

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

(SOP)

FOR

DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

OF THE UNITED STATES

Revised January 30, 2021

# FOREWORD

The attached Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is presented to the Council of Administration, Department of Missouri, VFW at the instruction of the State Commander and pursuant to an inspection report issued on November 2, 2017 which outlined a need to correct deficiencies and to conform to guidelines as defined over the signature of Hal Roesch, Past Inspector General 2016-2017, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America.

The appointees to the SOP Committee are as follows:

Jim Holmes	Committee Chair - Past State Commander
Larry Phillips	Committee Member - State Judge Advocate
John Hoffman	Committee Secretary - Past District Commander
Tom McClerran	Committee Member - State Quartermaster
Troy Williams	Ex-officio Committee Member - State Commander

The SOP Committee requested input and advice from three (3) other knowledgeable and respected Department Officers and we are greatly appreciative for the many hours of time and words of wisdom from the following:

Chris Bell	Past State Commander
Eric Sullivan	State Sr. Vice Commander
Jim Nail	State Surgeon

The Committee has reviewed the SOP's of other Departments and taken great care to incorporate existing Department of Missouri Standing Rules into the attached and proposed SOP document.

We believe this document to be properly researched, discussed and written in proper format.

This Committee submits the SOP to the Council of Administration, Department of Missouri, VFW for review and suggestions or changes to be added, deleted, or altered and are requesting any proposed changes be presented for discussion prior to the Department Convention in June 2019.

Please forward any comments, **in writing**, to any of the Committee Members for inclusion in the final document.

In the absence of any proposed changes, this SOP is presented to the Council of Administration for consideration of passage and implementation.

Respectfully submitted;

Jim Holmes, SOP Committee Chairman

# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)

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STANDARD OPERATING  
PROCEDURE (SOP) DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED  
STATES

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures, herein after called SOP, is to maintain a coherent and consistent Department organization, to establish consistent Department operation, to efficiently control Department finances and manage efforts to eliminate duplication of effort.

This SOP may not conflict with Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual, as well as Department of Missouri By-Laws. If a section of this SOP is found to be in such conflict, then the above stated shall rule and that section shall be removed from the SOP, but all other sections of the SOP will sever and remain in effect.

**SECTION 1**

**CONTROL AND ADMINISTRATION**

The official name of this organization is “Department of Missouri, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States”. The name may be abbreviated herein to read “Department, Dept., State, MO” and any such abbreviation shall mean the same as the official name.

The supreme control of this Department shall be vested in its members. Each member shall have an equal right to voice in its affair. These rights are to be expressed under procedures outlined by National and Department By-Laws.

The Chain of Command shall be Department to District, District to Post.

The Department is governed by representatives. Members are represented in the Department Convention by their own elected delegates from each Post. They are represented at the Council of Administration Meetings by their District Commander.

The primary objective of the Department Convention is to ascertain the wishes of the majority of the Department members on all questions pertaining to National requirements and Department governance. Between conventions this duty is delegated to the Council of Administration.

Department Officers are the Executives whose duty is to carry out the mandates of the Department Convention, the Council of Administration and requirements of National Headquarters. In their duty they are assisted by committees.

## SECTION 2

### DEPARTMENT

The Department is entitled to five (5) delegates to the Big Ten Conference. They shall be the State Commander, State Senior Vice Commander, State Junior Vice Commander, State Quartermaster, and the State Surgeon. One additional Member may be authorized to attend as an observer upon appointment by the State Commander. If a delegate cannot attend the Conference, the State Commander shall appoint an Alternate Delegate at his/her discretion. A budget line item amount shall be established for this purpose.

This Department, all Districts and all Posts within the State shall adhere to The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Manual of Procedure and Ritual in effect and as updated by National VFW Conventions.

The Department shall be governed by an annual Department Convention and the Council of Administration.

Department Convention shall consist of the officers and members designated in Article 5, Section 504 of the National By-Laws. The annual Department Convention shall be held in the month of June. The place, date and time shall be designated by the preceding convention.

Convention meetings shall be called to order promptly on the hour set. If a quorum is not present when the meeting is called to order, the presiding officer may declare a recess pending sufficient arrivals to make a quorum. A quorum shall consist of accredited representatives from no less than fifty (50) posts in the Department.

Delegates will be elected in accordance with Section 222 of the VFW Manual of Procedure. Each Post will pay a registration fee for every delegate to which the Post is entitled. The fee will be set by the delegates at the State Convention.

The Department Office Manager shall coordinate logistics to conduct the annual State Convention as authorized by the Council of Administration, the State Commander and/or the State Quartermaster.

