

OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

JOHN E. JACOBS AMERICAN LEGION POST 68

As of March 2025

Who Can Be A Post Officer

- **Any member in good standing with high moral character**
- **Is elected by the membership in accordance with the Post Constitution & By-Law's**
- **Can be appointed by the Post Commander with membership approval and in accordance with the Post Constitution & By-Law's**
- **Should be formally installed & a graduate of the American Legion Extension Institute Course**

Commander (elected)

The ability to lead is recognized by election to the office of Post Commander. Now, draw on that ability and experience while developing new skills to help the post prosper.

The charge accepted, Commander, is broad and difficult. How you respond will determine to a large degree the standing of The American Legion among associates and within the community. The support of district and department officers, the information in the American Legion Officers Guide, and help from post officers will together make performing the job possible. Look to the overall operation of the post and realize you have stepped to another level. At first, it may seem the step is too high, but as time goes by, following the suggestions and recommendations in the Officers Guide, your year as Commander will be most rewarding.

Your duty as the Post Commander is to preside at all meetings of the Post and to have general supervision over the business and affairs of the Post and be the chief executive officer of the Post.

The Commander shall approve all orders directing the disbursement of funds and shall make an annual report covering the business of the Post for the year, and recommendations for the ensuing year, which shall be read at the annual meeting and a copy thereof immediately forwarded to the Department Adjutant. The Commander shall perform such other duties as directed by the Post.

First vice commander (elected)

In most posts, a first and second vice commanders are elected, with membership and retention being the primary concern of the first vice commander. While each post is different, a membership campaign should cover certain fundamentals. Look at the methods used in the past. Develop new procedures to improve the methods being used. In a successful post, a new commander is going to contact the post officers and committee chairs immediately after annual Post elections to schedule a meeting where they can lay out a general plan of operation for the entire year. This is when the membership plan should also be decided. It is recommended that a vice commander execute a plan to conduct a Buddy Check twice a year at a minimum.

The four W's of planning:

- WHO – Who's going to execute each step necessary to reach the goal?
- WHAT – What steps are required to reach the objective?
- WHEN – When is the work going to be done?
- WHERE – Where do you want to go? What's the objective?

The Commander and Post best know the membership potential in their community. The steps to get there are similar for every post. Answer the following questions for the post and community to outline your job and know how to reach goals:

- Mailed dues notices will bring in about 80 percent of current member renewals. Who is going to contact the remaining 20 percent who do not respond?
- How is the post going to contact and recruit prospective members? Who's going to contact them? How will new recruits be assimilated into the post?
- Who can be counted on to work at membership and how will they be organized?
- What awards or special recognition will be given?
- What special events can be tied in with membership, such as Veterans Day, team competition, contests with other posts, The American Legion's birthday, etc.?

Other duties: Membership may be the primary assignment of a first vice commander, but during a normal year, this person will have many other duties. The vice commander should be familiar with the ceremonial protocol for regular meetings, and will likely be called upon to conduct one or more meetings during the year due to the absence of the post commander. Knowing how to develop an agenda, run a meeting, and follow protocol are useful skills to develop. The vice commander should be ready to fill in for the commander at a moment's notice.

Second vice commander (elected) (The Fun Guy/Gal)

The second vice commander is responsible for building an atmosphere in which Legionnaires have fun while accomplishing the mission of their American Legion post. The Commander depends on the second vice commander to help run operations to spice up meetings and attract members to the post. The social calendar should be filled months in advance with activities designed to engage members. One of the second vice commander's first duties should be to contact other veterans and civic groups to verify each patriotic holiday and observance receives the respect it deserves. The second vice commander should be looking for ways to involve members in post activities,

operations and programs to assist the first vice commander by providing improved member retention.

Finance officer (elected)

The finance officer should be honest and have experience in handling financial affairs. The Post depends on fiduciary integrity and should acquire expert advice in formulating and administering its financial policy. The finance officer usually serves as the chair of the finance committee and is in charge of all receiving and disbursing of Post funds. The Post Adjutant, in all matters relating to finance, should carry on the work in close correlation with the finance officer. Post accounting forms assist in meeting the requirements of American Legion posts in maintaining a correct and permanent membership and finance record. No special knowledge of bookkeeping or accounting is required. Be prompt in remitting national and department per capita fees and cards to department headquarters. It is essential the finance officer maintain accurate financial records for all Post operations and activities along with submitting annual Income Tax forms and paperwork.

