



## CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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**Purpose:** Provides a framework for unit activities and is an educational process for informing members on the importance of a standard document outlining roles and responsibilities for members and officers. If the Constitution and Bylaws and the 2014-2019 Centennial Strategic Plan are properly written, reviewed and updated, they strengthen our organization at all levels (Goal 4) and this helps to create an environment that allows goodwill to develop and grow (Goal 2).

Constitution and Bylaws is the most important document governing a unit's activities and provides a framework for all the discussions and decisions generated at your unit and Executive Committee meetings. A carefully prepared and crafted document provides for a successful organizational process. Always keep in mind that Department, District, County and Unit Constitutions and Bylaws cannot be in conflict with the national governing documents.

### Guidelines

#### Constitution for Unit, County, District

- Provides the foundation for the organization
- Contains the essential provisions relating to:
  - a. Name of the organization
  - b. Object/Purpose
  - c. Membership eligibility
  - d. Officers and how elected or appointed
  - e. Term of office
  - f. Meetings, when held, monthly, annually
  - g. Makeup of the Executive Committee and its functions
  - h. Parliamentary authority
  - i. How to amend
  - j. Are essentially the laws of the organization

#### Bylaws

- Details duties and powers of officers
- Includes responsibilities of the Executive Committee
- Outlines Standing Committees
- Provides for the appointment of Special Committees
- Includes responsibility for reports
- Provides a structure for dues required for membership
- Determines the membership year
- Provides a discipline process
- Parliamentary Authority
- Amendments and how accomplished

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* provides the governing document for all matters pertaining to the unit, unless they are specified in the bylaws of the organization or any special rules adopted by the organization.

Changes can be made to the Constitution and Bylaws with written notice to the members at a regularly scheduled meeting, **if a written copy of the proposed changes is mailed to each member prior to the meeting taking place.** A second reading of the changes is then not necessary and a final vote can be taken for adoption or rejection at the next meeting of the organization. A review of this document should be done annually by a committee appointed for this express purpose, but hopefully not changed every year.

#### Definitions

- a. Resolution: An elaborate, formally written motion. A resolution may contain a preamble that lists the reasons for adoption. Each reason is listed in a separate paragraph starting with the word "whereas". A resolution must have at least one "resolved" clause that specifies the action or position being proposed.
- b. Amendment: Proposes a change to the Constitution and Bylaws or Special Rules of Order. It is also used to modify a motion under consideration.

The Department Chairman of Constitution and Bylaws will review all documents sent to her and a response given to the submitting entity, and if all are in order, the document will be sent to Department Headquarters to be filed.

A mid-year and also a year-end report should be mailed to the chairman listed.  
Mid-year by **January 1, 2019** and Year-end by **May 1, 2019**.

As part of your Narrative Report, please include answers to the following questions:

1. Have you done an annual review of your Constitution and Bylaws?
2. When were your organization's Constitution and Bylaws last revised?
3. What plans do you have in place to review regularly?
4. Do you appoint a chairman for this committee?
5. Do you do any type of training or discussion at a meeting regarding Constitution and Bylaws and their necessity and impact on your organization? (Suggestion: have a member create a game of questions for members to participate in at a meeting, thus making Constitution and Bylaws fun!

#### **Additional Resources**

##### **National Constitution & Bylaws Contact Information:**

Melanie Taylor, National Chairman  
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Debra Noble, National Vice Chairman  
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