

**Department of Minnesota VFW
VFW Riders
Standard Operating Procedure**



**Based on Concepts Published by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States on
December 20, 2017**

NAME:

The abbreviation for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Motorcycle Riders Groups shall be VFWR.

Under no circumstances will VFWR's ever be referred to as clubs. The name of each VFWR shall be VFW Riders Post (or District) XXXX, e.g. VFW Riders Post 8731.

PURPOSE:

- To promote and support the programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
- To promote motorcycle safety programs.
- To provide a social atmosphere for VFW members who share the same interest.

DEFINITIONS:

- Motorcycle: A two or three wheeled vehicle manufactured for use on public roads and highways.
- President: Presiding officer of the VFWR. Elected by the members of VFWR as a leader of VFWR.
- Vice President: Assist the Presiding officer of the VFWR. Elected by the members of VFWR as a leader of VFWR.
- Secretary: Term for the designated individual made responsible for maintenance of meeting minutes or other pertinent documents related to the VFWR.
- Treasurer: Sponsoring unit's Quartermaster or person authorized by the Quartermaster to handle the receipt and disbursement of funds related to VFWR.
- Road Captain: Term for an individual within the VFWR designated as a ride leader within the VFWR. Typically assigned to an individual with extensive riding experience and planning abilities for events and rides.
- Sergeant-at-Arms: Term for the VFWR individual assigned or appointed to maintain order within the By-Laws of the VFW or policies within the VFWR.

DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA VFWR ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

A Department of Minnesota VFWR Advisory Committee will be formed of members who enjoy the pastime of motorcycling and monitor trends in motorcycling, policy, practices at the local, state and national levels.

The Committee Chairman shall be appointed by the Department Commander. The remainder of the Committee shall consist of at least one member from each VFWR operating within the jurisdiction of the Department of Minnesota. Each VFWR shall elect their representative to the Committee. The Chairman cannot be the representative for their respective VFWR, there shall be an additional representative from that group. The Committee shall hold regular meetings, and the Chairman will provide a report to the Department Council of Administration.

The committee shall advise on topics relating to group riding; assist in the coordination and execution of sponsored ride activity, provide guidance to groups and their sponsoring unit (a Post or District) to promote safe riding.

FORMATION:

Posts/Districts can sponsor and begin a VFW Riders in accordance with the action of the Council of Administration of the Department of Minnesota. Individual Post or District Riders groups will be referred to as the VFWR.

If all Riders are from a single Post (comrades, auxiliary brothers and sisters), then the Post should sponsor the VFWR. If Riders from several Posts want to have a group, then the District should sponsor the VFWR

In order to sponsor and begin a VFW Riders, the sponsoring Post or District must vote to approve the formation on the Post or District floor at a regular meeting. The Post Commander will then forward a letter through the District Commander for his/her information (District requests go straight to the Department Headquarters) to the Department Headquarters requesting permission to form a VFWR. The letter will include the statement that the motion to form was passed by a 2/3 majority at a regular meeting. The request will be reviewed by the Department VFW Riders Chairman, and, if all is in order, the letter will be sent to the Department Commander to approve the Committee formation and inform the Post/District.

As with Clubs/canteens, the Department Commander may suspend the activities of any VFWR for the good of the organization.

In order to dissolve a Post/District Riders, the Post/District must have a 2/3 vote on the Post/District floor at a regular meeting. If dissolved, all Rider designated funds will become the property of the Post/District general fund, and all former Rider members will be forbidden to wear VFWR distinctive clothing.

MEMBERSHIP:

All VFWR members shall be members in good standing with either the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or VFW Auxiliary. Each must be the legally registered owner of a properly insured motorcycle and must possess a valid motorcycle driver's license (military equivalents acceptable as well); or a passenger thereto; or non-riding persons volunteering on behalf of the group in an active supporting role.

In order to participate in any sponsored VFW event or VFWR event, the rider must additionally sign a waiver holding the VFW Post, District, Department, or National headquarters and VFW Auxiliaries harmless in the event of any accident or incident. These waivers will be maintained on file by the Post/District Riders Secretary.

In order to be a VFWR member, a comrade/sister/brother will present to the VFWR President proof of insurance, proof of license, and complete the waiver to hold harmless. The VFWR will turn in all member names to the Riders Secretary, who will maintain a list of all VFWR members. The VFWR Secretary will forward a copy of this list to the Department Riders Chairman annually.

Persons, not eligible for the VFW or VFW Auxiliary, will be permitted to become VFWR participants, provided such policy is adopted by the sponsoring unit, as VFW Rider Supporters. VFW Rider Supporters are authorized to participate in VFWR events. Such Supporter classification does not constitute membership in the VFW or any of its auxiliaries nor come with

the promise of any material, financial, or political benefit to the VFWR, its members or committee; nor to any other member at any other organizational level within the VFWR; nor there be any similar gains for the honoree through the conferring of "Supporter" status, but is intended as a means to provide recognition to those who show strong support to the VFWR stated purpose, programs, and events. Persons not eligible for VFW or VFW Auxiliary, who subsequently become eligible for VFW or VFW Auxiliary membership, must join.

