

SECTION 3

Leadership Guide to Protocol Parliamentary Procedure Disciplinary Procedures

Aids to Leadership

While this is only a suggested guide, it is recommended that leaders at every level:

1. Should have a current copy of the Podium Edition of the National Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual.
 2. Should stress the importance of studying the Post, District, County Council, Department and National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.
 3. Encourage Commanders at all levels to study the contents of the VFW Commander's Leadership Reference Guide.
 4. Set up Schools of Instruction on parliamentary procedure and the proper methods of conducting meetings.
- **Think** before taking action.
 - **How** can we release the motivation within our members so they will have the desire to do the very best job??
 - **Is** the member you have appointed the best qualified or the one you like better??
 - **Never** withhold the authority necessary for the completion of the task!!
 - **Knowing** the committee, and appointing the most interested and best suited, will do more to create a successful program.

The purpose of leadership development is to provide the dynamic force to mold basic elements into a stimulated individual who works for the good of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and for the highest level of attainments in its programs and purposes.

The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.

-- Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of State.



A Ten Point Pledge For Commanders

- 1. I WILL** subscribe in good faith to the solemn obligation to which I pledged, and particularly to my promise to faithfully discharge my duties to the best of my ability.
- 2. I WILL** promptly adopt a specific program of projects and activities to be fostered during my term in office.
- 3. I WILL** simultaneously appoint a full compliment of committees with capable chairmen who are pledged to perform their duties.
- 4. I WILL** be guided constantly by the rules and regulations of proper procedures as defined in the Congressional Charter and By-Laws of the VFW.
- 5. I WILL** create interesting programs for each regular meeting. Programs that will convince those in attendance that they belong to an organization that functions efficiently, one that deserves their continued active support because of the worthy purposes being accomplished.
- 6. I WILL** open and close all meetings promptly at the appointed hours, wielding my gavel ruthlessly in the suppression of aimless debates or time wasting arguments over trivial issues.
- 7. I WILL** honor and respect the purpose of the VFW Ritual by opening and closing all meetings with ceremonial dignity.
- 8. I WILL** select capable comrades to serve on a Ritual Team that will conduct ceremonial functions in a way that will effectively dramatize the basic principles on which the VFW is founded.
- 9. I WILL** tolerate no unkind utterances or performances at meetings that violate the ethics of good taste, or offend the morals of comrades who respect the presence of an open Bible on the altar.
- 10. I WILL** cheerfully make those sacrifices of time and labor that will prove that the confidence of my comrades in my leadership qualities has not been misplaced and that will serve to inspire equal sacrifices from those who can help insure the success of my administration.

Leadership Can Be Fun

Leadership can be fun as Commander. No one can have a greater impact on the success of our organization than you. To ensure our future success, we must all continue with a positive leadership approach!!

Positive, forward-thinking leadership is the key to our success. Not just the leadership that your position calls for, but the specialized, unique type of leadership that is needed to advance the aims and purposes of the VFW.

The inspiration, guidance, supervision, and advice must come from the person who is close enough for personal contact—that's you—the Commander. **You** are the cornerstone.

Enthusiasm

You must be enthusiastic...dedicated...committed to the job...well informed...sympathetic...and, above all, you must be available.

Be Well Informed

Be sure to read and study material sent to you from the various levels of our organization. A person can't give advice or take it and make the right decision without being well informed...so be well informed!!

- Read the *VFW* magazine; *Checkpoint*; the Commander's Leadership Reference Guide.
- Study the National and Department General Orders.
- Be familiar with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Ritual and Manual of Procedure.
- Know about and understand all the programs of the VFW.
- Stay on top of program revisions as they occur during the year and be sure to pass these changes on to your subordinate officers.
- Be aware of changes within the organization or within those units under your jurisdiction.
- Establish login on www.vfw.org (Members Only Section).
- Visit www.vfw.org daily to get up-to-date information relevant to VFW News.

Be Prepared

- Hold regularly scheduled meetings.
- If necessary, send out notices well in advance of scheduled meetings.
- Be sure your meetings are well planned and well conducted.
- Meetings should be interesting and educational.
- Don't start your meeting at 8pm **sharp** and end at 11pm **dull**.
- The impression received at meetings could very well determine individual attitudes toward the entire organization.
- Instructional meetings or schools of instruction are necessary for our continued success.

Be Positive

As you may have already noted, your duties are far greater than those prescribed in our By-Laws. Your job is not just to preside over meetings or to attend District or Department functions. Your job is a day-in, day-out, 365 days of the year, full time service. You need to be prepared to give the job all of the time and effort you possibly can.

- Be positive!!...Be enthusiastic!!
- Issue challenges to your officers.
- Offer friendly wagers to your chairmen.
- Don't be content with just equaling last year's records because you are then just breaking even.
- Remember...Problems that may arise are just opportunities waiting for your special attention.

Teamwork

A Commander who fully performs all the duties of his office is the busiest person in the VFW. The responsibility of providing effective leadership, coordinating activities, promoting programs, generating enthusiasm, initiating and developing new ideas is awesome. In most cases done as a labor of love, knowing the only satisfaction you will receive is the knowledge that you have done a good job during your year as Commander.

