AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF MONTANA
2021

POST LEADERSHIP

&

PLANNING MANUAL

Helpful information for the Post Commander, Adjutant and Finance Officer

INCLUDES HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER PROGRAM

REVISED January 2020
If you have suggestions for modifications of this manual, please contact Department Headquarters staff to make your suggestions.

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PO BOX 6075
HELENA, MT 59604

Department Website: mtlegion.org
THINGS I WOULD DO IF I WERE A POST ADJUTANT

Realizing that the most effective Post leadership is the result of team-work, rather than the efforts of one or two officers, I would cooperate 100% with the Post Commander and encourage all other Post Officers to do their full job.

I would realize the importance of membership and make a special effort to cooperate with the membership chairman. I would maintain an up-to-date eligibility roster of all potential members, with special attention to the Vietnam Era, Panama, Grenada and Persian Gulf Veterans. I would see that these names are circulated to the entire Post membership as well as to membership workers.

I would get the membership solicitation work in my Post under way as soon as possible after the Department Convention. **Experience repeatedly proves that early membership means strong membership.** Post Officers should be the first to pay their dues – to set a good example.

I would see that the credit is given to membership workers. Recognition at Post meetings is something everyone appreciates, and this credit should certainly go to those who have earned it. I would keep accurate records of the Post membership and see that Continuous Membership patches are awarded at least once a year.

I would remit Department Record Cards (and the $30.00 Department and National Per Capita per card) at least once a week to the Department Adjutant, knowing this will reduce my bookkeeping and that of Department Headquarters.

On each check being sent to Department Headquarters, I would attach the Department transmittal form showing an itemized list of the transmittal. Be sure that your dues per capita are a separate check. **Sons of The American Legion dues are separate, and a separate check and transmittal form should be made out to: SAL DETACHMENT OF MONTANA.**

I would keep my own Post accounting up-to-date at all times.

I would answer all Department and other Legion correspondence PROMPTLY.

I would carefully read, in advance of Post Meetings, all Department and National Bulletins, news releases, etc. marking the paragraphs I believed pertinent to the business of the Post – and then read the marked paragraphs at Post meetings. I would also pass on to Post Committee chairmen all information having to do with their Legion activity and assignment.

I would help the Post Commander plan meetings in advance, with the view of making them as interesting as possible.

I would review this publication at least once a month.
MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

Membership Awards to Posts are pretty much automatic, as these can be determined by the cards Department has received as of any particular date. **BUT, when it comes to individual awards to Post Member-Getters, it is up to the Post Adjutant to send this information. (see page 4 for a complete listing of reports and due dates.** A number of Post Member-Getters each year have been denied the honors due to them by this oversight of the officers responsible for keeping your records and sending them to Department. Special forms for ordering awards for Post Member-Getters are furnished to all Post Adjutants. **Use them.** Forms are also available on the Department Website at [www.mtlegion.org/resources/forms](http://www.mtlegion.org/resources/forms)

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS: (From Department)

- **Department Commander’s Pin:** A pin for cap; a special award by the Department Commander for getting 7 new and/or renewal members.

- **Gold Star Award:** For getting 10 or more new/or renewals.

- **Post Commanders:** A special pin to be awarded to each Commander that has reached or exceeded the Post Goal by National 100% Target.

- **Post Adjutants:** A special pin to be awarded to each Adjutant that has reached or exceeded the Post Goal by National 100% Target.

GO-GETTER AWARD

A new Go-Getter Pin is awarded each year. Six Points are given for each new or reinstated member and one point for each renewal. Members of Posts of 20 members or less will need 10 points; 21 to 50 members – 12 points; 51 to 100 members – 16 points; 101 to 150 members – 20 points; 151 to 200 members – 22 points and any Post over 201 needs 26 points.

TOP NEW MEMBER-GETTER AWARDS

Three of these will be presented at the Department Convention, to the three highest NEW MEMBERSHIP GETTERS in the state, as of May 15.

The TOP NEW MEMBER-GETTER in each District (must have at least 5 to qualify) as of May 15 will receive a special award as determined by the Vice Commander each year.

POST AWARDS: (By Department)

- **JUNEAU MEMORIAL AWARD:** One (1) to the Post with the best percentage increase over the year before, for Posts 75 or under by May 15.

- **FUHRINGER MEMORIAL AWARD:** One (1) to the Post with the best percentage increase over year before, for Posts 76 to 175 by May 15.
ANGELL MEMORIAL AWARD: Awarded to the Post with the best percentage increase over year before, for Posts of 176 or over by June 1.

THE POST GOAL RIBBON: Awarded to all Posts reaching 100% by or prior to the National 100% Target Date.

NATIONAL POST HONOR RIBBON: Posts qualify for the Honor Ribbon by enrolling an advanced membership by December 31, for the membership year about to begin, equal to or greater than the total membership, as of December 31st of the membership year then ending.

OTHER AWARDS:

CONSOLIDATED POST REPORT AWARD: For Large and Small Posts

BEST NEWSLETTER: For Large, Medium and Small Posts

POST SCOUTING AWARD – For Post Sponsoring a Scouting Unit

POST SCOUTING AWARD – For Post Not Sponsoring a Scouting Unit

Most forms can also be found on the Department website mtlegion.org
REPORTS & AWARD DUE DATES
TAL/SAL Department of Montana Membership Transmittal Form- Submit with every membership transmittal; SAL is to be submitted on a separate form

Anytime
1. IRS form 8822b- change of responsible party IRS

January 1
1. Employer Awards Department

January 15
1. Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award Department
2. Firefighter of the Year Award Department

March 1
1. Eagle Scout of the Year Award Department

March 15
1. Constitutional Essay Education Chairman

March 15 (or 90 days after close of the Post’s fiscal year)
1. IRS form 990N, 990 EZ or 990 IRS online

April 1
1. Montana VA Employee of the Year Department

April 15
1. Annual Post Data Report Department
2. Annual Business Report MT Secretary of State
3. Junior High and High School Surveys Education Chairman
4. Post Newsletter Publications Chairman

May 1
1. Certification of Officers Department

May 8
1. Top Recruiter Certification Department

May 15
1. Consolidated Post Report Department
2. Post Scouting Award Department

June 1
1. Member getter form Department
2. Go Getter form Department
3. Continuous Years Awards

June 15
1. Department Convention Delegate Form Department

July 15
1. VA Health Care Provider of the Year Department
2. VA Physician of the Year Award Department
DIRECT RENEWAL PROGRAM

Every member will receive a dues statement shortly after July 1. Second billing October 1. Third billing is January 5 and a Fourth billing March 2. There will be a Fifth billing on May 1 for all late renewals.

Your Post First Vice Commander is usually and automatically your Post Membership Chairman. He/She is to prove by this that he/she has the stuff to make a good Post Commander for the following year, and he/she must get to work early on his/her membership campaign.

The most successful Post membership drives are made by the time-tested membership team method. Have teams of two (or more) Legionnaires working on lists of renewals and eligible veterans calling on prospects personally to see them and sign them up. This method will produce the best results for your Post.

REMEMBER: Post Officers and others will want to be “Early Birds” by signing up before September 11th. December 31st is the time for all current year members to renew or become delinquent January 1st of the New Year. POST OFFICERS MUST BE RENEWED BEFORE DECEMBER 31ST!

ONLINE RENEWALS: Members may renew online using the National website at www.legion.org. When a member renews online they download a temporary membership card and are given instructions to contact their Post Adjutant for their permanent card. When the Post Adjutant issues the card he / she does not send the card to Department, Department is notified separately of the renewal and will already have given credit for the renewal.

Experience has shown that very few of the members who renew online will ask for their permanent card, therefore once the Post has been notified of an online renewal by Department or MyLegion.org the Post should issue the permanent card ASAP. The Post Adjutant should be checking www.mylegion.org weekly at a minimum.

