



Post \_\_\_\_\_  
Handbook

# Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

## Table of Contents

Our Post-----	3
Post Meetings -----	3
A Short History -----	4
Legion Uniform -----	4
Legion Language and Protocols-----	5
Volunteers are Super! They are! -----	5
Our Post Family -----	6
American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Unit -----	6
Our Post Programs -----	6
Sons of the American Legion (SAL) Squadron -----	6
American Legion Riders (ALR) Chapter -----	6
Training -----	7
“ <i>This is The American Legion</i> ” -----	7
Basic Training -----	7
Legion College-----	7
Legion Publications-----	7
Member Information (MyLegion.org)-----	8
Post Governance -----	9
Executive Committee-----	9
Vision of Success-----	9
Key Post Goals -----	9
Mission Statement-----	9
Constitution & By-Laws: -----	9
Post Leadership -----	10
No Partisan Politics-----	10
Summary Post Leader Duties -----	10
Post Operating Committees-----	12
Committee Descriptions -----	12
The Preamble-----	14
Our Post Address-----	14
Post Meeting Procedures-----	15



**1919 - 2019**  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
*Centennial celebration*

## 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 American Legion Riders work together as patriotic Americans to serve America and her veterans.

Since our very first meeting on March 15-17, 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.**

Under the Four Pillars are programs that support the foundation of The American Legion. They are as follows;



### **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation**

- VA Claims Backlog
- Access to VA Health Care
- Network of Service Officers
- GI Bill Benefits
- VA Vet Centers
- Health-care Funding Formula
- Veterans with Special Needs
- Volunteering
- Final Respects
- Heroes to Hometowns
- Careers for Veterans
- Homelessness

### **Children & Youth**

- Child Pornography
- Catastrophic Illness
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Family Integrity
- Immunization
- Media Violence
- Drug Abuse
- Child Sex Exploitation
- Family Support Network
- Temporary Financial Assistance
- Samsung Scholarship
- Child Welfare Foundation

# Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

---

## National Security

- Support for the Troops
- Size of the Armed Forces
- Quality of Life
- Homeland Security
- POW/MIAs
- Operation Comfort Warriors

## Americanism

Veterans in the Classroom  
Illegal Immigration  
Get Out the Vote  
Scouts  
Citizen's Flag Alliance  
Boys State  
American Legion Baseball  
High School Oratorical Contest

To the extent you are able, we hope you find ways to contribute to the proud future of Post \_\_\_\_ . Our Post's future will be defined by our service to local veterans, their families, \_\_\_\_\_ County communities, Tennessee 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 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. If we cannot provide answers for you, your Chain of Command is as follows; Post Commander, District Commander, Department Vice Commander, Department Commander.

## POST MEETINGS

- Business Meeting: Call of the Commander
- Member Meeting:
- Social: \_\_\_\_\_
- Facebook Page: \_\_\_\_\_

## A SHORT HISTORY



# Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

Post \_\_\_\_ is over \_\_\_\_ members strong and growing. Our Post is an integral part of the greater \_\_\_\_ County 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 and parliamentary procedure.
- **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



## Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

- 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.
- **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.

### OUR POST FAMILY



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 Friday before Memorial Day, 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 support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

Meeting:

#### 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:

## Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

### 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 raising scholarship funds for children of Post 9/11 Veterans. This program is called the Legacy Scholarship.



Meeting:

### 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 of the Post, that operate as subordinate units with their own leadership.

### TRAINING

<https://www.legion.org/training>

<https://www.tennesseelegion.org>



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. Select “American Legion Training and Education” link on the Department website to access LEAD (Leadership, Education and Development) classes.

“**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&t=17s>

- **BASIC TRAINING** – Focuses on the Four Pillars and programs of The American Legion for officers and members. To take the course, visit <https://www.legion.org/alei> or

# Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

request the offline course from the Department.

- **TENNESSEE LEGION COLLEGE** – Expands material covered in Basic Training (Held each year the 2 days following Department Convention).
- **NATIONAL 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>)

- [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](http://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



## Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

- 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 ensure dues are paid by October 20, per Article V Section 4 of the National Constitution.

*I want to setup automatic payments for future annual membership renewals.*



### POST GOVERNANCE

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 our post, the Executive Committee members are:



**VISION OF SUCCESS:** 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.”

# Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

---

**CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS:** The Constitution & Bylaws 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. Our Post Constitution and Bylaws may not conflict with, and are subordinate to the Department of Tennessee Constitution and Bylaws and National Constitution and Bylaws.

## **POST LEADERSHIP**

In The American Legion and Our Post, leadership is provided by members such as yourself. Post leaders are fundamentally responsible for the success of Our Post. These Legionnaires serve in many different capacities, as Post officers, committee members, chairmen and mentors. Good Post leaders have the initiative and commitment necessary to provide honorable and noteworthy service to our veterans, their families and the communities we serve.

Members interested in potential leadership roles must be dedicated to increasing their knowledge of The American Legion policy and procedure. Communicating this information and that dispersed by the Department staff, is critical to an effective Post. Members at every level of the Department of Tennessee are here to assist in your progression, as the need arises.

Attendance at your District Meetings, the Department Mid-Winter Conference and the Department Convention will also assist in your growth. At each of these gatherings, Department leaders will disseminate valuable information and provide an opportunity for your inquiries.

