



Constitution & Standing Rules

Marsha Bible ~ Chairman

The Constitution & Standing Rules program's purpose is 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 every level. They are the basis for governing your unit, district and our department. Reviewing and following the updated Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules ensures a more successful organizational process and provides a structured guideline for our members to follow at all levels.

Unit, District and Department Constitutions are only revised at our Department Conventions. A two-thirds vote of the total number of votes to which the accredited delegates present are entitled by provisions of the Department Constitution, providing the proposed amendments shall have been submitted through the Department Secretary to the Department Executive Committee prior to the convention; and provided that all proposed amendments shall be read at a regular meeting of the convention.

Constitution and Bylaws:

- Are the foundation of the organization
- Contain the most essential provisions relating to the organization, its name, purpose, membership, officers, meetings, governing board, committees, parliamentary authority and amendments to prescribe structure changes
- Are the law of the organization
- Should be reviewed, but not changed, every year
- Have direct bearing on the rights of members
- Should have a standard form and content
- Define the primary characteristics of the organization
- Prescribe how the organization is structured and functions
- Include all rules that are so important that they cannot be changed without prior notice⁴⁴

Standing Rules:

- Relate to the details of administration for the organization
- May be adopted by a majority vote
- May be amended or rescinded at any regularly scheduled meeting with prior notification, by a majority vote, unless the bylaws stipulate otherwise, without prior notification by a two-thirds vote

Unit and District Standing Rules may be changed at the unit and district level.

Department Standing Rules are changed at the department level through the resolution process.

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the American Legion Auxiliary 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.

A Resolution is 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.

An Amendment proposes a change to the Constitution, Bylaws, Special Rules of Order or Standing Rules. It is also used to modify a motion under consideration.

Each District should have a Constitution & Standing Rules Chairman. Districts are asked to submit a copy of their most recent District Standing Rules to me.

Units should also have a Constitution & Standing Rules Chairman. Each year they should review their Standing Rules to ensure that they are in compliance with our department and national organization’s updates.

Changes were made to the Department and District Constitutions at the 2017 Department Convention. Everyone should make sure that they are using the most current version of these documents. They can be found on our department website at mnala.org and will be in the Unit Guide. On the website select the “About Us” tab at the top of the page and you can scroll down for either the Constitution or Standing Rules.

Resources Available (through American Legion Emblem Sales at emblem.legion.org or on one of the websites noted below)

- National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules (available at ALAforVeterans.org)
- Policies and Procedures Manual
- Unit Handbook
- Parliamentary Procedure
- *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*
- Constitution & Bylaws program page (at ALAforVeterans.org under Programs Action Page)

Informed members equal happy members. Keeping your members informed as changes are made promote our Strategic Plan. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you have while reviewing and updating your documents.

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