

Does your Unit have a Constitution and By-Laws?

Have you reviewed it lately?

Do you know where it is?

Do your officers and members have access to it?

Your Constitution and By-Laws are the rules for your Unit. Governing documents describe the member's relationship to the organization and have provisions protecting the rights of its members.

Properly written bylaws cannot contain rules to the contrary to any local, state and national laws. The Constitution and Bylaws are two documents, with the Constitution being the primary document with higher authority. While the constitution provides the structure of the organization, it is the Bylaws that outline the procedures or the process to accomplish a particular task.

Your Constitution and Bylaws should be reviewed once a year. It is recommended that amendments are limited to modification approximately every five to ten years.

Consideration for changing a written rule is through a formal motion known as a resolution. Once voted on and adopted, this resolution (motion) becomes effective immediately unless otherwise specified within the motion. It is important to note that the bylaws cannot be suspended as a whole. An article within the Bylaws can only be suspended if a particular clause specifically provides for its own suspension or clauses in the nature of rules of order.

Standing rules describe in detail how administrative procedures are carried out. These rules have the flexibility to be adopted or amended as needed.

For additional information, there are resources available through "Support Tools" at www.alaforveterans.org; Roberts Rules of Order and the American Legions Auxiliary Department Operations Guide.

This year the Constitution and By-Laws Committee will be presenting a certificate to every unit that reports by April 15th that your Unit has updated its C&B.

Martha Whitaker, Chairman

Members: Flora Jean Craig, Martha Corriher, Mary Ward, and Michelle Potuzak