- Form a working team, not forgetting those Past Commanders to assist you during your year. Remember that they have already "been there and done that" and their knowledge will be a valuable asset.
- Delegate authority, but don't relinquish it. You can't do everything yourself, so assign various duties to the members of your team.
- Appoint the best chairmen. Use individuals who know the program, are interested in the program, are willing to promote its activities and are willing to sell the program to others.
- Did you wipe the slate of officers clean at the beginning of the year or did you appoint your friends to these positions?
- Don't appoint people on the grounds of friendship unless those friends can do the job!!
- Keep competent chairmen because their performance reflects on you. If the program fails, the blame will be yours.
- Follow up on appointments.
- Never assume the work has been done.
- Keep in touch with your chairmen. If they are not doing their job, remove them and appoint someone else. Don't wait until it is too late.
- Make up charts and graphs and set goals.
- Chart progress.
- Communicate with your officers and chairmen.
- Offer advice and assistance.
- Let everyone know that you are interested...That you care and that you are available.
- Be flexible and sympathetic.
- Be willing to accept changes, suggestions, ideas, and assistance from others.
- Don't be afraid to admit to a mistake.

Appearance

- A positive image is very important.
- As the Commander, your image is the first perception of the organization.
- Look into the mirror. You are the future of the organization. What you see in the mirror is what other people see in you!!

Appreciation

Throughout the year and, finally, when the year is over, you must show your appreciation.

- You can never say “Thank You” enough.
- Never forget the “Grass Roots” of the organization and never forget the Ladies Auxiliary and all the hard work they do for us and for veterans.
- Thank everyone for their loyalty and support.
- Remember...It’s nice to be important, but it’s more important to be nice.
- Remember...You have far more to gain with a pat on the back than a kick in the pants.
If you follow any of the above suggested guidelines, leadership will be fun because:
- **You will be successful**
- **You will meet your goals.**

So, just DO IT!!

- For your Post!
- For your District!
- For your County Council!
- For your Department!
- For the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States!

Guide to Protocol

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If you have ever planned a major VFW event, you know the importance of getting all the details in place. Please consider the information contained here first when planning VFW events such as luncheons, banquets or other social functions. There is a great deal to take into consideration when coordinating activities, and this guide to protocol will help you every step of the way.

At all levels, protocol is critical to insure that proper relations between VFW officials and the public are conducted with maximum efficiency and without embarrassment to the organization.

Keep in mind that the information contained here should not be considered as complete.

We hope you find these guidelines helpful and wish you success.

Maintaining an Order of Precedence



One of the cardinal rules of protocol is to observe an order of precedence at VFW functions where officials and their representatives are present. This is important when making seating arrangements or organizing receiving lines.

The order of precedence for dignitaries at all levels (National, Department, District, County Council and Post) is as follows: Commander, Sr. Vice Commander, Jr. Vice Commander, Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chaplain and Council of Administration.

Should a VFW function include a receiving line, the first person in line should be the program chairman, who introduces each individual coming through the receiving line to the host Commander, or Ladies Auxiliary President. The Commander or President, in turn, introduces each person to the guest of honor, who is next in line, with other guests following in their proper order of rank.

A receiving line should have no more than eight people and should be located away from the door by which people enter and leave the room.

Participants in a receiving line or those going through a receiving line should neither smoke nor carry food or beverages.

If the receiving line is held in a room that has a marble, tile or highly polished wood floor, it would be helpful to those people standing in the receiving line to provide a carpet runner on which they can stand.

It also is suggested that you provide chairs or a sofa immediately adjacent to or behind the receiving line for occasional rest periods for the members.

Some functions will require special seating arrangements. To this end, please review the suggested seating arrangements for different types of programs and dinners and choose the one right for you.

Making Proper Introductions



At some point during your event, you will need to formally introduce your guests of honor to the attendees.

As a means of expediting the program, guests who are not seated at the head table can be introduced during the dinner, before the head table is introduced. As another means of saving time, you can introduce people by groups rather than individually (i.e., committee members, officers, past commanders, etc.).

A standard procedure for introducing head table guests is to start at the extreme left end of the head table and introduce each guest by name and title, moving to the next guest and performing the same mission until you have introduced all of the guests to the left of the podium.

Remember there is no need to introduce guests who will be called on to speak or receive an award later in the program. You also can save time by asking the audience to hold their applause until all of the guests have been introduced and then give them proper recognition at that time.

After you have introduced all of the guests to your left move to the opposite end of the head table and introduce each guest by name and title moving from the farthest guest toward the center of the table, again skipping the introduction of those who will be called on to speak or accept an award later in the program.

In the case of a two-tiered head table, you should introduce the guests who are seated at the lower, or secondary head table before you introduce the guests at the top or primary head table.

The event “toastmaster” should be brief, laudatory and to-the-point when introducing a speaker. Introductions should be carefully planned and practiced in advance. The manner in which a speaker is introduced is very important.

The introduction should be approached in the same manner in which you would introduce a friend to a person you know by making them feel comfortable, at ease and known to each other.

Something to keep in mind is that the more important and well-known a speaker is, the shorter an introduction is required.

