



DISTRICT 16 HANDBOOK

VENTURA – SANTA BARBARA – SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTIES
DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA, THE AMERICAN LEGION



THE DISTRICT

The District Commander’s Guide states, “According to Article VIII of The American Legion Constitution, departments have the authority to create intermediate bodies between the post and department to assist as a liaison between the two, and for the purpose of promoting American Legion programs.”

District 16 is just that, an intermediate body between our 19 local posts and the Department of California. Our by-laws define the powers and duties of the district as well as the duties of our district officers. The district constitution, by-laws and standing rules can be found on the Resource page of the District 16 web site. (districtsixteen.org)

District 16 serves the 19 Legion posts in Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. We are part of Area 6, as are District 18, District 20 and District 24. There are 6 areas, 30 districts, and ~460 posts in the Department of California. The American Legion has 55 departments.

There are 19 **District 16 Posts**

- Post 48, Oxnard
- Post 49, Santa Barbara
- Post 50, Paso Robles
- Post 56, Santa Maria
- Post 66, San Luis Obispo
- Post 125, Vandenberg
- Post 136, Arroyo Grande
- Post 160, Santa Ynez
- Post 211, Lompoc
- Post 220, Templeton
- Post 339, Ventura
- Post 371, Guadalupe
- Post 432, Cambria
- Post 482, Ojai
- Post 484, Simi Valley
- Post 502, Moorpark
- Post 534, Orcutt
- Post 686, Oak View
- Post 741, Camarillo



The Organizational Pyramid shows the basic levels of The American Legion structure.

OUR DISTRICT IS A SUPPORT GROUP FOR ALL OUR LOCAL POSTS. THE DISTRICT CAN HELP TO PROMOTE, STIMULATE, AND COORDINATE LEGION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE OUR POSTS SUCCEED. The district is available to help, when requested by the local post.

The district can also provide and support training in operations, organization, mentoring and leadership for post and district leaders.



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DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (DEC):

The administration, governance and management of District 16 is entrusted to our District Executive Committee. As defined in the district by-laws, the District Executive Committee consists of:

- District Commander,
- First Vice Commander,
- Second Vice Commander,
- Junior Past Commander, and
- Six Executive Committeemen: Two (2) each from the Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.



DEC BACKGROUND:

The Commander and Vice Commanders are elected on a rotational basis between the three district counties: Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo.

The Junior Past Commander is the primary advisor to the district commander.

The Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties each elect two (2) Executive Committeemen to represent them as voting members of the Executive Committee. They are the Commander's Representatives in their respective counties. Members of the District Executive Committee may be assigned special projects as needed.

Officers are elected at the annual district meeting in June and serve a 1-year term of office. District officers take office when the District Commander is installed at the Department Convention.

The Adjutant, Finance Officer, Chaplain, Sergeant-at-Arms, Judge Advocate, Historian, and Service Officer are all appointed by the Commander, they do not have voting rights on the DEC.

The Judge Advocate is the lawyer and parliamentarian of the District. The Finance Officer tracks, reports, and disburses the district funds. They are both advisors to the DEC.



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COMMISSIONS VERSUS COMMITTEES:

The Department of California Commissions and their members are appointed by the Department Executive Committee (DEC). Commissions oversee specific areas of operation and specific programs of The American Legion directly linked to their Commission. Commissions report their progress to the DEC during executive committee meetings and through commission "call-ins" during the year.

Committees have members appointed at the Districts level and meet during conventions to hear reports from the department commissions. Committee members vote on proposals made to or by the commission and make recommendations to delegates attending the convention.

District 16 committees include: Membership, Ways & Means, Media & Communications, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Boys State and Oratorical Committees. Each of our committees play a very important role in our ability to serve our veterans.

DISTRICT OFFICERS

COMMANDER:

- Chairs all district meetings,
- Chairman of District Executive Committee (DEC),
- Plans meeting agendas,
- An ex officio member of all district committees,
- Voting member of the Department of California, Executive Committee,
- Visits all district posts at least once, and
- Represents the District as a member of the Department Executive Committee and Area 6.



FIRST VICE COMMANDER:

- Membership is the primary focus of the First Vice Commander,
- Chairs the district membership team, composed of all post first vice commanders, and
- Conducts a roundtable session on membership at district meetings.

SECOND VICE COMMANDER:

- Responsible for raising funds for all district programs, that serve our veterans. The district Standing Rules provides more detailed information about these programs. The Standing Rules are available on the Resource page of the District 16 web site. (districtsixteen.org)
- Coordinates volunteers to staff the booster club and raffle prizes at meetings.



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JR. PAST COMMANDER:

- Introduces distinguished guests, to assembled membership,
- Voting member of the District Executive Committee, and
- Advises the District Commander on district policy and procedures.



ADJUTANT:

- The Adjutant is the recording secretary,
- The district adjutant has the same position in the district as the secretary of any other organized body, and maybe a bit more. Just as at a post, an adjutant may provide continuity in the district,
- While the commander's duties are largely inspirational and executive, an adjutant's duties are administrative, including keeping the minutes of meetings, assisting the work of other officers and committees, and publishing official orders, announcements and instructions, and
- Post Everlasting reports are sent from local posts to the District Adjutant.