See page 14 for Post Online transmittal information.
2020-2021 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EARLY BIRD/NEF KICKOFF</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 11, 2020</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL MEETING</td>
<td>OCTOBER 9, 2020</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VETERANS DAY</td>
<td>NOVEMBER 14, 2020</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEARL HARBOR DAY</td>
<td>DECEMBER 11, 2020</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>MID-WINTER</td>
<td>JANUARY 16, 2021</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRESIDENT’S DAY</td>
<td>FEBRUARY 12, 2021</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGION BIRTHDAY</td>
<td>MARCH 12, 2021</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN &amp; YOUTH</td>
<td>APRIL 9, 2021</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARMED FORCES DAY</td>
<td>MAY 7, 2021</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELEGATE STRENGTH</td>
<td>30 DAYS PRIOR TO NATIONAL CONVENTION</td>
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</table>

Target dates fall on the second Wednesday of the Month unless there is a holiday on that day or at the beginning of that week.

The November target date will be on the second Thursday due to Veterans Day falling on that Monday.

To maximize the December renewal, notice the January target date will be on the third Thursday of the month.
# AMERICAN LEGION
MEMBERSHIP
2021 RENEWAL SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUTOFF DATES</th>
<th>RENEWAL DATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 8, 2019</td>
<td>July 1, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 11, 2019</td>
<td>October 7, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 10, 2019</td>
<td>November 15, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*December 11, 2019</td>
<td>January 3, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 12, 2020</td>
<td>February 26, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9, 2020</td>
<td>April 25, 2021</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* This cutoff date is also a membership target date. Transmittals received after this date will not prevent a subsequent notice from being delivered at or around the renewal date.

Please note, renewals transmitted and received by the cutoff (which is also a National Target Date) will be updated prior to printing renewal notices, assuming they can be successfully scanned. Membership that must be hand-keyed (new members and renewals that can’t be scanned) will take longer to process. Please transmit as early and as often as possible in advance of the Target Dates to help avoid delays in processing.
TIPS FOR POST COMMANDERS

1. NEVER START A MEETING WITHOUT AN AGENDA. An agenda might also be called a list of things to be covered by the meeting. An agenda saves time. An agenda keeps a meeting concise and to the point. Do not divert from your agenda.

2. STATE THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING AT THE BEGINNING AND READ THE AGENDA. Those attending a meeting are not always acquainted with why they are there. By informing them of the items on the agenda, you will help them concentrate and direct their thinking on what the meeting is to accomplish.

3. KEEP THE MEETING MOVING. Just as a meeting is seldom any better than its leader, so it is seldom any more productive than the interest shown in it by its participating members. Interest lags when action lags. You are the Commander – keep the meeting moving.

4. PREVENT HUBBUB: When everybody talks at once, no one can be heard, nothing can be accomplished. Insist on order.

5. AVOID TALKING TO INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT TALKING TO THE GROUP. Side conversations between the Commander and individual members are bad. They disrupt a meeting. Members may unintentionally disrupt a meeting, but not the Commander.

6. KEEP THE SPEAKER TALKING CLEARLY AND AUDIBLY. If a member asks for the floor and is given it, you are responsible to see that he makes proper use of it. Interrupt him if necessary and have him repeat what he has said if you have the slightest doubt of his being heard.

7. SUM UP WHAT THE SPEAKER HAS SAID AND OBTAIN A DECISION. Not all members will be good at expressing themselves. It is up to you to determine what they have said and whether or not it had been understood and get the decision of all the members on the question.

8. STOP AIMLESS DISCUSSIONS BY RECOMMENDING COMMITTEE STUDY. Occasionally, subjects arise and are discussed, but in general instances, submit the matter for further study by a committee, which you appoint.

9. KEEP CONTROL OF THE MEETING AT ALL TIMES WITHOUT STIFLING FREE COMMENT. Invite criticism and even disagreement. Also ask for support. And clarify issues by obtaining majority support.

10. DON'T ARGUE WITH THE SPEAKER. ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU DISAGREE – REMEMBER – YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE NEUTRAL. Nobody can be completely neutral. But you, as Commander, must remain as neutral as possible. No matter how ardentl you feel concerning the subject under discussion, let the meeting make the decision. Remember, you are conducting a full orchestra, not playing solo.

11. IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS, ASK FOR THE FLOOR AS A PARTICIPANT. As Commander, you must retain the respect of the meeting. If you feel called upon to
participate in partisan discussion, ask for the opportunity to “step down” from the chair and speak from the floor as a participant. Otherwise, you weaken your position as Commander. Remember to turn the gavel (the meeting) over to your Vice Commander.

12. DON'T SQUELCH A TROUBLEMAKER, LET THE MEETING DO IT. CALL SUCH TROUBLEMAKING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ENTIRE GROUP. Again, you must remain impartial. It’s the duty of the meeting to pass judgment, not only on the issues, but also on the conduct of individual members.

13. BE AWARE OF THE PARTICIPANTS COMFORT. Your members are human beings. They are subject to physical law as well as your authority. Your meeting can accomplish more if all members are comfortable. Be sure the area is well lighted, sufficient circulation and water should be available.

14. CHECK AT THE END OF THE MEETING TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL AGENDA ITEMS HAVE BEEN CONVERED ADEQUATELY. As adept as you may become at leading your Post meetings, you may still overlook an item of business. It is your duty to see that sound and just decisions have been reached. Double check at the end of each meeting to be sure.

**FLAG PROGRAM BOOSTS RESPECT FOR ‘OLD GLORY’**

As Post Commander, you can build your membership’s involvement on this important facet of the Americanism Program by providing these publications in sufficient quantities to the appropriate teachers who in turn can make them available to the students, i.e. Flag Education DVD, Let’s Be Right on Flag Etiquette, and Know Your America pamphlet. The Americanism Commission recommends that the flag education program be directed primarily toward students in the upper elementary grades. There are also comic books available for flag education for younger students.

In addition to providing the publications mentioned above which are available from National, to your local schools, here are some other suggestions for implementation of an effective flag education program.

The Post Commander and Americanism Chairman should contact local schools to offer any assistance in the development of a program to promote proper respect and display of the flag.

Ask the assistance of local news media – newspaper, radio and TV, in the promotion of the flag education program which could have as its climax a meaningful Flag Day observance, June 14th. (Through news media support, the flag education program can be carried beyond the schools and to the entire community.)

With a new surge of patriotism being expressed throughout the nation, American Legion Posts are urged by the Americanism Commission to provide the initiative and educational tools which will help the youngsters develop a proper respect for, and an interest in displaying the Flag of The United States.

Another area of flag education where your American Legion Post can be of great service is in setting the example for proper disposal of unserviceable flags. The United States Flag Code, as amended by PL 94-344, July 7, 1976, says that “an unserviceable flag should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.”
The Manual of Ceremonies section in your **POST OFFICERS GUIDE** contains instructions for a dignified and appropriate ceremony for the retirement of old colors and the disposal of unserviceable flags. Many Legion Posts have reported favorable response from both students and community leaders to this ritual.

The effectiveness of the program is up to you, Post Commander. You can help the students and community as a whole, gain better insight into respect for the flag.

Posts may sign up for the Flag Rewards program through emblem sales and earn rewards for the Post in the form of credit that can be used at Emblem Sales. To sign up fill out the form located in the Forms and Awards Manual for Adjutants.

**PICK GOOD COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

The organization of your Post Committees should be your first and probably most important duty following your election. You should call a meeting of the newly elected officers for the purpose of completing your committee assignments. Be sure to appoint an active chairman for each committee. Duties of these committees are defined in the **POST OFFICER’S GUIDE** Section 1 – page 16.

When you have completed your committee appointments, it is most important that each has an opportunity to meet and plan the activities. As Post Commander, it is not necessary that you meet with the Committees, but you should show your interest in their work. Check with each committee chairman at regular intervals; let him know that you and the Post appreciate the work of his particular committee.