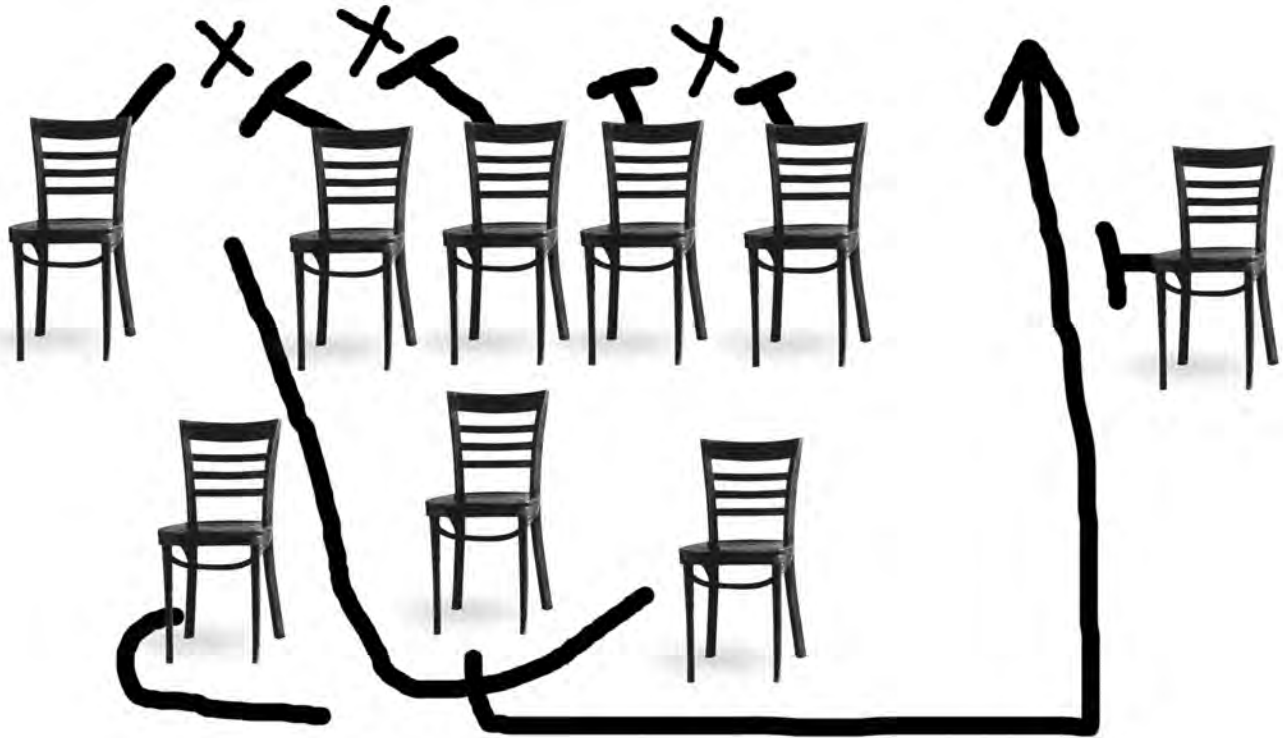
Please remember: There is no excuse for mispronouncing the names and titles of your guests.

Generally speaking, the main speaker should be introduced last. Occasionally, this conventional arrangement should be changed if there are several speakers on the program or numerous awards are to be presented at the event.

If the program does not have a keynote speaker, the guests who are called on to speak should be introduced from the lowest rank to that of the highest official present.

Plan the order of your program early. Discuss it with the people who are involved and remain flexible to changing the program to meet special needs.

Planning the Program



The following are a few suggested hints that may help you in planning your program:

- Extend written invitations as early as possible to those you wish to invite to a particular program, advising them of the time, date, place, attire and what is expected of them (i.e., principal speaker, greetings, brief remarks, attendance, time allotted, etc.). Be sure to include information as to whether the invitation includes their spouse or other members of the family.
- Follow up with those speaking at your program with a phone call to make sure they received the invitation. Ask for the number of those who will attend, and get their names.
- Check back with each speaker a week to 10 days prior to the scheduled event to be sure their plans have not changed and that their guests will be present.
- Be sure to include the spouses of guests you invite in your seating arrangements for the dinner and program.
- Remember to give dinner tickets to the speakers and other guests of honor before the event.
- Assign a host and/or hostess (officers, members, committee, etc.) to each guest you invite to see that your guests are properly met, escorted and introduced to other people. Your guests will appreciate your consideration.
- Be sure to use name cards and seat your guests at reserved tables near the front so they will not have to fend for themselves in obtaining seats.
- Notify the media several weeks ahead of your scheduled program. Follow up with a telephone call a few days prior to the event, reminding them of the occasion. Arrange for a photographer (commercial, Post member, etc.) to take pictures of the event.

What to Do When the Chief Visits



It is a very important occasion when the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars visits a Post.

He is the chief spokesman for some 1.6 million overseas veterans who served their country during a time of war. Anyone dealing with the Chief's visit has important responsibilities to him. We suggest that these individuals be familiar with the following guidelines to make their job a little easier and the Chief's visit run as smooth as possible.

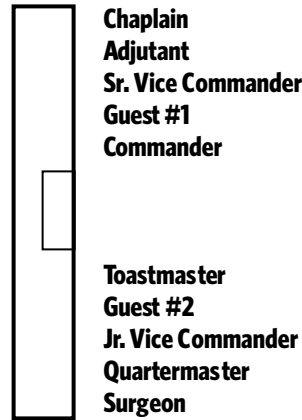
- Contact your local radio and TV stations as soon as you have the Chief's definite arrival time. Talk shows are sometimes planned well in advance. Public Service time is free, and an interview with the Commander-in-Chief and a local VFW leader might be arranged. It is important that the scheduling does not conflict with other engagements the Chief might have.
- Arrange a press conference for the Chief. It is usually more convenient to have it in the hotel where he will be staying. A notice of the press conference to all media — newspapers, TV and radio — should be sent at least three days before the event. On the morning of the press conference, call to remind the media of the time and place of the press conference.
- It is important to remember that the media who attend the press conference are there to interview a national leader of a major veterans organization, not local VFW members. For that reason, it is important that Post members do not volunteer information. The best arrangement is to leave the Chief alone with the media.
- Introduce the Commander-in-Chief to the local leaders in your community and invite them to a dinner or event at which the Chief will speak.
- Once an itinerary has been established, follow it precisely. Make sure the Chief gets to his appointments on time. If a dinner where the Chief is to speak starts at 7 p.m., have everyone seated and start serving the meal exactly at 7 p.m.
- Ask the Commander-in-Chief if he would like to see the local points of interest, or if he has a friend in the community whom he wishes to visit. Do your best to accommodate his requests. Be sure there is a good car available for him at all times, to meet him at his point of arrival, to take him to his point of departure and to take him from place to place in your community. The person who will drive the car must be one who can be relied on for punctuality, courtesy and safe driving.
- If the Commander-in-Chief is to speak where there is a bar, close the bar a half-hour before he is scheduled to speak and during his talk.
- Limit receptions before banquets and other events to one hour.
- Do not plan unrelated activities, such as baseball games or private parties, without first consulting the Commander-in-Chief.

