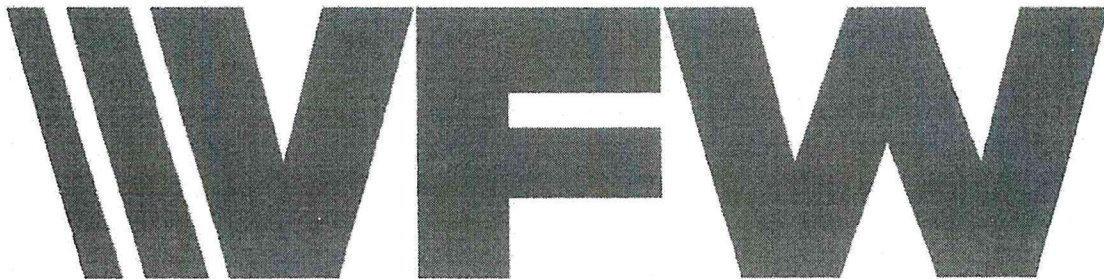


**DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES**

**VFW of MICHIGAN RIDERS GROUPS POLICY**



**AS APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION**

**June 7, 2023**

## **RIDERS GROUP POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Michigan, is a nonprofit membership organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan and is an affiliated organization of the Veterans of Foreign of the United States, a congressionally chartered nonprofit organization. VFW members, affiliated organizations (including VFW Districts and Posts) and the general public look to the VFW Department of Michigan to provide leadership on veterans' issues and to develop and implement effective programs to promote patriotism, community service, youth development and a strong national defense. In order to fulfill these important responsibilities, the organization must maintain a reputation that is above reproach.

### **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

The purposes of this VFW of Michigan Riders Group Policy are to provide guidance to Riders Groups sponsored by VFW Posts and Districts in the Department of Michigan and to supplement the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy.

The purposes of VFW Riders Groups are to promote and support the programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, to promote motorcycle safety programs and to provide a social atmosphere for VFW members and members of its Auxiliary who share common interests.

### **3. RESOURCES**

Resources used for the creation of this policy were: National VFW Bylaws and Manual of Procedure, National VFW Resolution 308 approved at the 111<sup>th</sup> National VFW Convention and adopted on August 23, 2010, the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy and the VFW Department of Michigan Bylaws.

### **4. CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS**

Questions regarding this Policy should be directed to the VFW Department of Michigan Adjutant or the VFW Department of Michigan Riders Group Committee Chairman.

### **5. GENERAL COMMENTS**

All activities of member VFW Riders Groups will be governed by VFW National and Department of Michigan Bylaws, Bylaws of sponsoring Districts and Posts, the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy and this Policy as approved by the VFW Department of Michigan Council of Administration. Whenever the Michigan VFW Riders Group Policy is found to be in conflict with the present or any future National or Department Bylaws or National policy, the latter shall prevail and be binding upon the Michigan VFW Riders Groups. In all cases where there is a disagreement in the interpretation of this Policy, the Commander of the sponsoring VFW unit (Post or District) or the Department Commander will decide the issue subject to the provisions of Section 109 of the VFW National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

The Department of Michigan VFW Riders Group Committee and Michigan VFW Riders Groups are not sanctioned Motorcycle Clubs (MC) or a part of any MC Confederation / Organization at any level and as such do not have colors. Members of Michigan VFW Riders Groups proudly display the VFW

Cross of Malta or Auxiliary Emblem which show they are members of the VFW or its Auxiliary and must always conduct themselves with that representation in mind.

A sponsored Michigan VFW Riders Group is not a committee or subordinate unit of the sponsoring Post or District. A Michigan VFW Riders Group is an authorized activity of the sponsoring Post or District.