The Post Executive Committee can be a valuable asset to the Post, as many matters can be acted on by the Executive Committee that would be of little interest to the Post as a whole. It can also act promptly on matters which cannot await a regular Post meeting, and which would not warrant the calling of a special Post meeting.

**LIST YOUR CHAIRMEN**

| MEMBERSHIP | ___________________________ |
| BOYS STATE | ___________________________ |
| ORATORICAL | ___________________________ |
| LEGISLATIVE | ___________________________ |
| COMMUNITY SERVICE | ___________________________ |
| PUBLIC RELATIONS | ___________________________ |
| REHABILITATION | ___________________________ |
| AMERICANISM | ___________________________ |
| CHILDREN & YOUTH | ___________________________ |
| NATIONAL SECURITY | ___________________________ |

**GOOD PROGRAMS MAKE A GOOD POST**

Encourage members to enroll and complete the American Legion Extension Institute Online course at [https://www.legion.org/alei](https://www.legion.org/alei) also known as Basic Training

**FALL** – ATTEND FALL DISTRICT MEETINGS
Plan and initiate a membership drive. Give everyone a part in it. Contact School Officials and arrange for Oratorical Contest and School Medal Awards Programs to be included in School Calendar. Observe Constitution and Citizenship Day; contact schools about the 7th & 8th grade and High School Constitutional Essay Program, (see Americanism manual). Appoint and organize Post Committees. Select good, working members. Arrange Post program to include report from representatives to American Legion Boys State. Plan in advance and participate in community Veterans Day program. Plan in advance and participate in National Education Week observance. Arrange a Halloween Party for Legion and Auxiliary. Arrange for and hold “Press Appreciation Night” for radio, TV and newspapers. Plan and participate in POW/MIA activities September 20th.

**WINTER**

Send contribution for VA Hospital Holiday Fund. Participate in community Welfare Programs for needy families. Continue the Membership drive – renew all of last year’s membership. Begin a “New Member” Drive. Visit newcomers to the community. Hold a proper initiation ceremony for new members. Conduct a Community Service survey to determine needs of community, and then participate with other service organizations to carry them out. Observe “Religious Emphasis Week” and “Four Chaplains Sunday”, first week of February. Plan and observe the Legion Birthday, March 15-17 with appropriate ceremony. February is Boy Scout Birthday month, support this worthwhile program. Plan for sponsorship of American Legion Boys State delegates. Conduct Post Oratorical Contest and participate in the city, county, district and state contests. Contact schools about the Jr. High and High School Government Survey Program and Jr. High and High School Essays.

**SPRING – ATTEND SPRING DISTRICT MEETINGS**

April is Children and Youth Month. What are you doing to support this program? Make plans for the summer program of your Boy Scout Troop. Organize and support Legion Baseball teams. Get a little exercise yourself. Assist the Auxiliary in the Poppy Drive. Don’t let them do all the work. Plan and participate in suitable ceremonies for observance of Memorial Day. Observe Flag Day, June 14th. Hold a public meeting and present School awards – combining with Flag Education program. Participate in the Department Oratory and 8th & 10th Grade Essay contests and the Government Survey programs. Send to Department all “end of the year” reports. Elect new Officers. (Complete Post Officer elections by 30 April). SEND FORM TO DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS. Make sure your Post files their Form 990 with the IRS.

**SUMMER**

Encourage your members to attend Department Convention and to attend any training that may be offered.

Attend the Department Convention. Have some fun while learning about the Legion. Support Legion Baseball tournaments by attending and cheering your team. Spend some time at Montana American Legion Boys State.
A FEW REMINDERS, COMMANDER

USE YOUR POST OFFICER’S GUIDE: Read the GUIDE from front to back and then use it as a ready reference.

USE YOUR MANUAL OF CEREMONIES IN YOUR OFFICERS GUIDE: Read this carefully, and follow it at all times.

REPORTS TO BE FILED: Each year, prior to the Department Convention, Post Officers are asked to file the following:

1. Post Data Form – Sent to each Post by the Department Headquarters. To be completed and returned to Dept by April 15th.

2. Consolidated Post Report Form – Sent to each Post by the Department Headquarters or filled out on mylegion.org.

3. Boy Scout Reports. To be completed by May 15th.

4. Roster of New Post Officers (Certification of Post Officers) elected for the next year, as soon after election as possible, but not later than May 1st.

When you leave office, see to it that your successor has all the necessary data.

Urge all Post Officers to be examples of consistency, believers in stability and promotion, and live wires for a good American Legion business system of service, information and attention to duty.

Make use of your inactive and new members by appointing them to a committee. You will have more than a card-carrying member as a result and will unearth additional leadership for your Post.

Be sure that the outstanding programs and community projects of your Post get before the public through newspaper, radio and TV publicity. Remember – the Post that does things, and lets the public know about it, has no membership problems.

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LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR MEMBERS  Department Headquarters has received many inquiries on life membership plans for members. The matter of life membership is left up to the respective Posts of Montana. There are two types of LIFE MEMBERSHIPS. The first is Honorary Life, where the life membership is presented to a member by the Post for long and faithful service to his Post. The Post pays this member’s State and National dues to Department each year and also presents him with a special metal life membership card. This may be ordered through Department or National. The second one is PAID UP FOR LIFE (PUFL) offered by National Headquarters. The cost of this type is based on two factors, the age of the member at the time the membership is purchased and the total dues of the Post at the same time. There is a calculator located at www.legion.org. A member in good standing may purchase a Paid Up For Life
membership only through www.legion.org or by calling (800)433-3318. A permanent, distinctive membership card will be sent to each Paid Up For Life member upon receipt and acceptance of his application by National. Thereafter, an annual membership card will be sent to each Paid Up For Life member by the National Organization.

CONTINUOUS MEMBERSHIP Continuous means just that for membership, it is not accumulative membership. If a member has belonged for 25 years but missed several years during his membership, he is not a continuous member. (An exception is made for the years where some Post failed to send in membership money to Department Headquarters after the member had paid.) This is up to the Post to determine. Special forms for continuous membership awards furnished by Department Headquarters must be used to apply for continuous membership pins and cap pins and patches (paid for by the Post).

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RENEWAL NOTICE DELETION LIST – If you have members who are PUFL members and are still receiving renewal notices, use this list. If you have members who have notified your Post they have no desire to renew or you have lost contact with them, use this form as well. Remember, for every notice that is sent there is a cost incurred to Department Headquarters. Send completed forms to Department Headquarters.

CUT OFF FOR MEMBERSHIP CARDS – After January 1st of each year we can no longer accept membership cards for the year which just ended, except by special coordination with Department Headquarters.

AVERAGE ANNUAL POST DUES – The average annual Post dues in Montana is $35.00. They range from $35 to $50 per year. A total of $30.00 per capita is sent to Department Headquarters for each membership. Of this total, $18.50 goes to National Headquarters, while $11.50 remains with the Department Headquarters to finance the office and services. Headquarters Post #105 dues are $47.00.

SPECIAL DUES RATE – If authorized at the Department Convention, there is a special dues rate of $18.50 for the new, first-time members who are on active duty, or within one year of discharge. The entire $18.50 is to be sent to Department; this is only if the Post chooses to participate.

MEMBER DATA FORMS. Department Headquarters has a supply of these forms for all Post Adjutants who request them. We have requested that you use this form for TRANSFERS ONLY. If your Post is signed up for MyLegion.org most transactions that had previously required submission of a Member Data Form can now be done on line. If your Post does not use MyLegion.org deceased, address changes, and name changes may be submitted to Headquarters by e-mail or on a plain piece of paper. You must include the member’s name, membership ID number and give us the requested change. We can submit these changes through the Internet with National Headquarters. The only thing we cannot change through the Internet is a transfer from one Post to another. That needs the Member Data Form with the members and the adjutant’s signature.
POST ONLINE TRANSMITTAL SUBMISSION

PROCESS MEMBERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The “Process Membership” feature in myLegion allows American Legion Post Officers to renew, add new members and transfer-in existing members from other Posts. (NOTE: Posts can only transfer-in members that dues are being paid for.) This feature utilizes electronic payment methods via myLegion and eliminates the need for Post Officers to send the National/Department portion of the (3-part) membership cards and paper-checks to the Department Headquarters office.

