



# American Legion Training Newsletter

National Headquarters Internal Affairs & Membership Division

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*Engage - Train - Empower*

## The age of a new normal



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*Department Vice Commander*

Let's face it, the world changes in ways that are completely unpredictable. Just 18 months ago, social distancing was something practiced on Facebook, Zoom was something you did while driving your car from place to place, walking into a bank with a face mask on would get you arrested, and flattening the curve was ... who even knew.

We have a choice: spontaneous evolution or spontaneous combustion. We choose evolution. With that choice comes an increased need to check in with our fellow veterans, disintegrate the barriers that prevent our move into the digital age, and have a drive to pursue future visions of ourselves and The American Legion.

The start of a new American Legion membership year is upon us and so is the dawn of the age of a new normal. We continue to rapidly evolve and find ourselves in a unique position to determine what our new normal will be. We are lucky to have the founding four pillars to guide us on this journey – stand proud and strong next to them. As we pivot, empower one another to continue our mission. We are stronger together.

The world we now live in makes it more important to keep in contact with our fellow veterans. Buddy Checks is the name for something many of you have already been doing. Continuously engaging our fellow brothers and sisters in arms, especially in times like these, is paramount to their, and our, success and well-being.

Buddy Checks can take many forms. It can be as casual as running into someone in a coffee shop and taking the time to say 'Hello, how are you?' or chatting while helping put groceries in the car. Some of the best conversations are spontaneous

and unscripted. Buddy Checks can be as formal as a scripted phone call or planned visit. We all know veterans are everywhere, not just in our posts, so engage veterans in your communities whenever possible.

The top priority for checking in with a fellow veteran should be to make sure they are doing okay and to let them know that someone cares. A simple act of kindness or cheerful word can make a big difference to another veteran. We are losing far too many of our brothers and sisters every day to miss any opportunity to make a difference.

Take the time to show that someone cares and is there in times of need. As we emerge from darker days, Buddy Checks are one of the best tools to uphold National Commander Paul E. Dillard's theme of 'No Veteran Left Behind.'

While we strive to make training available to all who desire knowledge, it's time to explore this new virtual world we find ourselves in and promote digital options (that Zoom word comes

to mind again) in all our education endeavors.

Training is an example of how digital platforms can be leveraged to bring information to the masses. It has already been shown that training can effectively transition to online platforms.

Training Tuesdays, The American Legion Media Alliance training sessions, and National Membership Workshops are just a few examples of virtual education success. It is effective, saves time, cuts down on travel, has no space constraints, and is inexpensive. Basically, it works.

Whether it's online classes, podcasts, hybrid in-person/virtual

learning, how-to videos, training presentations, or multimedia self-paced learning experiences such as Basic Training, the virtual education possibilities are endless.

To continue our journey to what will be the new normal, the use of online/virtual resources is a vital part of The American Legion's future educational success.

New experiences and opportunities present themselves continuously so embrace and learn from them. We decide how we emerge from darker days.

It's important to include everyone as we honor the past, cherish the present, and empower the future.

The message has never been more important to convey who we are: Veterans Strengthening America.

As the soapbox starts to wobble a little, it's time to take care of one final little piece of business. No article in a training newsletter would be complete without a little quiz. No cheating and queue the Jeopardy music.

What are the three things we can do to ensure our future growth and prosperity both as individuals and as an organization?

**ENGAGE. EDUCATE. EMPOWER**

## Upcoming Training Tuesdays

**Sept. 28**

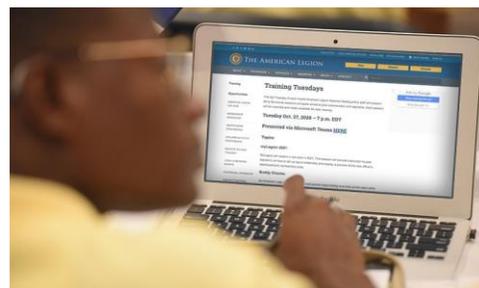
**Emergency assistance for American Legion members and posts**  
*National Emergency Fund and Mission Blue Post Assistance for American Legion members affected by natural disasters and posts facing loss of revenue due to the pandemic.*

