

**THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT OF COLORADO  
CONVENTION**



**RULES  
COLOR GUARD AND  
CONCERT BANDS  
2018**

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# SECTION ONE

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND RULES

### 1.0 HISTORY

Color guards and marching bands have been an important part of American history. In early history, flags were used for a number of purposes. A detachment of soldiers was usually assigned to protect the flag. As history moved forward, color guards were used to lead marching bands, drum and bugle corps and other types of marching units. During the third convention of The American Legion, a resolution was passed making a band contest a feature of each National Convention. At a later convention, color guard competition also became a feature of The American Legion Convention. Since then, The American Legion, having its foundation in the military, has designated classes of competition to the preservation and education of our country's rich and patriotic history of honor guards and bands by all of our Legion Family Organizations. The Legion is dedicated to upholding proper protocol, point of honor and due and proper respect for our National Colors in all ceremonial situations.

### 1.2 MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES

This is a required meeting. One representative of each competing unit will meet with the Chief Judge of Contests prior to the contest at a time and place to be designated by the Chief Judge. The purpose of this meeting is to receive instructions and transact any business, which may come before such meeting. Failure to attend the meeting may put the unit into a penalty situation.

Any contest declarations and spiel sheets must be turned in at the Meeting of Representatives.

### **1.3 JUDGES**

The Chief Judge, judges, tabulators and other contest staff are selected each year based upon their experience, caring and nurturing attitude, consistency, professionalism and communication skills along with the understanding and ability to uphold the rules and regulations as outlined in the manual. The judges are to rank and rate the unit participants using the subjective scoring system. In all classes, this system has been devised to reward and encourage the continuing development and quality achievement of excellence, taste, style, projection, and variety. Within the color guard and Advancing/Retiring of Colors classes, the system also rewards and encourages uniqueness, as well as innovation, and acknowledges the joint efforts of the performers, designers and instructors in maintaining the traditional American Flag etiquette and requirements.

Four judges will be provided for the Advancing/Retiring of Colors Class.

## **SECTION TWO COLOR GUARD RULES**

### **2.0 PURPOSE**

The intent of the color guard classes composed of either members of The American Legion, American Legion family and/or mixed family is to honor the American flag. The flag is to be honored in a military manner with dignity, style and bearing associated with a military ceremonial color guard. It may be creative, innovative, and/or entertaining, while keeping the National Colors an integral part of the performance. The American Legion Competitive Flag Code is an essential part of the marching performance.

### **2.1 CLASS ELIGIBILITY**

#### **ADVANCING/RETIRING OF COLORS CLASS**

All units must be members of The American Legion and/or Legion Family (i.e. Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or American Legion mixed participants). If competing for the Commander's Color Guard, all unit members

competing in this class must meet all the requirements for American Legion membership and be over 18 years of age.

This contest will be open to units composed of not less than four (4) members. If the color guard consists of only four (4) members, the American Flag bearer will give all color guard commands.

## 2.2 INSPECTION

The inspections will certify that all units have the required number of personnel for competition; the required equipment is being carried onto the field of competition, and to ensure personal appearances and condition of uniforms and equipment is in accordance with a precise military inspection. At the request of the inspection judge, unit members will be required to show their current American Legion Family membership cards.

## 2.3 UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

The style and color of uniform will be optional for each unit provided they are within the dignity and propriety required when carrying the National Colors. Headgear is required on the National Color bearer.

Required authorized equipment will consist of National Colors\* and at least two weapons and a Banner. Additional authorized equipment, such as flags, sidearm, sabers and swords may be carried and in some classes simulated.

### RIFLES:

Rifles are defined as weapons that are hand operated and designed to be fired primarily from the shoulder. The surface of the rifle must have bore lands and grooves to impart rotary motion to the projectile, which conform to the original design of military rifles, past or present. Sights, slings, barrels, triggers and trigger housings are optional, however rifles cannot be loaded.

The color Guard Captain will verify all competition sidearms and rifles contain **NO rounds** in the chambers before entering the Hotel.

The day of competition the Inspector will verify with the Color Guard Captain **NO rounds** are loaded in the side arm, rifles or in possession of any team member.

Side arms are defined as weapons, which are hand held and fired by means of a primer, percussion cap, or cartridge enclosed igniter.

Sabers (swords) are defined as weapons which are designed to be hand held for cutting, thrusting or slashing an enemy, with either a curved (saber) blade or straight (sword) blade which may be constructed of any material and must have a hand guard.

