

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS – DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA  
CHAPTER BYLAWS SAMPLE WITH INSTRUCTIONS

This is the the Bylaws Sample with instructions. Its purpose to help make it easier for Chapters to write their Bylaws. A few of things before you start:

- I am asking that all Chapters submit your Bylaws between **September 5<sup>th</sup> and November 19<sup>th</sup> 2021.**
- *I am adding a Proviso Statement on the bottom of the bylaws stating the officer titles of “Director” and “Vice-Director” will not change until the next election cycle. Keep ot on a separate page, but attached to the Bylaws. Please be sure to fill in the needed information We will remove the statement next year when the titles change. I will do that and assure you have a copy without the statement.*
- For Districts, use the reference “District ##” only where it calls for the Chapter number. Otherwise use Chapter.
- Fill in highlighted areas and then remove the highlights.
- Remove all instruction statements (they’re in italics and highlighted).
- Stay as close to the sample as possible. In other words no major rewrites. Do not rewrite sections that have no instructions except to fill in needed information.
- Remove this portion before finalizing the Bylaws.
- **All Bylaws submitted to department MUST be signed by the Chapter President and Secretary.**
- Chapter Bylaws will not go into final effect until approved by the Department of the ALR.
- I am here to help you if needed so please feel free to contact me with questions.

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American Legion Riders  
Department of California  
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**American Legion Riders Department of California,  
Area #, Post #, City, California  
Chartered: Month, Day, Year**

## **CHAPTER # BYLAWS**

These bylaws are established in accordance with and shall not conflict with the Constitution and/or Bylaws of the American Legion Riders - Department of California, the Constitution and/or Bylaws of the Department of California American Legion, or the Constitution and/or Bylaws of The American Legion.

### **AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS PREAMBLE**

For God and Country, we associate ourselves as members of the American Legion Family, constituting the American Legion Riders for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

To maintain Law and Order;

To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all Wars;

To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the Community, State and Nation;

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

To make right the Master of Might;

To promote Peace and Goodwill on earth;

To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of Justice, Freedom and Democracy;

To participate in parades and other ceremonies which are in keeping with the aims and purposes of the American Legion;

To promote motorcycle safety education programs and to provide a social atmosphere for American Legion Family members with the same motorcycle interests;

To consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

### **ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the American Legion Riders, Chapter # located at: American Legion Post #, City, California; Hereinafter referred to as "Chapter".

## **ARTICLE II – OBJECTS**

Section 1. The objects and purposes of this Chapter of American Legion Riders shall be to promote the principles and policies as set forth in the foregoing Preamble and the National and Department Constitution and/or Bylaws of the American Legion.

Section 2. To use our association to promote and support programs of The American Legion.

Section 3. To participate in activities in order to provide a social atmosphere for members of The American Legion Family who share the same interest.

Section 4. To promote motorcycle safety programs.

Section 5. The American Legion Riders is a program of the American Legion and is formed to promote the aims and purposes of The American Legion by members of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, and The Sons of The American Legion.

Section 6. Members are the motorcycle enthusiasts of The American Legion; with sole purpose to support The American Legion and the long standing and respected position and ideals therein. Members ride solely to promote the aims and purposes of The American Legion as a family oriented motorcycling activity for members of The American Legion the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion. It is required that members dress and act at all times in a manner that conforms with the Bylaws, Constitution and/or Resolutions of the American Legion Riders - Department of California and/or The American Legion - Department of California and further promotes a positive image beyond reproach for The American Legion and its principles. Members are reminded that they are a public face of this organization when operating in group activities or interacting with the community and shall act accordingly.

## **ARTICLE III – ORGANIZATION**

Section 1. This Chapter formed at Post #, City of Post, California, District #, Department of California, was chartered on Month Day, Year by the American Legion Riders Department of California.

Section 2. This Chapter of the American Legion Riders - Department of California, and as a subordinate body to and in accordance with the regulations of The American Legion Riders- Department of California.

## **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. There is one recognized "class" of involvement with the American Legion Riders. All members of the Chapter must be a member in good standing of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, or The Sons of The American Legion.

Section 2. Members in the Chapter must be the legally registered owner or operator of a highway legal two or three wheeled motorcycle and must possess a valid driver's license for the qualifying vehicle in their state of residence (military equivalents acceptable as well) or be the legal spouse, or registered domestic partner of an American Legion Riders member within the Chapter of application.

