



## CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS GUIDE 2016-2017

Another year is upon us. The National President's Mary Davis theme is "*That's ALA Member Pride*" and our Department President Ellen theme is "*Hats off to our veterans*".

By learning the Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules and the Preamble of our great organization on all levels we can be on the way to having a meeting that is enjoyable. Each Unit and District throughout this state should have copies of the National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules, Department Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules, District Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules and the uniform Unit Constitution and Bylaws. Units in Michigan write Standing Rules and adopt the Unit Constitution and Bylaws as prescribed by the Department of Michigan. The uniform Unit Constitution and Bylaws was first adopted in 1925 and has been changed throughout the years. Remember that the Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules are all separate documents and each should be available to all members. The Department Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules along with the uniform Unit Constitution and Bylaws are available online at [www.michalaux.org](http://www.michalaux.org). The National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules are also available online at [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org), member resource. As of this writing, the newly revised Bylaws for the Unit and Bylaws and Standing Rules for the Department have not been changed to incorporate the changes voted on at the 2016 Department Convention.

Districts in the Department of Michigan should write a Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules and include in them how their District is run. There are no uniform Bylaws for the District. As stated in the Department of Michigan Standing Rules, "*each District shall organize and adopt Bylaws in conformity with the Department and National constitution and Bylaws.*" As of the time I am typing this Guide, all of the Districts except one has a Constitution and Bylaws. Hopefully this year that District will write a Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. These also must be approved by the Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairman and the same requirements for the Units apply to the District (three copies, signed by the President, Secretary or Constitution and Bylaws Chairman and a self-addressed stamped envelope). If a person is both Secretary and Constitution and Bylaws Chairman make sure the President signs the document (have two different signatures). Each District should now be charter by the National Organization. Charter applications are available from the Department Office. The Constitution and Bylaws should only be changed at your Annual meeting; these documents are to be the hardest to change. If anything is in the bylaws that your District might change a lot, please move it to your Standing Rules.

Standing Rules are rules which are related to the details of the administration of a Unit rather than parliamentary procedure. There are policies that outline the customs or wishes of the Unit or District and are easily adopted or changed as the need arises. Standing rules can be adopted by a majority vote at any business meeting without previous notice given. Standing Rules should be reviewed annually and changes made as necessary to ensure the smooth operation of the Unit or District. These rules need to be updated ***EVERY THREE (3) YEARS and sent to the Department Chairman for approval.*** If no changes are needed, send the form attached to this guide to the Department Chairman and it will be placed on file. When writing Standing rules, you should not duplicate what is in the Bylaws. After the Unit or District adopt their Standing Rules, be sure they are dated as to when they were adopted, signed by the Constitution and Bylaws Chairman and the President or Secretary (two signatures are required and not all the same person). Please send three (3) copies along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Department Chairman for approval or corrections. If a correction is needed, copies will be returned to you, with a letter stating the correction that is required. If approved, one copy will be returned to you, one copy to the Department Headquarters Office and one copy is kept in the Chairman's File. ***Please remember to send a copy of your Standing Rules to your District Chairman of Constitution and Bylaws, the Department does not send them a copy.***

The objectives of this committee is to assist Units in updating their Standing Rules, have the most current copies on file and serve as a resource person to the Units as requested. The same applies to the Districts, to assist them in updating or writing their Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules, have copies on file and serve as a resource person to the Districts as requested. The Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules are critical in that they govern the operations of all levels of this organization. These documents should be considered working tools along with the Unit Guide Book and Policies and Procedures book. This year I will be sending a copy of each standing rules to my committee-members to have them go over your standing rules. They must send it back to me with any corrections that they think should be made or let me know that the rules are oked. I will also be going over your Standing Rules and I will approve them. It will take a little bit longer for you to receive them back.

Creating an interest among members to study Constitution and Bylaws is a challenge. It is each member's responsibility to have a copy of the Unit's Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules to learn the rules governing your Unit. New members should be given a copy along with their membership card so that they will have the material to study and become interested, productive members. Please remember that you are a Unit and not the Post. I have had Unit standing rules that state they are Post number so and so of the American Legion. You are a separate organization and are considered a Unit of the American Legion Auxiliary.