Prospective supporters must, without exception, be the legally registered owner of a properly insured motorcycle and must possess a valid motorcycle driver's license (military equivalents acceptable as well) or a passenger thereto. In order to be a VFWR Supporter, the person will be invited to participate by the VFWR and will then present to the President proof of insurance, proof of license, and complete the waiver to hold harmless. The President will turn in all Supporter names to the Riders Secretary, who will maintain a list of all VFWR Supporters.

Rider Supporters can be from any location. They do not gain any physical privileges from being a Rider Supporter, to include automatic entry into a Club/canteen. They could, however, be admitted to a Club/canteen as a guest of an actual rider (who must be a comrade/sister/brother).

All prospective members eligible for membership in the VFW or Auxiliary must become members in good standing, and then become an actual VFWR member.

Post/District Riders Secretaries are responsible for providing the Department Headquarters with the names, addresses, and designation (comrade, sister, brother, supporter) of all Rider members. The Department Headquarters will provide this information to VFW National Headquarters for the purpose of promoting any VFW national/regional riding events or distribution of VFWR related material. Knowledge and approval of this practice is required of any prospective Riders member.

VFWR RIDERS STRUCTURE:

Each VFWR will annually elected/appoint officers from within its ranks as follows:

1. President: Elected

- I. Must be a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, and a member of the sponsoring unit, or sponsoring unit's auxiliary.
- II. Duties: Presiding officer of all VFWR meetings. The President will act as a liaison between the VFWR and the sponsoring unit and community organizations. The President will request, from the sponsoring unit, approval for all events, expenditures of VFWR dedicated funds. The President, or their designee, will give a monthly report of the unit's activities.

2. Vice President: Elected

- I. Must be a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, and a member of the sponsoring unit, or sponsoring unit's auxiliary.
- II. Duties: Will perform the duties as presiding officer in absence of the President. Assists in the planning of VFWR events. Coordinates the flow of information provided to VFWR members and advises the President of concerns of VFWR members.

3. Secretary: Appointed

- I. Must be a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.
- II. Duties: Responsible for keeping all the VFWR records, written reports, and correspondence between outside organizations. The Secretary will maintain all applications and Waivers of Liability forms. They call role at VFWR meetings and responsible for recording the meeting minutes. It is the Secretary's duty to notify all members of special meeting times and dates other than the normally scheduled meetings. The Secretary will maintain the By-Laws of the VFWR noting any changes as voted on and approved by the Sponsoring unit.

4. Treasurer: Ex-Officio

- I. Held by the sponsoring unit Quartermaster or their authorized representative in accordance with VFW By-Laws.
- II. Duties: Maintains financial records of the VFWR. The Treasurer collects monies from all fundraising events and coordinates disbursement of funds. The Treasurer shall give a detailed report of all receipts and disbursement of funds at all VFWR meetings. Shall provide a monthly financial report to the sponsoring unit Quartermaster for inclusion in the sponsoring unit's financial report. The Treasurer is also responsible for maintaining all the VFWR patches that are un-issued as well as a record of the patches each member has in their possession. The Treasurer collects all VFWR dues, if any, from the VFWR members.

5. Sergeant at Arms: Appointed

- I. Must be a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.
- II. Duties: Makes certain to uphold rules of the VFWR and keeps order at all meetings and events. Reports actions of its members, who do not conform to rules of VFWR, or its sponsoring unit, to the President.

6. Chaplain: Appointed

- I. Open to any member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary or Supporter of the VFWR.
- II. Duties: Provides spiritual guidance to VFWR members.

7. Road Captain: Appointed

- I. Open to any member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary or Supporter of the VFWR that meets criteria as ride leaders, capable of executing rides and functions pertaining to the VFWR.
- II. Duties: The Road Captain is responsible for route planning and if needed the coordination of Support Vehicles for events. When on an event, they are the ranking officer if the President and Vice-President are not present and therefore leads the VFWR formation on the ride. If the President is on the ride, the Road Captain rides at the front of the group with the President. The Road Captain will give a pre-ride safety briefing to all participants on the event including Support

Vehicle drivers and passengers.

The Post/District Quartermaster shall handle all funds of the Riders. The Quartermaster will create a designated account in his Post/District ledger for the Riders and all designated Rider income and expenses must be accounted for in that column. All Rider expenditures and income producing events must be pre-approved by a Post/District floor vote, as presented to the floor by the Riders. Designated Rider funds can only be expended for Rider activities.

Riders may hold designated fund-raisers (such as poker runs) for their Post/District with approval of the Post/District floor. When fund-raisers are held, the purpose of the fund-raiser must be clearly stated and advertised, such as for the Post/District General Fund, or the Minnesota VFW Programs, etc.