Sample Seating Charts

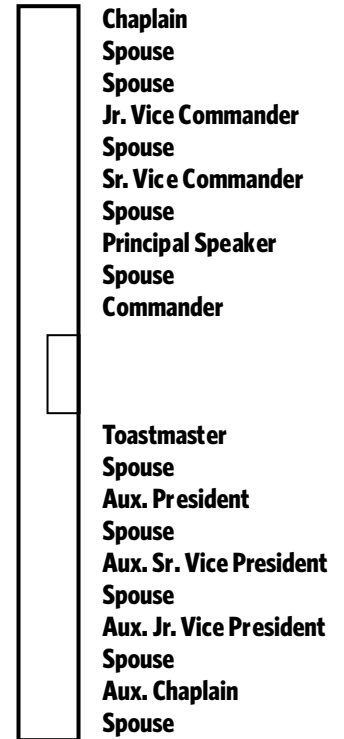
Adjustments should be made according to ranking VFW and Auxiliary visitors or invited guests.



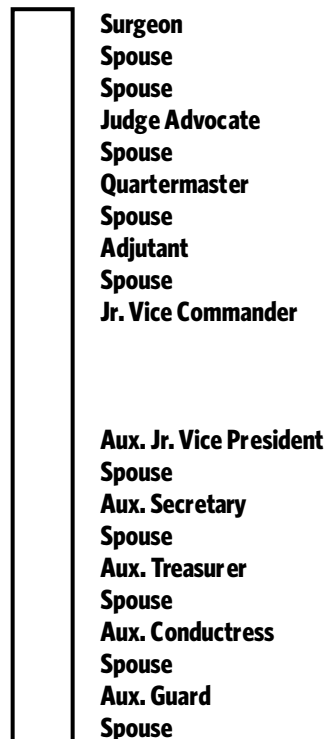
VFW Only



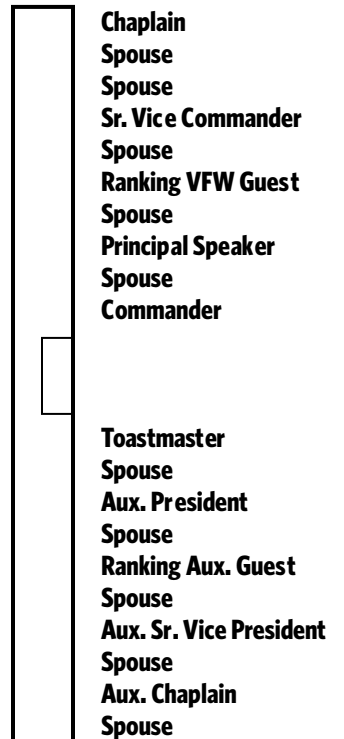
VFW and Auxiliary



Two Tier (Lower)



Two Tier (Upper)



Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States



Parliamentary Procedure

Object

The object of all procedure is to get things accomplished in an orderly manner, to take things up one at a time, and dispose of them in the shortest time possible, at the same time in a democratic fashion.

When only the Chairman knows Parliamentary Procedure, he can use it to his advantage, but when most of the body also understands the rules, the “Floor” actually controls the meeting, and the “Chair” simply directs it.

If you get in the habit of using the right terms, everybody will understand matters more readily. Note the expressions which appear in boldface type throughout this text.

When a meeting is called to order by the **CHAIR, AN AGENDA, OR ORDER OF BUSINESS**, is offered for approval, or should be offered. Once the agenda is approved, the meeting is technically limited to the POINTS included. We usually take care of other matters and “beefs” under the **“GOOD OF THE VFW”**. If no agenda is offered, ask for it. If certain points you are interested in do not appear to be included, rise and either inquire about them or MOVE to add them to the agenda.

The business of a meeting is carried forward by **MOTIONS**. The object of all motions is to get things done in an orderly manner, and democratically. A motion is **MADE** from the **DEBATE ON THE QUESTION**.

In actual practice, there is usually some debate before the motion. Debate without a motion often

becomes aimless, and should be limited.

In debating, or **SPEAKING ON A MOTION**, no member should be allowed to speak twice before others have had it once. Speaking on a motion is also called **TAKING THE FLOOR**.

Motions must be made on the subject involved, or the **POINT ON THE AGENDA**, which is being taken up. If a motion is made on some other subject, the chair is obliged to rule the **MAKER OF THE MOTION** out of Order, and **REFER THE QUESTION** to the proper place on the agenda.

Motions must be seconded to be entitled to debate. If the motion is not seconded, the chair is obliged to point out that there has been no second, and proceed with the meeting.

The chair is not supposed to “milk” the membership for a second because he wants one, but it is proper to allow enough time for a second, when required.