\*DEFINITION – The Institute of Heraldry, Washington, D.C., has specified in Title 4 of the U.S. Flag Code that the 50-Star American Flag is the Flag of our Country (U.S. Colors); therefore, all others shall be treated as banners. All banners and flags shall be dipped at a reviewing stand except the 50-Star Flag of our Country.

Use of National Color staff head finial piece, as defined by flag code, is mandatory. If a directional piece is used, it will be judged on the directions of the bearer, and not the direction of the staff head.

All other staff heads on other banners, when used, are optional.

Minimum size of U.S. Colors is 3 feet by 5 feet. No flag shall be larger in size than the U.S. Colors.

## 2.4 PERFORMANCE TIMES

### ADVANCING/RETIRING OF COLORS CLASS

Each color guard will have a maximum of four (4) minutes for their advancing/retiring of colors performance. Timing and judging will start for a unit with the first step across the starting line by **any** member of the unit. A double warning signal will be given at the three (3) minute thirty (30) second mark to alert the competitors there are thirty (30) seconds left to exit the competition floor. A single sound of the whistle will identify the expiration of the allotted four (4) minutes; if the competitors are not clear of the competition floor then penalties will be assessed. However, timing and all judging will continue until the last member of the unit proper crosses the finish line, including the Commanding Officer.

<b>Any violation of the maximum 4 minute time period for each class shall result in a one-tenth (0.1) point penalty for each three (3) seconds, or fraction thereof.</b>
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## 2.5 REQUIRED MANEUVERS

### (b). PRESENTATION OF COLORS

This maneuver shall be done at a halt, at attention, facing the saluting point. The banner shall dip at least momentarily to the saluting point. All weapons must render the proper “present arms” at least momentarily. All salutes shall be rendered simultaneously at some point in the presentation.

<b>Any violation of Presentation of Colors shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.</b>
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(c). POST AND RETRIEVE

This maneuver includes the U.S. Flag and a banner. The U.S. Flag is to be posted to the right of the saluting point with its front facing the field. Colors must be properly guarded at all times; for guarding purposes, weapons shall be in the possession of the guarding member at all times. During the ceremony of Posting and Retrieving, two (2) salutes are required, to be executed simultaneously by all members; one directly following posting and one salute directly prior to retrieving colors.

Colors must not be posted for more than sixty (60) seconds. Time shall commence upon the release of the first pike and shall terminate upon the grasp of the last pike. A color is deemed posted immediately upon the release of the pike. A color is deemed retrieved upon the intentional grasp of the pike. The U.S. Flag and Banner may be posted simultaneously, if not so posted, the U.S. Flag must be posted last. The U.S. Flag and Banner may be retrieved simultaneously. However, if not so retrieved, the U.S. Flag must be retrieved first.

The U.S. Flag must be guarded at all times. The U.S. Flag is considered as being properly guarded during maneuvers if the guard is within three (3) paces of the U.S. Flag.

<b>Any violation of Presentation of Colors shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.</b>
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ADVANCING/RETIRING OF COLORS CLASS

**The following are examples of an advancing/retiring of colors routine:**

*ADVANCING COLORS*

Color Guard consisting of minimum number of four (4) is formed at the rear of the contest area in a rank or file, whichever may suit the situation best, formation facing the Commander's station.

In forming a rank, the National Color is to the right of the Post Color and the two Guards are on the respective flanks. In forming a file, the National Color is second in file, preceded by a Rifle Guard and followed respectively by the Post Color and a Rifle Guard.

To properly form the Guard, the following sequence of Commands may be used: "Fall In"- "Dress Right Dress"- "Ready Front"- "Right or Left Shoulder Arms"- (Color Bearers should assume the position of carry or any other suitable position at this command) "Forward March." The above-mentioned commands put the Guard in a forward motion.

Upon arriving at a position in front of the Commander's station, the following commands may be used: "Guard Halt-Post Colors" (The National Color Bearer steps off in the direction of the flag receptacle to the right of the Commander's station, halting and facing front upon arriving in front of same). The Post Color Bearer follows the same procedure

to the flag receptacle to the left of the Commander's station. During this procedure the Rifle Guards will assume the position of Port Arms. The next command may be "Place Colors." Colors may be placed by stepping forward with one foot and placing Colors into the receptacles, making sure any top ornament on each respective color is facing the assemblage. It must be remembered that the Colors may be posted simultaneously, or the Post Color is posted first followed by the National Color. The Color Bearers then return to the position of attention. The next command may be "Present Arms." The Rifle Guards should render the prescribed salute with their pieces and the Color Bearers should render a right hand salute. Post Color Bearer should either face the National Color or turn toward the American flag while executing the salute.

