

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY  
PARADE JUDGES  
ASSOCIATION**

**OFFICIAL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**REVISED: March 2010**

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARADE JUDGES ASSOCIATION**  
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II. DEFINITIONS:

**Chief Judge** - the WCPJA member who supervises the Parade Judges at an event. The Chief Judge is the only liaison between WCPJA and HPC.

**Chief's Representative** - a person designated by a Chief to obtain parade data of the Chief's Fire Unit.

**Compartment** - a separate division or section; it can be open, as in booster, jump seat, hose, ladder compartment, or closed.

**Distance** - maximum space allowed between units or groups.

**File** - column front to rear; row of persons one behind the other.

**Fire Group** - subdivision of fire unit; color guard, chiefs, ex-chiefs, commissioners, officers, members are fire groups.

**Fire Unit** - company or department from color guard to last vehicle. (Excluding ladies aux., junior units, explorers, etc.)

**HPC** - Host Parade Committee.

**HPC Representative** - the person authorized by the HPC to receive parade results and sign for them.

**Line Of March** - the parade route.

**Members Marching** - on the street; not in or on vehicles or apparatus.

**Members Riding** - members in or on vehicles or apparatus

**DEFINITIONS (Cont'd)**

**Rank** - one line of people side-by-side perpendicular to the file.

**Right, As In “To The Right”** - the right side as the parade unit marches.

**WCPJA** - Westchester County Parade Judges Association.

# WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARADE JUDGES ASSOCIATION

## OFFICIAL PARADE RULES AND REGULATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

The Westchester County Parade Judges Association (WCPJA) was organized in 1973 to establish a uniform and equitable way of judging parade competition for the benefit of all fire companies and fire departments, with a strong emphasis on developing a closer relationship in the fire service. The membership consists of Ex-Chiefs from fire companies and departments in the lower Hudson Valley and the Association is guided by a Charter, By-Laws, and these Official Parade Rules.

The WCPJA judges parades and inspections, upon official request from a hosting organization, free of charge to the Fire Company or department. Each year, the Association judges many parades and inspections in the Hudson Valley and Out-Of-State with the members donating their services and out-of-pocket expenses. A host organization considering using the Association to judge an event need only contact one of the Association Officers to discuss services available and obtain Official Parade Rules and Regulations. The inquiring organization is not obligated to use the Association as a result of this discussion.

The WCPJA allows organizations hosting parades the opportunity to request the waiver, due to extenuating circumstances, of certain Rules and Regulations. The waiving of certain minimum Rules and Regulations is usually discussed at a formal meeting between WCPJA designates and the Host Parade Committee and may be permitted provided they are not major changes and that uniformity prevails. However, it is the Host Parade Committee's responsibility to notify all parade participants, within a reasonable time period before the parade, which minimum Rules and Regulations are waived at the Host Parade Committee request. This is an important responsibility of the Host Parade Committee who cannot, unilaterally make changes in the Official Parade Rules and Regulations.

The WCPJA usually judges and selects winners in the Appearance, Best Overall, Apparatus, Color Guard and Ladies Auxiliary trophy categories. Special trophy winners that are not selected by the WCPJA are normally the responsibility of the Host Parade Committee, unless a contrary arrangement is reached by the Host Parade Committee and the Association.

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**THE FOLLOWING PARADE RULES AND REGULATIONS ARE THE OFFICIAL DESIGNATED JUDGES STANDARDS OF THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARADE JUDGES ASSOCIATION (WCPJA). NO OTHER ORGANIZATION SHALL USE THESE RULES, FORMS, OR REGULATIONS TO JUDGE ANY PARADE IF THE WCPJA IS NOT REPRESENTED.**

**GENERAL PARADE GUIDELINES & INFORMATION FOR THE HOST PARADE  
COMMITTEE (HPC)**

- A. Judges and Chief Judges shall be selected by the WCPJA. There should be two (2) Judges for each judging category when up to twenty (20) units are participating in the parade, and three (3) Judges per category when twenty one (21) or more units are marching, unless an agreement to the contrary is made by the HPC and the WCPJA Chief Judge.
- B. Judging is usually separated into five categories (Color Guard, Uniform, Marching, Apparatus, and Ladies Auxiliary) based on the trophies to be awarded.  
  
