

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA**

**CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
PROGRAM ACTION PLAN
2016-2017**

Constitution & Bylaws and the 2014-2019 Centennial Strategic Plan – Properly written, reviewed and updated documents, policies and procedures strengthen our organization at all levels through clarification of roles and responsibilities (Goal 4). This creates an environment that allows goodwill to develop and grow (Goal 2).

The Constitution and Bylaws and Standing Rules are the rules that govern the American Legion Auxiliary and provide a successful organization process.

CONSTITUTION

Explains the structure of the organization: To include the preamble, name, and purpose of our organization; membership eligibility; elected and appointed officers; executive committee and defines the procedure to amend the document. This is the organization's incorporation statement, the reason the American Legion Auxiliary exists. It should rarely, if ever, change.

BYLAWS

Governs us and deals with issues: An organization's core governance structure, roles and purpose. Bylaws are the American Legion Auxiliary's "bones"—fixed only when broken or critical to continue the purpose of the organization.

STANDING RULES

Relates to the administration and operation of the Unit: Requirements for how the organization achieves good governance; details about the American Legion Auxiliary's structure (i.e. committee make-up, recurring governance events). Standing Rules are an organization's "skin"—they have the flexibility to be changed as often as desired to keep up with current times. Standing Rules have the same importance for members as Bylaws. Outlines the customs and wishes of the Unit and can be adopted by a majority vote of the membership without previous notice.

Examples of Standing Rules: Sets the specific amount of dues; the date and time of Unit meetings; defines who is in charge of membership, who signs checks, and addresses any other issues unique to the Unit.

Further, the parliamentary authority, "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised," shall govern this organization in all cases that are not in conflict with state statute, the Constitution and Bylaws or any special rules of order adopted by our organization.

The Constitution and Bylaws **MUST** be updated every 5 years. However, if any changes are made prior to that, your Constitution and Bylaws must be changed at that time. They should be reviewed, but not changed, every year.

Standing Rules should be reviewed often, and may be changed as often as necessary. Standing Rules must be updated as soon as possible after any changes are made. After updating Standing Rules only, include a copy of the Constitution & Bylaws when submitting to the Department Chairman, stating changes to Standing Rules only.

In either event, the procedure is to mail two (2) original, signed copies to the Department Constitution and Bylaws **Chairman** for approval. Include the date of the meeting that your Unit approved the change; have them signed by the Unit President, and either Constitution and Bylaws Chairman or Unit Secretary or all three and date it. Provide a space (name and date) for the Department approval.

Every Unit **MUST** have a Constitution & Bylaws and Standing Rules.

Mid-Year Reports

Each Unit Constitution & Bylaws Chairman is required to make a report to the District Constitution & Bylaws Chairman on the status of that Unit's Constitution & Bylaws by December 1, 2016. Are your Unit's Constitution & Bylaws up-to-date? When were they last revised?

Each District Constitution & Bylaws Chairman is required to make a report to the Department Constitution & Bylaws Chairman on the status of every Unit's Constitution & Bylaws in your District by December 15, 2016.

Year-End Reports

Each Unit Constitution & Bylaws Chairman is required to make a report to the District Constitution & Bylaws Chairman on the status of that Unit's Constitution & Bylaws by April 1, 2017.

Each District Constitution & Bylaws Chairman is required to make a written report to the Department Constitution & Bylaws Chairman on the status of every Unit's Constitution & Bylaws in your District by April 15, 2017.

Resources Available through Emblem Sales: <http://emblem.legion.org>

1. National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules (Item 355.202)*
2. Unit Guide Book (Item 355.200)*
3. Parliamentary Procedure (Item 755.203)
4. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (Item 855.300, 855.301)
5. C&B program page at www.ALAforVeterans.org

* Items 1 & 2 may also be downloaded from National's website.
www.ALAforVeterans.org

How To Guides, Member Resources and Support Tools for Constitution and Bylaws can also be viewed and downloaded at www.ALAforVeterans.org (under Resources).

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