Electronic check (Echeck) is the only payment method available when using this feature. The account must be a valid business checking or savings account held with a US Bank. Credit card payments are only accepted for foreign Posts outside of the US that do not have a checking/savings account with a US Bank.

Each dues payment charged for a member is the sum of the National Per Capita plus Department Per Capita in effect at the time of the transaction. National Headquarters will handle payment of the Department Per Capita back to the Department Headquarters office.

ELECTRONIC CHECK (Echeck) PROCESSING GUIDELINES

The processing time for Echecks is up to 5-business days. During the 5-business day period, a “Pending” charge will be placed on the funds in the checking/savings account designated by the American Legion Post. In addition, the batch status in myLegion will also show a “Pending” status for the 5-business day period. After a successful transfer of funds to the bank at National Headquarters, the transmittal status of the batch will change to “Closed”, and the member information will be applied to the National Database.

Credit card transactions should clear within 24-hours

Declined Echecks

If a Post submits payment for a batch of transactions and the Echeck is declined, the transmittal status of the batch in myLegion will be set to “Declined”. Common reasons for declined Echecks are:

1.) Insufficient funds
2) Bank Account has been closed
3) Invalid Bank Information

In the event a membership batch is declined, the Post Officer will be notified via email, and the batch will NOT be applied to the National database. Declined batches can be re-submitted within 14-days. If not re-submitted within the 14-day period, the batch will be deleted.

The Post will be charged all penalty fees levied by the ACH (Automated Clearing House) processor for declined Echecks. The American Legion National Headquarters reserves
the right to suspend the “Process Membership” feature for a Post at any time due to a high volume of declined transactions, or malicious use of the myLegion site.

**MEMBERSHIP IS A POST RESPONSIBILITY**

**EVERY POST COMMANDER IS ON TRIAL TODAY!**  His handling of his Posts Membership program is a yardstick of his leadership ability.  **The record will show for all time whether he licked his problem or whether the problem licked him!**

**MEMBERSHIP RESULTS -** are from hard work at the Post level by individual Legionnaires who are willing to take the time and to make the effort to contact unpaid former members and invited eligible veterans about becoming important parts of unselfish service programs in their communities.

**ORGANIZATION COUNTS:** - An early and well-organized Post campaign for members is the best way to reach your **Post Goal by November 11th, Veterans Day.** This is the date when all Posts should have their membership work over, so they can devote their time and energies the rest of the year on American Legion and community programs.

The First Vice Commander of a Post is usually selected to be the Post’s Membership Chairman.  This plan is used universally so that the person who is slated to lead the Post the next year can prove themselves.  This responsibility should be impressed upon them by the Post Commander.  Several cases can be cited in Montana where Post Vice Commanders were not moved up to Post Commanders because they laid down on their jobs as Post Membership Chairmen.

Most Posts have their own membership plans.  The only real way to get membership is to set up lists of members, former members and eligible veterans and send out teams of two Legionnaires, who know The American Legion, to contact and sell memberships to them.  In most cases eligible veterans are waiting for someone to “Ask Them” to join.  Also remember to contact Department Headquarters for DMS members and Headquarters Post 105 members from your community.

There are 107,000 war veterans in Montana eligible for membership in The American Legion.  We are getting less than 15 percent of these veterans.  There are over 96,000 eligible veterans in Montana who are non-Legionnaires.  Many of them are waiting to be asked to join.  The problem is that we are not asking!!

**REMEMBER:**  The only difference between an eligible veteran and an American Legion member in most cases is an INVITATION TO JOIN!

**COMMANDER, YOUR JOB BOILS DOWN TO THIS:**  **GET THE MEMBERSHIP THEN GIVE ‘EM LEADERSHIP.**  Then you will have your problem licked.

**SIGNING UP FORMER MEMBERS IS ANOTHER WAY TO INCREASE YOUR MEMBERSHIP.** Most Posts have a number of former and/or suspended members.  This list of former members should also be contacted so they can be reinstated.  No doubt a lot of them have never been contacted for reinstatement.  Many of them have been waiting for someone to contact them.  Get a Post list of former members from you Post
records, files, or Department Adjutant and go to work on them. All it takes is either a personal phone call or drop by to see them and find out why their membership lapsed. It may be as simple as they just forgot or perhaps a personality problem that no longer exists. In any case, you'll never know if you don't ask.

**DIRECT MAIL SOLICITATION (DMS) HEADQUARTERS POST #105:** Ask the Department Adjutant for a list of Headquarters Post #105 and DMS members from your community. Contact those members and ask them if they would like to transfer. Once you transfer them make sure you properly welcome them to your Post.

**OUR AMERICAN LEGION CAP “PLUS”**

Our Cap is the official uniform of The American Legion. Being so requires all of us to follow specific protocol prescribed by National Headquarters following Resolution No. 58, adopted by the National Executive Committee on April 30 to May 1, 1964.

Numerous styles are available, but colors may vary. Post caps are all blue with gold piping. The left side of all caps contains The American Legion emblem and location of the member’s Post; either the city and State, or only State. Pins and badges are never to be worn on the left side of the cap, only the right side.

The right side of our cap contains our Post number, our number is assigned by Department Headquarters at the time of the Charter. A newly formed Post may have a number from a canceled Post only after 2 years following revocation of that Charter. In addition to pins and badges, Post Officer positions may be displayed on the right side only. With the Post cap (blue) it is advised to use badges or pins for offices, rather than ordering embroidery with permanent gold thread due to changes in offices through the years.

White caps designate Department or State officers and are only worn during the individual’s time of service. The red caps are worn by National Officers. Blue with white tops are worn by District officers.

All Legionnaires are blue caps; meaning everyone is responsible for Post duties, including membership and Post programs. Department and National programs are also every member’s obligation. The American Legion was chartered in 1919 to perform many tasks adopted under our Four Pillars Campaign, which is commitment of membership.

**STANDARD OF CONDUCT**

Many Sons of the American Legion members have never served in the Armed Forces. Therefore, this portion is included as a tool for them.

- The cap is to be placed 2 fingers above their eyebrows and not on the crown of the skull.
- Caps are to be removed during the following:
  - While eating - Drinking coffee or other beverages do not require removal.
During prayer - When entering a place of worship, remove your cap and place it over your heart until seated. Caps are to be worn if part of an Honor Guard.

When reciting the Pledge of Allegiance or singing the National Anthem. A salute may be rendered with the cap on, should you not sing.

POW/MIA ceremonies - Legionnaires rise, remove caps and place it over your heart with the Emblem facing outward. This includes either the flag or chair cover on The Empty Chair or the Table and White Cloth ceremony.

Female Legionnaires are not required to remove their caps.

UNIFORM AND REGALIA
Our American Legion cap, uniform or regalia should be worn by American Legion members when in attendance at official meetings or ceremonies as official guests at patriotic or other functions, or when representing the American Legion on public occasions. The Department recommends for officers as well as others wishing to project a more formal image to wear a shirt and tie, gray colored trousers with navy blue blazer, dark socks and black shoes, along with the appropriate cap.

SALUTING
In military training, we were taught that a salute was a formal and proper greeting. Our national flag requires a respectful salute when in uniform and when approaching it, as well as retreating from its position during any meeting. When leaving a meeting room while the meeting is in session, a salute to our national flag is again required. When entering the room while a meeting in session, a salute is required. The Sergeant-at-Arms may be positioned to return your salute, but regardless, the salute is required. It is a Legionnaire’s prerogative to salute the Commander at the podium while a meeting is in progress. A salute is also made by the person placing the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair after placement and again prior to its removal the conclusion of the meeting. However, this is done reverently and slowly.