JUDGE ADVOCATE:

- Interprets the District Constitution, By-Laws and Standing Rules when called upon, and
- Is the District Parliamentarian. Interprets and rules on procedures in accordance with the latest copy of Roberts Rules of Order.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:

- Responsible for posting flags, banners and maintaining meeting order,
- Oversees meeting arrangement, escorts guests to the head table when necessary and maintains control of meeting environment,
- Sgt-at-Arms staff assists with distributing information packets and other correspondence to post leaders,
- Collects reports or forms from Post leaders, and
- Collects Post Everlasting reports of post members who have died since last district meeting from post leaders. *(Post Everlasting form can be downloaded from District 16 web site on the Resource page. <http://districtsixteen.org/resources.html#forms>)*





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DISTRICT FINANCE OFFICER:

- Keeper of the books, who helps develop district annual budget,
- A finance officer/treasurer must be a person of proven integrity and experience in handling financial affairs. He or she usually serves as chairman of the finance committee and oversees the receiving and disbursing all funds,
- Accounting forms are designed to meet the requirements of American Legion posts and districts in maintaining a correct and permanent membership and finance record. Because of their simplicity, they require no special knowledge of bookkeeping or accounting,
- Since districts are not chartered organizations, they must use the department's EIN for all financial accounts, and
- All account information and funds must be reported.



CHAPLAIN:

- Offers prayer and religious support.
- Conducts the 11th. Hour ceremony for those who have died and transferred to Post Everlasting, and
- Maintains control and upkeep of the District memorial bell.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

There is an annual cycle for distinct meetings defined in the district by-laws. All our post and district leaders are expected to attend. The schedule includes meetings of the district, area caucuses (aka meetings) and department meetings. Post officers report on their post at their district meetings, just as district officers report on their district at area and department meetings.



It is important for District officers to attend Area 6 meetings as well as the Department of California meetings. At these meetings district leaders represent our interests and report on district activities. Department Commissions are also called upon to report on their activities and levels of success.

District meetings are hosted by Legion posts who apply to the DEC to host a meeting. The post that is hosting a district meeting opens the meeting and then turns the gavel and control of the meeting over to the district commander. At the end of the meeting the District Commander



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returns the gavel and control of the meeting to the post commander. It is the local post commander who then closes the meeting.

DISTRICT 16 MEETING SCHEDULE

- Annual Meeting, 1st. Sunday in June — officer elections,
- Organizational Meeting, 3rd. Sunday in July (Officer installation is the night before),
- 1st. Meeting, 1st. Sunday after Labor Day,
- 2nd. Meeting, 1st. Sunday before Thanksgiving, and
- 3rd. Meeting, 2nd. Sunday after Lincoln’s Birthday.

DISTRICT 16, AREA 6 CAUCUS:

District 16 is part of Area 6, along with District 18, District 20 and District 24. Just as District 16 supports our local posts, the Area 6 serves a similar function on a larger scale and is more directly linked to the Department of California. There is a total of 6 areas in California, 30 districts and 460 Legion posts. Area 6 traditionally holds their caucuses on:



- Spring Caucus, the 3rd weekend in March, and
- Fall Caucus, the 3rd weekend in September

DEPARTMENT (STATE) OF CALIFORNIA MEETINGS:

- Annual Convention (June)
- Fall DEC (August),
- Spring DEC (March), and
- Various meetings and call-ins of Department Commissions.



The specific dates and locations of these meetings can be found on the Calendar page of the Department web site, calegion.org/calendar.html

MEETING ATTENDANCE:

- All Legionnaires are encouraged to attend district meetings,
- District and Post officers are expected to attend, and
- Legionnaires and guests are to sign-in upon arrival at a district meeting, at the Sergeant-at-Arms table.,



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LEGION UNIFORM:

- All Legionnaires are encouraged to wear The American Legion uniform cap, and
- Legion officers are expected to wear The American Legion uniform cap. *Purchase your uniform cap online at: emblem.legion.org*

NAME TAGS:

Leaders attending District 16 meetings are expected to wear a name badge with their name, post number and leadership position.

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS AND POST REPORTS:

Early in a district meeting agenda the district adjutant will conduct a “Roll Call of Officers and Posts”, this is when each post commander is expected to rise and report:

- Name, Position and Post Number,
- Number of post members (delegates) in attendance from post,
- Current number of paid members submitted to the Department, and
- Percentage of post membership goal attained.

Should the post commander be absent, a Post Vice Commander would be expected to make the post report.

HOSTING A DISTRICT MEETING:

Local posts can submit an ‘Application to Host a District Meeting’ if they want to host a district meeting. The application is available on the District 16 web site. (districtsixteen.org) Submit the application before the July organizational meeting.



OTTO HASSE LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR AWARD:

The Otto Hasse Legionnaire of the Year Award is a perpetual award awarded to an outstanding District 16 Legionnaire each year. The outstanding Legionnaire chosen receives a small trophy and his or her post will receive the perpetual plaque with the Legionnaire’s name engraved on it. The plaque will hang in the Post for the year of the award.





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TRAINING:

Veterans are familiar with training, as they received a lot of training upon entering the service and all during their time on active duty. Quality training is very important to the long-term success of The American Legion. Good training that is presented well produces consistently better program outcomes and helps identify future leaders. Training helps explain why we give our time and energy in service as volunteers. Our mission, the tools we use to accomplish our mission and the camaraderie we enjoy, are better appreciated after we are well trained. Effective training helps keep our Legion strong and vibrant.

AMERICAN LEGION EXTENSION INSTITUTE (ALEI)

The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI) is a basic training program that covers much of the history and programs of The American Legion. It is available online @ <https://www.legion.org/alei>. The course cost of \$4.95, includes a graduate pin and a certificate of completion. Completion of the ALEI training is required in many posts and districts for those interested in serving as an officer.



District 16, Area 6, Department of California, The American Legion

Send e-mail to: mail@districtsixteen.org, District Web Site: districtsixteen.org

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