new official training program of The American Legion for officers and members. To take the course, visit [https://www.legion.org/alei](https://www.legion.org/alei)

- **LEGION COLLEGE** - The American Legion National College enhances knowledge and appreciation of The American Legion. It teaches the core values and contributions of the organization, its Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and many subordinate programs.

- **LEGION PUBLICATIONS** - Legion publications can be an excellent training resource for those who are self-motivated. The Publications page of The American Legion web site is a good place to find most of them. Here are a few key publications many find helpful. ([https://www.legion.org/publications](https://www.legion.org/publications))
  - Officer’s Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
  - Post Operations Manual and Post Building Guide
  - The American Legion Positions and Programs
  - The American Legion Membership Public Relations Guide
  - Why You Should Belong
MEMBER INFORMATION (MYLEGION.ORG)

Accurate and up-to-date member information is important for any organization. We are very fortunate in The American Legion that every member can take an active role in keeping their information accurate and up-to-date, using the myLegion.org members-only web portal.

This requires a Member Account be established in MyLegion.org. To establish the member account, visit the home page of The American Legion web site (legion.org) and click on the MYLEGION.ORG link at the very top of the home page.

Once your personal Member Account is established in MyLegion.org, select the "MY PROFILE" option to update your information or print a copy of your membership card.

In addition to updating your personal profile information you can also:

- Subscribe to electronic newsletters
- View past editions of the Legion Magazine
- Make donations in the "Giving Made Easy" option
- Find out about special offers available to Legionnaires, and
- Select dues renewal options

In the dues Renewal Options, we highly recommend the automatic payment option for annual dues. It is an easy and smart way to keep your dues current.

☑️ I want to setup automatic payments for future annual membership renewals.
POST GOVERNANCE

Our Post By-Laws state,

“The administration, governance and management of this Post is entrusted to the Executive Committee.”

Good post governance is an essential duty of post leaders and it includes a variety of elements. It is realized in the long-term success of our post.

Executive Committee - the administration, governance and management of Our Post is entrusted to the Executive Committee.

In many posts the Executive Committee members are: Commander, First Vice Commander, Second Vice Commander, Adjutant, Finance Officer and Executive Committee Members-at-large.

VISION OF SUCCESS: (Example is without a time frame.)

“Our Post excels in service to fellow veterans, their families, and our community, while consistently operating as a model of quality post operations.”

KEY POST GOALS:

• Sustained membership growth
• Financial solvency and stability
• Excellent leadership development
• Successful programs
• Quality service to veterans, their families and community

MISSION STATEMENT: “Our Post exists to support fellow veterans, their families, and our community.”

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS: The Constitution & By-Laws are two of the most important documents in our post operation. They define the complete responsibilities of all Post officers and they are available from the post Adjutant.
POST LEADERSHIP

In The American Legion and Our Post leadership is provided by volunteer members, like you. Post leaders are fundamentally responsible for the success of Our Post. These volunteers serve in many different leadership roles as Post officers, committee members, chairmen and mentors to new members. Good Post leaders have the initiative to provide honorable and noteworthy service to our veterans, their families and the communities we serve.

Many believe leadership is not something you are born with and it cannot be awarded or appointed. True leadership for many, is something learned and earned through the hard work of service to others. Legion leaders must have stellar character and transparent integrity.

Good post leaders must give an adequate commitment of time, sufficient personal energy and must communicate effectively, to give our posts strong roots in the communities where we serve our veterans.

NO PARTISAN POLITICS

The American Legion is a 501 (c) (19) non-profit corporation and is absolutely non-partisan. Policies, Not Partisan Politics is our guiding principle.

SUMMARY POST LEADER DUTIES

Post leaders are responsible for the post’s success. Our Post Constitution and By-Laws are the ultimate reference on post leader duties. The following descriptions are intended as a generic overview of what many consider key responsibilities of post leaders.

The post Commander, Finance Officer and Adjutant, are “required” officers in the annual Certification of Eligibility of American Legion Post Officers. This is one of the forms our post must submit each year, to maintain our charter.
Post Commander (Elected) "First among equals." is a good way to look at the relationship of the Post Commander to other post members. The Commander ensures the post’s vision of success is completed and keeps the post family together in the process. The Post Commander traditionally serves as the President of the Board of Directors for incorporated posts. The Post Commander is also the voice of the post, within the post and at meetings beyond the post. Post Commanders also work with and through other leaders to complete the post business, as they cultivate and guide them for future leadership roles.