Music Judges are usually provided by the HPC, unless an agreement to the contrary is made by the HPC and the WCPJA Chief Judge.
- C. The parade route (Line of March) should be arranged, as much as practical, to eliminate any conditions such as crowding, parked cars, etc. which impede the progress of the parade.
- D. It is recommended that the farthest any participant will march in the parade, from start to finish, is four (4) miles.
- E. The parade should start at the scheduled time communicated to all participants. In case of postponement or cancellation, the HPC must notify the Chief Judge and the parading units at a reasonable time before the scheduled parade starting time.
- F. Judges will be positioned along the Line of March, but not near the start or finish of the parade. Judging will not be performed within fifty (50) feet of any corner, at any sharp bend, at any steep grade, or at any encumbrance in the Line of March, except by those judging Apparatus. No judging will occur while a unit is stopped, stopping or starting.
- G. Fire units arriving after the parade has started should be placed at the end of the parade Line of March. The HPC should inform the Chief Judge so the unit is not penalized for “wrong position”.
- H. Fire units shall have a minimum of ten (10) members marching on the street in uniform to compete for parade trophies. The Ladies Auxiliary shall have a minimum of five (5) marching on the street to compete for parade trophies.
- I. For “Most In Line” trophies the total is those in line in uniform including members riding, excluding Ladies Auxiliary. For “Most Ladies” trophies the total is those in uniform including members riding as a Ladies Auxiliary.

**GENERAL PARADE GUIDELINES & INFORMATION FOR THE HOST PARADE  
COMMITTEE (HPC)**

- J. The Host Parade Committee Shall inform the Chief Judge of any situations where participating units informed the HPC in writing of any exceptions, matters or items which should be considered by the Judges when compiling competition results.
  
- K. A Private place shall be provided for the judges to compile results of the parade. It is requested that the HPC Chairman be present with the Judges while results are compiled. The results (Trophy Winners) will be handed to the HPC Chairman or his representative who will sign for their receipt.

NOTE TO HPC After all judging sheets are tallied and each sheet signed and dated by the scoring judge, the sheets are placed in a large envelope which is signed by the Chief Judge and another Judge with the date and parade location noted on the envelope. The WCPJA gets this envelope from the Chief Judge.

- L. A Chief or the Chief's Representative of a unit which participated in the parade may, within ten (10) days from the parade date, request the results of their scores. All requests must be on Company or Department Stationary or letterhead and sent with a stamped self addressed envelope to the WCPJA Secretary; Paul Gallagher, 36 Deer Park Rd., Katonah, NY 10536-3432.

The purpose of the above is to help parade participants correct faults and weaknesses (demerits) which may be hindering the unit from securing trophies.

\*Note: The Host Parade Chairman should advise parade participants that they can obtain scores and demerits for their units from the Westchester County Parade Judges Association Secretary.

## **GENERAL PARADE GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS**

- A. A WCPJA Judge is a member of the WCPJA who judges fire companies, fire departments, ladies auxiliaries, for marching ability and appearance, and judges fire apparatus and equipment. A non-WCPJA judge used by the Host Parade Committee e.g. for music is not WCPJA approved.
- B. A Music Judge is a competent, qualified person in the music field who is able to judge the general appearance of music units. The Music Judge is usually supplied by the HPC. In as much as music competition scores are not retained by the WCPJA, participants should not request them from the WCPJA.
- C. To compete for parade trophies the fire unit must have a minimum of then (10) members marching on the street. Ladies auxiliaries must have a minimum of five (5) members marching on the street.
- D. A service person will be counted as a fire person when marching with a fire unit.
- E. For “Most Members In Line” trophies the total is those in Line Of March in uniform, including members riding, excluding ladies auxiliary. For “Most Ladies In Line” trophies the total is those in Line Of March, in uniform, including ladies riding.
- F. The Chief or representative of a participating unit shall inform the Host Parade Committee in writing of any matters or items such as truck breakdown, injured personnel riding, or special department rules pertaining to uniform, apparatus, etc. that may be considered by the Judges when compiling parade results. The written notice shall be forwarded to the Chief Judge by the Host Parade Committee Chairman.
- G. Fire units, which arrive after the parade has started, shall fall in at the end of the parade, regardless of the division to which they have been assigned. If the unit falls in the “wrong position”, that is, any non-designated position except the end of the parade, it will be penalized **ten (10) points** for “wrong position”.
- H. Judges will be positioned along the Line Of March, but not near the start or finish of the parade, nor within fifty (50) feet of any corner, nor at any sharp bend, nor at any steep grade, nor at any encumbrance in the Line Of March, except those judging apparatus. No judging will occur while a unit is stopped in the Line Of March

## **FIRE UNIT PARADE FORMATION**

- MUSIC UNIT

20 Feet MAXIMUM

- COLOR GUARD -

10 Feet MAXIMUM

Must be in one rank; minimum is one U.S. Flag and one guard; unit flag or banner on a staff may be carried in this rank. If a salute is rendered, it must be done uniformly. Salute is not required.