Debate before a motion has been made can always be stopped by someone **MAKING A MOTION**. Once a motion has been made and seconded, it must be **DISPOSED OF**, either by being **DEFEATED, PASSED, TABLED, REFERRED, or PLACED IN COMMITTEE**. All of these are covered further in the text.

Except for certain **PRIVILEGED MOTIONS**, which will be explained later also, a motion cannot be placed while there is a **PREVIOUS MOTION** on the floor.

Recognition

In making a motion, or **MOVING**, the member should rise, face the chair, and signal or call for attention in a manner which will not disrupt the meeting. Once **RECOGNIZED** by the chair, the **SPEAKER** should first state his or her name and department, so such information can be **RECORDED IN THE MINUTES**.

In other democratic bodies, it is proper to say “Mr. Chairman,” “Madame Chairman,” etc., but in the VFW, it is more proper to say “My Comrade(s)”.

Once a motion has been **MADE**, it is the duty of the chair to repeat it in order that everyone hears it, and also to **CLARIFY** it, if it was made in confused language.

Before we proceed further with motions, let us remove some of the misunderstanding concerning **WITHDRAWING A MOTION**.

Withdrawing

Before a motion has been **STATED BY THE CHAIR**, its maker has the right to **WITHDRAW** it, or modify the language. But, after it has been stated by the chair, the maker cannot withdraw or modify his motion without the **CONSENT OF THE ASSEMBLY**. After a motion has been stated by the chair, it belongs to the assembly.

It is also out of order to ask for the consent of the **SECONDER** to the withdrawal of a motion the seconder can only withdraw his second if the motion has been changed informally after he seconded it.

It is **IN ORDER** for anyone to ask the maker of a motion to withdraw it, through the chair. But the maker does not have to comply. In brief, once a motion is made, seconded and stated by the chair, it cannot be withdrawn without the chair getting the consent of the assembly (usually by asking if there are any objections to the withdrawal). When a motion has gone that far, it must be disposed of by being tabled, referred, defeated, passed, etc., by vote.

When a motion has been withdrawn, it is treated as though it had never been made, and is not recorded in the minutes. Further, anyone can make the same motion again. The object of withdrawing a motion is to prevent it from being voted on and appearing in the minutes.

Once a motion has been duly made, seconded and is on the floor, it is subject to **AMENDMENT**. (Note: certain motions are not amendable and will be covered later on).

The object of an amendment is to change or modify the original motion, without destroying the sense of it. For instance, if there was a motion on the floor to hold a picnic, it could be amended to add a date or a place, but it could not be amended to change the affair from a picnic to a bowling match.

Amendments should take the form of: inserting or adding words to the motion; striking out words; substituting words or sentences. The chair is obliged to rule out of order any proposed amendment which would do more than the above, and change the sense of the motion entirely.

In some cases, where a poorly worded motion is made, even the amendment does not make it a complete motion in some of the members' eyes. In such cases, an amendment can be made to the first amendment. This **SECOND DEGREE AMENDMENT** method is sometimes confusing, but it is legitimate, and it is up to the chair to clarify the motion and its amendments.

If it is too complicated for this, the chair can call for or recommend a **SUBSTITUTE MOTION**, with

the consent of the assembly, which will tie the loose ends together so that an intelligent vote may be taken. A substitute motion is itself a form of amendment.

Amendments to motions are **DEBATABLE** (that is, can be discussed). Like motions, amendments also require seconding. Discussion on an amendment must be confined to the amendment itself.

In **TAKING THE VOTE**, after debate, the amendment is first voted upon, and then the motion itself is voted upon. Sometimes, the nature of the amendment is such that passing or defeating the amendment **CARRIES** or **DEFEATS** the motion also. In that event, it is not necessary to take a vote on the motion.

Before proceeding into further study on motions, it might be well to give some attention to the **MINUTES**.

The **MINUTES OF A MEETING** are simply a record of the proceedings of that particular meeting. As such, they can only be **ACCEPTED BY THE BODY**. In short, the general membership can only **ACCEPT** minutes of the membership meetings, the executive board can only accept its own minutes, etc. Upon reading of the minutes of a given meeting, they are subject to a motion to accept. Sometimes, **CORRECTIONS** are raised, and then the minutes are **ACCEPTED AS CORRECTED**.

Being simply the record of proceedings, minutes may be corrected at any time, including subsequent meetings.

Minutes shall record all main motions which were not withdrawn, all points of order, all appeals and whether lost or sustained. The makers of motions should be recorded, but not necessarily the seconders.

The date, time, and place of the meeting, as well as the time of adjournment should be in the minutes. Also the results of any **ROLL CALL** votes, and full report of **TELLERS**. (Tellers are members elected or appointed to tally ballot).

Minutes cannot be **REJECTED**, but they can be **RETURNED FOR CORRECTION**. When the minutes of an executive board meeting are read at a membership meeting, it is only for general information, not acceptance or correction.

However, having been thus advised, the membership can take action at the meeting to censure or approve their board.

This, of course, is done through motions at the proper time on the agenda. The membership should be alerted to do this, and be certain not to allow any top body to exercise undemocratic control.

In connection with minutes, it is important to

know that **ACCEPTING A REPORT** is the same as adopting it. **RECEIVING A REPORT** merely allows it to be read to the assembly. Receiving does not mean approving or adopting. Accepting does! In making motions on reports, the assembly should understand the distinction in the above two words.

Deferring

Once a matter has been duly placed on the floor through motion and seconded, it may become necessary to defer or postpone action. This can be done democratically by the assembly in several ways, in addition to withdrawing the motion, which we have already covered.

