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VFW SAFETY AND RECOGNITION CHAIRPERSON'S GUIDE



SERVING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES AND HONORING THEIR PROTECTORS

The Role of the Chairperson

The VFW's chairpersons do more than just plan projects to improve their communities. They also recruit volunteers, build relationships with community leaders, organize partnerships with civic groups and promote the VFW.

You Are the Point Person

A program chairperson should understand one important fact right from the outset: You are the Post's point person in your community.

As chairperson you will be your Post's liaison to:

- School teachers and administrators.
- Community leaders.
- Local military personnel.
- City government officials.
- Members of civic groups.
- Members of the media.
- Your fellow veterans.

Seek out these new relationships. When it comes time to recruit volunteers or you need specialized expertise for Post projects, these community contacts will prove invaluable. Project an outgoing, friendly personality. Speak positively about your Post, your community and your projects. Articulate your thoughts and plans clearly, concisely and coherently. Remember, you represent not only your Post, but the entire VFW organization as well.

Reporting Your Activities

You may have heard it said that "the job's not over until the paperwork is done!" That is especially true of VFW Programs. A post must report their Post activities in their respective areas. Check with your respective Department chairperson to learn what should be reported and in what form. Documentation of your programmatic efforts is the thing that ensures the VFW's reputation and our not-for-profit status.

Master Organizational Skills

As chairperson, your talents must be varied. Consequently, your organizational skills should be fully developed.

Some of your specific duties include:

- Recruiting and maintaining a pool of active volunteers.
- Identifying and initiating programs needed in your community.
- Motivating your Post members, community volunteers and sponsors involved in your various projects.
- Recognizing your volunteers efforts.
- Organizing and maintaining records, photos and newspaper clippings that document your activities.
- Reporting to your Department chairperson the volunteer hours, dollars donated by the VFW, Auxiliary, and Cootie members and other information requested.

Through the contacts you've developed in your community, cooperate with other civic or fraternal groups. They may already be involved in community service programs you would like to undertake, or they may be eager to help with projects that you've planned. Also identify resources at your Post, talk with members and find out what special skills or hobbies they may have. Since 1923, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has concerned itself with the safety of the communities in which their Posts and members reside.

Alarmed over the post-WWI use of drugs, VFW magazine, then called Foreign Service, printed a resolution calling for President Warren G. Harding to declare a National Anti-Dope Week and set up a national conference to deal with the problem. VFW Posts began a process of making the public aware of the dangers of drug use that continues to this day.

Early on, VFW Posts began sponsoring bicycle safety clubs. In 1962, Posts started providing reflective stickers through the Lite-a-Bike program. When manufacturers began putting lights on bicycles, the reflective stickers were moved to backpacks and jackets and the program became Lite-a-Tike.

Working with the National Safety Council, driver safety programs were part of the first safety efforts. Later the VFW began to promote AARP's 55 Alive/Mature Driving program.

Throughout the history of the VFW, Posts have been quick to recognize the contributions of those who make our homes, highways and communities safer.

Today, VFW Posts regularly honor citizens who save lives and those who serve the community as emergency responders. A special section in this manual is dedicated to the ways in which these courageous individuals can be recognized at every level of the VFW.

In the late 1970s, VFW families became increasingly concerned about the safety of their children. One of the first organizations to create a child ID kit, the VFW provided hundreds of thousands of parents with this tool they hoped would never be used.

With the tragedy of 9/11, the VFW has begun encouraging Posts to utilize the resources of the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These organizations, as well as hundreds of others, provide printed materials about safety in the home, community, while traveling, almost anywhere.

Chairpersons should visit the following websites and review the materials and information relevant to almost any emergency or security situation a community might encounter:

fema.gov
dhs.gov

VFW Post, District and Department Safety Chairpersons play a vital role in the VFW's impact on our communities. They are responsible for overseeing the various safety programs at their respective level. To accomplish this purpose it is essential that they do the following:

- Read and understand all Safety Program materials.
- Maintain a working knowledge of all program aspects so as to be the authority on the Safety Program.
- Promote the execution of Safety Programs at their respective Post, District or Department levels.
- Provide timely and accurate program activity reports of Safety Program activities at their level.

VFW Recognition Program

The purpose of the VFW Recognition Program is twofold. First and foremost, as an organization of wartime veterans and their spouses, the VFW and Auxiliary understand the need to recognize and honor those individuals who have performed above and beyond their peers. Of particular significance are those who, like wartime veterans, have placed the safety and welfare of others above their own. Secondly, the VFW and its Auxiliary realize the value of these awards to the Post, District, Department and National organization. Recognizing worthy individuals makes the public aware of the VFW and Auxiliary and increases the public's respect and appreciation for these organizations. That increased respect and appreciation results in greater public support for these organizations and membership growth.