Historian: (elected)

The work of post historian is cumulative. It is wise to leave the responsibility to one person if handled well. There should be close cooperation between the post adjutant and the historian. The former works with records on matters of current interest, the latter on matters of historical interest. The post historian should also keep in touch with the department historian and be prompt in answering inquiries. An annual report should be made to the department historian prior to the department convention. Copies of printed material regarding the post should be deposited in local and state libraries, as well as in the post and department archives. This will prevent complete loss of records through fire or other catastrophe, as well as provide source material for those looking for information about The American Legion. THE AMERICAN LEGION | OFFICER'S GUIDE | 2024 17 The post historian should attend department conventions and make a point of knowing what historians of nearby posts are doing. The department historian can advise post historians on department and national post history contests, historians associations, and materials to assist in maintaining best practices.

Chaplain (elected)

The chaplain need not necessarily be a clergyman, but must be a person capable of moral and intellectual leadership and one who gives dignity and respect to the office. The chaplain should be in close touch with the commander and other post officers, and should attend all meetings of the post executive committee. The leadership in many post activities belongs by right to the chaplain, and when this office is filled by the right person, the post's usefulness to the community greatly increases. The Manual of Ceremonies (see page 35) gives an important place to the chaplain in the conduct of meetings, the observance of patriotic occasions, funeral services and dedication ceremonies. At all these events, the chaplain is the moral leader. The chaplain should work with the

post historian on grave registration work and inspire the post to decorate veteran graves, especially on Memorial Day. Besides officiating at post members' funerals when requested, the chaplain can serve their bereaved families. The chaplain may also chair the post's Veterans Administration Voluntary Services (VAVS) Committee, which coordinates volunteer work at nearby VA facilities. The American Legion Chaplain's Handbook, available online and through department headquarters, offers guidance for the post chaplain and religious emphasis committee.

Sergeant-at-Arms: (elected)

The sergeant-at-arms knows how to arrange the meeting hall and assists the Post Commander and adjutant in preliminary arrangements for meetings, including leading the color detail during presentation and retirement ceremonies. He or she is the expert on flag etiquette and should know proper flag display and procedures in operating a meeting. The sergeant-at-arms should also play a leading role in the post color guard, burial detail and other pageantry. The sergeant-at-arms is the logical person to chair a welcome committee, which can have a tremendous influence on the post's image, membership and relationship with members. Every Legionnaire wants to feel part of the group, particularly the new Legionnaire attending his or her first few meetings. The sergeant-at-arms must make certain new members are welcomed, introduced and made to feel they are important to the post. The welcome committee also encourages present members to attend meetings and advises the commander on who should be acknowledged.

At-Large Members: (elected)

Post 68 At Large members are used by the Post Commander to carry out duties as needed. They may be assigned as committee or team leads, event leads, or participate in membership activities. At Large members also assist in the annual Financial Review of the Finance Officer's books

Adjutant: (appointed)

The adjutant is the primary administrative officer for the post. Post activities revolve around the adjutant. Most posts retain a good adjutant over a period of years. The role of adjutant provides continuity for a post. While the commander's duties are largely inspirational and executive, an adjutant's duties are administrative and functional. The commander navigates the ship, while the adjutant is the engineer who sees that the ship's machinery is working and maintained. The adjutant is the personnel officer and personal point of contact for individual members of the post. They maintain membership records and minutes of meetings, check and assist the work of the other officers and committees, and publish official orders, announcements, and communication with post members. All post records should be maintained and accessible by the adjutant, in a comprehensive filing system. The office involves a great deal of work and attention to detail. An effective adjutant is an essential component of a successful post

Suggestions for the new adjutant: The only indispensable qualifications for the job of adjutant are honesty and willingness. They should go through all the post records at the first opportunity. The

constitution, minutes of meetings, and reports of officers and committees will give insight into the post's policies and traditions. Communications from department headquarters will bring the adjutant up to date on instructions.

The Post Adjutant's Manual has detailed instructions on the handling of membership cards, per capita payments and other duties. Every adjutant should have a copy. Request one from department headquarters or download it at legion.org/publications.