TABLING: A motion to **TABLE** is a motion to lay aside business in such a manner that it can be **RENEWED** at a later time—either at the same meeting or a later one. A motion to table requires a second. Once seconded, the motion to table cannot be either debated or amended, but **MUST BE PUT TO IMMEDIATE VOTE WITHOUT DISCUSSION**.

When it is desired to resume the matter which was tabled, the correct motion is to **“TAKE FROM THE TABLE.”** This motion must be seconded, and is also not subject to debate or amendment. When a matter is taken from the table, it is taken with all previous actions, amendments, etc., and resumed just as it was when tabled. Tabling a motion or matter does not carry a time limit. That kind of postponement is handled as follows:

POSTPONE TO A SET TIME: When the object is to set a future time at which a matter or motion must be considered, do not move to table. Instead, move to **POSTPONE** to a set time, date, or meeting. A motion to so **POSTPONE CONSIDERATION** requires a second. It **CAN BE DEBATED** before being voted on, and can be amended as to the time.

PLACE IN COMMITTEE: When it is desired to let a few handle a given matter, instead of tying up the whole meeting needlessly, this is done by **COMMITTING**, or **PLACING IN COMMITTEE** through a properly worded motion.

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY: A motion to **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY** is really a motion to **KILL** the subject. It must be seconded, can be debated, but cannot be amended.

These motions are dangerous, and must be watched with care when they come up. For, they can not only help to carry the meeting along—they can also wreck consideration of important subjects.

Appeals to Overrule Chair

The Chairman of a meeting or the “Chair” has certain rights, but they do not include engineering the meeting, or “railroading” certain matters through. A decision of the chair can always be subjected to change through **APPEAL**.

When a member rises to appeal a decision of the chair, his motion can be either to **APPEAL THE DECISION**, or to **OVERRIDE THE CHAIR**—they both have the same meaning.

Under such circumstances, the member should state carefully and in understandable language why he is making the motion. The motion requires a second.

Technically, the motion to appeal the decision of the chair is debatable when the question involved is the **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**, and not debatable otherwise. It is simplest, and perfectly fair, to always handle an appeal without a debate. The decision of the chair stands, until reversed by a majority vote. A tie vote **SUSTAINS THE CHAIR**.

Members should not rise to criticize the chair. If they have an objection to a **RULING**, it should always be handled through an appeal.

A sensible chairman should not take an appeal personally, but should welcome it, since it relieves him of the responsibility and places it upon the assemblage. Sustained, he is that much more confident in his chairmanship.

The chair is supposed to be the “servant of the assembly,” and as such should refrain from discussing questions before the assembly, thus maintaining an impartial attitude.

The chair cannot authorize anyone to act in his place if he is absent from the meeting. If the By-Laws do not cover that contingency, the assembly has the duty to elect an acting chairman.

The Question of Privilege

The **QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE** is often interpreted to mean “I am a privileged guy, and have the right to the floor again.”

The only privilege involved is the privilege of getting the attention of the chair at once to **ASK A QUESTION, MAKE A POINT OF ORDER**, or draw attention to the pressing business which cannot wait.

When rising on a question of privilege, you do not wait for recognition from the chair, you **INTERRUPT** by stating “I rise to a point of inquiry (or order, or procedure).” The chair is **OBLIGED** to recognize you, answering: “state your question.”

Rising to a “point of procedure” means that you question the procedure the chair is following—you feel he is off the track, acting contrary to **REGULAR PROCEDURE**.

Rising to a “point of order” usually means that you feel some member of the assembly, rather than the chair, is off the track, and you want the chair to take action.

Rising on other “questions of privilege” usually involves drawing attention to conduct or misconduct of members, comfort of members, conduct of press or guests, etc. All such interruptions are loosely included in the term “question of privilege.”

If the chair sees the point you are making, he states, “the point is well taken,” and follows it. If the chair does not, he states his reason, and the way is open or an appeal to be taken, if necessary.

AND THIS IS IMPORTANT! Even though the chair is obliged to recognize the above questions of privilege, the assembly is not. As the book states it, “privilege of assembly out-ranks personal privilege.” A chronic interrupter can thus be silenced by a proper motion.

While a question of privilege requires no second, gets no debate, and is not amendable, the action desired may be deferred until the speaker is finished, and may also be tabled or postponed indefinitely. In the latter case, the question interrupted is not carried with a tabling or postponement motion.

Renewal & Reconsideration

Much confusion exists as to bringing up a point again, or trying to get a matter reconsidered. There are simple rules covering these things.

Renew a Motion

The object of this action would be to bring up a motion again after it has been defeated. The rule is:

A rejected motion cannot be renewed at the same session. It can be renewed by the same maker at a future session.

Further, no motion can be introduced that is so nearly like a rejected motion that it would **PLACE THE SAME QUESTION BEFORE THE HOUSE** a second time. Also, no motion can be introduced which interferes with a motion which has been tabled, postponed, or placed in committee.

Reconsider a Motion

The object of this action would be to bring back a question for more discussion, and obtain a new vote. Such a motion can only be made by a member **WHO VOTED WITH THE PREVAILING SIDE** on the previous vote! Such a motion must receive a second, and can be debated, but not amended.

If reconsideration carries, the result is just as though the original vote had not been taken.

Should such motions be brought up, and you feel the reason is a bad one, don't forget to use the “question of privilege.”

It is a good thing for the most sincere members of the VFW to know the rules, and thus be prepared to keep the meeting on a true course.

Voting

Voting is normally by voice. If the result is not clear, the chair should ask for a standing vote.

Other methods of voting are: **DIVISION OF THE HOUSE, SECRET BALLOT, or ROLL CALL** of the assembly.

