



March 17, 2020

Department Commanders,

In our March 12, 2020 memo concerning Department Conventions, we asked that you must exercise calm and flexibility in the wake of this concern. We asked that Posts and Districts must still fulfill their duties and responsibilities to elect officers for the ensuing year prior to their respective Department Conventions, but all should be flexible in when and how those responsibilities are met.

As indicated in the attached Executive Order No.1, dated March 17, 2020 from the Commander-in-Chief, this flexibility would be to allow Posts and Districts to use all necessary means to meet the quorum requirements of the bylaws to elect officers prior to your Department Conventions. We know that there will be areas that will be hit harder than some and as result will not be able to elect officers. This is where we ask that you also exercise flexibility and not take punitive action for those that are not able to conduct their business prior to your Department Convention as a direct result of COVID-19. This CinC directive also provides the necessary guidance to keep officers in place until such time they're able to elect new officers.

It is also our recommendation that prior to meetings or elections, at all levels, efforts should be made to contact your members to inform them of their options so they are still able to be involved if they are not comfortable being around crowds during this time.

Further, if you haven't done so already, we urge you to begin working on a contingency plan immediately for your upcoming events. When contemplating your contingency plans, each Department must be cognizant of any state and local government declarations/executive orders currently in place. Many states have issued State of Emergency procedures that ban any gatherings of greater than 50 people, and the closing of bars and restaurants. These restrictions do apply to our VFW Posts and these prohibitions must be followed where applicable.

For those Posts that may be adversely affected financially by such closures, such Posts should see if they have any insurance policy, such as Business Interruption Insurance, in effect. Posts should consult with their respective insurance provider for questions. Additionally, the U.S. Small Business Administration may provide some relief. The SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing. These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75%. Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower's ability to repay. For additional information, please contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center. Call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or e-mail disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

Additionally, you need to immediately reach out to any hotels hosting your events and talk with them about the possibilities of cancelling and what those ramifications will be. Please utilize your contacts from other Departments as well. Several have instituted plans that could possibility work for your Department.

As America's largest organization of combat veterans, the health and well-being of our members, partners, associates and communities is our top priority. The VFW has a job to do and a solemn promise to keep to those veterans, service members, and their families for which we work. Now more than ever we must find solutions in the face of adversity and strive to meet the needs of those who rely on the vital services we provide.

Additionally, we will continue to closely monitor developments for any needed modifications to our national meetings and events.

Please do not hesitate to call the National Organization if you have any questions.

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