

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
PROGRAM ACTION PLAN
2020-2021

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

What is this program and why do we have it?

The Constitution & Bylaws program informs and educates members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of properly written, reviewed and updated documents, policies and procedures at all levels. Constitution & Bylaws are the basis for governing of your Unit. Preparing and adhering to updated Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules will ensure a more successful organizational process, and provide the structures to follow at all levels of our organization.

CONSTITUTION

Explains the structure of the organization: to include the Preamble, name, and purpose of the unit; 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: it is the Unit's core governing structure stating roles and purposes. Bylaws are to be 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 unit achieves good organizational procedures; details about the American Legion Auxiliary's structure, i.e. committee make-up, recurring governing events. Standing Rules 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. See the supplemental list at the end of this action plan.

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

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 10 years. However, if any changes are made prior to that, the Unit 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 Constitution & Bylaws Chairman’s approval.

Year-End Reports

Each Unit Constitution & Bylaws Chairman is required to complete the form at the end of this Action Plan and submit it to the District Constitution & Bylaws Chairman by April 1, 2021. Each District Constitution & Bylaws Chairman is required to complete the form at the end of this Action Plan with a compilation of the information you received from the Units to the Department Constitution & Bylaws Chairman by April 15, 2021.

Helpful Resources

1. National Constitution, Bylaws & Standing Rules* (<https://emblem.legion.org> Item #355-202)
2. Policies and Procedures Manual*
3. Unit Guide Book (<https://emblem.legion.org> Item 355-200)*
4. Parliamentary Procedures (<https://emblem.legion.org> Item 755-203)*
5. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (<https://emblem.legion.org> Item 855-301)*
6. Constitution and Bylaws Program pages at [www.ALAfor Veterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
7. ALA Department Operations Guide at www.ALAforVeteans.org

*Items 1, 3 and 4 may also be downloaded or viewed from National ALA Website - [www.ALAfor Veterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) along with other How to Guides and Member Resources.

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