Post Service officer (appointed)

The value of a post service officer increases with length of service. As the service officer's reputation grows, so will the value of the organization in the veteran community. The job requires a competent, dedicated and organized person, preferably one is readily available to provide assistance. The post service officer is responsible for bringing awareness to all veterans and their dependents the rights and benefits granted them by law. The post service officer also must know how to access and utilize the expert services available through The American Legion, state and federal government agencies, and local community agencies. The job requires timely submission of information to full-time professionals so veterans and their dependents are adequately represented. The service officer's report should be a standard part of every meeting. The American Legion maintains a full staff of appeals representatives in the Washington, D.C., and Indianapolis headquarters offices. A small mobile staff of field representatives provides a constant flow of information concerning conditions in VA hospitals, domiciles and regional offices. Other American Legion representatives assist veterans who petition DoD boards for review of less than fully honorable discharges or dismissal from the military. They also assist veterans in obtaining deserved decorations and medals. Department service officers are certified and can provide necessary claims forms. Additional information comes through department publications, National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation bulletins, memorandums and VA pamphlets. Many departments conduct training for post service officers to gain knowledge and contacts, and all have trained and certified service officers in VA regional offices and hospitals. With most of today's veteran population composed of those who served during the Vietnam War era and after, the work of the post service officer continues to be vital. These former servicemembers are likely to not be fully versed in veterans benefits and programs. Meanwhile, older veterans need advice on how to integrate possible benefits into their retirement plans. Dependents should be contacted as soon as feasible after a veteran's death. Every Congress considers legislative matters of importance to veterans and to The American Legion. Working in cooperation with the post legislative committee, the post service officer can aid the national organization's legislative efforts.

Parliamentarian (appointed)

The Parliamentarian advises the presiding officer and other officers, committees, and members on matters of parliamentary procedure. Parliamentarians are frequently used to assist with non-legal advice during meetings.

Logistics Officer (appointed)

The Logistics Officer is responsible for a wide variety of duties that help maintain the operation of the Post. The Logistics Officer shall work closely with the Commander to coordinate the administration of the Post's physical resources and assets. Typically, the Logistics Officer shall be responsible for purchasing, receiving, storing and issuing of all materials in support of the Post's mission and activities under the direction of the Post Commander, Finance Officer and PEC.

The Logistics Officer should make every effort to form a logistics team. The Logistics team is primarily responsible for coordinating all logistical aspects of events and activities hosted by the post, including venue booking, transportation, catering, supplies, volunteer management, and overall event planning to ensure smooth execution, often working closely with other post officers and committees to facilitate successful functions.

Public Relations Officer (appointed)

The Public Relations Officer is responsible for promoting Post events and activities via local and social media venues

Elevates awareness in the veterans community and the community of American Legion advocacy of veterans issues, national security, Americanism and youth. The American Legion is defined in the public eye by the values it demonstrates. The committee accomplishes this in two ways: placing radio and TV advertisements and public service announcements produced by National Headquarters where they can be seen and heard, and developing relationships with editors and journalists in the post's community so they cover programs supporting the Legion's four pillars. For example, the High School Oratorical Contest is the reporter's news peg, but the Legion's support for a "one hundred percent Americanism" is the story. Why and how veterans strengthen America is the question the post's public relations committee should answer in the media. Public relations is a membership multiplier..

Membership Chairman: (appointed)

The Membership Chair will meet and greet members & guests as they enter Post meetings and will be responsible for all members and guests to sign in. The membership chair shall also assist the Adjutant by accepting dues payments, issuing new ID cards, processing of new member applications and member transfers (with guidance from the Adjutant). The Membership Chair shall also assist the First Vice Commander with buddy checks and other membership related activities.

Executive committee (consisting of all elected and appointed officers)

Government and management of the post is entrusted to the executive committee. It should meet regularly or as often as the commander deems necessary. In some cases, the post executive committee is further charged with assisting in hiring employees, authorizing and approving all

expenditures, hearing reports of post committee chairpersons, and providing business oversight over post affairs. Delegation of these functions to the executive committee is in no way intended to usurp the powers of the membership through regular post meetings. Rather, this allows the routine business affairs of the post to be handled outside of post meetings. Committee reports and other issues of general interest to members should be handled during post meetings. The key to interesting post meetings is using the executive committee effectively. The post meeting that becomes bogged down in arguments on petty details is interesting only to those engaged in the conflict.

ADDITIONAL POSITIONS: (this section in draft)

Webmaster: Responsible for updating and maintaining our Post website

Calendar Admin: Responsible for updating our Post Calendar in Google Calendar

Events Admin: Responsible for maintaining our Volunteer Signup area of our website

Facebook Admin: Responsible for our Post Facebook page

TEAMS and COMMITTEES: (This section in Draft)