



Pod—Organizational Support

- Audit Committee
- Constitution & Bylaws
- Parliamentarian (How To sheets only; no Plan of Action)
- National Finance
- Cavalcade of Memories
- Past Presidents Parley
- National Historian

Constitution & Bylaws

2011-2012 American Legion Auxiliary Plan of Action

Purpose: To inform and educate members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of properly written, reviewed and updated documents, policies and procedures at all levels.

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For examples on how to implement each objective in this Plan,
refer to the *How To* component at the end of this section.

Constitution & Bylaws

Constitution & Bylaws are the basis for governance of your Department, District, County and Unit. Preparing and adhering to an updated Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules will provide a more successful organizational process. The following is provided as a guideline to help facilitate reviews of your current Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules. Please remember that Department, District, County and Unit Constitutions, Bylaws, and Standing Rules cannot be in conflict with national governing documents.

Guidelines for Departments and Units

- A. Constitution & Bylaws
 - a. are the foundation of the organization
 - b. contain the most essential provisions relating to:
 - name of the organization
 - its object
 - membership
 - officers
 - meetings
 - executive board
 - committees
 - parliamentary authority
 - amendment to prescribe procedure change
 - c. are the law of the organization
 - should be reviewed every year
 - have direct bearing on the rights of members
 - d. should have a standard form and content
 - e. define the primary characteristics of the organization
 - f. prescribe how the organization functions
 - g. include all rules so important that they cannot be changed without previous notice
- B. Standing Rules
 - a. relate to the details of administration for the organization
 - b. may be adopted by a majority vote
 - c. may be amended or rescinded:
 - without prior notification by a two-thirds vote or a majority vote of the entire membership
 - with prior notification, by a majority vote.
- C. 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, the bylaws, or any special rules of order adopted by the organization.
- D. Definitions
 - a. Resolution: An elaborate, formally written motion. A resolution may contain a preamble that lists the reasons for adoption. Each reason is listed in a separate paragraph starting with the word “whereas.” A resolution must have at least one “resolved” clause that specifies the action or position being proposed.
 - b. Amendment: Proposes a change to the Constitution, Bylaws, Special Rules of Order, or Standing Rules. Also used to modify a motion under consideration.

For examples on how to implement each objective in this Plan,
refer to the *How To* component at the end of this section.

Constitution & Bylaws

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

1. National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules (also available at www.ALAforVeterans.org)
 2. Policies and Procedures manual
 3. Unit Handbook
 4. Parliamentary Procedure
 5. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised
- See program page on www.ALAforVeterans.org for additional resources.

For examples on how to implement each objective in this Plan,
refer to the *How To* component at the end of this section.



Committee:

Constitution & Bylaws

Submitted by:

Sharon Conatser, National Constitution & Bylaws Chairman

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Objective:

How to obtain copies of National Constitution & Bylaws

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Go to <http://www.alaforveterans.org/Documents/alaconstitution.pdf>
- You may print them for your Unit members.



Committee:

Constitution & Bylaws

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Objective:

Reviewing and interpreting Constitution & Bylaws

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- After National Convention, attain copies of all resolutions that passed.
- Integrate the changes (if needed) into your Department bylaws. Be sure members receive the changes in writing per your bylaws.
- Rulings are given by your Department Parliamentary Advisor.
- If still in question, please submit in writing your question to your Department Secretary, and she will contact National Headquarters for a ruling.
- Be sure your Department Bylaws are not in conflict with the National Bylaws.



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Constitution & Bylaws

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Objective:

Writing Standing Rules

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Start with a detail that relates to administration of your Unit (e.g., awards you present, budget for convention attendees, voting body).
- Write the Standing Rule.
- Present it at a Unit meeting.
- Passes with majority vote at any meeting. No advance notification is needed to Unit members.
- This document should be kept up-to-date, and each new Standing Rule dated with adoption date.



How to Exercise Your Rights and Duties as a Good Member

Committee:

National Parliamentarian

Submitted by:

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Objective:

To understand how to exercise your rights and duties as a good member.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- FOLLOW THE GOLDEN RULE - Be sensitive to the feelings of other members. Give them the benefit of doubt that they have positive motives for their actions.
 - Listen to what members are saying, not just to how they say it.
 - Be on time for meetings.
 - Pay attention and listen to others. Do not engage in side conversations.
 - Keep your remarks focused on only the issue. Don't ramble or backtrack.