This short course was specifically designed to acquaint members with only the rudiments of parliamentary procedure, and is therefore, brief in coverage.

How To Manipulate Motions For Passage Or Defeat

(Read across the page. Read 1 with 1, 2 with 2, etc.)

To help defeat a motion:

1. Do not second it. Remain silent.
2. Speak against it while it is before the body.
3. Vote against it.
4. Move to postpone it indefinitely to “kill” it.
5. Amend it adversely to encumber it or complicate it.
6. Move to refer it to a committee to delay it.
7. Move to postpone it to the next meeting to delay it.
8. Move to the previous question to shut off debate on its good points.
9. Move to table it.
10. Move to recess to go after more votes.
11. If their motion wins, move to reconsider it.
12. If their successful motion remains unexecuted by a later meeting, then move to rescind it.
13. Move to adjourn, so as to prevent action on their motion at this meeting.
14. Only votes win. Get your voters to the meeting. Urge them to stay to the end and to vote as you or another key leader will vote.

To help pass a motion:

1. Second it immediately. Say: “I second it.”
2. Speak in favor of it while it is still before the body.
3. Vote for it.
4. Vote against postponing it to rescue it.
5. Amend it sensibly to perfect it or improve it.
6. Vote against referring it, to achieve action now.
7. Vote down all postponements that delay it.
8. Defeat the previous question so you can continue to debate its meritorious points.
9. Vote against tabling it.
10. Defeat recess so they may not go seeking more votes.
11. Vote against their motion to reconsider your motion.
12. Execute motions promptly, so that they may not be subject to the motion to rescind at any later meeting.
13. Vote down all motions to adjourn, so as to achieve adoption of your motion now.
14. It is votes that win elections and other proceedings at meetings and conventions. Have your supporters there to help you with their votes.

Parliamentary Procedure

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them, and what to expect of the rules.

..... at a glance ... from Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Law and Order

TO DO THIS:

YOU SAY THIS:

	DO YOU NEED A SECOND?	IS IT DEBATABLE?	CAN IT BE AMENDED?	WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?	CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?
ADJOURN MEETING	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
CALL AN INTERMISSION	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO
COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC.	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO USUALLY
TEMPORARILY SUSPEND CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS	YES	NO	NO	2/3	YES
POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
GIVE CLOSER STUDY OF SOMETHING	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES (2)
AMEND A MOTION	YES	YES (3)	YES	MAJORITY	YES
INTRODUCE BUSINESS (MAIN MOTIONS)	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
PROTEST BREACH OF RULES OR CONDUCT	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE (4)	NO
VOTE ON A RULING OF THE CHAIR	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY (5)	YES
SUSPEND RULES TEMPORARILY	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO
AVOID CONSIDERING AN IMPROPER MATTER	NO	NO	NO	2/3 (6)	— (7)
VERIFY A VOICE VOTE BY HAVING MEMBERS STAND	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
REQUEST INFORMATION	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
TAKE UP MATTER PREVIOUSLY TABLED	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
RECONSIDER A HASTY ACTION	YES	— (8)	NO	MAJORITY	NO

NOTES: 1. Unless vote on question is not yet taken. 2. Unless the committee has already taken up the subject. 3. Only if the motion to be amended is debatable. 4. Except in doubtful cases. 5. A majority vote in negative needed to reverse ruling of chair. 6. A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion. 7. Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered. 8. Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable.

Parliamentary Procedure continued ...

TO DO THIS:

YOU SAY THIS:

	DO YOU NEED A SECOND?	IS IT DEBATABLE?	CAN IT BE AMENDED?	WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?	CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?
ACCEPT REPORTS OF COMMITTEES	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
CLOSE NOMINATIONS OR THE POLLS	YES	NO	YES	2/3	NO
POSTPONE INDEFINITELY (TO KILL)	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY	YES
REOPEN NOMINATION OR THE POLLS	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	YES
RESCIND	YES	YES	YES	2/3	YES
WITHDRAW A MOTION OR SECOND	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO

Presiding & Leadership Practice

1. Opening ceremonies.
2. **Commander:** (Leading all members in recitation of VFW purpose as outlined in Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars) The purpose of this corporation are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational and are; to pre serve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.
3. Calling the roll of officers.
4. Reading, referring, membership applications.
5. Report of Investigating Committee.
6. Balloting for candidates.
7. Mustering in of recruits.
8. Reading of minutes.
9. Quartermaster's report; disbursements.
10. Quartermaster's report; receipts.
11. Reading of bills.
12. Report of Service Officer.
13. Is there a Comrade or the family of a Comrade in distress?
14. Report of all committees.
15. Remember our National Home.(Interrupt business at 9:00 p.m. or as close to 9:00 p.m. as is practical for National Home Ceremony.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice.) All present will rise. Parade rest. Comrade Chaplain, you will ask divine blessings upon our National Home.

Chaplain: Each evening the children of our departed Comrades, at the VFW National Home, kneel at their bedside in reverent prayer to Almighty God. Let us turn our thoughts toward Eaton Rapids, Michigan, and with bowed heads join them in their prayers. Repeat after me (all, in unison), "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God." (Short pause.) May God bless our National Home. Amen. (Commander raps gavel.)

16. (At a time other than the above specified evening hour, the Chaplain may use the following prayer for the VFW National Home):

Chaplain: Almighty God, we ask Thy divine blessing on the widows and children in our National Home. May Thy divine spirit be with them forever, giving them health and guiding their lives. Trust us always, to honor our departed Comrades. Amen.