#### **6. DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN VFW RIDERS GROUP COMMITTEE**

- A. Article VII Section 5 of the Department of Michigan Bylaws establishes VFW Riders as a standing committee of the Department of Michigan VFW. The Department Commander is therefore required to appoint a Department *Director* who shall be responsible to ensure VFW Riders Groups compliance with the National VFW Riders Groups SOP, Department of Michigan VFW Bylaws and this Policy and such other duties as may be directed by the Department Commander.
- B. Article XVI of the Department of Michigan Bylaws gives authority to the Department and to affiliated subordinate units (Districts or Posts) to form a VFW Motorcycle Association hereinafter referred to in this Policy as a VFW Riders Group.
- C. Pursuant to the authority of National VFW Resolution 308 and the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy, the VFW Department of Michigan does herein establish the Department of Michigan Riders Group Committee. The Committee shall be responsible to ensure that all authorized Riders Groups formed in the Department of Michigan comply with all governing Bylaws and Policies.
- D. The Department Riders Group Committee *Director* shall be appointed by the Department Commander and shall advise the Department Commander on topics related to group riding, assist in the coordination and execution of sponsored ride activities, (examples would be the annual Vander Clute Memorial Motorcycle Ride or any Commander arranged rides), and provide guidance to sponsoring Units (Districts or Posts) in the form of a policy approved by the Department VFW Council of Administration.
- E. The Department Riders Group Committee shall consist of the *Director*, the Department Commander and Department Quartermaster by virtue of their office and such other officers as shall be determined by the Department Commander upon the advice of the *Director*.
- F. The term of the *Director* and any other officers appointed by the Commander shall end concurrently with the term of the Department Commander unless reappointed to the position. All officers of the Department Committee must be members in good standing of a VFW Post in the Department of Michigan and a member of a registered Riders Group sponsored by a District or Post of the Department.
- G. The Michigan VFW Riders Group Committee shall meet in conjunction with each regular Department Meeting (Fall Conference, Mid-Winter Conference and Department Convention) at a time and place to be announced by the Department Adjutant.
- H. The purpose of each meeting shall be to discuss issues of mutual concern to the Groups and their members and to share information on member Group activities.
- I. The *Director* shall preside at all meetings of the Department Riders Group Committee.
- J. The *Director* shall cause minutes of each meeting to be taken and transmitted to the Department Adjutant for permanent record.

- K. The *Director* shall make a report to the Department Council of Administration at each regular Department meeting or as requested between such meetings by the Department Commander of the activities of the registered VFW Riders Groups of the Department.

#### 7. MISSION OF VFW RIDERS GROUPS

Support the purposes of the VFW Congressional Charter and programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Promote safe motorcycle riding practices and safety programs.

Provide a social atmosphere for VFW members and members of its Auxiliary who share common interests.

#### 8. VFW RIDERS GROUPS

- A. Upon the request of at least *five (5)* members in good standing of a VFW Post or *five (5)* VFW Posts within a District the unit may agree to sponsor a VFW Riders Group providing that the request is approved by majority vote of the unit members present and voting at a regular or special meeting called for such purpose.
- B. Upon passage of the request the sponsoring unit (District or Post) must prepare and submit to the Department Commander *through the Department Director* the appropriate VFW Riders Group Registration Form as provided in the VFW National Riders Groups Statement of Policy which, upon approval of the Department Commander, shall be forwarded to the National Adjutant General. The Group shall not be considered an active VFW Riders Group until notified of their accepted registration application by VFW National Headquarters.
- C. By agreeing to sponsor a Michigan VFW Riders Group the sponsoring unit, District or Post, agrees that it will 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 of Michigan, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- D. The Michigan VFW Riders Groups provided for herein must adhere to the policies herein and those passed down from proper authority in accordance with Section 709 of the VFW National Bylaws.
- E. Sponsoring units, Districts or Posts, *shall* establish Bylaws, standard operating procedures or adopt additional rules and regulations for the governance of their VFW Riders Group. Such Bylaws, procedures or rules shall be subordinate to and consistent with the Bylaws of the sponsoring unit, the VFW National and VFW Department including the Department and National VFW Riders Groups Policies.
- F. Each VFW Riders Group *shall* propose Bylaws, a standard operating procedure, or propose rules and regulations for the governance of the Group. Such Bylaws, procedures or rules shall only become effective upon the approval of the sponsoring unit by a majority vote of members present and voting at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose.
- G. Michigan VFW Riders Groups may establish annual member dues subject to the approval of the sponsoring unit.
- H. Michigan VFW Riders Group members may wear a Back Group Patch provided that it is in compliance with the current and subsequent guidelines contained in the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy and has been approved by the VFW Adjutant General.

