



BLOOD DONOR CHAIR GUIDE

2026-2027

2026-2027 Blood Donor Committee

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American Legion Blood Donor Program

MONEY can't buy it. **SCIENCE** can't duplicate it. **PEOPLE** can't live without it. But, in one brief, simple gesture, many of the members of your American Legion Post, SAL Squadron, and Auxiliary Unit can join with others who are able to give life's most important asset, a pint of blood.

Participation by your Post/Squadron/Unit in The American Legion's Blood Donor Program opens another door for a great and continuing humanitarian opportunity. Here is community service of the highest order. Here is a program which meets an ever-present need. Here is a program which shows the community the depth of your Post's concern for the well-being of your fellow citizens.

It's impossible for patients and their immediate families alone to bear the burden of blood needs. The constant and critical need for blood can only be met by a system of voluntary donations throughout your community.

Is there a regularly scheduled collection of blood in your community? By a "regular schedule," we mean one which calls for a bloodmobile visit or a group trip to a blood collection center every 8 weeks. If such a program does not exist, your American Legion Post is the logical focal point for its establishment. If there is an ongoing blood donor program in your community, it can be made just that much better through your Post's cooperation and participation.

If your post does not have an active, continuing blood donor program, consider the assets which can accrue through such an endeavor:

1. Community Service: Through your Post's organized, continuing blood donor program, the citizens of your community know that this valuable lifeline is available in time of need.
2. Improved Public Relations: The exposure your Post receives in its promotion of, and participation in, such an activity will enhance The American Legion within the community.
3. Membership Growth: An American Legion Post with a well-organized, continuing blood donor program provides its membership workers with another strong talking point when approaching non-members who are eligible.

The American Legion's interest and participation in organized blood donor campaigns dates back to World War II when the need for plasma for our wounded became so intense. Hundreds of American Legion Posts became sites of community visits by Red Cross Blood mobiles. Legionnaires and Auxiliary members by the thousands rolled up their sleeves to provide the gift of life for a new generation serving in our fighting forces. The need for blood and blood products has not diminished in the decades since patriotic fervor motivated so many Americans to respond to this cause. Today's demand for whole blood and its by-products is even greater. Unfortunately, the response to the need has not been inspiring.

It is estimated that only 5 percent of those eligible to give blood do so. Is your American Legion Post and its membership among the other 95 percent? If so, would you consider organizing your Post's Blood Donor potential to share in your community's responsibility for supplying this most precious gift?

You as Blood Donor Chair should check with the blood collection agency serving your area (most have someone serving as blood donor recruiter) for its recommendations as to the type of donor program which will be of greatest benefit. The agency may also be able to provide informational and promotional materials on the need for blood, who may donate, etc. In some instances, the agency may be able to provide a qualified representative to present a program on the subject at a Post/Unit meeting.

A Donor Program to Fit Every Post

There are several systems for American Legion Post/Auxiliary Unit participation in a continuing blood donor program. This is an area which you as Post Blood Donor Chair should discuss in detail with the donor recruiter of the blood collection agency serving your area.

Because the need for blood varies in its intensity from one area or region to another, it is impossible to state categorically which one system is the most preferable and practical. It's up to each blood collection agency and the volunteer donor organizations to work out a program that is mutually convenient and beneficial.

The system which probably is most popular and effective is **THE GROUP DONOR PLAN**. This system calls for the development of a file of Legionnaires, SAL, and Auxiliary members (and other volunteer donors if you can recruit them) who are willing and able to donate blood on a periodic basis. Once you have established these records, set a time for your group to appear either at the blood collection center or at the post, if a mobile collection unit is necessary.

The group donor plan requires the services of someone to draw up and maintain the necessary records on the available donors. It means that the Post blood donor chair, perhaps with the help of other volunteers, will need to make whatever inquiries are necessary to get the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and blood types of those willing to donate blood.

The donor recruiter of the blood collection agency may be able to offer advice and guidance concerning the most effective format for your records.

Once such a file is developed (and don't overlook the need to add more names as time goes by), it's up to you, the Blood Donor Chair, to contact the donors to advise them of the next scheduled collection.

Another system is called **THE "WALKING BLOOD BANK."** However, this method is best used as a means of keeping a file on the donors of rare blood types. The "Walking Blood Bank" consists of registration and blood typing of eligible donors. In event of emergency, the Blood Donor Chair need only call the blood type. Have your Blood Donor Chair talk over all of these plans with the agency's donor recruiter. Once the best system has been selected, it's time to start the recruitment of donors from within your Post/Unit (and throughout the rest of the community, if possible).

Job Description for Blood Donor Chair

PURPOSE- to aid in the running of the Blood Donor program for your Post and to promote the ideals of The American Legion through the Florida Blood Donor program.