The Unit Guide Book is a comprehensive source of information on the American Legion Auxiliary and its programs; Unit operations and procedures, membership eligibility and prescribed ceremonies. Along with the handbook are the Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules that explain the structure of the organization; the governing topics unique to the issues such as: Election of officers; duties and powers of those officers; frequency of meetings; discipline; quorum, etc; and rules which are related to the details of the administration of the organization's level.

The Presiding Officer should always have at hand the Unit Guide book, National, Department and Unit Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. Please use the Unit Guide book, Policies and Procedures manual (which can be found on the National website) and the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (11<sup>th</sup> Edition). Questions that are not covered under the Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules are governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (11<sup>th</sup> Edition) The Eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) Edition supersedes all previous editions and is intended automatically to become the parliamentary authority in organizations whose bylaws prescribe "Robert's Rules of Order," "Robert's Rules of Order Revised," and "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised," or "the current edition of" any of these titles, or the like, without specifying a particular edition. If the bylaws specifically identify one of the nine previous editions of the work as parliamentary authority, the bylaws should be amended to prescribe "the current edition of "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised."

Constitution and Bylaws are classified as an activity and not a program; therefore, there are no awards presented by this committee. This committee would appreciate hearing from you throughout the year on what you have done on studying the Preamble, The Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules of all levels of our organization. This year we will have an annual report included in the Annual Report Form so that we can find out what your Unit is doing on Constitution and Bylaws and answer the questions that National has asked of us.

Attached separately, is a sheet with instructions for writing Standing Rules which is very helpful. Please use this attachment.

When a new Unit is formed in your District, provide them with a sample copy of Standing Rules. Make yourself or another member available to them so that they have someone to go to to get their questions answered. This is an important time in our organization, we need to mentor, when a new Unit is formed, and we need to show how happy we are that they have joined us by making ourselves available to assist them.

With the rules set forth by National, Department and Unit, your meeting should run smoothly and efficiently. If this committee can assist you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact any of us listed below. We are here to serve and assist you and your Unit and District in any manner that we can.

Donna Fuelling, Chairman  
24646 McDonald  
Dearborn Hts, MI 48125  
313-291-7574  
[bearpoo54@aol.com](mailto:bearpoo54@aol.com)  
Unit #409-16<sup>th</sup> District

Sandra Stehle-Committee Member  
268 Marquette Ave.  
Holland, MI 49424  
Unit 6 -5<sup>th</sup> District



*No Changes in Unit/District Standing Rules Form*

*Unit# \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ District has had no changes in their Unit/District Standing Rules.*

*Please file this as an attachment to the previous file.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*President or Secretary*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Constitution and Bylaws Chairman*

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_

*Please submit three (3) copies to the Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairman along with a self-address stamped envelope. One copy will be returned to you for your files.*

*Approved Date* \_\_\_\_\_

---

*Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairman*

## Guidelines for writing Unit Standing Rules

Every set of Standing Rules needs to be preceded with this statement before the first rule is listed:

*“The \_\_\_\_\_ (Unit name and number) of the \_\_\_\_ District, American Legion Auxiliary, hereby adopts the Unit Constitution and Bylaws as prescribed by the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan. (See Unit Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 14) This does not appear on District Standing Rules as each District should write own Constitution and Bylaws. (See Department Standing Rules, District Organization & Bylaws, paragraph 2).”*

*“This Unit shall be governed by the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, in all questions not governed by the articles of the National, Department and Unit Constitution and Bylaws.”*

*Then start with listing your Standing Rules.*

*The following is an outline or guide for Units when writing or updating their Standing Rules. Not every item will apply to everyone and something’s that concern your Unit may not be listed, but we hope these guidelines will be helpful.*

