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Massachusetts

**Duties and Obligations of Post Officers
and Chairmen**

National Bylaw's, Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.

Post officers, elected and appointed, and chairmen, shall have such duties as are prescribed in these bylaws and in the Manual of Procedure.

If every Post Officer were familiar with their duties and responsibilities and their limitations -- and carried out their duties to the best of their ability -- there would be very few squabbles within a Post and none which would require outside intervention. The National Manual of Procedure specifically lists certain duties for each officer and, in the normal course of events, this would be sufficient. However, the complex nature of the operation of many Posts makes it necessary that we look beyond a mere listing of duties and fully understand the reasons for the division of authority. In this way we can apply them to the unusual situations which are bound to crop up from time to time.

Post Commander

Manual of Procedure, Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.

Among the duties of a Post Commander, the Commander shall:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Post, conducting such meetings in accordance with Article X of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and other applicable parliamentary rules.
- b. Enforce strict observance of the laws and usages of this organization, including Post, County Council (if applicable), District and Department Bylaws and the Congressional Charter, National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual and all lawful orders from proper authorities.
- c. Insist that Post business and activities be conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment upon the Post, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Post Commander



d. Decide all questions of law and usage in the Post, subject to appeal pursuant to the Bylaws.

e. Upon entering into office, appoint all other officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.

f. Approve all disbursements of funds properly authorized by the Post.

g. Assure that the office of Quartermaster is bonded according to Section 703 of the Bylaws.

h. Assure that all dues and other monies due the National Headquarters and Department are forwarded promptly together with accurate reports and returns pertaining thereto.

i. Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded, that all the business of the Post is handled with dispatch and that all necessary licenses and permits are obtained for proper operation. Cont.

Post Commander



Ensure that a properly completed Report of Election of Officers for the ensuing year is submitted to Department and National Headquarters by June 1.

j. Assure that the Post Trustees have examined the books and records of the Post and prepared the Post Trustees Quarterly Report of Audit no later than the end of the month following the last day of each quarterly period.

k. Assure that the Commander or their representative attend all properly called District Conventions or meetings and County Council meetings (if applicable).

l. Comply with and perform all of the duties required by the laws and usages of this organization, the provisions of these bylaws, the Manual of Procedure and Ritual and Department, District, County Council (if applicable) or Post Bylaws pertaining to the duties and obligations of a Post Commander and lawful orders from proper authority and perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

m. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.

Post Commander Summary

The **Post Commander** is the key officer of the Post. They, alone, represent the **judicial** branch of the organization and also have some of the responsibilities of the **executive** branch.

- They preside at all meetings, enforce the rules, appoint committees not otherwise provided for, and make certain that the other officers and committeemen perform their duties.
- Their authority extends to the Post Home or Club to the extent of enforcing the rules of the Post and the National and Department VFW and public laws.
- They represent the authority of the Post between meetings, and their voice is that of the Post membership.
- Their authority also is limited according to the rules of the organization and the bounds of common sense. **They are in no sense a dictator.**

Post Commander Summary

- They cannot order nor permit the breaking of laws nor can they supersede the recognized authority of other officers or committees. They cannot, for instance, order the Club Manager to keep the clubrooms open after hours, nor can they direct the Post Quartermaster to pay an unauthorized bill.
- The Commander should be familiar with all activities of the Post.
- They should sit in with the Trustees at their audits or, at least, have a sufficient knowledge of their procedure to know whether they are doing their job.
- They should attend the meetings of the House Committee, calling to their attention any discrepancies he/she may have observed or complaints they may have received.
- The Commander is the arbitrator of arguments and the judge in disputes. As a general rule, their decisions are considered correct until over-ruled by the Post meeting, the District, Department Commander or Commander-in-Chief.

Post Senior Vice Commander



The Post Senior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order, preside in the absence of the Commander, provide such advice or assistance as may be required and perform such other duties as are incident to such office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

Post Junior Vice Commander



The Post Junior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order, preside in the absence of the Commander and Senior Vice Commander, provide such advice or assistance as may be required and perform such other duties as are incident to such office or may from time to time be required of the Junior Vice Commander by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

Post Commander Pro Tempore



In the event that neither the Commander, Senior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander is present, the Post shall elect a Commander Pro Tempore to preside at the meeting of the Post.