**Oct. 26**

**Resolutions**

*Issues and concerns pertaining to the operation and policies of The American Legion are accomplished through the resolution process. Legionnaires at every membership level may present resolutions. In this training session, you will learn the proper way to write and present a resolution.*

The last Tuesday of each month the Internal Affairs and Membership Division has committed to conducting training. These 60-minute sessions are aimed at post commanders and adjutants. Each Training Tuesday session is recorded for later viewing. Video presentations and PowerPoints are available at [legion.org/training/training-Tuesdays](https://legion.org/training/training-Tuesdays).



## Did you know?

On Sept. 21, 1937: The American Legion national convention parade in New York City drew national media coverage and lasted nearly 18 hours. More than 250,000 marchers and spectators lined up for the event. [Learn more fun facts about American Legion history at: legion.org/history.](https://legion.org/history)

## National American Legion College

Two National American Legion College sessions are scheduled in 2021. The postponed 2020 class will be in Indianapolis the week of Nov. 14-19. The 2021 class will be held the week of Dec. 12-17.



Graduates of the National American Legion College are encouraged to take the knowledge back to their districts to help their departments with training and engagement efforts. Many of these graduates are now leaders at department and national levels, to include some past national commanders. Information is available at [legion.org/college](https://legion.org/college).

## MyLegion.org online resources

Information and help with the new MyLegion.org platform, including registration and account resources, may be found at: <https://mylegion.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Resources/Help>



## Tools for training at the local level



During the 102nd National Convention in Phoenix, several training sessions were conducted by National American Legion College graduates. These facilitators led training and discussions on various subjects pertaining to member engagement. Their PowerPoint presentations may be viewed and downloaded for use via the Training In a Box area on the training webpage, [legion.org/training](https://legion.org/training).

Training In a Box contains many materials to assist training efforts at the local post level. These include lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations and various handouts. Find downloadable training materials at [legion.org/training](https://legion.org/training) and click on Training In A Box.

## **Share your stories on Legiontown**



The American Legion has over 12,000 posts around the world who are making an impact on their communities. [Legiontown.org](https://legiontown.org) is a great way to stay connected with your American Legion Family by sharing your post's success stories and reading about others.

Through the "Share Your Story" feature, you can select one of 30 categories that fits your story topic. After submission, your story will be reviewed to ensure proper editorial and legal content, then published on Legiontown.org where it may be seen by other Legion Family members.

## **Resuming post business while keeping safe**



As communities go through the stages of easing restrictions on public gatherings, American Legion posts will have a new challenge. While some Legionnaires are ready to attend post meetings and events, others may be wary of resuming these activities just yet. So, what measures can be taken to include members with different comfort levels?

Since most American Legion members join for the camaraderie, it is important to keep everyone connected is important. You can explore options that will include all of your members to ensure success with engagement and renewals. For example, if your post has been conducting virtual meetings, you may consider a hybrid model. During in-person meetings, also give members the option to join the meeting virtually. Hosting a virtual meet-and-greet for new members is a chance to inform them of post activities. It may take some extra planning and communication, but it is well worth the effort.

If your post is new to virtual meetings, this article may help you navigate your options: [legion.org/membership/251768/virtual-meeting-options-choose-what-works-your-post](https://legion.org/membership/251768/virtual-meeting-options-choose-what-works-your-post).

### **About this newsletter**

This periodic and Legionnaire-driven newsletter, produced by the Internal Affairs & Membership Division, is designed to address best practices, ideas, and training that every Legionnaire needs to know to engage our membership through effective training now and into the future.

Highlighting new training ideas and resources becoming available, it will also feature essays from successful leaders and training ideas of posts, districts, departments, and individuals throughout

The American Legion. Are you a trainer? A writer? We need your submissions!

Send your training ideas and articles to [LegionTraining@legion.org](mailto:LegionTraining@legion.org)