Section 3. Members may not be concurrent members in more than one local Chapter, except that they may maintain membership in a local Chapter during the period of organization of another local Chapter. Once the new local Chapter has been officially recognized by Department, they must limit their membership to only one Chapter.

Section 4. Applications for membership will be presented at a regular meeting of the Chapter. A majority vote of those members present and voting shall elect or reject a candidate. All regular members are eligible to vote. The vote of the membership is final and may not be appealed. A majority vote of those present and voting shall elect or reject a candidate for membership.

Section 5. Active members in good standing who become physically incapable of operating a motorcycle or who lose a spouse to death may be granted retired status by a vote of the Chapter. The status "retired" applies only to the ownership and operation of a motorcycle requirement and does not create another class of membership. All other provisions of these By-Laws will apply to members granted this status. The Chapter will communicate to the American Legion Riders Department Secretary in writing, the granting of Retired Status, the members' information, and the reason for granting retired status.

Section 6. Any member who resigns from the Chapter will be required to comply with Article IV, Membership, if they request to be reinstated into this Chapter.

## **ARTICLE V - INITIATION FEES AND DUES**

*(I suggest you use any specific amounts for dues or fees. It is not needed to do so and would require a Bylaws amendment if the amount changes)*

Section 1. The initiation fee for membership includes the first year dues and the cost of the ALR back patch and are non-refundable. The center patch and flares are property of the Chapter and shall be surrendered to the Chapter if the member resigns, is removed from the Chapter roster for non-payment of dues, or is permanently suspended.

Section 2. The annual dues for this Chapter shall not be less than the amount of the American Legion Riders-Department of California per capita dues, payable annually as required in the Bylaws. This amount may be changed by recommendation of the Executive Committee, upon being read at two regular meetings, a quorum being present and adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting.

## ARTICLE VI - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*(You may choose whether or not to have an Executive Committee so long as there are at least 5 people including the Director, Vice-Director, and Secretary on the Committee. It must be specified in the Bylaws who they are. Many Chapters just designate all Officers. Whether or not you opt to actually have an Executive Committee, please leave this article in your Bylaws should your Chapter grow enough to warrant one. **Smaller Chapters may opt out of having this.**)*

Section 1. The Chapter may by a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority vote of the Chapter membership, establish an Executive Committee. If an Executive Committee is established, it shall be composed of the The Director, Vice-Director, Junior Past-Director, and two (2) other officers or members appointed by the Director. There may also be one Chapter member who is appointed by the Commander of American Legion Post # to serve as a liasan and advisor on behalf of the Post who shall have voice, but no vote. If an Executive Committee is already in place, no further voting or other action is required.

Section 2. The Director shall serve as Chairperson of the Executive Committee and the Vice-Director shall assume that position in his absence. The Secretary of the Chapter shall serve as Secretary of the Executive Committee.

Section 3. The Executive Committee should meet once a month, prior to the regular meeting of the Chapter each month to discuss Chapter business.

## ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS

*(You may enter the specific months if you choose or leave it as is. This way, if any problems come up, you'll have some flexibility. I do highly recommend your Chapter votes on the months and you follow them year to year.)*

Section 1. All regular members are eligible to hold office.

Section 2. Two rounds of nominations and elections for chapter officers shall be held between April 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year with notice given therein. Officers shall assume their duties effective July 1<sup>st</sup> and will be installed by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Section 3. If the position of any officer becomes vacant, the Director may appoint a member to fill that position until an election can be held to fill the vacancy. Nominations will be received at the next regularly scheduled meeting after the vacancy occurs and elections will be conducted at the first regular meeting 30 days after nominations have been opened.

*(You may choose to elect other officers if you wish. Just make sure it's noted in the Bylaws which are elected and which are appointed in sections 3 and 4.)*

Section 4. The elected officers of the Chapter shall be the Director, Vice-Director, and Treasurer.

Section 5. The Director, with the concurrence of the Executive Committee, shall appoint the following officers: Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, Ride Coordinator, Historian, Chaplain, Membership Officer and/or Public Relations Officer. *(Whatever officers your Chapter decides it needs, make sure they're identified in the bylaws.)*

Section 6. A member may hold more than one office except for the offices of Director or Vice-Director.