### **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 OF POST LEADER DUTIES**

Post leaders are responsible for the post's success. Our Post Constitution and Bylaws 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, Adjutant, Service Officer, First Vice Commander and Finance Officer are "required" officers on the annual *Post Officer Certification Form*. This is

## Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

---

one of three forms our post must submit each year, to maintain our charter.

**Post Commander** (Elected) 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.

**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, processing membership and coordinating with the Post's various committees.

**First Vice-Commander** (Elected) The First Vice Commander, fulfills the duties of the Post Commander in their absence. The first vice commander is primarily concerned with membership. In too many posts, the First Vice Commander serves as a Membership Committee of one. A post, even a small post, should have Recruitment, Renewal, and Reconnect Committees 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 three (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 ceremonial programs, and other duties as directed by the Post.

**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.

**Post Service Officer** (Elected) shall educate the Post on veteran's benefits and assist in gathering information for the County Veterans Service Officer (VSO).

**Sgt-at-Arms** (Elected) shall preserve order at all meetings, ensures members are properly greeted at the door, makes new members welcome, and oversees flag etiquette/disposal, and

# Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Post.

**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.

## POST OPERATING COMMITTEES

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

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, Scouts, Oratorical Contest and School Award Medal Program.



**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.

are our PRIMARY FUNDRAISERS. Our Legion Family and friends of Post \_\_\_\_ give their financial support to this important event to help fund The American Legion programs we conduct.

## Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

**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.



As a small Post, we have committees that our membership numbers can support. In addition to the aforementioned committees, several others are used to support our Four Pillars. They are; **National Security Committee, Legislative Committee, Veterans Employment and Education Committee, and Internal Affairs Committee.**



## Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

---

*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.



**THE AMERICAN LEGION**  
VETERANS • DEFENSE • AMERICANISM • YOUTH

### **Our Post**

## **POST MEETING**

### **Opening, Business & Closing**

All officers should be in uniform, each wearing an official Legion cap and the official badge of office. The commander shall announce the meeting is about to open. Officers shall take their stations. The commander shall seat those present with one rap of the gavel, and the sergeant-at-arms shall close the doors of the meeting hall. The commander shall then give three raps of the gavel, and all who are present shall stand at attention.

**Post Commander:** “The color bearers will advance the colors”

*As the color bearers start to advance, the commander gives the command to salute*

**Post Commander:** “Hand salute”

*Give the command “Two” immediately after the colors have been posted*

**Post Commander:** “The chaplain will offer prayer”

**Post Commander:** “All members and guests in attendance shall remain standing with their caps removed and placed over their hearts from the opening prayer, through the POW/MIA ceremony, and concluding with the Pledge of Allegiance”

*The chaplain offers prayer*

**Post Commander:** “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. This is a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of

## Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

---

the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves to this vital endeavor!”

**Post Commander:** “Place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair.”

*The first and second vice commanders, or other designated individuals, approach the empty chair carrying a folded POW/MIA flag. Upon reaching the chair, they reverently unfold the flag and drape it over the chair with the crest facing the membership. After the meeting is concluded, the POW/MIA flag should be refolded and stored for future use.*

*The post commander leads the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Tradition in The American Legion requires Legionnaires to recite the Pledge of Allegiance with cap in hand over heart.*

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all”.

*Regular meeting opening resumes after the Pledge of Allegiance*

**Post Commander:** “Cover”.

*The post commander and members recite the preamble of the Constitution of The American Legion slowly and in unison, as follows:*

“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;

## Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

---

“To make right the master of might;

“To promote peace and good will 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”.

*The post commander seats members with one rap of the gavel.*

**Post Commander:** “I now declare this meeting of Post \_\_\_\_\_, The American Legion, Department of Tennessee, regularly convened”.

### **Roll call**

This may be done prior to the reading of minutes or introduction of guests, but it is usually best to do just before the meeting’s business commences. The person answering for a post should rise, render the appropriate salute, and state his or her name, position and number of attendees. Convey this to those in attendance during social hour for an opportunity to once again meet each post and have a smooth and professional meeting.

### **Reading of minutes of previous meeting (vote on adoption)**

### **Introduction of guests**

Department officers present should be given special recognition and the opportunity to extend greetings at a time predetermined by the Post Commander and Department officer. Suggested text would be, “We are delighted to have our Department \_\_\_\_\_ Commander, Joe Smith, with us today, and we will be happy to hear from him at this time”.

### **The suggested order of business shall be:**

Committee reports

Sick call

Unfinished business

## Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

---

New business and correspondence  
Business for the good of The American Legion

**Post Commander:** “With no further business to come before the meeting, the chaplain will lead us in prayer”.

*The commander gives three raps of the gavel, and the membership rises and uncovers. The chaplain prays.*

**Post Commander:** “Cover. Sergeant-at-arms, recover the POW/MIA flag”.

*The sergeant-at-arms steps forward, picks up the POW-MIA flag off the chair, folds the flag, steps back and places the POW-MIA flag on the table in front of the commander*

“Till we meet again let us remember our obligation to our country can be fulfilled only by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of The American Legion and its members. Let us be ever watchful of the honor of our country, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom and democracy. The color bearers will retire the flag of our country”.

*As the color bearers retrieve the colors, the commander shall give the command to salute*

**Post Commander:** “Hand salute”.

*As the color bearers reach the rear of the meeting hall, the commander says, “Two*

**Post Commander:** “I now declare this meeting of Post\_\_\_\_\_, The American Legion, Department of Tennessee, adjourned”.

*The commander gives one rap of the gavel*

# Post \_\_\_\_ Handbook

---

