

Unit Governance

It is the responsibility of each Unit to keep their governing documents concise and up to date. Any changes at the national and department level should be included in the Constitution and Bylaws of each Unit. If written correctly we will all be on the same page.

Constitution

National Constitution - Under Article I Name; The name of this organization shall be the American Legion Auxiliary, Peace Arch Unit #0086 (use your Unit name and number) Department of Washington.

All other Articles should mirror those of department and national but using your Unit name and number.

Bylaws

National Bylaws - Under Article XIV - The authority under which all Departments and Units, of the American Legion Auxiliary shall function is vested in the National Constitution, and Bylaws and such Standing Rules as have been duly adopted. Any provision of any Department or Unit Constitution or Bylaws, or any regulation of any Department or Unit in conflict with the foregoing authority shall be void.

This makes sure that each entity is on the same page, therefore implementing and following the rules together. There are Articles which National say the Unit shall be responsible for, not the department, for example, Each Unit shall be responsible for verifying eligibility and deciding it's membership, subject to the restrictions of the National governing documents.

Adding a bylaw to your Unit bylaws is allowed if it does not conflict with national or department.

Standing Rules

Standing rules are the procedures of the entity, those of the department show the procedures of conferences, convention, department finance, dues, department officers and chairs, programs and general rules.

Your standing Rules would be specific to your Unit, dues per capita, meetings, programs, your budget, when you have an audit, whether volunteers at dinners get a free meal, no alcohol at a meeting, scholarships if any. It is up to you and your members.

Rules you shouldn't add, department and unit

- Membership eligibility that still lists "wives"
- Organization of women
- Unit bylaws should not be approved by department. Is the department ready to assume risk for the unit? If so, go ahead and approve. As C&B Chair I stopped "Approving" Unit documents and confirm that they are consistent with national and department instead. Units are separate entities. Department can ask for copies of Units C&B, but they only need to comply if they want to.
- Lapsed members do not have to pay back dues before being reinstated unless they want continuous years on their card.
- It is not the departments job to tell Units how to discipline its members.
- A rule that states a Unit must follow a procedure "as stated in the unit guide". What happens if that part of the unit guide no longer exists?
- "Recommend". A recommendation is not a rule.

I have included the recommended Unit Standing Rules in both Word and PDF along with the suggested constitution and bylaws in Word.

If you are updating your Unit's governing documents, I would appreciate receiving them in a Word document. I can then edit right on the document and return it to you for corrections.

If you have any questions, you can call me at 778-246-4450 or email me at I_lorna@dccnet.com

Lorna Ledoschuk
NEC
Department Constitution and Bylaws Chair