We Legionnaires often forget that the Sons of the American Legion members have never been to Boot Camp or Basic Training and are unaware of how to properly render military courtesies. Please assist Sons of the American Legion members on how to render a proper salute. The upper portion of the arm is to be at the right angle to the body, the fingers of the hand straight and touch the forehead above the right eyebrow.

BREAKING THE PLANE
The “PLANE” is the space between our National Flag and the Banner placed at the head table. This space or area between these flags represents “Hallowed Ground”, dedicated to the remembrance and respect for all of our brothers and sisters who gave their lives for the freedoms we all enjoy today. When we reach
through this space we are desecrating their memory. Always walk around to pass anything to those at the head table or behind the head table. The flags could even be placed in front of the head table. Please consider this tradition as sacred at all times and not only when the meeting is in progress.

CONVENTIONS

Remember any paid member can attend any convention whether they are an elected delegate or not.

First time Department and National Convention attendees are often confused about what they should be doing when they attend convention, this next section is intended to assist them, and the Post in preparing them for their attendance.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION
All convention attendees are responsible for their own reservations, with both the convention committee and for lodging. The first thing to do is to complete the convention reservation form which can be found in the Montana Legionnaire newspaper or on the Department website. This form is used to register for the convention and to let the convention committee know which events/meals you plan on attending. None of the events listed on the form are mandatory. It is very important that the events/meals are selected so the convention committee can plan for the proper headcount. All delegates must register and pay the registration fee, some Posts pay the fee or reimburse their delegates, but that is up to each individual Post.

Lodging is up to the individual member, although lodging is listed on the form normally it is up to the member to make their own reservations. All attendees should stay at the convention hotel, but it is not required. Remember the host Post incurs many costs and the more rooms they fill at the convention hotel, the less the costs are.

Delegates must be elected and reported to Department Headquarters two weeks prior to the start of the convention. Delegates are allocated based on Post membership 30 days prior to the start of the convention. Post will be notified by Department, the number of delegates they are authorized and provided with a form to report the names of the delegates. Only submit this form if your Post has delegates attending the convention.

When attendees arrive at convention, they must report to the convention registration table to pick up their event/meal tickets and any other materials the convention committee has for them. If they are elected delegates, they must report to the Department Convention office and pickup their credentials. Post Commanders, Adjutants or authorized personnel will also pick up their Post packets. All delegates will have a committee assignment which will be posted at the Department office and assignments will also be read on Friday morning.

Delegates are expected to attend their assigned committee meetings and participate. Generally, all committees meet on Friday afternoon, however depending on issues before the committee they may be required to have additional meetings.
Remember, only elected delegates can vote; however, all attendees can speak to any issue and attend any committee meeting, again with voice, but no vote.

**NATIONAL CONVENTION**

All attendees to National Convention must register through Department Headquarters on the form which is published in the Montana Legionnaire newspaper and the Department website. All forms and deposits paid must be completed prior 1 July. When completing the form make sure you indicate the type of room required, and if you are sharing with someone and most importantly the date of arrival/departure.

If you plan on attending the National Commander’s banquet you must reserve and pay prior, the tickets are nonrefundable unless the Department Adjutant can sell them.

Hospitality room fee must be paid by all attendees or they will be denied entry to the Department Hospitality room.

All members who want to attend National Convention as an elected delegate must be nominated and elected at the Department Convention. If elected as a delegate, the Department pays the delegate fee. If the delegate fee is paid prior to election and then the attendee is elected, they will be reimbursed for the fee. All elected delegates are required to stay at the Department hotel. All elected delegates must attend their appointed convention committee meeting on the Sunday of the convention.

Prior to the start of National Convention all registered attendees will receive detailed instructions from the Department Adjutant. Upon arrival at the convention city all attendees will need to proceed to the designated location and pick up their credentials and packets from the Department Adjutant.

If your attendees still have questions or need any clarifications have them contact the Department Adjutant.

**RECRUITING STATION/BOOTH**

1. **Booth-Store Front Equipment**
   - 4 chairs for each 4 to 6-foot folding table or equal, (1) set up per side of booth or straight run wall area
   - 2 clipboards
   - Trash can
   - Banner or Sign designed to inform all the booth/table is manned by Legionnaires for the benefit of all who served and are serving in the United States Armed Forces and their families.
   - Dedicated, informed Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion members –The Legion Family

2. **Handout Pamphlets, Materials and Supplies**
   - Membership applications for “The Legion Family”
   - Why you Should Belong –Stock No. 30-185
   - Membership Benefits pamphlet
• Current Legion Magazines and Department Publications
• Post Newsletter
• Pamphlets on Children and Youth Programs
• TS2 Troop Support booklet
• Guide for Women Veterans
• Agent Orange Guide for Benefits and Programs
• Gulf War Era Benefits and Programs
• Blue Star Service Poster
• For Which it Stands DVD
• Junior Shooting Sports Handbook
• Legion Rider Information
• “Win a Home Flag Set” Recruiter Registration Box (Post Optional)
• Home Wall Mount American Flag Set for display purposes, winner of drawing receives this set (Post Optional)

3. General Information and Tips on Working a Booth
• Work in pairs with one person addressing the prospective member and the other person being the supporter
• Keep tabletop clean and booth area straight with materials laid out in a neat and orderly manner
• Dress in accordance for the activity, namely don’t over or underdress. Be neat, look sharp with clothing that has some form of The American Legion Emblem, Patch or Insignia on them; you are making a first impression
• Remember to engage in conversation pertaining to Legion activities and events with all who pass by your location. Using the “Win a Home Flag Set” drawing box is a good tool to draw individuals into a patriotic conversation.
• Provide information regarding functions and activities The American Legion is involved in locally
• Assist the prospective member in filling out a membership application; fill in the required blanks, leaving the new member with the responsibility of signing their name.

PATRIOTIC EVENT FOR AMERICAN LEGION POSTS

CERTIFICATE OF GRATITUDE
AND
BLUE STAR SERVICE BANNER

Objective:
American Legion Posts and Districts organize a “Special Patriotic Event” designed to recognize individuals who are serving on active duty in the United States Armed Forces and the individual’s family.
Plan:
The local American Legion Post /District develops and sponsors a special patriotic event involving a Certificate of Gratitude and Blue Star Service Banner. The Blue Star Service Banner is presented to families in the community who have a loved one serving in the Armed Forces. A Certificate of Gratitude is also present to the family, the certificate recognizes the family member who is serving on active duty. This event is designed to include all patriotic citizens from the community; school students, civic and spiritual leaders, city officials and community residence, National Guardsmen, Armed Forces Reserve, Active Duty Military and Veterans.

Steps Required:
1. Develop a roster of families with loved ones serving on active duty in the US Armed Forces; include names of the families loved one. The following listed resources are commonly used when developing an active roster.
   a. Local media; radio, television, newspaper, Posters and Post website.
   b. Other patriotic organization, National Guard, Armed Forces Reserve Units and Local Armed Forces Recruiters and Military Installations.
   c. Local church groups, community Ministerial Association, elected Community Officials and Community Leaders
   d. Community High School students, councilors and teachers.

2. American Legion Post representative’s coordinate with city/community officials to set up a schedule of activities for a pre-determined date, time, and place for this community event.

3. The community is invited, and invitations are sent to families and the family member who will be recognized and presented with the Blue Star Service Banner and Certificates. In the event of the active duty family member being absent the family will on the behalf of that individual receive their Certificate.

4. The public is invited to this event along with city, county, and state representatives and dignitaries from the community and business leaders. The Mayor or other dignitary should be invited to provide a proclamation recognizing the purpose of this event.

5. Representatives of the United State Armed Forces are invited to speak and participate in the event.

6. Media coverage of this event is important. Local newspapers, radio and television coverage is one of the key elements in making the event a success.

7. Posts may order Blue Star Service Banners from The American Legion Emblem Sales catalog.
8. The Certificates of Gratitude are available for printing, contact Department Headquarters for the template.