Post Quartermaster



Among the duties of a Post Quartermaster, the Quartermaster shall:

- a. Qualify and secure a bond in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which the Quartermaster may be accountable in accordance with Section 703.
- b. Collect all monies due the Post, giving receipt therefore, and have charge of the funds, securities and other property of the Post, all of which shall be placed in their care. The Quartermaster shall be the accountable officer of the Post and the Treasurer of all committees handling funds.
- c. Disburse funds as properly authorized by the Post using accepted banking practices. Unless otherwise provided for in Post Bylaws, all disbursements of Post funds shall bear the signature of the Quartermaster or other person(s) authorized by the Quartermaster. Such other authorized person(s) shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which the Quartermaster may be accountable in accordance with Section 703.
- d. Receive annual membership dues (admission fees if applicable) and life membership fees and forward the Department and National dues and life membership fees immediately to National Headquarters as prescribed in Section 104.

Post Quartermaster



e. Provide the Post Trustees with all records, files and statements required or necessary for the preparation of the Post Trustees Quarterly Report of Audit.

f. Reconcile and verify all transactions listed on all bank statements to assure the accuracy of Post records. The books and records of the Quartermaster shall be maintained in a legible and uniform format. Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a back-up is maintained. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and Post members at all reasonable times. Unless specifically authorized by the Post to remove such books and records from its facilities, they will be kept at the Post facilities.

g. Provide access and transfer to their successor in office or anyone designated by higher authority, without delay, all books, records, papers, monies, securities and other property of the Post in their possession or under their control.

h. Comply with, and perform all duties required of the Quartermaster by the laws and usages of this organization, applicable Bylaws and orders from lawful authority and perform such other duties as are incident to such office.

Post Quartermaster



- i. Report on transactions concerning receipts and expenditures, for any given period, at a regular or special meeting of the Post.
- j. File appropriate forms as required by Federal, State and Local Statutes or regulations.

Post Quartermaster Summary

The **Post Quartermaster** has certain definite responsibilities and duties as we've discussed. The Quartermaster is the **responsible** Post Officer in financial matters -- not necessarily the Post bookkeeper. For example, in a large corporation the treasurer does not physically handle the bookkeeping obligations but he/she is responsible that they are done properly, efficiently and accurately. This may also be true of the Post Quartermaster, depending upon the Post Bylaws and Club regulations. In any case, they must be familiar with all books of record and are responsible for all required Federal and State reports and payments.

- They are the responsible officer for all Post funds and property and his/her signature validates all checks.
- They keep the fiscal records for the Post and have the duty of overseeing all financial transactions.

Post Quartermaster Summary

- They must be bonded to the Post for all funds under their control.
- In the case of a large-scale Club operation, it often becomes impractical or impossible for the Post Quartermaster to physically handle all the funds or to personally keep the detailed records of operation. It is not uncommon in these cases to require that the Club Manager or a hired bookkeeper keep a separate set of club books, subject to the control of the Quartermaster and reported to the Quartermaster at regular intervals.
- The Quartermaster only pays bills which are authorized by Post action or under Post rules. They cannot refuse to pay a legitimate and properly authorized bill except for a lack of funds. Neither can they be forced to pay one which is not properly authorized.

Remember that the Post cannot take away any of the authority of the Post Quartermaster although they may be relieved of some of the **work**.

Post Quartermaster Summary

Quite often a controversy arises between the Quartermaster and Club Manager as to responsibility for Club funds. Sometimes a fine point arises which must be arbitrated.

As a rule of thumb, the Quartermaster keeps their nose out of the cash register except for checking purposes, and the Manager hides no transactions from the Quartermaster.

The Quartermaster does have the right, and the duty, to determine that all reports are correct and that all funds are handled properly.

They do not have the right to assume managerial responsibilities.

Post Adjutant



Among the duties of the Post Adjutant, the Adjutant shall:

- a. Be the official corresponding officer for the Post and shall attest to all official communications and reports with their signature.
- b. Under the direction of the Commander, prepare all reports and returns required of the Adjutant.
- c. Maintain the books and records in a legible and uniform format. Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a back-up is maintained. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and Post members at all reasonable times. Unless specifically authorized by the Post to remove such books and records from its facilities, they will be kept at the Post facilities.
- d. The Post Adjutant shall maintain the following records:
 1. A copy of the original application of every member admitted to the Post.
 2. Minutes of each Post meeting after correction and approval.

Post Adjutant



3. All current orders or circulars issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, the Department Commander, the District and/or County Council Commander (if applicable) and the Post Commander.