Section 7. The term of service for all elected and appointed Officers shall be one year at a time.

Section 8. All elected or appointed officers shall have only one vote at the Executive Committee or Chapter Meeting except that the presiding Chairperson shall have no vote except to break a tie vote and for the election of officers or the passing of motions.

Section 9. Elections shall be by secret ballot. A majority of all votes cast by those present at a regular meeting will determine the winner. In the case of non-opposed offices, a voice vote may be the method of voting.

*(Make sure the described duties reflect what is being done. If your Chapter does not have a Membership Officer, then that job should be given to the Vice-Director and added to the duties of that officer in the Bylaws.)*

Section 10. The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

A. DIRECTOR: Will serve as Chief Administrative Officer and will preside over all general meetings. Shall have general supervision over the affairs of the Chapter. Shall perform such duties as directed by the general membership. Will be limited to no more than three consecutive terms without a one year break between terms. Will serve as Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

B. VICE-DIRECTOR: Will assume the duties of the Director in their absence and will assist the President in the performance of their duties.

C. SECRETARY: Will have charge of and keep correct records of all proceedings of all meetings and under the direction of the Director and handle all correspondence of the Chapter. Will keep the membership rolls. report to the Executive Committee if members become delinquent or no longer meet eligibility requirements.

D. TREASURER: Will have charge of all finances of the Chapter. Will disburse funds as directed by the general membership. Will give detailed financial reports at each general meeting. Will serve as the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

E. SERGEANT AT ARMS: Will preserve order at meetings and other such duties as may be assigned to him by the Chapter Director or Executive Committee.

F. RIDE COORDINATOR: The Ride Coordinator will be the person in charge (Road Captain) during organized rides of the Chapter. The Ride Coordinator will also act as the Safety Officer, ensuring that motorcycle safety is observed at all times during events. They may, at their discretion, appoint assistant road captains or take any other measures necessary to help insure the safety of the group during a ride. Must hold a valid motorcycle license.

G. HISTORIAN: Will keep a record of Chapter incidents and activities and other duties as may be directed by the Chapter Director or Executive Committee.

H. CHAPLAIN: Will be charged with the spiritual welfare of the Chapter members and will offer divine but non-sectarian service in the event of dedications, funerals, public functions, etc., and to adhere to such ceremonial rituals as are requested by the Chapter Director or Executive Committee.

I. MEMBERSHIP OFFICER: Will gather new membership applications and validate the eligibility of each new member. At each regular meeting of the Chapter, shall report upon all applications received during or after the previous regular meeting and report on all membership applications. The Membership Officer shall assure all members are current with their dues in their parent organization, has a current operator's license (if the operator), current insurance coverage, current vehicle registration, and has signed a liability waiver for the current year. If there is no Membership Officer, all said duties shall be done by the Chapter Vice-Director or other officer as designated by the Director.

J. JUDGE ADVOCATE: Shall advise Chapter members on the interpretation of the bylaws of the Chapter and the bylaws of the Department of California - American Legion Riders and perform such other duties as are incident to the office of Judge Advocate.

Section 9. In the event that any officer shall be absent for three consecutive meetings of the Chapter without being excused by the Director or the Executive Committee, such office may be declared vacant by a majority vote of those present at a regular Chapter meeting. Vacated Positions shall be replaced at the next regular Chapter meeting by the same manner the office was originally selected.

## ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS AND QUORUM

*(The minimum requirement for a Quorum is 3 members including an officer. Your Chapter can establish whatever number it likes. The larger the Chapter, the larger the quorum. However I suggest you keep your Quorum no higher than 7 members and an officer)*

Section 1. Meetings will be held monthly on the **Day and Time** at Post #. The Executive Committee will meet as needed before the stated meeting if one is in place.



Section 2. A majority of three (3) members present including either the Director or Vice-Director will constitute a quorum. *(The minimum is 3 members, but your Chapter may require more members/officers, but be careful not to have too many so you can still conduct business.)*

Section 3. Special meetings of the Chapter may be called by the Director or the Executive Committee and must be called, upon the written request of ten members. No special meetings shall be called unless announced by the President at the regular meeting preceding or unless written notice is sent to each member ten (10) days prior to said meeting, stating the time, place of the meeting and the subject to be considered.