All sleeping room accommodations at the Headquarters Hotel shall be reserved for 3 nights stay, (Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Convention Weekend) unless otherwise authorized by The State Quartermaster.

### **SECTION 3**

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. Suggestions or criticisms directed at Department or National, by individual members must be forwarded through their representatives in the form of a resolution.
2. Such resolution should be prepared in triplicate.
3. It must be specific in nature, courteous in tone, and must be approved by the Post of which the author is a member.
4. It should then be forwarded by the Post Adjutant to the State Adjutant.
5. The State Adjutant shall forward the resolution to the Resolution Committee Chairman.
6. The committee will review and present the resolution with recommendations at the Department Convention.
7. Resolutions may also be originated by State Officers or by the Department Convention itself.
8. If the resolution is intended for consideration at a Council of Administration Meeting, it should be forwarded to the District Commander.
9. The District Commander shall present the resolution at the next Council of Administration Meeting.
10. All resolutions of statewide, regional or national concern must be acted upon by the Department Convention.
11. Those resolutions approved by a Department Convention which affect matters outside state boundaries must be forwarded by the State Adjutant to the National Convention for final disposal.
12. Nothing herein contained shall prevent a resolution from being presented from the floor of a Convention meeting.
  - a. The resolution must be submitted under the proper order of business and by an accredited delegate.

### **SECTION 4**

#### **COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION (COA)**

1. The Council of Administration shall consist of the State Commander, Sr. Vice-Commander, Jr. Vice-Commander, Adjutant, Quartermaster, Judge Advocate, Chief of Staff, Inspector, Surgeon, Chaplin, immediate past State Commander and District Commanders.
2. The Council of Administration shall govern the affairs of this Department between annual Department Conventions.
3. In the absence of the District Commander, the District Senior or Junior Vice Commander may represent their District on the Council of Administration.
4. The Council of Administration shall meet in regular sessions not less than three (3) times each year. The first meeting shall be held immediately following the close of the Department Convention. Other meetings will be held as scheduled by the State Commander.
5. The State Commander may call a special meeting of the Council of Administration when necessary for the welfare of the Department in accordance of Sec. 522 (g) (h) of VFW By-Laws.
6. Members of the Department Council of Administration shall be entitled to expenses as shown in the current Budget. Vouchers for expenses must be submitted each month.
7. Reimbursement for official travel will be at the rate set by the Council of Administration.
8. Lodging will be paid at the actual cost, not to exceed the current GSA rate.
9. No expenses will be paid unless a completed Expense Voucher and supporting documents have been submitted.

## **SECTION 5**

### **DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION**

#### **1. DISTRICTS**

1. All Districts shall submit dates, Post, and town locations of scheduled District Meetings for the upcoming year to Department Headquarters by June 1st of current year.
2. District Commanders shall appoint a sufficient number of Deputy Inspectors to ensure that all Posts within the District are inspected, and the inspection results are reported to the State Inspector no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>. of the current year.
3. All Districts are required to submit the "Report of District Meeting" not later than 30 days following each District Meeting.

All Districts are required to submit Quarterly Audit Reports to be filed with the Department Headquarters no later than 30 days following the end of the quarter. Non-submission of Quarterly Audit Reports shall result in action per (Section 420 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedures).

#### **2. POSTS**

1. All Posts are required to submit Quarterly Audit Reports.
2. Non-submission of Quarterly Audit Reports shall result in action per (Section 211 of the National By-Laws and Procedure Manual).
3. All Posts in the Department who fly the American Flag should also fly the POW/MIA Flag.
4. All donations/contributions to National Home should be mailed direct to the National Home marked for what fund the donation/contribution is for.
5. All donations/contributions for Department Veterans Service should be sent to Department Headquarters annotated for such.
6. Donations/contributions to Veterans & Military Support, should be sent to National Headquarters annotated for such.
7. Post Commanders or their designated representative are reminded that National by Laws require that they attend all District Meetings.
8. Posts failing to have the Commander or a Representative in attendance at a District meeting will be disciplined in accordance with the Department of Missouri Procedure for Disciplinary action, adopted by the Council at the October 2008 Council meeting.

### **3. DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

The Commander shall appoint such officers, chairpersons and committees in compliance with the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure and others as deemed appropriate to properly conduct the affairs of the Department. They will, when authorized, make full and complete reports to the Council of Administration and/or to the Department Convention and such reports shall be written and subject to full and open discussion.