- BECOME A KNOWLEDGEABLE MEMBER - Good members exercise their rights and also accept and meet expectations for member participation. You are empowered by knowing how the organization functions.
 - Obtain a copy of the basic documents such as bylaws, standing rules, and the *Unit Handbook*. Ask someone to help you get a copy of these resources, if necessary.
 - Become familiar with these documents and reference them often.
 - Help when asked. Volunteer if you can. Serve if elected.

- KNOW THE BASICS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE - A member has the right to attend meetings, make motions, speak in debate, vote, nominate, and hold office. Understand the correct process to exercise these rights. There are many books and resources available to learn all the rules of parliamentary procedure.
 - There are three basic guiding principles in parliamentary procedure:
 - § justice and courtesy for all
 - § the right of the majority to rule
 - § the right of the minority to be heard.

- SOME MAJOR POINTS OF THE BASICS FOLLOW:
 - Every meeting should have an agenda. The chairman should prepare it or review it before the meeting if someone else creates it. Advise the president in advance if you have business that should be on the agenda.

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*Parliamentarian How To continued*

- When you make a motion, say, "I move that..." (not "I motion..." or "I want to make a motion"). Language should be clear, brief, and specific. Consider who is to do what action, when, and will it be accepted by a majority of the members.
- The purpose of the "Second" is to understand there is a second person who agrees that a motion should be discussed. If the motion comes from a committee, a second is not needed.
- The maker of the motion is usually allowed to speak first. It is polite for members to not speak more than twice until all members have had a chance to speak on each motion. The chairman should try to allow alternating views to be heard as much as possible. All remarks should be addressed to the chair, not at other members.
- Motions have different levels of priority. For example, if a main motion is made and then an amendment is made to it, the amendment is addressed before there is more discussion on the merits of the main motion. An incidental "Point" is resolved at the time it is raised, no matter when it occurs.
- Discussion should continue until members wishing to speak have the opportunity or until the main points of both sides have been expressed. If there are members who want to continue the discussion and it has become repetitious, someone should move to end debate. If the discussion is ended or will end after a couple more speakers, the motion to end debate is not needed. The motion to end debate is, "I move previous question." It is a motion that takes away the right of members to have more discussion, so it must be voted on before the main motion is considered. The motion to end debate requires a 2/3 vote.
- It is important for members to voice their opinion during discussion and to vote. Silence means you are agreeing with the majority who do vote. To pass, some motions require a majority which is more than 50 percent of the votes cast. Other motions may require two-thirds of the votes cast.
- Votes may be taken by voice, a show of hands, standing, a voting card or ballot, roll call, or some electronic means. A vote may also be by unanimous consent when there is no objection. When a motion requires a two-thirds vote, it must be by a countable method.

"So use your knowledge and talents that others will be glad you possess them." --Henry M. Robert



How to be an effective parliamentarian in the American Legion Auxiliary

Committee:

National Parliamentarian

Submitted by:

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Objective:

To understand how to be an effective parliamentarian in the American Legion Auxiliary.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- **BE IMPARTIAL** - The parliamentarian is much like an official in a game. She is to be impartial and make sure everyone plays by the rules. Similarly, as the official does not play the game, the parliamentarian does not exercise the same rights as a member. She does not make motions, debate, or vote, except by ballot.
- **KNOW THE RULES** - Just as a referee must know the rules of the game, a parliamentarian must know the rules of the organization and of the parliamentary authority. As the size of the group increases, so must the depth of knowledge of the parliamentarian. A Department parliamentarian must know and understand bylaws, standing rules, and parliamentary procedure much better than a Unit parliamentarian.
- **PRESIDENT'S APPOINTMENT** - The president appoints the parliamentarian for her knowledge and skills, not as an honor or special appointment for a friend. The parliamentarian should be someone reliable and trusted to provide accurate advice for everyone on both sides of an issue. The president and parliamentarian should have a good working relationship.
- **VARIED ROLES** - The parliamentarian has a variety of duties before and during meetings with members, committees, officers, and boards. The goal is for the business to be handled properly and smoothly.
- **DUTIES BEFORE A MEETING** - Review the agenda with the president to be familiar with the business and possible problems that may arise. Review the bylaws and standing rules of the organization. Work with any committee members who request assistance in preparing reports for the meeting.
- **DUTIES DURING A MEETING** - Preparatory work before the meeting should reduce the work necessary during the meeting. The parliamentarian should arrive early to counsel as needed. Have a copy of the governing documents at the meeting. Keep track of the motions to assist the presiding officer. Be as inconspicuous as possible. Provide advice when requested and

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*Parliamentarian How To continued*

communicate with the president tactfully and discreetly. Remain impartial and be prepared to cite references if needed. Be available after the meeting for further counsel.

