



**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY**  
**Department of Ohio**

**2009-2010**  
**CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**  
**PLAN OF ACTION**

**Department of Ohio Constitution & Bylaws Chairman**

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**Communication Is Key**  
**Martha Lee Thatcher**  
**2009-2010 Department President**

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

2009-2010

Looking at the revision dates on the list of Unit Constitution and Bylaws at Department has helped influence the Department's goals for this year.

## CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OBJECTIVES

1. **OBJECTIVE** – Units that have Constitution and Bylaws older than 2000 updated and filed at Department.

### **Action Steps:**

- a. Provide District Presidents a list of Units that do not have a Constitution & Bylaws on file in Department.
  - b. Give each District President a list of her Units that were updated previous to 1995 because they do not include the last eligibility date. Therefore, it is probably safe to say there are major changes to be made.
  - c. Give each District President a list of her Units Constitution & Bylaws that were last updated between 2006 and 1995.
  - d. District Presidents will then work with the Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairman to provide input on Unit C&Bs and the tools necessary to have Unit C&Bs updated and placed on file at Department.
2. **OBJECTIVE** – To change the perception that a Unit's Constitution and Bylaws are dull as dishwater. (They are as much a living, breathing part of a Unit as a Member.)

### **Action Steps:**

- a. Units will receive presentations at School of Instruction and Mid-Winter and receive a working example that can be used as a template for all Units.
3. **OBJECTIVE** – To encourage Unit members to read and become familiar with their Unit's document, ask for clarification on anything they don't understand, and definitely make suggestions if they have a good idea.

### **Action Steps:**

- a. Hold mini-leadership training sessions (10-15 minutes at a Unit or District meeting).
- b. Ask members questions and have little prizes for correct answers.
- c. Ask members if they understand why certain things are in the Unit Constitution & Bylaws; do they understand why it is written that way; do they have any questions.

The National Organization's Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules and Policy Statement set rules and regulations for the American Legion Auxiliary Departments and the organization of Units. The Department of Ohio takes these rules and incorporates them, along with rules that pertain to Ohio Units, in Ohio's Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules and Policy Statement. When drawing up or revising a Unit's documents we are required to conform to these regulations. In other words we cannot be in conflict with the National and Department of Ohio Constitution and Bylaws. Each Unit is unique in the way they go about Auxiliary business and the way members wish to conduct their programs and activities. Rules may be added to reflect your member's wishes as long as they do not conflict with National or Department rules.

Unit President's should appoint a C & B committee and chairman each year to go over the Unit constitution and Bylaws, compare it to the Department documents and recommend any changes needed to the membership. Each chairman is encouraged to use this review as a program at one meeting each year. Try to make it fun, have a quiz with fun prizes or give a raffle ticket and draw for prizes at the end of the meeting for members who have their governing documents with them at meetings.

The "Model Unit Constitution and Bylaws" will help you in organizing the articles and sections needed to govern your Units particular needs. Keep in mind that the foundation of a Unit is in the Constitution. The Bylaws tell how the Unit is going to build on that foundation and Standing Rules provide for day-to-day activities the Unit wishes to do on a continuing basis between meetings. Any change to the Constitution and Bylaws must be read at a regular meeting. All members must be notified in advance when a change is to be voted on. State how your Unit will do this in your bylaws. Suggestions are: put a notice in your Post/Auxiliary Newsletter; do a special mailing with notification; set a particular meeting each year that changes will be done. Your members have a copy of the document so they can read when it will be and you can still put a reminder in your newsletter if you want. The revised or amended Constitution and Bylaws does not go into effect until it is accepted and filed at Department Headquarters as the official documents of a Unit. Standing rules can be made or changed by a motion and vote at a regular meeting and be in effect immediately without acceptance from Department.

Do you utilize Standing Rules?

I'll bet there are several procedures your Unit does when doing a particular program or function. The Unit has always done it this way but it's not written down anywhere. Someone new comes in and has agreed to chair a particular program. You give her a copy of the plan of action and turn her loose. She comes up with the way she wants to do it and somebody starts "But we've always done it this way..." How would she know if you don't have it documented where a member can read it? Put it in your Standing Rules.

Here's what I would like for you to do for me.

If you have something documented that your Unit does a particular way, send me a note or an email. In the bulk mailings I'm going to share these tips. I have several to start but I would love to hear about yours.

Here's your first tip:

If you have several Standing Rules you might want to start separating them for the Office it would come under or the Program so they would be easy to look up.

Here's your second tip:

Membership - When a member turns 70 years young and has 10 years continuous membership the Unit will present her an honorary life membership. Now you're going to ask, how do we know when they turn 70? Most ladies will not divulge their age. It's listed in your standing rules and you can still put a reminder in your newsletter. Trust me...they or a family member will let you know.

**Bulletin:** You can now receive a copy of the Unit model Constitution and Bylaws by email as a Microsoft Word Document, make your changes and additions and print it off. It will save you a lot of time. Just email me at the email address below and request a copy.

To encourage you to provide the proper tools for your officers, chairman and members on the next page is a listing of resources available from:

American Legion Emblem Sales  
PO Box 1050 Indianapolis  
IN 46206-1050  
Telephone 1-888-453-4466.  
Order on line at [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)

## CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS RESOURCES

### Emblem Sales

a.	<u>National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules</u>	<u>355.202</u>
b.	<u>Policies and Procedures Manual.</u>	<u>355.204</u>
c.	<u>Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised</u>	<u>Hardback 855.300</u>
		<u>Paperback 855.301</u>
d.	<u>Unit Handbook of the American Legion Auxiliary</u>	<u>355.200</u>
e.	<u>Parliamentary Procedure.</u>	<u>755.203</u>
f.	<u>Lets Be Proper.</u>	<u>355.205</u>
g.	<u>American Legion Auxiliary Preamble Certificate 8" x 10"</u>	<u>333.130</u>

### Books Recommended by Chris Dickey, Parliamentarian to National Convention

- English Grammar for Dummies by Geraldine Woods
- Robert's Rules for Dummies by C. Alan Jennings
- The Complete Idiot's Guide to Robert's Rules by MA, PDP, CPP-T, Nancy Sylvester

(Ms. Dickey conducted the Workshop on Resolutions & Bylaws at National Convention this year. She recommended having a book on grammar on hand. It is important to know where to put commas and other punctuation. She also stated that the Dummies and Idiot' Guide were both good books and that she knows both of those authors.)

### Websites

<u>American Legion Auxiliary</u>	<u><a href="http://www.legion-aux.org">www.legion-aux.org</a></u>
<u>National Association of Parliamentarians</u>	<u><a href="http://www.parliamentarians.org">www.parliamentarians.org</a></u>
<u>Robert's Rules of Order</u>	<u><a href="http://www.robertsrules.org">www.robertsrules.org</a></u>
<u>The Official Robert's Rules of Order</u>	<u><a href="http://www.robertsrules.com">www.robertsrules.com</a></u>
<u>Survival Tips on Robert's Rules of Order</u>	<u><a href="http://www.roberts-rules.com">www.roberts-rules.com</a></u>
<u>Parliamentary Procedure Online</u>	<u><a href="http://www.parlipro.org">www.parlipro.org</a></u>