Chairpersons shall be known to the membership of the Department by the publishing of the chairperson names in General Order No. 2, on or before August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Department Chairpersons shall be entitled to expenses as authorized by the Council of Administration. The reimbursement for official travel will be set by the COA per mileage rate. Lodging will be reimbursed at actual cost but is not to exceed the GSA rate and budget provided. No expenses will be paid unless a completed Expense Voucher and supporting documents have been submitted.

Such Committee Chairpersons may include for example:

1. Budget and Finance
2. Buddy Poppy
3. By-Laws / SOP
4. Community Service
5. Legislative
6. Membership
7. Patriots Pen
8. POW/MIA
9. Public Relations
10. Resolutions
11. Voice of Democracy
12. Scouting – National Representative
13. Americanism – Teacher of the Year
14. Veterans Service Information
15. Employment and Homeless Veterans
16. Student Veterans
17. National Home
18. Veterans and Military Support
19. Web Master
20. Employee Oversight Committee
21. Special Committees

Some Department Chairperson's responsibilities are listed below.



**1. Budget and Finance:**

This committee shall consist of four (4) members. The Department Quartermaster (QM) shall be the Chair, plus three (3) additional members appointed by the Department Commander and approved by the Council of Administration.

- A. The committee will assist the QM in the development of the annual budget. A draft budget will be presented at the first meeting of the newly elected Council of Administration. The committee will review any recommended changes and present the proposed budget to the State Commander no later than two (2) weeks prior to the Fall Council meeting. The proposed budget will be presented to the Council for approval at the Fall Council Meeting.
- B. The committee will assist the QM with review actual expenses compared to the approved budget throughout the fiscal year. The QM will provide an itemized list of receipts and expenditures to the committee quarterly. The committee will review the report for compliance with the approved Department budget and to ensure that all expenditures and receipts are properly coded to the correct account or sub-account.
- C. The committee will assist the QM with preparation of the quarterly financial reports. The QM will provide a copy of the quarterly report to the committee no later than the 20<sup>th</sup>. of the month following the end of the quarter to review for accuracy and compliance with the approved Department budget.
- D. The QM shall make a detailed report at each Council of Administration meeting showing the extent of variation of the actual receipts and expenditures from the anticipated receipts and expenditures. A copy of the report will be provided to the committee at least one (1) week prior to the Council meeting for review.

**2. BY-LAWS/SOP:**

This committee will consist of three (3) members. The committee shall, at a minimum, conduct an annual review of the Department By-Laws and SOP to ensure they are current and in keeping with the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and other written guidelines. It shall receive and evaluate all recommendations for changes and amendments submitted by subordinate units and the membership. It shall submit a written report of all recommended changes or amendments at the Council of Administration meetings for appropriate consideration and action. Final approval shall be consistent with the By-Laws.

**3. EMPLOYEE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the Department of Missouri Employee Oversight Committee is to Advise the Commander and Council of Administration on matters pertaining to all Department employees, to include Department Veterans Service Officers, Assistant Service Officers and office staff as well as to provide employees an additional path for submission of grievance in the event they have a grievance that involves a direct supervisor or Department Officer.

- A. The scope of the committee is to include, but is not limited to:

1. Advise on hiring
2. Advise on disciplinary measures
3. Advise on Discharges
4. Investigations of complaints about Assistant VSOs and office staff
5. Create a grievance process for VSOs
6. Assist in conducting or reviewing performance reviews
7. Assist in creating performance review criteria
8. Report to the State Commander and Council of Administration
9. Advise on Compensation
10. Other duties as assigned by the Commander and Council of Administration

B. The Employee Oversight Committee shall be comprised of the following:

1. A three (3) year Committee person
  2. A two (2) year Committee person
  3. A one (1) year Committee Person
  4. Non-Voting Advisors consisting of:
    - a. Immediate Past Commander
    - b. Department Surgeon
    - c. Department Quartermaster (Advising in matters pertaining to expenditures)
    - d. The Department Veterans Service Officer
- C. The incoming Department Jr. Vice Commander will recommend a three (3) Year Committee Person to be appointed by the Commander.
- D. As one (1) year Committee member's term expires, the remaining members will advance from their current year term to a new term of one (1) year less
- E. The one (1) year Committee person will serve as the Committee Chairman and will be the spokesperson at the Council of Administration and Department Convention and is responsible to report as described in Sec. 3.A.8 above
- F. In each ensuing year after the first year of the committee, the Jr. Vice Commander shall recommend a new committee member to the Commander for appointment.
- G. If possible, the committee members should consist of one (1) member from the Eastern part of the State, one (1) member from the Central part of the State and one (1) member from the Western part of the State, who are not current members of the Council of Administration.
- H. Initial Committee Start Up
1. The current Commander shall appoint a one (1) year committee member
  2. The current Sr. V. Commander shall recommend a two (2) year committee member to the Commander for appointment.
  3. The current Jr. V. Commander shall recommend a three (3) year committee member to the Commander for appointment.
  4. This Sub-section H. shall automatically expire and terminate from this SOP at the end of the first year after the Employee Oversight Committee is put into effect and will have no consideration beyond that date.