- I. Michigan VFW Riders Groups are encouraged to form relationships with other VFW Riders Groups within the Department for mutual support to further their mission and the mission of the VFW, Department of Michigan. Michigan VFW Riders Groups may not jointly sponsor or participate in any events or *organized ride, as a representative of the VFW, with any Clubs that identify themselves as a 1% or Outlaw Club, unless such event or ride has been approved in writing by the Commander of the sponsoring District or Post and the Department of Michigan VFW Riders Group Director.*

## 9. VFW RIDERS GROUP OFFICERS

- A. The term of office of all VFW Riders Group officers, elected or appointed, shall end *in October* unless reelected or reappointed to the position.
- B. Upon their approved registration the VFW Riders Group shall elect from its number a member who shall serve as the Riders Group *President*. The *President* shall be a member in good standing of the sponsoring unit, and
1. Shall exercise supervision over the Group members and will ensure the protection of the VFW name and property, and
  2. Shall report activities of the Group at each regular meeting of the sponsoring unit. Such reports may be verbal or in writing, and
  3. Shall ensure that all recurring reports required herein or as required by other governing Bylaws or policies are timely and accurately transmitted.
- C. All other Group officers will be elected or appointed from its members-in good standing of the sponsoring unit or its Auxiliary pursuant to provisions of the Bylaws or policies of the sponsoring unit or the Bylaws or policies of the Riders Group. Other officers may include but are not limited to the following:
1. *Vice-President*, elected – Must be a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the sponsoring unit. The *Vice-President* will perform the duties as the presiding officer in the absence of the *President*, assist in the planning of Group events, coordinate the flow of information provided to Group members and advise the *President* of concerns of Group members.
  2. Secretary, appointed – Must be a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the sponsoring unit. The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping all the Group records, written reports and correspondence between the Group and outside organizations. Further the Secretary:
    - a. Will maintain all applications a Waivers of Liability Forms.
    - b. Will call the role at Group meetings.
    - c. Is responsible for recording the meeting minutes.
    - d. Will notify all members of special meeting times and dates.
    - e. Will maintain the Bylaws or Standing Rules as approved by the sponsoring unit that are applicable to the Group.
  3. Treasurer – The sponsoring unit Quartermaster shall serve as the Group Treasurer. If provided for by the Group Bylaws the Quartermaster may nominate a Group member, who is a member of the sponsoring unit, and who, subject to the majority vote of the Group at a regular meeting or special meeting called for such purpose, shall fulfill the duties of the Treasurer in the absence of the Quartermaster, and shall further assist the Treasurer in

performing his/her required duties. The duties of the Treasurer shall include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Will maintain the financial records of the Group.
  - b. Will collect monies from all fundraising events and ensure proper deposit.
  - c. Will coordinate the disbursement of funds as authorized by the Group.
  - d. Will give a detailed report of all receipts and disbursement of funds at each Group meeting.
  - e. Will provide a monthly financial report to the sponsoring unit Quartermaster for inclusion in the sponsoring unit's financial report.
  - f. Will maintain the inventory of all Group patches that are unissued.
  - g. Will collect all dues, if any, from Group members.
4. Sergeant-at-Arms, appointed – Makes certain to uphold rules of the Group and keeps order at all meetings and events. Reports actions of Group members who do not conform to the rules of the Group or its sponsoring unit to the Group *President*.
  5. Chaplain, appointed – Provide spiritual guidance and counsel to the Group members.
  6. Road Captain(s), appointed – Is responsible for route planning and coordinating support vehicles for events as required. When on an event, they are the ranking officer if the Group *President* or *Vice-President* are not present and therefore lead the Group formation on the ride. If the Group *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 ride participants including support vehicle drivers and passengers.
  7. *The Commander and Quartermaster of the sponsoring unit shall serve as VFW Riders Group members with full voting rights by virtue of their office.*