- Have a GOAL. Make a plan of action for the year.
- Be knowledgeable of your program.
- Attend all Post meetings to promote the program.
- Communicate regularly with Post Commander, District Blood Donor Chair.
- Plan for the Blood Mobile to come to your post or community events.
- **Submit a one-two page narrative for your post to have a chance to be awarded the Post with the Best Blood Donor Program for the 2026-2027 year at the Department Convention**

Blood Donor Terminology

- **Aphaeresis**

- Definition: a process that allows donors the ability to give only special components of the blood and returning the rest back to the donor. The component most often needed and given in our area is donor platelets.
- Each donor is issued his/her own disposable, sterile kit for an Aphaeresis procedure. The sterile tubing of the kit goes from one arm through the aphaeresis machine, into a centrifuge and then back to the donor through the other arm. The centrifuge is fitted with special chambers that hold a pouch attached to the kit. These different chambers can be changed to collect whatever component is needed. After a specific component is collected then the rest of the blood is returned to the donor. **NO BLOOD EVER TOUCHES THE INSIDE OF THE MACHINE.**

- **Platelets**

- Definition: the clotting factor of the blood.
- **How will giving platelets affect me?**
 - A donor only gives about 10% of their platelets at one donation. Your body rebuilds your platelet supply very quickly. In fact, you could give platelets again in as little as three days if needed.
- **Who will benefit from platelet donations?**
 - Severe trauma patients use platelets to stabilize and control bleeding. Most of the platelets go to help cancer patients. Chemotherapy kills the cancer cells in patients but, also can kill their platelets as well. Cancer patients need platelets to keep them from bleeding internally until their own platelets can rebuild.

- **Who can donate?**

- You must be at least 16-year-old, qualify as a regular blood donor, and be able to spend approximately two hours for donation. They will check your arms and platelet count to see if you can be a donor.

Suggested NEWS RELEASE

Blood Donor Program

The American Legion is calling upon the citizens of-(Community)-to join in a continuing Blood Donor Program, Commander-(Full Name)-of-(Name of Post)-Post No.-announced today that the Post has recruited-(Number)-of its members to set the foundation for a community-wide donor program, and is seeking the assistance of others who wish to be a part of this great humanitarian effort.

Post No.-has arranged with- (Name of Blood Collection Agency)-to have one of its mobile units at the post, -(Address)-, from-(Hours of First Collection)-,-(Date)-. In order to avoid a long waiting period, prospective blood donors are urged to telephone- (Full Name)-, the Blood Donor Chair of Post No.-, at- (Telephone Number)-.

Every effort will be made to arrange an appointment for each donor at a convenient time and help keep the waiting to a minimum. For those who do not have a record of their blood type, this service will be available during the visit of the mobile unit. Each donor will be provided a card with his or her blood type printed on it for future reference and a record will be retained for use in the event of emergency or call for a specific blood type. The need for blood never diminishes, Chair-(Last Name of Blood Donor Chair)-explained. Every minute of every day, five persons in the U.S. each need an estimated three pints of blood. Multiply those 15 pints by the number of minutes in a day, and the total daily consumption becomes enormous. And that's why donating blood is so important. Donor blood is kept in a blood bank. But even when stored under ideal conditions (refrigerated at the right temperature and with the proper preservative), it has a legal use limit of 35 days. "Don't underestimate the value of your blood donation," Post Commander- (Last Name)-emphasized. "All types of blood are needed.... all the time!"

Radio/TV Announcements

Note: *The following should be re-typed, triple-spaced, one announcement to each sheet, filling in all blanks before taking them to your radio and tv stations.*

Millions of lives are saved each year because others have donated blood. You can become a part of this great humanitarian cause by joining The American Legion's continuing Blood Donor Program here in-(Community)-. For further details, contact- (Full Name of Blood Donor Chair)-, telephone (Repeat Phone No.)-

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The American Legion asks you to join its continuing blood donor program here in-(Community)-. Only you can help assure that there will be an adequate supply of blood and blood products to give a child with leukemia a chance to live . . . to help a burn victim recover . . .to aid a shock trauma patient in recovery. Your single donation might help save a friend . . . a neighbor. . . a co-worker. For further details, contact- (Full Name of Blood Donor Chair)-, telephone number-(Phone No.)-

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Money can't buy it. Science can't duplicate it. People can't live without it. But - you can afford to give it - a pint of your blood. It's life's most valuable asset. You can share this priceless human resource when you join The American Legion's continuing blood donor program here in-(Community) -. Be a blood donor. It's a good feeling. For more details, contact- (Full Name of Blood Donor Chair)-, telephone number- (Phone No.)-

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Every 17 seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Will you help? Your blood donation offers hope of recovery for victims of fire or accident to persons in shock to infants or mothers to those who suffer leukemia or hemophilia . . . to patients undergoing surgery. You can help by joining The American Legion's continuing Blood Donor Program here in-(Community)-. For further details, contact- (Full Name of Blood Donor Chair)-, telephone number- (Phone No.)-

AWARDS FOR VOLUNTEER BLOOD DONORS

An important element in the success of your Post's continuing Blood Donor Program is the recognition given to the donors and volunteer workers.

Your donors need to be aware of just how important their contributions really are. Keep adequate records of all donations. Publicize the program by listing the donors of each collection in your Post publication. Display their names on the post bulletin board.