The next command sequence may be "Right Shoulder Arms" (Color Bearers recovering from hand salute on same), "Assemble March" (Color Bearers may face the center and step off respectively in the direction from which they came and assume their positions in the formation facing the rear of the competition area). The Rifle Guards may execute an about-face on command and be prepared to move out on the next command with Guard intact.

The next command may be "Forward March" and upon arriving at the starting point, the Guard should be halted with the command of "Guard Halt" and then the Guard may be given "Fall Out."

### *RETIRING COLORS*

Retrieving the Colors may be executed in nearly the same manner except substituting the command of "Retrieve Colors" for "Post Colors," and giving the command "Present Arms" upon the Color Bearers arrival in front of their respective colors (Color Bearers will salute at this time).

The next sequence of commands may be "Right Shoulder Arms" (Color Bearers will assume position of attention) "Take Colors" (Color Bearers putting one foot forward to take Colors and assuming position of attention, after securing same). It must be remembered that the Colors may be retrieved simultaneously, or the National Color is retrieved first followed by the Post Color. The next commands may be "Assemble, March" (Color Bearers executing same marching as in returning from Posting). The Rifle Guards will execute about-face after Colors have arrived in respective positions. The Guard may be retired in the same manner as it was in Posting, with the exception of the last command, which should be "Dismissed."

## **2.6 CONDUCT OF COLOR GUARD/PENALTIES**

(a). The contest will be held on a floor 40 feet wide and 60 feet long with the outside lines and center line marked.

(b). Each Color Guard will have a designated competition time. Following inspection, the unit will remain available to proceed to the starting line for competition.

**The failure of any unit to report at the designated competition time will result in a one-half (0.5) point penalty. For each 15 minutes or part thereof and up to the conclusion of the contest, another one-half (0.5) point will be assessed.**

(c). Once a unit reports to the starting official that the unit is ready, the unit must start within sixty (60) seconds or less.

**Failure to start within 60 seconds or less will result in a one point (1) penalty.**

(f). Each Color Guard shall be subject to the rulings of the Chief Judge of Contests with respect to entry on, exit from, conduct on the field, and in the immediate area.

(g). The Banner shall be accorded proper respect at all times.

(h). The current competitive flag code, as adopted by The American Legion National Headquarters, will be the rules for proper use in all matters not covered herein. A Bugler and/or Drummer will be judged on the proficiency of the playing or drumming under the General Effect caption.

## **2.7 OTHER PENALTIES**

(a). A unit violating any rule, or part of a rule for which no specific penalty is provided.

**Any color guard breaching standard contest etiquette or failing to comply with directions from contest personnel for which no specific penalty is provided, shall be penalized for each such violation, not less than 0.1 point up to disqualification at the discretion of the Chief Judge and Assistant Chief Judge.**

(b). Any infraction of flag etiquette. The authority adopted for flag etiquette is the "American Legion Competitive Flag Code," adopted by The American Legion.

**One point (1.0) for each offense**

(c). Each piece of dropped equipment or uniform.

**Assessment is one-tenth (0.1) penalty for each infraction**

(d). Retrieval by any member of each piece of dropped equipment or uniform.

**Assessment is one point (1.0) for each retrieval of dropped equipment or uniform**

(e). Deliberate grounding of equipment is not permitted in this class.

**Assessment is one point (1.0) penalty for each infraction**

## **2.8 PROTESTS**

Any protest regarding these contests will in all respects conform to and will be disposed of according to these rules. Protests must be filed with the Chief Judge of Contests, no later than thirty (30) minutes following the conclusion of the contest. Copies of the protest must have been given to any other units involved or affected by the protesting group. The protesting unit must be represented by a proper officer at a meeting on said date, time and place announced by the Chief Judge of Contests. Copies of protests, reviews of decisions and rulings may be obtained from the

Audio-visual recording equipment may be allowed in the area of competition at the discretion of the Chief Judge of Contests; however, no such evidence will be admissible at a protest meeting.

## **2.9 TIE BREAKER**

In case of a tie for first place, the color guard with the highest general effect score will be declared the winner.