#### 10. VFW RIDERS GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- A. To be a member of a Michigan VFW Riders Group a person must:
  1. Meet all eligibility requirements of and be a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; or
  2. Meet all eligibility requirements of and be a member in good standing of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and
  3. Must provide proof of membership in the VFW or the Auxiliary by providing a current membership card issued by the National VFW or Auxiliary.
  4. Riding members consist of VFW members in good standing in any Michigan VFW Post who have a valid driver's license of any state with a motorcycle "CY" endorsement and maintain proper levels of insurance and meet the requirements of the sponsoring unit as established by the sponsoring unit's Bylaws or policies.
  5. Riding members who become disabled to the point that they can no longer ride a motorcycle shall be eligible to maintain their Riding Member membership with full voting rights and eligibility to hold any office within the Group, provided they:
    - a. Are members in good standing of the Group; and
    - b. Were members who met all requirements herein prior to any disability caused by:
      1. An accident; or
      2. The aging process; or
      3. A military service connected disability.
- B. Michigan VFW Riders Groups may accept support (or participating) members if provided for in the Group's Bylaws. Support members shall consist of either non-riding VFW or Auxiliary

members in good standing in any Michigan VFW Post or Auxiliary or non VFW or Auxiliary Members nominated to the Group by a Riding member and accepted by the Group by a majority vote of the members present at a regular meeting of the Group. Support members may include persons who do not ride or cannot ride a motorcycle but otherwise meet the requirements of the Group they belong to as established by the sponsoring unit Bylaws or policies.

- C. Any Riding or Support member of a Michigan VFW Riders Group who is delinquent in their annual dues to their respective organization will lose the rights and privileges of their Michigan VFW Riders Group membership until such time as they are a current paid member of their respective organization. All persons wishing to join a VFW Riders Group in any capacity must, if eligible, first become a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or its Auxiliary.
- D. *Any VFW or Auxiliary member who is suspended or has been removed from the membership roll by action of the National Auxiliary President or the Commander-in-Chief will not be entitled to retain eligibility to be a member of any VFW Riders Group of the Department of Michigan in any category of membership to include as a Support member during the duration of their suspension or they have been reinstated as a member in good standing by action of the National Auxiliary President or the Commander-in-Chief.*

#### **11. MICHIGAN VFW RIDERS GROUP FORMS & REPORTS**

- A. Pursuant to the provisions of the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy each Michigan VFW Riders Group shall submit a properly prepared appropriate Registration Form provided by the VFW Adjutant General. A copy of the application and all subsequent Department and National correspondence related to or in response to the application for registration to include all documents related to proposed original or subsequent modifications to the Group patch shall be retained in a permanent file by the Group.
- B. Pursuant to the provisions of the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy each Michigan VFW Riders Group member must complete a Membership Application and Release Form annually on a form provided the VFW National Adjutant General, the due date of which shall be determined by the Group. The Group *President* shall ensure that all members have complied with this requirement and that a proper record of all completed applications is retained by the Group.
- C. Pursuant to the provisions of the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy each Michigan VFW Riders Group shall require all non-member participants in a sponsored ride event to complete a Release and Waiver of Liability and Indemnity Agreement for each participating ride event on a form provided by the VFW National Adjutant General. The Group *President* shall ensure that all ride event participants have complied with this requirement and that a proper record of all completed releases is retained by the Group.
- D. Pursuant to the provisions of the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy each Michigan VFW Riders Group *President* shall make a monthly report to its sponsoring unit. A copy of the written report or summary of the verbal report shall be retained by the Group in a proper file as a permanent record.
- E. Pursuant to the Department of Michigan Bylaws each Michigan VFW Riders Group shall prepare a report of the elected and appointed officers of the Group following the annual election of officers. The preparing officer will attach to the report of election a current roster of all VFW members and Auxiliary members of the Group. The report of election shall be

submitted to the VFW Department Adjutant *through the Department Director* no later than June 30 of each year in a format to be determined by the Group. The use of MS Excel for this purpose is encouraged.