Event Results/Benefits:

1. A great way to recognize and thank those individuals who have made the commitment to protect and preserve the American way of life. The Certificate of Gratitude event is a show of patriotic support for those serving on active duty and for those who stand ready to be called to active duty.

2. Active duty elements of the Armed Forces, National Guard Units or Detachments and Armed Forces Reserve members are recipients of the certificates and their family is recognized with a Blue Star Banner. We recognize the Blue Star families for their sacrifices and the families’ commitment to serving America.

3. Post receives recognition for sponsoring a worthy patriotic event that includes all elements of the community in a united show of support for those serving in the United States Armed Forces in the War on Terrorism.

4. Citizens of the community and those participating in the event are enlightened to the contributions and sacrifices being made by all whom serve in the Armed Forces and of the sacrifices of the families with loved ones who are serving on active duty.

5. Creates a patriotic venue for advancing and promoting a positive image of The American Legion for those who are serving to protect the American way of life.

6. The Patriotic Event provides another opportunity for Posts to work with the Total Force, Active Duty Reserve, and National Guard Units. Actions of this nature result in an opportunity for Posts to advance Reconnect Programs and Family Support Network Programs.

7. Action results in the Legion Posts in being provided with an opportunity to acquaint themselves with potential members, namely those being recognized.

**Patriotic Event Talking Points for the Blue Star Service Banner and Armed Forces Certificate of Gratitude**

The American Legion sponsored Certificate of Gratitude and Blue Star Patriotic event provides a venue for a show of community support for all who are serving in The Armed Forces and Their Families.

The American Legion along with other elements of the community presents a special personalized Certificate of Gratitude to all active duty Armed Forces personnel.
Families with loved ones serving in The Armed Forces are recognized and presented a Blue Star Service Banner.

Use all forms of the media in providing the general public with an invitation to show their support for our Armed Forces by actively participating in the Certificate of Gratitude and Blue Star Banner Event.

Community involvement in this Patriot Event starts with helping your local Legion Post generate a list of names of individuals who are serving on active duty in the United State Armed Forces. Anyone who has knowledge of families with loved ones serving on active duty are asked to provide this information to Legion representatives, by simply calling telephone number _____________ and asking for ______________

Invite community leaders, local businesses, churches, schools, and other Patriotic organizations to join in taking an active role in developing a list of families with loved one serving on active duty. Contact National Guard, and Armed Forces Reserve components and Armed Forces recruiters to assist in developing this list.

Provide information pertaining to the proposed location and date the event will take place. Announce that anyone with an interest in participating or those looking for more information may contact Legion member/members ______________ at phone number ______________

Invite the City Council and Chamber of Commerce to take an active role in working with The American Legion in planning this event.

Invite an elected community official to provide a Patriotic Proclamation for the event. Provide them an example of the Certificate of Gratitude and the Blue Star Service Banner.

Don’t forget to thank EVERYONE for allowing you the time to present the certificates and banners.

**SUBSIDIARIES**

There are special rules that apply to subsidiaries, both corporations and organizations and the Riders.

Trademark law requires that The American Legion be certain that its name and emblem are used exclusively for those purposes determined by The American Legion. The American Legion has no choice or room to maneuver in this area of the law. No one know where the limit to toleration might be. However, we do know that once a court rules the limit has been crossed, it’s too late. One of the tests to show exclusive use and to protect the emblem is “constant and continuous control.”
In this context, Departments may have subsidiary corporations or groups such as a trust or foundation if the Department desires. The Department needs to request permission for the group to use the name and/or emblem of The American Legion from the National Adjutant. Moreover, because of the requirements of the trademark law such subsidiary corporations, trusts and foundations must meet the following requirements:

Five Rules for Subsidiary Corporations or Sons of The American Legion or Riders

1. All officers, directors, trustees, etc. must be named by the Department (usually nominated by the Department Commander and confirmed by the Department Executive Committee)
2. All vacancies in the subsidiary corporation must be filled by the Department.
3. The subsidiary corporation must report to the Department, no less frequently than monthly. These reports must include financial reports
4. The Department Treasurer or Finance Officer or Department fiscal officer must be a signatory on all accounts.
5. All amendments to articles of incorporation or by-laws must be approved by the Department. (If the current text has not been approved by the Department, it too must be so approved.)

These same rules apply to all subsidiaries of Post and Squadrons and Riders chapters. Of course, all references to Departments also reference Posts in the appropriate situation.

Remember, the subsidiary does NOT tell the parent what to do!

MONTANA AMERICAN LEGION
HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER PROGRAM

PREFACE

Readers are cautioned that roadside safety policy, criteria, and technology is a rapidly changing field of study. Changes in the roadside safety field are on-going and subject to change after the date of this memo.

Our American Legion Fatality Marker Program has operated under policies and procedures that have been in place for many years.

As time has evolved, so have guidelines under which the program operates. In the early 1950’s a verbal agreement between the Montana Highway Commission and the American Legion was enough to initiate what was called the “White Cross Program” In 1953 the program was officially adopted by the State of Montana.

With the advent of the Interstate Highway System, the US Bureau of Public Roads prohibited the location of the White Crosses on Interstate Right-of-Way. It wasn’t
until November 2001 that a formal Letter of Instruction was issued by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), giving further definition to the program.

In 2007 additional guidance was issued by MDT which specified no advertising; no reflect paint or other devices; and, no wreaths or decorations placed upon the crosses. Further stipulated was there shall not be any MDT involvement in providing materials, installation, or maintenance. Guidelines for materials to be used, installation, and location were outlined.

I found, asking anyone a question dealing with authorized materials, installation, etc. usually results in a different answer each time. To update my understanding of the program, I reviewed several tiers of federal and state rules and regulations and visited with design engineers and MDT state leadership. This document, approved by MDT, is designed to provide background information as well as current or updated information for the benefit of the program.

The American Legion Fatality Marker Program success depends entirely on active participation and volunteerism. Our organization belongs to the people it serves and the communities in which it thrives.

Jim Kelly, Coordinator
July 15, 2019

**History of Fatality Marker Program**

They are numerous enough to notice, infrequent enough to startle at seeing, and they stimulate reverence, sorrow, sympathy, curiosity and caution. They affect us all to one degree or another. They are the white crosses that mark the sites of fatal traffic accidents along the highways of Montana. For over 65 years, these white crosses have reminded passing motorists of the dangers of the road, as well as the lives that have been lost on these highways.

The Montana American Legion White Cross Highway Fatality Marker Program began in 1953. The unique idea of marking fatal traffic accident sites with a white cross was the brainchild of Floyd Eaeheart, a member of Hellgate Post #27 in Missoula after 6 lives were lost in that area over the 1952 Labor Day Holiday. The safety program started out as a county and later district project for the Missoula American Legion Post. However, the idea was so good that it was soon adopted as a statewide program.

The Montana Highway Commission, now the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), approved the program in January 1953 with the blessing of the then 13th governor of Montana, J. Hugo Aronson. E.A. "Gene" King from Livingston was the Department Commander at the time. Louis Babb was the Assistant Adjutant for the Department of Montana during this time and was instrumental in getting it started. He appeared before the Montana Highway Commission and convinced them to adopt the White Cross Safety Program which placed a white cross at the site of a fatal traffic crash unless opposed by the family of the deceased.
With this authorization, most of the 134 Montana American Legion Posts participated in the program. Floyd Eaheart, the man who conceived the program, served as the state White Cross Chairman for the first several years.

However, this safety program was not acknowledged in writing until a Letter of Instruction was signed by the then Director of MDT, David A. Galt on November 5, 2001.

In January 2007 the then Director of MDT, Jim Lynch, was instrumental in getting the American Legion Highway Fatality Marker Program included on the 2007-2008 Official Montana Highway Map. This provided the American Legion with a lot of visibility and publicity.

In November 2007, Mr. Lynch approved the construction and installation of 5' by 13' highway signs at all highway entrances to Montana. These huge blue and white signs state that the White Marker Program is "maintained" by the American Legion of Montana. It was also in 2007 the name of the program was changed from the White Cross to the Fatality Marker Program.

