

SERGEANT AT ARMS

Delta Tau Delta Fraternity

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INTRODUCTION

In any organization, and in society as a whole, it is essential to have someone in charge of maintaining order. In our country, it is the responsibility of law enforcement to preserve order within our cities. Just as each city has its method of maintaining order, so does your chapter. In your case, you are that person. As Sergeant at Arms, your primary duty is to preserve order within the chapter.

Duties

In this chapter you'll find a general listing of duties for Sergeant at Arms. Because each chapter has its own set of duties and responsibilities for this officer, you should discuss the specifics with your President and, if possible, the former Sergeant at Arms. Although your duties may differ from those listed in this chapter, there are two primary areas that you will definitely be in charge of: insuring order at chapter meetings and serving as chairman of the rules committee. It is very important, therefore, you understand the process for amending chapter Bylaws. To help you, we have inserted a step by step section of the process. Read it carefully, and if you have any questions be sure to ask your advisor.

Your Role as Leader

Because you are in charge of maintaining order, it is critical that you always act in a respectable and responsible manner. You should be viewed as a role model for the other chapter members. No one is going to follow the rules if its own Sergeant at Arms can't abide by them. You are a leader of the chapter and you should commit yourself to acting as leader.

DUTIES OF THE SERGEANT AT ARMS

According to Article II, Section 8, of the Bylaws, the Sergeant at Arms position is defined as:

"The Sergeant at Arms shall have charge of the hall of his chapter and keep guard at the door."

Usually, the duties of the Sergeant at Arms are much more specific. In many chapters these duties include:

- A. He is to insure order during chapter meetings.
- B. He is to act as the chapters chief parliamentarian and shall decide all issues of parliamentary procedure according to Robert's Rules of Order.
- C. He is chairman of the rules committee.

- D. He is a voting member of the administrative committee (*ex-officio*).
- E. He is a voting member of the executive committee (*ex-officio*).

- F. He is to perform ritualistic duties outlined in the Fraternity's Ritual.

Other duties will be prescribed by local chapter tradition. Be sure to spend some time with the past Sergeant at Arms as well as your current chapter President outlining your individual responsibilities clearly. This will prevent oversights.

INSURING ORDER AT CHAPTER MEETINGS

One of your most important duties is insuring that there is order during the chapter meetings, so that they may be run efficiently and with the dignity they deserve. It shall be important that you quiet members who are out-of-order promptly and effectively. A standard procedure in most chapters is the following:

- First violation: *A warning to the offending member.*
- Second violation: *A five dollar fine.*
- Third violation: *Removal from the chapter meeting and a ten dollar fine.*

This method should be effective in maintaining proper order. Be sure that whatever procedure you choose conforms to your local chapter bylaws.

HOW THE RULES COMMITTEE DIFFERS FROM THE HONOR BOARD

A lesser-known but still very important duty of the Sergeant at Arms is his role as the chairman of the rules committee. **The Rules Committee should not be confused with the honor board.** While the honor board performs the judicial function of handing out sanctions and punishments for violations of the chapter's bylaws and rules, the rules committee performs a legislative function in the process of creating new bylaws or house rules.

PURPOSE OF THE RULES COMMITTEE

Article X, Section 12, of the Suggested Chapter Bylaws defines the rules committee as such:

“It shall be the duty of this committee to make necessary any reasonable revisions of these bylaws and house rules, and to inform all members of the chapter of the current bylaws and house rules...”

PROCESS FOR AMENDING THE BYLAWS

The process, according to Article XV of the Suggested Chapter Bylaws, is as follows:

Any member of the chapter can make a motion to amend the bylaws during the time for new business in the administrative committee. If the motion is approved by the administrative committee, it then passes on to the rules committee to check the amendment for clarity of

wording, and to insure that it does not conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Fraternity or provisions governing fraternities at the institution.

The next step is to bring it to the next chapter meeting following approval by the administrative committee. The amendment shall be proposed to the chapter, who shall decide by majority vote whether the resolution shall be submitted to the chapter for vote at the next chapter meeting. The reason for this process is to make the chapter aware of the proposed change, and to allow for discussion during the week-long waiting period between chapter meetings.

Finally, at the following chapter meeting the motion is submitted to the chapter. A two-thirds vote of approval for the adoption of the amendment will cause it to become a part of the bylaws.

If a bylaw is not approved by the administrative committee, it can still be brought to the chapter. However, it must pass through the rest of the process described here: the rules committee and the initial majority chapter vote, and then in order to finally be approved it requires a three-fourths vote by the chapter.

Amending the bylaws, while it is a complicated process, is one that is designed in the best interests of the chapter. If it were a simple process, it would be easy for amendments to be passed in the heat of the moment without thought given to the long-term impacts of the legislation. This process allows for reasoned discussion to take place both on a formal and informal level between the time when the amendment is proposed and the time that it becomes a part of your chapters bylaws.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

It is not within the scope of this guide to give an exhaustive treatment to parliamentary procedure. For an abridged discussion and explanation of the various types of motions and voting, review the Procedure of Meetings section in the Chapter Leadership Guide. As Sergeant at Arms, you should be thoroughly familiar with the important discussions pertaining to parliamentary procedure to be found in Robert's Rules of Order. Your duty as chief parliamentarian requires that you have the ability to answer these questions of procedure at the chapter meeting. You will want to bring a current copy of Robert's Rules to every chapter meeting.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

As an officer of the chapter, you have the responsibility to take part in the leadership of the chapter. Your most direct contribution will be doing a thorough and conscientious job in your duties as Sergeant at Arms. These activities insure well-run and efficient chapter meetings, and develop your own leadership potential.

You will also want to take an active part in the development of chapter goals, policy and planning. If you take a genuine interest in chapter planning, operations, and activities, you will be able to assume leadership. You are in the position to listen, interpret, and be heard.

Chapter leadership requires initiative and knowledge. As an officer in the chapter, you will have an opportunity to gain the knowledge necessary for future leadership. What you accomplish depends on your willingness to work. Assistance is always available from the Central Office, your Division President and Vice President, your chapter advisor, and the other chapter officers. When a Chapter Consultant visits your chapter, you should make a special effort to talk with him about your specific duties and chapter leadership.

In summary, the role of Sergeant at Arms may seem small, but its importance should not be underestimated. Your influence can be great -- it all depends upon the effort that you are willing to put into the duties, and the extra mile you are willing to go on behalf of the Fraternity.