#### 4. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The State Commander will appoint Special Committees as needed.

## **SECTION 6**

### **REPORTING**

1. All posts within the Department are expected to submit Community Involvement, Americanism, Veterans Service, POW/MIA, Service Officer Event and Recruiting Event reports.
2. Reports are to be reported online to the VFW Department of Missouri Online Program Reporting.
3. The Online Reporting can be accessed on the Department of Missouri website under RESOURCES/ONLINE REPORTING.

### **INSPECTION:**

1. Posts will be inspected at least once yearly, and the report will be submitted by the District Inspector to the State Inspector.
2. Districts will be inspected at least once yearly and submitted to the State Inspector.
3. Post and District inspections should be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **TRUSTEE AUDITS:**

1. Posts and Districts are required to submit Quarterly Trustee Audit Reports.
2. Audit reports are due at Department Headquarters by the last day of the month following the audit.
3. Audit periods are January through March, April through June, July through September and October through December.
4. Sample Inspection Report and Trustee Audit Report forms are contained in the appendices.

## **SECTION 7**

### **AWARDS**

National and Department awards shall be specified in the Department Annual Membership Campaign document. This document shall contain the requirements or each Post, District, member or citizen award selection.

## **SECTION 8**

## **REGISTRAR OF DECEASED MEMBERS**

The State Chaplin shall read aloud the number of deceased members in each District and the total number of deceased members in the Department at the annual Department Convention Memorial services.

## **SECTION 9**

### **ENDORSEMENT OF CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL OFFICE**

1. The Department of Missouri may endorse a candidate for National Office with the approval of the Department Convention.
2. Such endorsement shall be made no earlier than two (2) year prior to the candidate's nomination for such office.
3. An exception to the two (2) year rule would be when the candidate is from Missouri, a Missouri candidate's endorsement shall be made no earlier than three (3) years prior to the nomination for National Office.

## **SECTION 10**

### **1. DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS**

The State Commander shall have access to buildings, keys, security codes, files, computer passwords and all other assets of the Department.

Direct management of Department Headquarters and employees of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Missouri will be the State Quartermaster. The Quartermaster and Adjutant will receive a salary authorized by the Department Council of Administration.

Department Headquarters shall be required to update and publish General Orders on a monthly schedule. General Orders shall be sent or made available to Posts, District Commanders, and all Line Officers by the 26<sup>th</sup> of each month and shall be posted on the Department web site.

Department Headquarters shall be closed on all legal holidays as defined in the employee Handbook and the first Monday following Fall Council of Administration, Winter Council of Administration and Department Convention.

## **2. QUARTERMASTER**

All returned checks shall be subject to a \$35.00 fee to the individual, Post, or District whom the check is written by.

Checks for the State Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen and Teacher of the Year winners will be issued during the month of February each year.

The Quartermaster will be responsible for closing out the financial records of the Department following the annual convention. All records will be prepared for audit by the end of July. The completed audit report will be submitted to the Council of Administration at the Fall Council meeting.

## **3. DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT**

Dept. Adjutant will prepare a list of meeting and convention rules for approval by the council of administration at each meeting and convention.

## **4. DEPARTMENT CREDIT CARDS**

Department credit cards will be issued to the State Commander, State Quartermaster for travel expenses, air fare, motel rooms, that is authorized by the State Commander, and the Department Office Manager for operational expenses of Department Headquarters. All receipts are to be turned into State Quartermaster monthly. All other Department Officers will be reimbursed for their official travel expenses in accordance with Section 12 of this SOP.

## **SECTION 11**

### **RULES GOVERNING HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT, LEAVE AND OTHER CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR PERMANENT EMPLOYEES**

**Rules governing employment, hours of work, vacation and sick leave, accrued time off, etc., are as detailed in the Department of Missouri Employee Handbook**

## **SECTION 12**

### **1. DEPARTMENT TRAVEL POLICY**

1. Cash will not be paid for travel or expenses incurred while on Department Business.
2. Mail or fax (1-573-636-2664) a completed "Travel Voucher" to arrive at Department Headquarters no later than thirty (30) days after the expense has been incurred.