There are special American Legion Blood Donor pins which should be presented to individual donors and those who reach significant quantity donations over an extended period. There are also individual Blood Donor Certificates which may be presented at the discretion of the Post. Consult your current Emblem Sales Catalog for description and prices.

Adequate recognition of both the donors and those volunteers who help with the program helps retain your participants and serves to recruit others.

AWARDS FOR POSTS

Post with Best Blood Donor Program

This award is given out at the Department Convention in June.

Rules:

1. The National Consolidated Post Report and Department Addendum must be on file with the Department.
2. The report for judging must also contain a one-page narrative explaining what you did to have a successful Blood Drive, the number of donors, and number of units of blood produced.
3. A Letter of Verification from your blood center on their stationery.
4. The report must be on time based on the due date in the Post Administrative Manual.

FACTS ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER BLOOD DONOR

- Healthy volunteer donors contribute 98% of the blood and blood products transfused in the United States.
- Donors cannot contract AIDS by donating blood.
- Volunteer blood donors contribute between 11 and 12 donations of blood resulting in the availability of nearly 15 million components for transfusion annually.
- Each day, 15,000 donors are needed to meet the ongoing need for blood and components.
- The number of donors volunteering to commit 2-3 hours to donate platelets by an aphaeresis is increasing steadily.
- Many lives have been saved by blood voluntarily donated by caring individuals.
- Approximately 40% of the population are medically eligible to be donors, however, less than 10% are the "quiet heroes and heroines" that provide the blood needed for the entire population.
- Blood donors come from all walks of life. They are people just like you.
- Teenage donations have increased rapidly in the past ten years, due to state legislation lowering the age requirement to 17 years.
- Thousands of blood donors discuss with their families their desire to be an organ and tissue donor.

DONOR REQUIREMENTS

- Must be 16 years old (No upper age limit as long as healthy).
- Weigh at least 110 pounds.
- Never had Hepatitis.
- Be free of ALL cold and flu symptoms (or infection) on the day of donation.
- Has not been pregnant within past 6 weeks (or pregnant now).
- No recent surgery.
- No blood transfusion in the last 8 weeks.
- Cancer – for 5 years, must be medication and symptom free.
- Heart disease or heart medication - Must have a written doctor's permit stating it is OK to donate. (If you are on a blood thinner, you will not be able to donate).
- Diabetes – diabetics whose illness is well controlled on insulin or oral medication are eligible to donate.
- Blood pressure medication - OK to donate but must wait 2 hours after taking or take medication after donating.
- Must eat breakfast and/or lunch before donating.
- Aspirin - OK to donate, just let staff know how much and when taken.
- Antibiotics - 10 days from last dose before donating.
- Must not have exposure to anyone with AIDS.
 - Exception: nurse, doctor, paramedic, etc.
- Malaria - for 3 years must be medication and symptom free.
- Travel to Malarial area - Must wait 3 months before donating.
- Have a temperature less than 99.6F.

10 Common Excuses Not to Donate Blood

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN AT YOUR POST!!!

1. **I'M AFRAID OF NEEDLES:** Contrary to popular belief there is very little pain in the actual donation process. The feeling is no different than pinching your arm.
2. **OTHER PEOPLE MUST BE GIVING ENOUGH BLOOD:** Only five percent of the eligible donor population actually bother to donate. New donors are needed to replace those who become ineligible due to medical reasons, and to keep pace with the rising need for blood each year.
3. **MY BLOOD ISN'T THE RIGHT TYPE:** Every type is the right type. The rarest blood is the type that's not available when you need it. All types must be on hand when they are needed.
4. **YOU WOULDN'T WANT MY BLOOD:** The nurses on duty review each donor's medical history before drawing the blood to protect the donor as well as the person who will receive the blood. Very few past illnesses exclude a person from donating.
5. **I DON'T HAVE ANY BLOOD TO SPARE:** If you are generally in good health, you have 10 to 12 pints in your body. You may safely donate one pint of blood every eight weeks.
6. **I AM TOO OLD TO DONATE:** If you are in good health and 17 years or older, you are able to donate safely. There is no upper age limit to donating blood.
7. **I DON'T DONATE UNLESS IT'S AN EMERGENCY:** If people wait until a relative or friend needs blood, it could be too late to donate. It takes 12 to 18 hours to do the necessary typing and testing of the blood after donation. Blood has to be available before it is needed.
8. **THEY THROW AWAY A LOT OF BLOOD:** The blood collected by Central Florida Blood Bank is generally delivered to a hospital for patient use, on average, 48 hours after you have donated.
9. **I CAN PAY FOR ANY BLOOD I NEED:** If dollars could be transfused, there would be no need to donate. However, only blood can be transfused, and only people can donate. All the money in the world is useless if no blood is available.
10. **I DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO DONATE.:** Positively the poorest excuse ever invented. It only takes 30 minutes to give a pint of blood...the donation itself takes five to seven minutes on average.