GUIDE TO STANDARDIZED MARKER HARDWARE

(Changes or points of emphasis in specifications are in BOLD print)

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has a written policy for designing roadways that incorporates wide clear zones, and breakaway sign and support structures in new construction and reconstruction. Montana Department of the American Legion operates the Fatality Marker Program under these established policies.

GENERAL

The white markers, together with the upright supporting post, are to be furnished by the local American Legion Posts and installed by them. American Legion Posts may make the markers themselves. There should be no decorating or writing of any kind on the markers. It is recommended any decorations attached to the highway fatality markers be removed during regular maintenance.

A small American Legion emblem, small label, etching or “dog tag” may be placed on the back of the marker to let people know who erected it. It shall be the duty of the Legion Post most closely situated to the scene of the crash to furnish the marker and see that it is properly placed, and maintained as long as it is in that Post's area of responsibility.

Marker specifications:

1. They should be made of 1/8 or 3/16-inch-thick band steel or aluminum

2. The recommended width of the metal is four inches (4").
3. The crossbar should be twelve inches (12") across and the upright portion of the marker should be sixteen inches (16") inches. If less than 4" wide metal is used the dimensions of the marker may be reduced accordingly to a minimum of 9’ x 12”.

4. The markers should be seam welded to prevent rusting but may be riveted or bolted together.

5. Front and back of markers are to be painted with bright white exterior metal paint. They shall NOT be constructed of or painted with reflective material.

Support specifications:
1. Supporting upright post shall be steel “U” delineator post rated at 1.12 ppf (minimum) to 2.0 ppf (maximum), six foot in length.

2. Supporting post should be pounded into the ground a minimum of 18”. NOTE: Be very aware of unground utilities – look for underground pipe or cable markers in all directions. Montana one-call (800-424-5555) should be contacted a week before installation to confirm absence of utility conflicts.

3. Top of supporting post and markers should not exceed 54” above the ground. NOTE: MDT recommends using 6’ posts as it will provide a uniform mounting height of 54” and a uniform depth of 18”.

4. Supporting posts mounted in concrete require a breakaway joint.

5. Supporting posts are to be painted bright red with exterior metal paint. They shall NOT be constructed of or painted with reflective material.

Installation:
1. Fatality Markers shall be placed in the right-of-way in the direction of travel prior to accident (i.e. westbound travel = westbound right-of-way, northbound travel = northbound right-of-way)

2. Fatality Markers shall be placed perpendicular (not parallel) to the highway. (Note position of Marker attached to “U” shaped post.)
3. Fatality Markers shall not present a vertical or horizontal obstacle for pedestrians along bike or pedestrian pathways.

4. Fatality Markers shall be outside of CLEAR ZONE
   a. State & local highways (6’ behind a guardrail or 30’ from edge of roadway)
   b. Four lane roadways (6’ behind a guardrail or 50’ from edge of roadway)
   c. OR Outside edge of “MOW” areas (whichever is greater)

5. Only one support post per fatality location is allowed. In the event of multiple fatalities at same accident scene, multiple markers may be used on a single post

6. DO NOT install markers in median and DO NOT attach marker to guard rail support.

7. Fatality Markers currently in place are "Grandfathered" and do not need to be removed or corrected to conform to these standards.

Maintenance:

1. Fatality Markers placed on the highways of Montana are to be maintained annually by the respective Legion Posts. This can be as simple as replacing a supporting post / marker that has been refurbished. This work should be done in the Spring, prior to Memorial Day.
2. **Signs will be removed under three circumstances:**
   a. If a family requests the removal of a sign, it will be expeditiously removed
   b. If a sign is no longer in satisfactory condition due to wear and/or appearance
   c. When a section of highway is reconstructed to new standards, all markers that involve the old roadway shall be taken down regardless of condition.

3. Removed markers will not be replaced unless requested by a family member.

4. When Fatality Markers are required to be removed and reset for any reason, the Legion Post responsible is to re-erect the marker at the appropriate location with breakaway, lateral clearances and mounting heights as required by this document.

5. **Legion workers on or near the roadway shall wear high-visibility safety clothing.**

**New or Re-Construction:**

1. In the event a section of highway is undergoing **design changes**, all fatality markers should be removed by the local Legion Post and not be replaced.

2. If the highway is only being re-surfaced or having the shoulders improved, all markers should be **replaced using these updated requirements** upon completion of the re-construction.

3. Installing guardrails, installation of underground cables, or moving the tree line back may require the fatality markers to be removed and be replaced.

**IDEAS:**

1. New breakaway/yielding and crashproof post specifications allow for markers to be easily disassemble and a new supporting post or marker put in place, avoiding total replacement of post and/or welding. Markers can be attached to the support post after it is in the ground. See MDT detailed drawing 619-14 below for square tubular signpost breakaway devices.
2. We have been successful in contacting highway construction companies and having them donate “used” delineator posts which cannot be reused on other road projects. We also contacted a local highway sign company and they donated the pre-painted aluminum materials for the Markers. They receive a tax credit for their donation.

3. Some local machine shops or Industrial Arts classes will donate either the material or workmanship to construct the marker.

4. A cooperative agreement with a local government agency to purchase required posts at a discount. To avoid a conflict of interest, local Legion Post must pay for posts.

5. If you must purchase material, pre-drilled, breakaway/crashproof U-shaped steel posts are available at most hardware stores. They may also be available in other ranch or fencing establishments near you. If the post and marker is pre-drilled, the marker can be attached to the post after it is in the ground.

6. If using older support/markers, keep a number in reserve. Refurbish them during the winter months. During annual maintenance, it may be quicker to replace a damaged support/marker with a new/refurbished marker built to standards. Reduces field maintenance.
FREQUENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Are Fatality Markers Memorials?
No! American Legion Fatality Markers mark the scene of a fatal accident and serve as part of a Highway Safety Program. They are placed to serve as a reminder to drive carefully and alert drivers to potential hazard areas.

Can They Be Decorated by Family?
Most Legion members realize a family has lost a mother, father, brother, sister or close relative and are sensitive to the trauma surrounding death and the need to grieve.

Decorating a newly installed marker may be reasonable but the use of any type of decoration **obstructing the marker is strongly discouraged**, as this reduces visibility and defeats the purpose of this **highway safety program**.

American Legion Fatality Markers are routinely maintained, and decorations are removed. If redecorated, the marker may be removed.

Can Fatality Markers be placed along the Interstate?
Yes, you can put American Legion Fatality Marker up on the Interstate in Montana. (SEE: CLEAR ZONE)

Glossary

**American Legion** - American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veteran’s organization. Focusing on service to veterans, servicemembers and communities, the Legion evolved from a group of war-weary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States.

**Breakaway** - A design feature which allows a device such as a sign support to yield or separate upon impact.

**Clear Zone** - The unobstructed, traversable area provided beyond the edge of the through traveled way for the recovery of errant vehicles. The clear zone includes shoulders, bike lanes, and auxiliary lanes, except those auxiliary lanes that function like through lanes.

**Fatality Marker Program** – An American Legion program intended as a highway safety program aimed to reduce deaths resulting from traffic crashes. Markers are placed at the scene of fatal vehicle accidents within the borders of Montana.

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** - An agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that supports State and local governments in the...
design, construction, and maintenance of the Nation’s highway system (Federal Aid Highway Program) and various federally and tribal owned lands (Federal Lands Highway Program).

**Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)** - A document issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to specify the standards by which traffic signs, road surface markings, and signals are designed, installed, and used.

**Median** - The portion of a divided highway separating the traveled ways for traffic in opposite directions.

**Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)** - Montana Department of Transportation is an agency in the U.S. state of Montana, responsible for numerous programs related to the construction, maintenance, and monitoring of Montana's transportation infrastructure and operations.