For those reasons, it is important that VFW and Auxiliary leaders at every level take advantage of every opportunity to honor worthy individuals and sometimes organizations. With that in mind, the VFW National organization has established a number of suggested awards. The Post/Auxiliary Safety Chairperson should constantly be on the lookout for opportunities to honor individuals of all ages in the community.

The following are suggested awards:

Public Servant Award Citations for Emergency Medical Technicians, Law Enforcement Personnel, Firefighters, Dispatchers and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technicians (EODT).

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects emergency medical technicians, law enforcement, firefighter, dispatcher and explosive ordnance disposal technicians personnel to receive VFW Public Servant Awards. Post Safety Chairpersons are encouraged to submit a candidate/group for these awards to their Department Headquarters by January 1. The Department may select a single candidate/group for each of the five awards and submit those to VFW National Headquarters by February 1.

Public Servant

All Department Public Servant Citations must be requested through the VFW Department Public Servant Award Request form through Formstack. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants and Quartermasters prior to deadline. Deadline for Department submissions to National is February 1, to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentations.

VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Public Servant Citation

Any individual/group, who actively gives emergency medical treatment, provides rescue service or civil disaster assistance as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to give emergency medical care, provide rescue and civil disaster assistance to our nation's citizens.

VFW National Law Enforcement Public Servant Citation

Any individual/group, who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with enforcement of the laws pertaining to their area of responsibility. This award does not apply to individuals employed by private companies or security services.

VFW National Firefighters Public Servant Citation

Any individual/group, who actively fights fires as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to fight fires and give assistance to our nation's citizens.

VFW National 911 Dispatcher Public Servant Citation

Any individual/group, who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with providing the vital link between callers in distress and emergency response teams by obtaining essential information to send the appropriate responders to the right location.

VFW National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Public Servant Citation

Any individual/group, who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with the enforcement of the laws and special handling pertaining to disposal of explosive threats to our nation's citizens.

Note: The First Responder Medal is available through the VFW Store. To review this item please click on the following link:
vfwstore.org/products/32134

Documentation required for all Candidates:

- 1) Public Servant Award Citation Post Entry Form.
- 2) Nomination letter containing the candidate's or group's name, title, address, telephone and identifying the award for which the individual/group should be considered.
- 3) Include justification outlining background in the field, accomplishments, and awards. *If personal identifiable information (PII) becomes a concern recommending an officer, please submit as much information as possible to justify nomination.

Nomination - Post Safety Chairpersons should send the above information to their Department Headquarters to arrive no later than January 1.

Departments should submit thier "VFW Department Public Servant Award Citation Request Form" on vfw.org no later than February 1.

If you have any questions, please contact VFW National Headquarters—Attn: Tammy Beauchamp at 816.756.3390 Ext 6287 or via e-mail at tbeauchamp@vfw.org.

Life Saving Award

Safety Chairpersons at Posts, Districts and Departments are encouraged to regularly identify and honor individuals throughout the year in their geographic area who have saved a life. The VFW National Programs office provides the following three different citations and medals, free of charge, for local presentation.

- Regular Life Saving Citation – Honors individuals who have, without regard for their own comfort, taken action resulting in the saving of another human life.
- Line of Duty Life Saving Citation – Honors individuals who, in the execution of their assigned duties, have taken action resulting in the saving of another human life.
- Valor Life Saving Citation – Honors civilians who have taken action resulting in the saving of another human life and have placed their own safety at risk.

All Life Saving Award Citations must be requested through the Programs Dashboard Tool. You can access the Programs Dashboard tool by logging in to vfw.org, on the “My VFW” page, under the Membership Quick Links section. Documentation of the event, newspaper clippings, articles, etc., will need to be uploaded with the entry. If there are any questions email tbeauchamp@vfw.org or call 816.756.3390 Ext. 6287.

Recognizing local heroes, heroines, patriots and outstanding youth with VFW awards, citations and medals is one of the easiest and most effective ways to grow a VFW Post. Every time your VFW Post honors a local individual, you spread good will among the individual’s family, friends and your entire community. That good will returns to your Post in the form of increased public support for your fundraising, increased attendance at your events and, perhaps most importantly, more members for your Post and its Auxiliary.

VFW awards don’t cost, they pay - BIG dividends.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONCERNING VFW SAFETY AND
VFW RECOGNITION PROGRAMS CONTACT:

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NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