Monies secured from such fund-raisers must be accounted for by the Post/District Quartermaster in the appropriate fund. For example, funds raised for the Minnesota VFW or the Wounded Warriors Project would be accounted for and a report on that fundraiser would be given at a Post/District Meeting.

Funds from VFWR events can be transferred to other Post/District funds upon recommendation of the VFWR and approval of the Post/District floor.

Expenditure and receipt of funds (to include solicitation of and fundraising activity) shall be in accordance with the VFW National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

The President will exercise such supervision over VFWR members as will insure the protection of the VFW name and property. Disciplinary actions will be handled in accordance with Post/District, Department, or National By-Laws. The VFWR may adopt rules and regulations governing the structure and conduct of their VFWR as do not conflict with those issued by higher authority. Such rules and regulations shall become effective upon their approval by the sponsoring Post/District.

District Commanders will include VFWR's in their post inspections to insure they are complying with this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

LOGOS, APPAREL and PATCHES:

The back patch of a jacket or vest will be a single patch. At no time will any VFWR utilize a 3-Piece Patch design, nor display patches identifying their group as a "MC." In addition, the use of rockers, or appearance thereof is deemed unacceptable. The VFWR Back Patch may be worn by all VFWR members and Supporters in good standing when approval is obtained consistent with the requirements of the VFW. The Rider's affiliation (Post, Auxiliary, or Supporter) patch will be worn on the right breast pocket. The American flag (if worn) shall be worn on the upper left panel of the vest in a manner that no other pin or patch will be displayed above it.

In order to promote uniformity throughout the Department of Minnesota, each back patch will contain the VFW Cross of Malta in the center of the patch, "VFW RIDERS" will be written on the top of the patch. For Post sponsored groups, "POST" will be written vertically on the left side of the patch, the Post number written vertically on the right side, and the words "DISTRICT" and District number will be displayed under the Cross of Malta. The name of the post town and the words "MINNESOTA" or "MN" will be displayed on the bottom of the patch. District sponsored groups the word "DISTRICT" and District number will be displayed under the Cross of Malta with no wording or lettering along the sides. The word "MINNESOTA" will be displayed on the bottom of the patch. All Supporters wearing the back patch utilizing the VFW logo must carry the designation

“SUPPORTER” within or just below the patch. Samples of the approved Department of Minnesota VFW Riders patch design are attached to this SOP. VFWR’s who have been registered and approved by National Headquarters before October 1, 2019 shall continue to display patches that do not adhere to this guideline but are encouraged to adopt a patch design that fits within this standard.

A copy of the patch will be forwarded to Department Headquarters, which will forward along with the VFW Riders name to VFW National Headquarters, Attn: Admin Operations, for approval by the Commander-in-Chief.

Members will be dressed in a manner that promotes a positive image for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, particularly when operating in group activities or interacting with the community. No VFWR shall allow the use of patches or apparel using offensive or political language in conjunction with any patch or apparel using any VFW logo or trademark. The Post/District Commander or Riders President may forbid individual Riders from participating in any single VFW sponsored event if their apparel is inappropriate.

MISCELLANEOUS:

VFWR’s will report annually to the Department Riders Chairman, who will forward to the National VFWRG Advisory Committee, a full accounting of VFWR members and participants, to include VFW Members VFW Auxiliary Members and Supporters, their activity, which should include a number of VFWR events, mileage, and hours, and an accounting of funds raised and disbursed by the VFWR for the year. Annual reports will cover a period of June 1 to May 31 (e.g. June 1, 2018 to May 31, 2019 for the 2018-2019 year) and are due to the Department Riders Chairman no later than June 1. The Department Riders Chairman will review and forward the reports to the National VFWRG Advisory Committee.

Each VFW subordinate organization operating a Riders Group must adhere to the policies herein and those passed down from proper authority. Failure to comply with these issued standard operating procedures will cause the group to be disbanded. Under no circumstances will VFW comrades/sisters/brothers operate under any other rules than this SOP and the approved Post/District additional rules, if applicable. Posts/Districts will not support, operate, or provide assistance to any subordinate motorcycle organization unless governed by this SOP and the approved Post/District additional rules, if applicable. All Post/District additional rules are subordinate to this SOP, Post By-Laws, District By-Laws, Department By-Laws, National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

Riders units may cooperate in functions with other like-minded motorcycle organizations for patriotic purposes, such as the Patriot Guard or Rolling Thunder. Post/District floor approval must be obtained prior to any multi-organization function. Under no circumstances will Riders units knowingly participate in functions operated by or participated in by "outlaw" clubs.

This SOP may be amended by Department Headquarters from time to time.

APPROVED by the Department of Minnesota, VFW Council of Administration on this 13th day of September 2019.

VFW RIDERS

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DISTRICT 1

CANON FALLS, MN



VFW RIDERS



DISTRICT 7

MINNESOTA