

THE AMERICAN LEGION
CONTEST RULES
COLOR GUARD
AMERICAN LEGION OPEN CLASS

1. PURPOSE

The intent of this class is to be creative, innovative and entertaining. The National Colors must be an integral part of the performance and must be presented at all times in accordance with The American Legion Competitive Flag Code.

2. TIME AND PLACE

The Open Color Guard Contest will be held in the National Convention City starting at a time to be designated by the National Convention Commission (NCC). The contest site will be in an appropriate location designated by the NCC.

3. SUPERVISION

Competition will be under the supervision of the NCC. All interpretations and rulings made by the NCC are made within the framework of the national rules. These rules, properly mandated by the National Executive Committee (NEC), are not subject to review, correction or waiver, unless the NEC, properly constituted, in proper session, makes such review, correction or waiver.

4. ENTRY FORMS

American Legion sponsored COLOR GUARDS, AMERICAN LEGION OPEN CLASS, who is qualified for participation may receive the forms by requesting them from the Director, National Convention and Meetings of The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. The entry form must be certified by the Adjutant of the unit's sponsoring Department and sent to the Director, National Convention and Meetings.

5. ENTRY

All competing units shall, not later than 30 days prior to the date of competition, forward their contest entry form via their Department Adjutant to the Director, National Convention and Meetings, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. No award will be made to any unit until the National Organization of the American has approved its eligibility.

6. ELIGIBILITY

All competitors must be bonafide members of the American Legion Family over 18 years of age (Family Organizations, i.e. Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and American Legion mixed participants). Each competing unit must have participated in its Department contest and parade (or parade only if no contest is held) within the current year. In the event that a Department conducts neither contest nor parade, units affected may still qualify for entry into the National Contest by obtaining written verification of this fact from its Department Adjutant and include it with the entry form. No member shall compete with more than one unit or in more than one class.

All contest participants 19 years of age or older are **REQUIRED** to register for the National Convention as **GUESTS** of their respective Department. This may be accomplished by sending a by name list (please ensure all names are spelled correctly) of participants to the Department Adjutant or by registering on-site at the National Convention. All competing members will be expected to wear their registration credentials during the inspection portion of the contest. Registration is \$15.00 per attendee and allows access to all venues of the National Convention. Those participants who are 18 years of age and younger must go to the on-site registration booth prior to the contest, to register for their complimentary credentials.

Participating units with members not registered for the National Convention will not be eligible for any contest awards.

COLOR GUARD: American Legion Open Class Contest will be open to all units composed of not less than four (4) or more than seventeen (17) members including Commanding Officer, Bugler and/or Drummer. The use of recorded or live music is allowed. If live music is used, the number of performers is limited to six (6) and considered as a part of the unit proper.

INSPECTION: Will consist of a certification that the required number of personnel are available for competition, that each has registered for the National Convention (the registration credentials **must be** worn during the inspection portion of the contest), that required equipment is being carried onto the field of competition, and to insure that basic personal appearances and condition of uniforms and equipment is in accordance with a precise military inspection. At the request of the inspection judge, unit members will be required to show their current American Legion Family membership cards.

7. PARADE

All competing personnel of each unit entering the contest must participate in the Convention Parade except when special written permission to be excused has been obtained from the NCC Chairman, the Chief Judge of the Contests and the Director, National Convention and Meetings. Further, these Color Guards must parade with their respective Department unless excused by their Department Adjutant and the NCC Chairman.

8. MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES

One representative of each competing unit will meet with the Chief Judge of Contests prior to the contest at a time and place to be designated by the Chief Judge, to receive instructions and transact any business that may properly come before such meeting.

Declarations, in triplicate, must be handed in at the Meeting of Representatives.

Order of appearance in the contest will be in reverse order of receipt of entry form with earliest postmark.

9. JUDGES

Seven judges will be provided: One Chief Judge, two General Effect Judges, two Marching and Maneuvering Judges, one Timing and Penalty Judge and one Inspection Judge shall be provided by the National Convention Commission. The judges, tabulators, contest chairman and staff are selected each year based upon their experience, caring and nurturing attitude, consistency, professionalism and communication skills and the understanding and ability to uphold the rules and regulations as outlined in the manual. The judges are to rank and rate the unit participants. They must never exhibit rude, sarcastic or hurtful dialogue or to convey boredom or indifference. A judge relates to all participants at three levels, that of teacher, counselor, and critic. They must judge with their “head, conscience and heart.”

10. POINTS

Awards will be made on the following points:

General Effect:

Performance Effectiveness.....	15
Repertoire.....	15
Requirements Effectiveness.....	10
Effective Use of American Flag Section.....	10

Marching & Maneuvering

Execution

Performance.....	15
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Exposure/Technique.....	10
Equipment	
Performance.....	15
Exposure/Technique.....	10
TOTAL.....	100

This system has been devised to reward and encourage the continuing development and quality achievement of excellence, taste, style projection, variety and unit uniqueness, as well as innovation, and acknowledges the joint efforts of the performers, designers, and instructors in maintaining the traditional American Flag etiquette and requirements.

11. UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT

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

Required authorized equipment will consist of National Colors* and at least one weapon and one American Legion Organizational Banner. Additional authorized equipment, flags, rifles, sidearm, sabers and swords may be carried. These weapons can be simulated.

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

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

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

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

Rifles are defined as weapons that are hand operated and designed to be fired primarily from the shoulder. The surface of the rifle must have bore lands and grooves to impart rotary motion to the projectile, which conform to the original design of military rifles, past or present. Sights, slings, barrels, trigger and trigger housing are optional. Bolts or simulated bolts are required.

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

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

12. CONDUCT OF COLOR GUARD/PENALTIES

(a). The contest will be held on a field or floor 40 feet wide and 60 feet long with the outside lines and center line marked. A 90-inch (7ft. 6in.) line will be marked on each side of the centerline for the Pass-in-Review area.

(b). Performance time shall be not less than five (5) or more than seven (7) minutes. Timing and judging will start for a unit with the first step across the starting line by a member of the unit proper, excluding the Commanding Officer. A warning single will be given at the expiration of five (5) minutes, however timing and all judging will continue until the last member of the unit proper crosses the finish line, including the Commanding Officer.

Any violation of the minimum or maximum times shall result in a one-tenth (0.1) point penalty for each three (3) seconds, or fraction thereof.

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

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

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

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

(e). Each Color Guard shall only enter the floor over the designated "starting line" to the left of the Saluting Point, and exit over the designated "finish line" at the opposite end of the field, to the right of the Saluting Point. After timing has commenced, there will be no penalty for marking time at the starting line. The saluting point shall be the center of that sideline of the floor that is to the right of the traditional starting line. The use of the colors must be with dignity and propriety. All boundary lines are inviolate at all times except for unit entrance, exit, or for members involved in set up prior to the start of the performance or tear down at the end of the performance.

A one-tenth-- (0.1) point penalty will be assessed for each starting line, exit line, or other boundary line violation.

12.1. REQUIRED MANEUVERS: A unit must execute in front of the saluting point in any order at least one of the following maneuvers: Pass-In-Review, Presentation of Colors, Post and Retrieve done in accordance with FM-22-5.

PASS-IN-REVIEW

The area of Pass-In-Review shall be ninety (90) inches before and ninety (90) inches after the Saluting Point. This area will be clearly marked. The unit shall be in a company front with the placement of the Commanding Officer at the discretion of the unit. All members, including the commanding Officer may start the Pass-In-Review with the salute or first step over the line of the Pass-In-Review area. All members of the unit must render the proper salute by displaying "Eyes Right" except: The U.S. Flag bearer shall not dip, but may at the discretion of the unit, render "Eyes Right". The extreme right element of the unit renders no eyes right, but does render the proper salute unless it is the Commander, in which case an "Eyes Right" is required.

Any violation of Pass-In-Review shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

This maneuver shall be done at a halt, at attention, facing the Saluting Point. The American Legion organization banner shall dip at least momentarily to the Saluting Point. All weapons must render the proper "present arms" at least momentarily. All salutes shall be rendered simultaneously at some point in the presentation.

Any violation of Presentation of Colors shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.

POST AND RETRIEVE

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

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

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

Any violation of Presentation of Colors shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.

(e). The Commanding Officer and any guard members playing musical instruments shall be judged as a part of the unit proper. All musical instruments must be played within the boundaries of competition floor.

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

(g). The Banner of The American Legion sponsor shall be accorded proper respect at all times.

(h). General Effect judges will use cassettes while judging.

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

(j). No pyrotechnic, discharged of arms, pressurized canisters, dangerous materials, inflammable liquids, powders, lives animals will be permitted.

13. OTHER PENALTIES

(a). A unit violating any requirement of Rule 6 will be disqualified and its position and standing in the contest will be forfeited.

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

Each violation not less than one-tenth (0.1) point nor more than disqualification, at the discretion of the Chief Judge of Contests

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

One point (1.0) for each offense

(d). Any unit violating Rule 8.

Assessment is a two point (2.0) penalty

(e). Any unit violating Rule 12, Section (i).

Assessment is a One Point (1.0) penalty for each infraction

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

Assessment will be a one tenth (0.1) penalty for each infraction

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

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

Only judges may retrieve dropped equipment or uniform items only.

(h). Deliberate grounding of equipment is permitted in this class.

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

14. PROTESTS.

Any protest regarding these contests will conform to and will be disposed of according to these rules. Protest must be filed with the Chief Judge of Contests, not later than thirty (30) minutes following the conclusion of the contest. Copies of the protest must have been given to any other units involved or affected by the protesting group. The protesting unit must be represented by a proper officer at a meeting on said date, time and place announced by the Chief Judge of Contests. Copies of protests, review of decision and rulings may be obtained from the office of the Director, National Convention and Meetings.

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

15. AWARDS and RECOGNITION

Prize money will be allocated at the discretion of the National Convention Commission as authorized by the National Executive Committee.

The awards will be a National Champion Guidon and Trophy.

16. TIE BREAKER

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

American Legion Open Class (Rev. 2005)