

The Importance of MOUs With Local Agencies for American Legion Posts

American Legion posts have long served as pillars of service, leadership, and community resilience. Legionnaires bring unique training, discipline, and readiness skills rooted in military service—qualities that make posts natural partners in local disaster operations.

To fully leverage these strengths, establishing **Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)** with local agencies is essential.

1. Formalizing the Post's Role in Community Readiness

American Legion disaster doctrine emphasizes that posts should be “seen as pools of leadership, expertise and resources” in their communities.

MOUs make this reality actionable by defining the post's operational role before disaster strikes—whether providing shelter space, volunteers, communication support (including Legion Amateur Radio Clubs), or logistics assistance.

2. Strengthening Coordination With Local Response Agencies

MOUs ensure posts are integrated into local emergency plans, enabling seamless collaboration with:

- Emergency management offices
- Fire and law enforcement agencies
- Public health departments

- Local nonprofits and faith-based organizations
- Citizen Corps partners (also referenced in Legion guidance)

Clear coordination prevents duplication, accelerates response time, and ensures the post's capabilities are deployed where they are most effective.

3. Leveraging Post Facilities and Resources

Many posts possess meeting halls, kitchens, parking areas, generators, or radio equipment that can be critical during crises. Posts can support both preparedness and response missions in their communities.

An MOU documents how these assets may be used—whether as:

- Shelter or warming stations
- Points of distribution (PODs)
- Volunteer staging sites

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From your Disaster Preparedness Chair:

This month's topic is **Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)**. MOUs are an essential part of any Post Disaster Plan. I'll attach a template you can use as part of this newsletter. I can email this file to you if you request it. MOUs are also a great tool for building a community network. If you have any questions, feel free to email me at: rmcgregor.wk@gmail.com

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- Communication hubs using Legion Amateur Radio resources

4. Clarifying Liability, Cost, and Operational Boundaries

Memorandums of Agreement (MOA), functionally similar to MOUs, help address legal and administrative issues ahead of time.

This includes:

- Liability and insurance expectations
- Reimbursement procedures if applicable
- Facility use conditions
- Safety protocols
- Command structure and points of contact

This preparation protects both the post and partner agencies.

5. Supporting Training and Volunteer Integration

MOUs can formalize commitments for:

- Joint training exercises
- Volunteer credentialing
- Radio communication drills
- Public safety education events

This strengthens relationships and enhances the post's operational readiness.

6. Demonstrating the Legion's Commitment to Community Service

The Legion's mission includes assisting veterans, families, and the broader community—especially in times of crisis. Through MOUs, posts show they are proactive, reliable partners in disaster resilience.

This commitment reinforces the post's public image, builds community trust, and highlights the continued service ethos of Legionnaires.

Conclusion

American Legion posts are uniquely positioned to support disaster preparedness due to their military heritage, community presence, and organizational mission. Formal MOUs with local agencies bring structure, clarity, and coordination to this role, enabling posts to respond swiftly and effectively when disaster strikes. Strong partnerships and readiness are central to the Legion's ongoing service to America.

Disaster Recovery Resource Survey

I want to thank the posts that have responded to our Disaster Recovery Resource Survey. The following Posts have responded: Post 4, Post 15, Post 72, and Post 118. If you haven't completed the survey yet, you can do so at:

<https://forms.gle/L8PCAbWauhom5nEDA>

I. Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes a cooperative relationship between **American Legion Post ____** (“the Post”) and **[Local Agency/Organization]** (“the Partner Agency”) to enhance community disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

The purpose of this agreement is to outline roles, responsibilities, and resource-sharing arrangements to ensure effective coordination before, during, and after emergencies.

II. Background

American Legion posts serve as community anchors with strong volunteer capacity, leadership experience, and facilities that may be used to support local emergency operations. The Partner Agency provides critical public services related to emergency management, public safety, health, or community support.

Both parties recognize that coordinated planning improves resilience, reduces response times, and ensures essential services reach affected populations.

III. Scope of Collaboration

This MOU applies to joint activities including, but not limited to:

Emergency preparedness planning

Disaster response operations

Training and exercises

Volunteer coordination

Public information and community outreach

Use of facilities, equipment, or communication systems (e.g., Legion Amateur Radio Clubs, generators)

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

A. American Legion Post ____ agrees to:

1. Provide facilities such as meeting halls, kitchens, or parking areas for use as:

Emergency shelters

Warming/cooling centers

Points of distribution (PODs)

Volunteer reception centers

2. Supply trained volunteers to support disaster operations when available.

3. Maintain communication capability if applicable (e.g., amateur radio operators).

4. Participate in planning meetings, exercises, and public preparedness activities.

5. Follow all safety guidelines and protocols established by the Partner Agency.

B. The Partner Agency agrees to:

1. Provide emergency management guidance, training, and operational support.
2. Include the Post in local emergency plans where appropriate.
3. Notify the Post when activation of the facility, volunteers, or equipment is needed.
4. Ensure coordination with other responding organizations.
5. Offer credentialing or orientation for volunteers, if required.

V. Resource Sharing

Both parties agree to coordinate the use of available resources, which may include:

Facilities (Post buildings, parking lots)

Equipment (generators, communication devices, vehicles)

Supplies (food, water, emergency kits)

Personnel or volunteers

Resource commitment is subject to availability at the time of activation and may require additional documentation (e.g., facility use agreements).

VI. Liability and Insurance

Each party shall be responsible for its own acts, omissions, and liabilities.

Nothing in this MOU shall be construed to create a legal partnership, joint venture, or agency relationship.

Any insurance requirements or indemnification expectations should be documented in an attached appendix if necessary.

VII. Costs and Reimbursement

Unless otherwise stated in an attachment, each party is responsible for its own costs.

Any reimbursements—if permitted—must be approved in writing by both parties before costs are incurred.

VIII. Term, Review, and Termination

1. This MOU becomes effective on the date of the last signature.
2. It remains in effect for **[X] years** unless amended or terminated.
3. Either party may terminate the agreement with **30 days' written notice**.
4. The parties agree to review the MOU annually to ensure accuracy and relevance.

IX. Points of Contact
American Legion Post ____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

[Partner Agency/Organization]

Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

X. Signatures

For American Legion Post ____:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For [Partner Agency/Organization]:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____