*(Yes, you can conduct Electronic Meetings, but I highly suggest you stay with in-person meetings as the primary method. You'll get more done.)*

Section 4. Electronic meetings are authorized for all official meetings of the Chapter using one of the formats identified in Article XVI, Sections 1 & 2 of the Bylaws for The American Legion Riders – Department of California.

## ARTICLE IX - FINANCES

*(Section 1 does not mean you are required to have 2 signature checks. What it means is that here needs to be two signatures involved with the process, one of which can be the signature of the Chapter Secretary on the minutes of any meeting where expenditures are authorized.)*

Section 1. All Chapter expenditures, regardless what conveyance or prior approval by the membership has taken place, shall require (2) signatures of the Director's pre-designated Chapter Officers.

Section 2. Finances of the Chapter will be held in a bank account within the City of Post #. Signatures on the account will include the Treasurer, Director, and Secretary.

Section 3. Disbursement of funds will only be those authorized at a Chapter meeting except in case of an emergency.

*(Emergency funds limits is the only specific dollar amount that should be specified in the Bylaws. For most Chapters, this should be a relatively small amount given that the Riders usually do not own the club house being used by The American Legion.)*

Section 4. Emergency Expenditures, as defined by "those unanticipated expenditures for the benefit of the purposes of the Chapter" and directed by Chapter Director and pre-approved by at least two other Executive Committee members (use elected officers if there is no Executive committee) will not exceed \$\_\_\_\_\_". All emergency expenditures shall be disclosed to the membership at the next regular meeting.

*(The content of Sections 5 and 6 are specified in the Department Bylaws. Do not change any of this. Again, I suggest you avoid stating the specific amount of dues in your Bylaws.)*



Section 5. The Treasurer will provide a finance report, in writing, at each regularly called meeting of the Chapter. The report will be attached to the minutes of that meeting. The minutes and the financial report will be made available for review to the members of the Chapter.

Section 6. All financial, and nonfinancial information of the Chapter will be made available upon reasonable request with reasonable notification, by the Executive Committee of the American Legion Post. Further, such financial records shall be made available each year by the Chapter to their respective Post not later than thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the annual American Legion Riders Department Convention.

## **ARTICLE X – COMMITTEES**

***(Identify any recurring Committees here)***

Section 1. Committees may be formed by appointment of the Director. The duties and length of service of these committees shall be stated at the time the committee is appointed.

Section 2. The Finance Committee shall be charged with the administration of the financial policy, preparation of reports and supervision of Chapter funds. The committee shall be composed of the Chairperson and any additional members that may be appointed by the Director. ***(Omit this section if your chapter is small and does not have a finance Committee)***

## **ARTICLE XI – UNIFORM**

Section 1. Vests or Jackets that have the patches of the "American Legion Riders" will conform to the guidelines the American Legion Riders-Department of California Uniform Manual.

## **ARTICLE XII – CONDUCT**

Section 1. Chapter members shall be held to the same standards of conduct as those of the American Legion. Members of the Chapter shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner that brings respect to the American Legion and the American Legion Riders. Every attempt must be made to avoid the appearance of being or belonging to a Motorcycle Club (MC). Loud or vulgar language, swearing in public, the excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages while on rides and/or behavior that is inconsistent with the standards of the American Legion may result in suspension or expulsion from the Chapter under Article XIV, Section 1 of these Bylaws. Proper decorum will be followed when participating with or interacting with members of other motorcycle associations and clubs.

Section 2. The Chapter or any member(s) of the Chapter shall not affiliate with, or associate with any Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs) or their affiliates as defined by the California Attorney General's Office or any Federal Law Enforcement agency while wearing any American Legion or American Legion Riders regalia.

## **ARTICLE XIII - MEMBERS IN ARREARS**

***(Do not change any of this)***

A member whose dues for the current year have not been paid by December 31<sup>st</sup> shall be classed as delinquent and placed on suspension. If the member's dues are paid on or before January 31<sup>st</sup>, they shall be automatically reinstated. If the member is still under such suspension on February 1<sup>st</sup> of such year, their membership in the American Legion Riders shall be forfeited. A member so suspended or whose membership has been so forfeited may be reinstated to active membership in good standing by a vote of the Chapter and payment of current dues for the year in which the reinstatement occurs. Provided, however, that the Chapter, Department or the National Organization may waive the provisions hereof, upon payment of dues for the year in which the reinstatement occurs, with reference to former members who have been prevented from paying their dues by reason of active military service. The chapter may elect to pay the per capita of their members serving on active duty to avoid delinquency or suspension.