- **DUTIES FOR A CONVENTION** - The duties of the parliamentarian for a convention include those listed for meetings. Also be prepared to advise convention committees such as resolutions, credentials, rules, and elections. Review the script with the presiding officer. Stay focused, steady, patient, and fair.
- **PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**- Any organization requires rules of operation. The most important should be the hardest to change. Typically these include Corporate Charter, Constitution and/or Bylaws, Rules of Order such as *Robert's Rules*, and Standing Rules. The Charter, Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules are written specifically for a given organization. Those rules take precedence in governance. On matters not specifically addressed in those documents, the Rules of Order specified in the Bylaws are the parliamentary authority. This is usually *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. A parliamentarian should spend time studying these rules.
- **HELP MEMBERS LEARN** - During your year of service as parliamentarian also consider working with members to educate them in parliamentary procedure. This can be as you counsel them in their roles or teach lessons to further develop their knowledge and skills.
- **DEVELOP YOUR KNOWLEDGE** - Good parliamentarians are always learning their craft. Invest in your knowledge. Resources are available through Emblem Sales, through parliamentary associations, and online.

<http://emblem.legion.org/Books-Pamphlets/products/40/>

<http://parliamentarians.org/products.php>



How to Write a Resolution

Committee:

National Parliamentarian

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Objective:

To understand how to write a resolution.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- A resolution is a written formal motion. Resolutions are used because the motion may be presented in written form with some of the reasons included in the document. If written well, the resolution makes it easier for members to consider the proposal. Importance, length and complexity of the motion, and size and formality of the assembly are major considerations in using resolutions.
- A resolution has two sections - the resolving clauses and the reasons. Resolving clauses tell the specifics of the proposal. The main reasons a motion should be adopted are included in the "Whereas" clauses. Neither section should include more clauses than are absolutely necessary. Simple, but specific is best.
- When developing a written motion or resolution, consult with members who can be of assistance to improve the wording and whose support will assist in its adoption.
- The two sections of a resolution can be written in either order, but many believe it is better to write the main motion first and then write the reasons it should be adopted. This way, you first determine what is to be done. Focus on the most crucial specifics essential in the motion. Say it in one or two sentences. A third sentence could include who is responsible and a timeline.
- Once the main motion is determined, develop three to five statements to support the adoption of it. These are worded as "Whereas" clauses. These points should be the most important and least controversial arguments for the motion. Less than three points may not make the case depending on the motion, and more than five may get too complicated and confuse the issue. Again, it is important to stay focused on the points that are strictly necessary. Leave other points for the discussion.
- When the resolution is finally written, it begins with the "Whereas" clauses and ends with the resolved clauses. *Robert's Rules* prescribes the proper format, capitalization and punctuation. Again, it is a good idea to consult with members who can be of assistance and *Robert's Rules* to ensure your resolution is correctly formatted.

See the sample resolution attached to this guide.



Pod: Organizational Support

Committees included: Audit Committee, Constitution & Bylaws, Finance, Cavalcade of Memories, Past Presidents Parley, American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, Parliamentarian

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Objective:

Build and foster relationships with The American Legion Family - TAL, SAL, ALA, Riders

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Contact the leaders of The American Legion Family in the community where you are located.
- Invite them to a meeting, and ask them bring their ideas and vision for their TAL Family.
- Outline objectives.
- Arrange for refreshments and meeting space.
- Provide round tables with chairs for easy communication.
- Assign seating so that representatives from each part of TAL Family are at each table.
- Have flip charts and markers available for each table to document ideas.
- Assign a spokesperson for each table.
- Each table should conduct a SWOT analysis, which entails identifying your internal strengths and weaknesses and your external opportunities and threats.
- The spokesperson at each table will share the findings of their group with the entire audience.
- After all findings are shared, the group as a whole will identify ways to take advantage of your strengths, improve upon your weaknesses, look for opportunities and decrease your external threats, which could result in utilizing the ALA membership calendar for program activities such as Americanism Month and Children & Youth Month.
- As an American Legion Family, we can build our internal relationships by planning activities to foster our relationship.
- On a quarterly basis, bring the committee back together to assess your progress.