3. A Department check will be sent to your address of record within two (2) weeks of the receipt of your completed "Travel Voucher".
  - a. Be sure to include a complete and correct address on your voucher
4. The Department asks that you cash your checks promptly.
  - a. We have informed our banks that all checks will be void ninety (90) days from the date if issue.
  - b. Travel and other expense vouchers will not be honored past sixty (60) days from the date that you incurred the expense.

## **2. REIMBURSED EXPENSES:**

### **a. HOTEL:**

1. Department Council of Administration Officers, Chairpersons, Budget Committee Members, Veterans Service Officer, Sergeants at Arms, Officer of the Day and other travel authorized by the State Commander.
  2. Department Conventions: Outgoing and Incoming Officers shall be entitled to three (3) nights lodging reimbursement at the actual rate per night, not to exceed GSA rate, and an auto expense of \$.35 per mile. A hotel receipt is required with your expense voucher. A maximum of three (3) nights lodging will be allowed for Convention reimbursement expense to anyone participating as an Outgoing and Incoming Department Officer.
3. Council of Administration Meetings: Officers shall be entitled to two (2) nights lodging reimbursement at the actual rate paid, not to exceed GSA rate and an auto expense of \$.35 per mile for the round trip. A hotel receipt is required with your expense voucher for reimbursement.
4. Other Travel: Department Council of Administration, Officers, Chairman's, Budget Committee Members, State Inspector, VFW Staff Members, Veterans Service Officers, Asst. Service Officers, and others as may be designated and authorized by the State Commander.

### **b. AUTO**

1. Officers shall be entitled an auto expense of \$.35 per mile from home (round) trip.
2. Officers and members of the Department traveling more than 200 miles from home (round trip) on official and authorized Department business are allowed lodging reimbursement at the actual rate paid per night not to exceed the current GSA rate.
3. A hotel receipt is required with expense voucher for reimbursement.
4. Exceptions to the 200-mile restriction may be considered on a case by case basis by the State Commander.

### **c. OTHER DEPARTMENT TRAVEL**

1. Expense allowances for State Officers that are required to travel on official Department business to functions other than those referred to in this policy shall be authorized reimbursement of their travel expenses by line item within the Department budget as approved by the Council of Administration.
2. Expense allowances for Department are authorized at a maximum allowance of \$25.00 per overnight stay away from home, as meals and misc. expense allowance. Meals and other expenses paid for by the Department will be deducted from this allowance. Receipts are required for all expenditures.

**d. OTHER EXPENSES:**

1. Expense reimbursements for telephone, postage and other misc., expenses required to perform their duties up to a maximum of \$25.00 for each expense.
2. Amounts above \$25.00 require approval of the State Quartermaster. Receipts are required to be included with the expense voucher.

**SECTION 13**

**DEPARTMENT VEHICLES**

1. A committee, appointed by the Commander, will consist of the Current State Commander, Current State Senior Vice Commander, State Junior Vice Commander and the State Quartermaster.
2. The committee shall be authorized to purchase and have delivered to the Commander every three years two (2) vehicles in the name of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Missouri.
3. The vehicles shall be ordered after the State Convention in June. At the end of three years the vehicles will be used as a trade in or sold for cash at the trade in value or Kelly Blue Book price whichever is greater.
4. All tags, insurance and taxes will be paid by the Department.
5. Department vehicles shall be used for Department Business only.
6. The Department Commander's vehicle shall display signs stating Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Missouri, and the current position of "State Commander" on the vehicle. The second vehicle will display the organization but no officer title.
7. The assigned drivers will be responsible for all owner's manuals, maintenance, repairs and fuel for the vehicles, at the cost of the Department.
8. All state and local laws will be observed when operating the vehicles.
  - a. Any traffic violations or other violations will be charged to the licensed driver. Any damages occurring due to negligence of the licensed driver will be his/her responsibility.

**INDEMNIFICATION: IN THE EVENT OF ACTS OF GROSS NEGLIGENCE WHILE OPERATING A DEPARTMENT VEHICLE, THE OPERATOR AGREES TO INDEMNIFY THE DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI AND THE VFW OF THE USA AGAINST ANY AND ALL LOSSES AS A RESULT OF SAID NEGLIGENCE.**

#### **SECTION 14**

#### **ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS OF STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

The Department Council of Administration is responsible for approving changes to the SOP as deemed necessary due to new or revised requirements from National **Headquarters, Department Council of Administration or the general membership or SOP** Committee.



APPENDIX A

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)

DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
OF THE UNITED STATES