## **ARTICLE XIV – DISCIPLINE**

Section 1. Members of the Chapter shall be suspended or expelled as provided in the Trial Manual of the American Legion Riders-Department of California as adopted at 5th Annual Department Convention and subsequent amendments thereto.

Section 2. A member may be forcibly excused by agreement of a majority of officers in attendance at any function where they are representing the American Legion Riders and they are judged by the officers to be acting in a manner bringing discredit on the organization. This excusal will be immediate and in effect and shall be reported to the Chapter Director, the Chapter Membership.

Section 3. Any person who is no longer a member in good standing of the American Legion Riders will be required to return their American Legion Rider Patch with flares from the back of their vest to their Chapter or Post. They will no longer be authorized to wear the said patch or flares at any time nor to any place. They will no longer be authorized to wear any regalia that has a Chapter, District, Department identity or number.

Section 4. Any member expelled or suspended from their home Post, Unit, or Squadron will be automatically expelled from the Chapter. When the member is reinstated, they must make a new application for membership in the Chapter as described in Article IV, Section 4 of these bylaws.

## **ARTICLE XV - CHAPTER BYLAWS AND AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. These Bylaws or any Amendments shall not be in conflict with the Department of California Constitution and/or Bylaws governing The American Legion Riders. Any changes or

Amendments to the Department of California-American Legion Riders Bylaws shall automatically apply to these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE XVI – PARLIAMENTARIAN AUTHORITY**

When not inconsistent with these bylaws, or any special rules of order the Chapter may adopt, along with Federal and State regulations, the rules contained in the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised will govern the Chapter.

**ARTICLE XVII – AMENDMENT**

Section 1. Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be submitted in writing at a regular meeting of the Chapter. At the next regular meeting with prior notice being given, the proposed amendment may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of those present and voting. A committee of officers and members shall be appointed annually to review and recommend amendments to the Bylaws.

Section 2. Any provision of these Bylaws not in compliance with the Department of California American Legion Riders Bylaws, shall be automatically amended to conform to those Bylaws and to The American Legion National, Department, Area, District, or Post # Bylaws under which this organization operates. Such amendments will be announced at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Chapter #.

Section 3. It shall be the responsibility of the Judge Advocate to ensure that the Bylaws of the American Legion Riders Chapter # are in agreement with the American Legion National, Department, Area, District, and Post # Bylaws and to present the necessary proposed Bylaws or amendments to the Executive Committee and the membership at a regularly called meeting.

Section 4. These Bylaws and any amendment initiated by the Chapter which is not in conflict with Department Bylaws shall be in effect until approved by The Department of California American Legion Riders.

These Bylaws were adopted on (Month/Day/Year) at (City), California, Post #, by a vote of the members of ALR Chapter # at the regularly convened membership meeting.

# # #

\_\_\_\_\_  
President Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Be sure to fill out the needed information in the Proviso Statement below and **keep it on a separate page but attached to your bylaws (it will be removed after the new titles take effect)**. It shall be removed following your next election cycle which should be spring of 2022 (if not sooner). The date used in the statement must be the same date as the approval date for your bylaws. Regardless of when your chapter elections are held, all Chapters are required to change their Officer titles at that time.  
(This statement should be on a separate page but still attached to the Bylaws)  
**REMOVE THIS STATEMENT BEFORE PROCESSING**

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS  
DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA  
CHAPTER #  
2021 BYLAWS

#### APPENDIX A:

As approved by the membership of Chapter # at a regular meeting on **Month, Day, Year** in **City**, California, a revision to the Chapter Bylaws was approved by a 2/3 majority vote which included striking out the word President and inserting Director in all sections of the ALR Bylaws and also striking out the words Vice-President and inserting the words Vice-Director with the proviso that the change shall go into effect upon the completion of the next election cycle of the Chapter following the close of the American Legion Riders – Department of California 2021 Convention.