4. A correspondence file.

5. A file containing a copy of the proof of eligibility submitted by officers pursuant to Section 216.

e. Maintain a current copy of the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and copies of the Bylaws of the Post, Department, District and County Council (if applicable).

f. Transfer to their successor, without delay, all books, papers, records, monies and other records and property of the Post in their possession or under their control.

g. Comply with and perform all duties required of the Adjutant by the laws and usages of this organization, applicable Bylaws and orders from lawful authority and perform such other duties as are incident to such office.

Post Chaplain

The Post Chaplain shall perform such duties as are incident to the office or as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

Offer the ritual prayers at each meeting of the Post. You will also be called upon to offer appropriate prayers at the initiation of new members installation of officers; the dedication of a building, monument or colors; or at the memorial service of a comrade.

Post Judge Advocate

The Post Judge Advocate shall perform such duties as may be incident to the office or as may from time to time be required of the Judge Advocate by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

Assist the Post Commander in Bylaw updates and Post Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) for Post Home and/or Canteen.

Post Surgeon

The Post Surgeon shall perform such duties as are incident to the office or as may from time to time be required of the Surgeon by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

Promote Post health programs (e.g. blood drives, clinics, etc)

Post Officer of the Day

The Officer of the Day shall perform such duties as may be incident to the office or may from time to time be required of the Officer of the Day by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

Assists the Post Commander with meeting room setup and keep the peace during meetings.

Post Trustees



Trustees shall not be eligible to serve as an elected officer, Adjutant or on a committee whose books, records and accounts are audited by the Trustees.

Among the duties of Post Trustees, they shall:

- a. At least monthly, review the Monthly Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Post Quartermaster.
- b. Within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, properly audit the books and records of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant, and any activity, club room, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the Post and submit a Post Trustee's Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.
- c. The Report shall be in accordance with and upon such form as may be prescribed by the Adjutant General. The audit shall be signed by the Post Commander and Trustees, who shall, by their signatures, certify to the accuracy of the information contained therein.
- d. Perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

Post Service Officer



The Post Service Officer shall assist members of the Post, their surviving spouses and orphans and other worthy cases brought to their attention in obtaining rightful entitlements from federal and state governments. The work of a Service Officer shall be performed in accordance with the instructions contained in the **VFW Guide for Service Officers** under the general supervision of the Department Service Officer. The Service Officer shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office and as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

It is important to note that VFW Post and District Service Officers **are not** accredited by the VA. As a consequence, their ability to assist veterans and other claimants prepare claims for submission to VA is limited. Post/District Service Officers should be familiar with the basics of the compensation (for service connected disabilities) and pension (for nonservice connected disabilities) program. However, the PSO should fill out forms for the claimant only when requested. In this capacity, the PSO is not a claim preparer but rather someone who merely records information provided by the claimant. The application should be immediately returned to the veteran to submit through proper channels such as the DSO or a VFW-accredited state or county service officer. Under no circumstances should a PSO retain any veteran's personal information for any length of time, as this is a violation of the law. Further, under no circumstances should the PSO provide any personally identifiable information concerning a claimant to any member of the VFW who is not a VFW accredited service officer (e.g., DSO, Assistant DSO or Claims Consultant.)

Summary & Questions

Committee and Program Chairmen

Elected Post and District Commanders – *(e. Upon entering into office, appoint all other officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for.)*

Typically, these core programs within the ***Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities*** are ones that Posts and Districts participate in yearly and include our scholarship programs; Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen, the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year program, Scouting, and "Buddy"® Poppy.

These programs are highly encouraged for all Posts and Districts. However, before you can effectively execute a program, you first must know the programs. I recommend to all Post and District officers and chairman, to carefully read the program chairman's guides to familiarize yourself with the programs and choose the ones that best fit your Post/District and your available resources.

Committee and Program Chairmen

As a program chairman you should understand one important fact right from the outset: You are the Post's point person in your community. As chairman you will be your Post's liaison to:

- school teachers and administrators
- community leaders
- local military personnel
- city government officials
- members of civic groups
- members of the media
- your fellow veterans

Seek out these new relationships. When it comes time to recruit volunteers or you need specialized expertise for Post programs or projects, these community contacts will prove invaluable.

Committee and Program Chairmen

Committees you may have at a Post are:

- Membership
- House
- Budget
- Finance
- Scholarship

Remember, As the Post or District Commander, you are *an ex-officio member of all committees.*

Summary & Questions