17. Unfinished business. (Reading of communications associated with unfinished business. Read and vote.)
18. New business. (Reading of communications associated with new business. Read and vote.)
19. Good of the order. (Reading of communications associated with good of the order. Read and vote.)
20. Closing ceremonies.

To Presiding Officers

The presiding officer is the servant of the organization.

All his acts at meetings and conventions must have the body's approval, unless a by-law makes them independent.

Presiding officers who are ignorant of parliamentary law or who defy the body's will or deny to the members the proper exercise of their rights are a sad spectacle before intelligent assemblies and frequently cause discontent and disunity.

Capable presiding officers make good meetings.

Incompetent, abusive or obnoxious presiding officers can be censured; and their tenure of office can be shortened or abolished altogether by a 2/3 vote, and thus they may be legislated out of office at any meeting with prior notice.

You are not expected to know all the law. No one is. But you are expected to be able to at least match the members' combined basic knowledge of it.

Handy Phrases for Members

- Comrade Commander, or, Mr. President, or, Madam Chairman, etc.
- I doubt the quorum.
- I doubt the vote.
- I move that we ...
- I rise to a point of order.
- I move that we adopt this resolution:
Resolved, That ...
- A parliamentary inquiry.
- I move to amend the motion.
- Comrade Commander, will the member yield the floor to me?
- I do not yield, or, I yield to a question only, or, I yield.

Handy Phrases For Presiding Officers

- The meeting will be in order.
- The secretary will read the ...
- The first [or, the next] business in order is...
- The Chair requests order.
- The Chair requests quiet.
- The Chair can recognize only one member at a time; all other members will be seated.
- The Chair now recognizes ...
- For what purpose does the member [delegate] rise?
- State your name, city, etc.
- The motion is [or, is not] in order.
- Do you yield the floor?
- The member will refrain from ...
- The Chair wishes to state ...
- Please repeat your motion.
- It is moved and seconded that we ...
- It is moved and seconded to amend the motion by ...
- The ayes have it; the amendment is carried, now, the vote is on the motion as amended.
- Those in favor will say aye. Those opposed will say no. The ayes [or, noes] have it.
- If there is no objection, the Chair will ...

Disciplinary Action



The procedure now in place was designed to eliminate some of those difficulties while still preserving the basic right of the member to be advised of the charges against him and given an opportunity to be heard. In each instance, the member will be provided written copies of the Charges and Specifications against him. If the member does not request a hearing within fifteen (15) days or advises the Commander in the meantime that a hearing or mediation is not desired, the Commander initiating the charges, with majority concurrence of the Post, can proceed to set a penalty. It is hoped that this will eliminate the necessity of a full-blown trial in many cases where the accused member does not want one.

If a hearing is requested, the procedure for conducting that hearing, as set forth in Section 903 of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure will be followed. If the accused member desires to appeal, he must do so under Section 904 of the By-Laws.

The By-Laws and Manual of Procedure provide the basic rules governing the grounds for, and conduct of, disciplinary actions. To help facilitate a Post in initiating disciplinary action, if desired, forms have been developed and are located in the Appendix immediately following the Manual of Procedure. The By-Laws and Manual of Procedure should always be consulted first.

Disciplinary Action

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can a District Commander initiate a Disciplinary Action?
NO. The District Commander is not in the loop when it comes to Disciplinary Actions.
2. What happens if the accused is the Post Commander?
If the Post Commander is the accused, the action must be initiated by the next higher authority. (Remember the District is not in the loop and therefore, the Department Commander would be the one to initiate the action.)
3. What if a Post Commander initiates an action and then expects to be a witness with respect to factual matters, can he appoint the panel?
NO. The District Commander will select the disciplinary panel members when the action is initiated at the Post level.
4. Is Article IX used to suspend members from participating in Post social activities or using the clubrooms?
NO. These activities and clubrooms come under the direct control of the sponsoring unit pursuant to Section 709 and the House Committee should handle this type of matter.
5. What happens if the accused fails to accept the Special Order and Charges and Specifications sent by certified, return receipt mail?
A signed receipt from the accused is not necessary, so long as there is a postal receipt indicating delivery to the accused's last known address. If the accused fails to request a hearing within the fifteen (15) days allotted, the Initiating Officer takes whatever action he deems appropriate to include the ordering of any penalties prescribed in Section 907.
6. Once a hearing is scheduled, can the accused ask for postponement for cause?
YES. He must make a written request to the President of the Hearing Panel explaining the reason for the continuance. If approved by the Panel President, he then notifies all parties and panel members in writing of the rescheduled date if the continuance is granted.
7. Once the panel is selected, can it be changed?
YES. Each side may challenge any member or members, but those members may be removed only for good cause. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, prejudice for or against a party, financial or other interest in the outcome or inability to afford an impartial hearing. The challenging party shall state the reasons upon which that party believes good cause exists. When a member of the panel is challenged for cause, the President of the panel will decide on the question. No further panel member may be

excused for cause when the effect is to reduce the number of panel members below three.

8. How many votes does it take to convict?

There must be a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote in order to convict on any charge and specification.

9. How is the panel's decision announced?

The Findings and Sentence (DA-4) are announced by the President in an open hearing after the deliberations are complete. In the event the accused was not present at the hearing, but the accused has been found either guilty or not guilty, a copy of the Findings and Sentence (DA-4) shall be mailed to his last known address within seven (7) days after the hearing.

10. Does the accused have any recourse after the panel has made it's decision?

The accused may appeal (Section 904) the decision by appealing to the next higher authority. If the action is brought by a Post Commander, the appeal is to the Department Commander, etc.