

Resolution No. 308

VFW Motorcycle Rider Group

WHEREAS, numerous departments have requested authorization for the formation of VFW motorcycle rider groups; and

WHEREAS, these departments have stipulated a primary consideration to maintain integrity to the VFW and its image as core factors to the rider groups; and

WHEREAS, an *ad hoc* committee was established by the Adjutant General in October 2009 to provide suggested guidelines concerning the formation and existence of VFW motorcycle riders groups.

WHEREAS, proposed guidelines were accordingly developed by the ad hoc committee and sent on January 2010 to all departments for their further suggestions and comments; and

WHEREAS, the Commander-in-Chief directed a meeting be conducted at the National Convention to further discuss this issue and coordinate the guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the consensual final recommendation at the convention meeting is to allow the formation of VFW rider groups provided that there is no affiliation with the Confederation of Clubs (CoC) and that each department titles their riders organizations as a "riders group" and not as a "club"; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that National guidelines will be established that (1) standardizes the title of the formed groups; (2) protects the trademark of the Cross of Malta; (3) mandates the use of the one-piece patch; (4) mandates that each member of the rider groups must wear the appropriate logo (i.e., VFW wear Cross of Malta, Ladies Auxiliary members wear their logo, etc.); (5) all groups must adhere to Post, Department and National By-Laws, as applicable (especially as it pertains to the handling of funds as directed by section 709 of the National By-laws); and, (6) the groups not be allowed to elect officers but be formed as a committee or unit of the Post (similar to Post Honor Guards).

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.



Motorcycle Riders Groups

This document is intended to serve as a standard for Veterans of Foreign Wars Motorcycle Riders Groups/Associations, henceforth referred to as VFWRG, pursuant to mandate of the 111th National Convention, Resolution 308, adopted August 23, 2010.

This document may be amended from time to time by the Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Purpose

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

Formation

Each VFWRG will be presented as an activity, managed by a VFWRG Committee, established by its sponsoring Department, District or Post. No VFWRG will represent itself as, or be a Motorcycle Club (MC) or part of any MC Confederation / Organization at any level.

Name

Each VFWRG may adopt a name of its choosing, subject to rules and regulations adopted by the Department having jurisdiction and the approval of the sponsoring unit and that of the Commander-in-Chief. The use of the name "VFW Riders" is recommended.

Membership

All VFWRG members shall be members in good standing with either the Veterans of Foreign Wars or one of its nationally recognized auxiliaries. Each must be the legally registered owner of a properly insured motorcycle and must possess a valid motorcycle driver's license in their state of residence (military equivalents acceptable as well) or a rider thereto.

Subject to the rules and regulations of a Department, a Department, District or Post VFWRG may allow Supporters (aka "Supporting Riders" or "Guest Riders"). Such supporter classification does not constitute membership in the VFW nor come with the promise of any material, financial, or political benefit to the VFWRG, its members or committee; nor to any other member at any other organizational level within the VFW; 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 VFWRG programs and events. Prospective supporters must, without exception, be the legally registered owner of a properly insured motorcycle and must possess a valid motorcycle driver's license in their state of residence (military equivalents acceptable as well) or a rider thereto. All supporters eligible for membership in the VFW or one of its Auxiliaries shall become members in good standing.

VFWRG Committee

Each VFWRG formed shall be managed by committee, appointed by its respective Commander. All committee chairmen/members will be selected from those VFW members in good standing who are also members of the VFWRG. In addition, the Commander and Quartermaster of the sponsoring unit, by virtue of their offices, shall be members of the committee. Trustees of the sponsoring unit shall not serve on the committee.

The committee shall exercise such supervision over VFWRG members as will ensure the protection of the VFW name and property.

The committee chairman shall seek approval and report activities at each regular meeting of the sponsoring unit.

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

The committee may adopt rules and regulations governing the structure and conduct of their VFWRG as do not conflict with those issued by higher authority. Such rules and regulations shall only become effective upon their approval by the sponsoring unit.

Waivers and Liability

All VFW rides/events will require that a waiver and release of liability be signed by the rider and/or their passenger. The waiver should include a statement indicating the rider carries liability insurance for himself and all passengers that meets the minimum state, city and/or local insurance requirements; it should also indicate that the rider carries a valid driver's license. This is to indemnify the Post, District or Department against liability for damages caused by the rider, his/her passenger and/or their motorcycle. This waiver shall be part of the application process for the group and shall be retained by the sponsoring unit for seven (7) years.

Additionally, each sponsoring unit shall maintain sufficient general liability insurance to protect such unit and must name, as additional insureds, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Department in which the sponsoring unit is located.

Logos, Apparel and Patches

The use of the VFW logos and VFW trademarks are protected under Sections 803 and 805 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

Each VFWRG may adopt a one-piece back patch or other apparel that will promote its group in a safe and respectable manner. The patch(s) may use the member's appropriate logo (i.e. VFW Member wears VFW logo; auxiliary member wears the appropriate auxiliary logo. All articles of clothing worn by "Supporting Riders" using any logo or trademark, when authorized by the VFW, shall contain the word(s) "I support" or "Supporter"), Post/District/Department affiliation or be of creative design. In all instances, the design shall be subject to the approval of the Department having jurisdiction and that of the Commander-in-Chief, with the authority to manufacture in accordance with Section 803 of the Manual of Procedure. Under no circumstance shall a VFWRG adopt a three-piece patch; the use of "rockers" is deemed unacceptable.

It is strongly recommended that members dress in a manner that promotes a positive image for The Veteran of Foreign Wars, particularly when operating in group activities or interacting with the community. No VFWRG shall allow the use of patches or apparel using offensive language in conjunction with any patch or apparel using any VFW logo or trademark.

Miscellaneous


Each VFW subordinate unit currently operating a Riders Group, M/C or like organization, must adhere to the policies herein and those passed down from proper authority. Failure to comply with these issued guidelines will cause the group to be disbanded.

Each newly formed VFWRG shall forward immediately (within 30 days), through proper channels to the Adjutant General's office, the name/membership number of all committee members and/or any changes thereto, for the purpose of promoting any VFW national/regional riding events or distribution of VFWRG related material.

These guidelines are hereby amended, this 22nd day of May of 2015.

By Order of
John W. Stroud
Commander-in-Chief
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US

Official:


John E. Hamilton
Adjutant General