- F. Pursuant to the provisions of the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy each Michigan VFW Riders Group will report annually, prior to June 1, to the National VFWRG Advisory Committee:
  - 1. A full accounting of VFW Riders Group members and participants to include VFW members, VFW Auxiliary members, support members and invited participants, and
  - 2. A summary of the Group activities for the annual period on a form to be provided by the VFW Adjutant General, and
  - 3. An accounting of all funds received and disbursed by the Group during the annual period.
- G. Pursuant to VFW National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure the Quartermaster of the sponsoring unit shall include the accounting of finances of the sponsored VFW Riders Group in the Monthly Report of Receipts and Disbursements.
- H. Pursuant to VFW National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure the Trustees of the sponsoring unit shall include the accounting of finances of the sponsored VFW Riders Group in Quarterly Report of Audit.
- I. The records of Michigan VFW Riders Group activities and all other Group records are to be made available to Department and District Inspectors in the same manner as records of all other authorized activities of the sponsoring unit.
- J. Each Michigan VFW Riders Group will forward to the Department VFW Riders Group *Director* a report of planned events and rides *that are open to other VFW Riders Groups*. If the Group's event or ride is open, this information will be shared by the Department *Director* with other Michigan VFW Riders Groups.
- K. The VFW Department of Michigan *Director* shall be responsible to create and maintain a correspondence file for each registered Michigan VFW Riders Group which shall include copies of all correspondence regarding the registration of the Group, approval of the Group Back Patch, copies of all regular reports and records of any disciplinary actions involving members of the Group. *The VFW Riders Director will forward such documents to the Department Adjutant.*

## 12. MICHIGAN VFW RIDERS GROUP CONDUCT

- A. Misconduct is defined as the failure of the Group to abide by VFW National Bylaws, VFW Department of Michigan Bylaws, the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy, this policy as approved by the Department Council of Administration or the Bylaws or policies of the Group's sponsoring unit.
- B. In the event of any determination of misconduct the Department VFW Riders Group Committee *Director*, with the written approval of the Department Commander, has the right to temporarily suspend the Group's privileges to include the wearing of a Group Back Patch and participation in Group activities to include meetings. Notice of suspension shall be in writing to Riders Group *Director* and the Commander of the sponsoring unit by certified mail to the addresses of record of the identified officers. The suspension may be lifted by the Department *Director*, with the approval of the Department Commander, when the offending issues have been rectified. The VFW Riders Group suspension may be appealed to the Department Commander.



### 13. MICHIGAN VFW RIDERS GROUP MEMBER CONDUCT

- A. Misconduct is defined as the failure of a Group member to abide by VFW National Bylaws, VFW Auxiliary National Bylaws, Bylaws of the VFW Department of Michigan or its Auxiliary, the Bylaws or policies of the sponsoring unit, the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy or this policy as approved by the Department Council of Administration.
- B. In the event of any misconduct by a member of a Michigan VFW Riders Group, the Group *President* has the right to temporarily suspend the member's privileges to include the wearing of a Group Back Patch and participation in Group activities. Notice shall be given to the member in writing by certified mail. The temporary suspension must be reviewed and voted on by the Group members present and voting at the next regular Group meeting or special meeting called for such purpose. At that time, the Group members present and voting may vote to remove the suspension, permanently revoke the member's privileges, or temporarily suspend the member's privileges for a designated period. The vote of the Group members may be appealed to the Commander of the sponsoring unit (District or Post).
- C. In the event that the Group member's alleged misconduct is a violation of Department or National Bylaws, the National VFW Riders Groups Statement of Policy or this policy, the Department Riders Group Committee *Director*, with the written approval of the Department Commander, shall have the authority to suspend the member's privileges to include the wearing of a Group Back Patch and participation in Group activities. Notice shall be given to the member in writing by certified mail. The suspension will remain in effect until the violation has been corrected to the satisfaction of the Department *Director* subject to the member's appeal to the Department Commander.
- D. Alleged misconduct of a Group member which is alleged to be a violation subject to action under Article IX of the VFW National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure may be prosecuted under that authority simultaneous with the above authority of the Department Riders Group Committee *Director*.

### 14. CHANGES TO THIS POLICY

Proposed changes to this Policy may be forwarded from any interested Department of Michigan VFW member to the Department Riders Group Chairman who shall submit them with recommendations to the Department Adjutant for consideration by the Department Council of Administration at the next regular meeting or special meeting called for such purpose.


#### ADOPTION

This Policy was voted on and adopted by the VFW Department of Michigan Council of Administration on June 7, 2023.

Attested to by:



Department Commander, Ray Lopez



Department Adjutant, Barry Walter