**National Highway System (NHS)** - The National Highway System is a network of strategic highways within the United States, including the Interstate Highway System and other roads serving major airports, ports, rail or truck terminals, railway stations, pipeline terminals and other strategic transport facilities.


**Highway Sign** - Any traffic control device that is intended to communicate specific information to road users through a word or symbol legend.

**Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD)** - Defines the standards used by road managers nationwide to install and maintain traffic control devices on all public streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public travel. The MUTCD is published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

**REFERENCES**

AASHTO's Roadside Design Guide and AASHTO's Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware for guidance on selecting the appropriate Test Level (TL) based on traffic using the facility.

These devices have been evaluated in accordance with the NCHRP Report 350 or the 1985 and 1994 AASHTO Standard Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaries and Traffic Signals. Note that breakaway support hardware that was determined to be eligible under either the 1985 or 1994 editions of the AASHTO specifications were determined to meet the NCHRP Report 350 testing guidelines. However, additional testing and evaluation may be necessary to meet the current criteria in MASH.
For further information about sign supports, please refer to AASHTO Task Force 13 Guide for Sign Supports, an Online Guide to Sign Support Hardware.

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) policy** requires all roadside appurtenances such as traffic barriers, railings, **signs** and work zone hardware used on the National Highway System (NHS) to include Interstates, meet the performance criteria contained in NCHRP Report 350 or MASH.

The mission of FHWA is to enable and empower the strengthening of a world-class highway system that promotes safety, mobility, and economic growth, while enhancing the quality of life of all Americans.

**The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, (MUTCD) defines the standards** used by road managers nationwide to install and maintain traffic control devices on all public streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public travel. The MUTCD is published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 655, Subpart F.

The MUTCD, which has been administered by the FHWA since 1971, is a compilation of national standards for all traffic control devices, including road markings, highway signs, and traffic signals. It is updated periodically to accommodate the nation's changing transportation needs and address new safety technologies, traffic control tools, and traffic management techniques.

On December 16, 2009 a final rule adopting the 2009 Edition of the MUTCD was published in the Federal Register with an effective date of January 15, 2010. **States must adopt the 2009 National MUTCD as their legal State standard for traffic control devices within two years from the effective date (January 15, 2012).**

A sign support can become a deadly hazard when struck by a vehicle that drives onto the roadside; therefore, **there is a standard that requires all roadside sign supports in the clear zone to be breakaway, yielding, or shielded by a barrier or crash cushion.**

‘Breakaway’ is a term to describe crash tested sign supports that break or bend upon impact. This includes sign supports that, when struck by a vehicle, separate from the base and are knocked ahead of or up and over the errant vehicle. A ‘yielding’ support refers to a support that bends, allowing a vehicle to run over it.

All sign supports on highways within the clear zone must either be of a breakaway type meeting crashworthiness or be shielded by guardrail, barrier, or an energy absorbing system meeting. Barriers are typically not installed to shield roadside signs, especially on local roads; hence, **the design of the post, regardless of the type, must provide the breakaway or yielding feature.**
Breakaway and Crashworthy
Breakaway and crashworthy are essentially interchangeable terms. When the term breakaway is used, it means the sign support is designed so it breaks away or yields safely—even in the case of a steel post.

Breakaway describes all types of sign supports that are designed to yield when impacted by a vehicle.

Crashworthy refers to a roadside sign that has been successfully crash tested in accordance with a national standard.

MDT specifications for our Fatality Marker Program specify a “1.12 ppf steel "U" delineator post” which is both breakaway/yielding and crashworthy. “U” shaped delineator posts up to 3.0 ppf are considered to be yielding.

Clear Zone
Clear zones are designed to adequately provide a clear recovery space for many drivers who run off the road. All clear zone distances are measured from the edge of the traveled way.

Although there are varying factors, Fatality Markers should be placed six feet behind a guard rail or outside 30 feet on most state highways. On divided highways the clear zone extends to 50 feet. Common sense also dictates markers should be placed on the outside edge of mowed areas or at the fence line on parallel frontage roads.

U-Channel Steel Post
The U-channel, hot rolled steel post is a common small sign support. It is considered breakaway since it will bend, break or pull out of the ground when it is hit. The post shall be driven into the ground and not encased in concrete.

A U-channel delineator post of re-rolled rail steel weighing 3 pounds-per-foot or less meets breakaway requirements by itself.

Square Steel Tube
Another acceptable signpost is the square steel tube (perforated) design. Posts of this type are considered breakaway if they are 2 ¼ inches or less in size.

Re-bar should not be used.

Post Support
Posts should be driven into the ground 18”, not cemented unless installing the breakaway device.
If a sign replacement is warranted, do not assume the original sign was placed correctly. It is important to check the location of the support and the mounting height of the sign above the roadway to ensure the sign is visible and crashworthy.

**Placement**
Not less than six feet (6’) from highway shoulder of roadway.

**Visibility**
Is the marker visible, both day and night, at the required distance? Fatality Markers are part of our Highway Safety Program. *If blocked by vegetation or other signs it is not effective.*

**Utilities**
*WHEN INSTALLING A NEW SIGN CHECK WITH YOUR UTILITY COMPANY AND ANY OTHERS WHO MAY HAVE UNDERGROUND CABLES AND CONDUITS. LOOK FOR WARNING SIGNS. CALL Montana One-call @ 800-424-5555 TO CONFIRM THE ABSENCE OF UTILITY CONFLICTS. DO NOT ASSUME UTILITIES ARE BURIED AT REQUIRED DEPTH.*
November 5, 2001

Mr. Larry Stroklind
Chairman
Montana American Legion White Cross Program
1519 Kaniksu Avenue
Libby, Montana 59923

Subject: White Cross program

Dear Larry,

Thanks for your patience in writing and visiting with our people to get an updated letter of understanding for the white cross program. I do want to assure you that, even though there have been changes to the program since it was originally approved by the Highway Commission in 1952, we remain committed to the program and the safety message it sends.

The safety message is enhanced by consistent presentation, therefore I’m asking that all the American Legion posts in the state of Montana please follow the guidelines I’m including with this letter.

Larry, thank you very much for your diligent efforts in this regard. If you have any technical questions about the guidelines, please contact Don Dusek or Don Williams of our Traffic and Safety Bureau at 444-6217 or 444-6218

Sincerely,

David A. Galt
Director

Attachment

copies: Gary Gilmore, Chief Engineer
John Blacker, Maintenance Administrator
Doug Morgan, Traffic and Safety Bureau Chief
Don Dusek, Traffic Engineer
Montana Department of Transportation

Guidelines for American Legion White Cross Program

Advertising
- MDT does not allow advertising with signs within the highway right-of-way and any existing signs must be removed or permitted outside the right-of-way.
- We encourage alternate forms of advertising, for example, educational posters could be mounted in the local chambers of commerce, visitor centers, and rest areas to explain the white cross markers to the traveling public. The kiosk in the Bozeman rest area is one example.
- State highway maps could explain the white crosses; please contact Bill Cloud at 444-6114 if you'd like to pursue that possibility.

Use of reflective paint and other reflective devices
The white cross markers are not considered to be signs and must not be reflectorized.

Wreaths
They should not be considered as memorials, therefore placing of wreaths on the crosses should be discouraged.

Limits on our involvement
- MDT cannot provide the material, installation, nor the maintenance of new white crosses.
- We can no longer provide a list of accident locations (please see attached copy of Attorney General's interpretation letter for details). Individual American Legion posts will need to get the information locally.

Replacement of markers
On new highway construction projects, the existing markers should not be replaced.

Interstate
Markers may not be installed in the Interstate right-of-way.

Guidelines for white cross installations
- One marker per accident site
- Posts should correspond with the 1.12 pound per foot steel "U" delineator post
- Six-foot posts will provide a uniform mounting height and a uniform foundation depth of 18 inches.
- Marker material can continue to be flat steel plates 16 inches long and 12 inches wide.
- Locate markers a minimum of 30 feet from the highway paved shoulder or six feet behind face of guardrail.