

**American Legion Department of Michigan**  
**Disposal of Unserviceable Flags D-01**

1. The Committee will provide and set-up in the contest area chairs and a podium for the Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, Chaplain and Sergeant-at-Arms, receptacle for the simulated dignified disposal of unserviceable flags, and a flag to be disposed of.
2. The unit shall provide one National Flag, one American Legion Flag, and two flag stands. Flags to be posted prior to inspection.
3. Eligibility: Only units composed of bonafide members of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion in any combination thereof, over 18 years of age, will be permitted to compete with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 13 members.
4. The minimum number of personnel shall be: Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, Chaplain, Sergeant-At-Arms, Two (2) Color Guards, Two (2) Color Bearers, and One (1) Flag Detail Member.

NOTE: It is the option of the unit to use a bugler. If no bugler is used, a tape player will be required for the playing of "To The Colors." In the event a unit options not to use a bugler, the tape player can be operated by a member of the team.

5. Team uniforms shall consist of military or American Legion type uniforms as approved by the contest chairman. Color Guard shall wear an appropriate type uniform, which may differ in style as approved by the contest committee and participate in the Department parade.
6. Inspection: General overall appearance of complete unit including the Color Guard. Flags shall be posted prior to inspection.
7. Following inspection, members will move into position to begin the Flag Disposal Ceremony.

8. The judging criteria shall be:

- 8a. Execution: All members will be judged on military bearing, dignity, precision of maneuvering while entering, during and while exiting the contest area. Uniformity of position while sitting, standing, position of hands, feet, etc., if applicable.
- 8b. Accuracy of Delivery: Per American Legion Officers Guide, "Dignified Disposal of Unserviceable Flags."
- 8c. Delivery: Clarity, ease of delivery, expression, self-confidence.

9. Delivery can be from memory or read from the Officers Guide. (Credit can be earned if memorized.)

10. Demerits can be given for undue delay.

NOTE: No flag shall be higher than, in front of, or to the right of the National Colors on the same lateral line with the same directional front. A finial piece is required on all National Flag staffs.

The National Color bearer shall not back step, side step, to the rear, or about face while carrying the colors.

The National Colors shall fly free and aloft.

Units will receive a one (1) point penalty for each flag violation and disqualification if the US flag is dropped or touches the ground.

## Dignified Disposal of Unserviceable Flags

This is a very desirable ceremony to present as part of a Flag Day observance.

The Post assembles in meeting, out-of-doors, at night. Members are aligned in two parallel rows about twenty feet apart, facing each other. Officers at their stations as shown. A small fire is burning opposite the Commander and beyond the rows of members. Diagram of arrangements appears on the next page.

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** "Comrade Commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable Flags of our Country for inspection and disposal."

**Commander:** "Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, advance with your detail and present the Flags for disposal and inspection."

"Sergeant-at-Arms calls detail to attention. They form at the Post of the Sergeant-at Arms, take the Flags which are to be inspected, march abreast down center until opposite the Second Vice-Commander, turn right and halt two paces in front of the Second Vice-Commander The Sergeant-at Arms steps one pace forward and salutes.

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** "Comrade Vice-Commander, we present these unserviceable Flags for your inspection."

**Second Vice-Commander:** "Is the present condition of these Flags the result of their usual service as the Emblem of our Country?"

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** "These flags have become faded and worn over the graves of our departed comrades and the dead soldiers, sailors, and airmen of all our Nation's wars."

**Second Vice-Commander:** "Present these Flags to the First Vice-Commander for his inspection."

The Sergeant-at Arms salutes, about faces, commands the detail, `About Face, " crosses behind the detail and takes post at its left, commands "Forward March. " The detail marches to within two paces of the First Vice-Commander, halts and proceeds as before.

**Sergeant-at Arms:** "Comrade Vice-Commander, we present these Flags which have been inspected by the Second Vice-Commander, for your further inspection." First Vice-Commander:- "Have any of these Flags served any other purpose?" Sergeant-at-Arms: "Some of these Flags have been displayed in various public places."

**First Vice-Commander:** "Present them to the Commander for final inspection and dignified disposal."

The Sergeant-at Arms salutes, about faces, commands the detail, `About Face, " crosses behind the detail and takes position on its left commands `Forward March. " The detail marches to center, turns left, halts within two paces of the Commander, Sergeant-at Arms steps one pace forward and salutes.

**Sergeant-at Arms:** "Comrade Commander, we have the honor to present for final inspection and proper disposal these Flags of our Country."

**Commander:** "Have these Flags been inspected by the First and Second ViceCommanders?"

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** "They have."

**Commander:** "Comrade Second Vice-Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"

**Second Vice-Commander:** "Comrade Commander, since these Flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend they be honorably retired from further service."

**Commander:** "Comrade First Vice-Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"

**First Vice-Commander:** "Comrade Commander, since these Flags have become faded and worn in a tribute of service and love, I also recommend they be fittingly destroyed."

**Commander:** "Comrades, we have presented here these Flags of our Country which have been inspected and condemned as unserviceable. They have reached their present state in a proper service of tribute, memory and love.

"A Flag may be a flimsy bit of printed gauze, or a beautiful banner of finest silk. Its intrinsic value may be trifling or great; but its real value is beyond price, for it is a precious symbol of all that we and our comrades have worked for and lived for, and died for—a free nation of free men and women, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practice of Justice, Freedom and Democracy.

"Let these faded Flags of our Country be retired and destroyed with respectful and honorable rites and their places be taken by bright new Flags of the same size and kind, and let no grave of our soldier, sailor, or airman dead be unhonored and unmarked. Sergeant-at-Arms, assemble the Color Guard, escort the detail bearing the Flags and destroy these Flags by burning. The members shall stand at attention.

" Color Guard forms. The detail about faces. Preceded by the Color Guard, the detail marches down center to the fire. National Colors crossover and take position on the right of the fire, facing the Commander. Post Standard takes position on left of fire. The detail lines up behind the fire, which is burning low.

**Commander:** "The Chaplain will offer prayer."

**Chaplain:** "Almighty God, Captain of all hosts and Commander over all, bless and consecrate this present hour.

"We thank you for our Country and its Flag, and for the liberty for which it stands.

"To clean and purging flame we commit these Flags, worn out in worthy service. As they yield their substance to the fire, may your Holy Light spread over us and bring our hearts renewed devotion to God and Country. Amen."

**Commander:** "Hand salute."

Color Guards present arms. Post Standard is dipped. All officers and members, except those on the Flag detail, salute. Members of the Flag detail dip the condemned Flags in kerosene and place them on a rack over the fire. Bugler sounds "To the Colors. "

Commander, at conclusion of "To the Colors: " "Two. "

The Color Guard shall resume its station and detail is dismissed.

Color Guard advances down center and places Colors. Members of the detail resume their places among the members.