- 1. State time (day and hour) of meeting, place of meeting and information on notification of meeting. Are your meetings all 12 months (See Unit Bylaws, Article VI-Meetings)?*
- 2. Dues-Senior, Junior, Gold Star Mothers, Life Members.*
- 3. Process for selecting Life members.*
- 4. Election-(See Unit Bylaws, Article I & II).*
  - a. When will election be held?*
  - b. Secretary and/or Treasurer-elected or appointed?*
  - c. A nominating committee-yes or no? Elected per Robert’s Rules of Order.*
- 5. Election of delegates for Department Convention and District meeting and Representatives to Fall and Mid-Winter Conference. When and how selected. (Unit Bylaws Article 1 Section 2).*
- 6. Installation of Officers. When, Where, Who is in charge. (Unit Bylaws, Article 1, Section 2).Remember Officers take Office at the close of Department Convention.*
- 7. Equipment-Rules for loaning, maintenance, etc.*
- 8. Finances----*



- a. *Rent*
  - b. *Utilities*
  - c. *Working funds for officer, chairmen, poppy purchases, Girl State, V.A. & R., etc.*
  - d. *Annual gifts for District President, retiring officers, etc.*
  - e. *Flowers and/or gifts for illness, death, etc.*
  - f. *Expenses for delegates to Department Convention and District meetings and Representative for Fall Conference, etc. (Registration fee, mileage, per diem, etc.)*
  - g. *How bills are paid and who signs the checks.*
  - h. *Contest prizes---how much for Poppy, Essay, etc.*
  - i. *Department and District mandatory dues.*
  - j. *Arrangement for special dinners—funerals, etc.*
  - k. *Annual donations to special programs or charities*
  - l. *Filing of 990 form with IRS- who file and when*
9. *The fiscal year of this Unit will be July 1 through June 30 inclusive. (See Unit Bylaws, Article III)*
10. *Audit-when and by whom (Unit Bylaws, Article X, Section 4)*
11. *This paragraph should appear at the end of your Standing Rules: “These Standing Rules may be amended by two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote at any regularly scheduled meeting, or if notice has been given, by a majority vote.”*
12. *The date of the Unit meeting at which these Standing Rules were approved MUST be shown, ALSO the signature of the Unit Constitution and Bylaws Chairman and Unit President or Unit Secretary MUST appear on the bottom of the list. Please have two different people sign.*

*Mail three (3) copies of your Standing Rules to the Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairman. One copy will be returned either for correction or approval. ENCLOSE a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of your copy. One copy is for the Unit, one for Department office and one to be kept on file for the Department Chairman. (It is important that we have the name and address of a person to contact in the Unit.)*

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

## Resources List

These items are available from the Department Headquarters, American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, 212 North Verlinden Avenue, Suite B, Lansing, Michigan 48915

| ITEM   | PRICE          |
|--|----------------|
| <b>National Constitution and Bylaws</b><br>(Revised-2014) Department Office  | <b>\$ 2.50</b> |
| <b>Department Constitution and Bylaws</b><br>(Revised-2014) Department Office<br>Available on website_www.michalaux.org  | <b>\$ 3.50</b> |
| <b>Parliamentary Procedure</b>   | <b>\$ 2.00</b> |
| <b>American Legion Auxiliary Preamble</b><br>(8" x 10 ½")  | <b>\$ 2.00</b> |
| <b>Unit Guide book</b><br><b>Revised (2014) Department Office</b><br>(Currently being revised)<br>Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, Latest Edition (11 <sup>th</sup> ) available from National Emblem Sales at a cost of:<br>\$28.95 Hard Copy Stock #855.300<br>\$13.95 Paper Back Copy Stock #855.301<br>Or purchase at your local bookstore. | <b>\$12.00</b> |

Most of these items are also available from National Emblem Sales, the American Legion, P. O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206 or telephone 1-888-LEGION or online at: [www.Emblem.legion.org](http://www.Emblem.legion.org).

Shipping and packing not included in the above prices.

National Association of Parliamentarians website: [www.parliamentarians.org](http://www.parliamentarians.org)

National American Legion Auxiliary website: [www.alaforveterns.org](http://www.alaforveterns.org)