Finance Officer (Elected) Much of the Post Finance Officer's work is defined and determined by standard accounting practices and the needs of the post. The Post Finance Officer is the person of integrity that helps develop a post budget and administers the post book of accounts. Finance Officers also advise post leaders on the formulating and administering of financial policies, including the annual Post budget.

Adjutant (Elected) Whether seen as a Post ‘First Sergeant’ or a Continuity Officer, the Adjutant’s role is critical in the long-term success of our post. Adjutants are responsible for keeping official records of our post business, minutes of meetings and many key administrative compliance duties.

Executive Committee Members (Elected) The Executive Committee Members are advocates for the general membership, assist post officers in directing post business and act as post representatives in the absence of post officers.

First Vice-Commander (Elected) The American Legion "Officer's Guide" states this about the 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." In too many posts, the First Vice Commander serves as a Membership Committee of one. A post, even a small post, should have a true Membership Committee to help with recruitment, transferring members from department administrative posts, member renewals, member retention and with ensuring the post routinely has personal (by phone or in person) contact, with every member of the post. A Membership Committee of two (or more), is far more effective than the committee of just one.
Second Vice-Commander (Elected) In our Post the Second Vice Commander is
the designated liaison to other veteran organizations, coordinates new member
orientation and shall oversee Post morale to include entertainment and special
programs, and other duties as directed by the Post.

Sgt-at-Arms (Appointed) shall preserve order at all meetings,
ensures members are properly greeted at the door, makes new
members welcome, and oversees flag etiquette/disposal, and shall
perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Post. Often
the first of four steps in the journey to becoming Post Commander.

**POST OPERATING COMMITTEES**

To help advise the Commander and Executive Committee the
Post may establish and define the work of Post committees.

With the Commander’s consent, each chairperson selects at least
two other members to serve on each committee and they will
serve for an indefinite term at the discretion of the chairperson.

Through work on committees, our members provide the hard
work needed for our Post’s success as they plan, organize, communicate and
implement the programs of our Post and The American Legion.

The Post Operating Committees are critical to increasing active membership.
Committees within Our Post create a forum for members to pursue personal
interests. They allow for the strengths and dedication of our members to shine.
Post members, like you, serving on committees can grow as productive post
members and leaders. Committee work also functions as a very important
training ground to develop the leadership skills and knowledge of the Legion,
future Post leaders need to succeed.

**COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS**

Americanism Committee(s) - seeks to inspire love of
country and good citizenship through patriotic observances,
flag etiquette, civic instruction in schools, community service,
and youth activities such as Boys State, Boy Scouts, Oratorical
Contest and School Award Medals.

Membership Committee - has charge of all matters pertaining to membership
eligibility, growth, acceptance, retention, and renewals. Guidance is provided by
the First Vice Commander.
Finance Committee - supervises the financial duties of the Post, prepare the annual budget and advise the Executive Committee on financial matters.

Ways & Means Committee - develops fund-raising projects to support post programs. Once approved they are responsible for the project’s completion and success.

The Annual Pancake Breakfast is our PRIMARY FUNDRAISER. Our Legion Family and friends of Our Post give their financial support to this important event to help fund The American Legion programs we conduct.

Facilities Committee - handles the operation and upkeep of our Post facility.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) Committee - is responsible for bringing to the attention of members and their dependents the rights and benefits granted them by law. They shall assist veterans in the pursuance of claims and in obtaining other veteran’s rights and benefits; to visit comrades who are sick or disabled; to visit and comfort members of their families of sick or bereaved.

Medias & Communications Committee – oversees print and digital media communications and channels delivered from Our Post. The committee also has oversight of Our Post’s media outreach program. It also provides support for key marketing initiatives of Our Post.
Although the Preamble of The American Legion Constitution is printed on the back of our membership cards, having it available in larger text, is helpful to many Legionnaires. We recite the Preamble before each meeting, as it is the written essence of who we are.

**THE PREAMBLE:**

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.

**OUR POST ADDRESS**

**Our Post**
123 Main Street, Hometown, USA
Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX - E-Mail: Adjutant@ourpost.com
SAMPLE HANDBOOK SUPPORT

Support: If you would like to use the Sample Handbook to prepare a handbook for your post, please review the information carefully and modify it as needed. You can download a MS Word version from:
http://www.slolegion.org/sample/SamplePostBackbook.docx

The Sample Handbook is provided as an example for your post or district to follow. You have permission to adapt the Sample Handbook and any of the graphics for use within The American Legion.

I believe in “Mutual Helpfulness.” If you have any questions or need any help adapting the Sample Handbook, please contact me:

Phone: 805-925-9144, E-Mail: rpushies@yahoo.com

For God and Country

~Rick