- UNIT FLAG or BANNER

10 Feet MAXIMUM

- VILLAGE or TOWN OFFICIALS  
or DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS NOT IN UNIFORM

10 Feet MAXIMUM

- CHIEF OR OFFICER  
IN CHARGE

10 Feet MAXIMUM

Chief and Assistants may march in same rank. If Chief salutes, all in the same rank must salute uniformly. Salute is not required.

- CLERGY

10 Feet MAXIMUM

Clergy and Ex-Chiefs may be combined.

- EX-CHIEFS

10 Feet MAXIMUM

- COMMISSIONERS IN UNIFORM

10 Feet MAXIMUM

- OFFICERS AND/OR EX-OFFICERS

10 Feet MAXIMUM

Uniformity must prevail in the wearing of gold and silver hatbands, lapel insignias, and uniform buttons within groups.

## **FIRE UNIT PARADE FORMATION**

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| - FIRE POLICE<br>and/or PATROL | Must march either here or at the end of the column of<br>firefighters marching, but not in both spots. |
| 10 Feet MAXIMUM                |  |
| - RANKS of FIREFIGHTERS        | See Marching Rules and Regulations for rule on column<br>formation.                                    |
| 10 Feet MAXIMUM                |  |
| - JUNIOR CORPS                 |  |
| 10 Feet MAXIMUM                |  |
| - LADIES AUXILIARY             | See Ladies Auxiliary Rules and Regulations.  |
| 20 Feet Maximum                |  |
| - APPARATUS                    | See Apparatus Rules and Regulations; spacing between<br>vehicles is twenty (20) feet.                  |

( NOTE: ALL DISTANCES ARE MAXIMUMS)

## COLOR GUARD - RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 1 - All fire companies and departments participating in a parade shall be preceded by a Color Guard. The first rank behind the Music Unit is the Color Guard rank and is the only rank judged for Color Guard demerits. All people in the Color Guard must march in the same rank.
- 2 - A firematic Color Guard is a minimum of one fire person carrying a U.S. Flag and one guard, to left or right of U.S. Flag.
- 3 - One U.S. Flag and another bearer (flag or banner) is not a Color Guard. A lone U.S. Flag or masses flags without a guard is not a Color Guard.
- 4 - Units marching without a Color Guard gets **fifty (50) demerits**.
- 5 - The company or department may use a non firematic Color Guard, for example, a Service Unit. However, the non-firematic Color Guard score will not be counted as part of the Fire Unit scores, incurs no penalty for the Fire Unit, is not counted in total number in Line Of March, and is eligible only for a non-firematic Color Guard trophy. All other Color Guard rules shall apply to a non-firematic Color Guard.
- 6 - Excepting non-firematic Color Guard, the firematic Color Guard must belong to the Fire Unit they precede.
- 7 - Marching more than twenty (20) feet from Music Unit results in **two (2) demerits**.
- 8 - All flags shall be unsoiled and not torn, with clean staffs. **Five (5) demerits each**.
- 9 - The U.S. Flag must be to the right of all other flags or banners. Two or more U.S. Flags is massed flags and must always be positioned to the right of all other flags or banners. A company or department flag or banner will always be carried to the left of the U.S. Flag(s). **Five (5) demerits**.
- 10- Excepting rain conditions, all flags shall be carried unfurled, and the U.S. Flag(s) carried at an angle no more than thirty (30) degrees from perpendicular. Carrying U.S. Flag(s) at more than thirty degrees incurs **five (5) demerits** as does dipping the U.S. Flag(s).
- 11- Finial ornaments, for example, spread or soaring eagle, on U.S. Flags (massed flags) must be identical. Finial ornaments on all flags must face front. **One (1) demerit each**.

## COLOR GUARD – RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 12- Color Guard saluting at reviewing stand is optional. If salute is rendered it must be done uniformly in reference to presentation of Unit Flag, axes, rifles, etc. Carrying of axes, rifles, etc, must also be uniform. **Three (3) demerits each.**
- 13- Special company or department Uniforms may be worn by the firematic Color Guard. They must be uniform, including hats, scarves, patches, bands, etc. All Color Guard members must have the same uniform, Entire Uniform must be clean and neat. **Five (5) demerits each.**

## MARCHING - RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 1 - Required number of files for a Marching Unit is determined by the total number of members in uniform marching on the street;
  - A. If total number is 20 or less there can be two (2) or three (3) files abreast.
  - B. If total number is 21 - 50 there can be three (3) or four (4) files abreast.
  - C. If total number is 51 or more there must be four (4) files abreast.
- 2 - The 2, 3, and 4 abreast rule refers only to the files of firefighters marching behind the Officers. Wrong formation is **ten (10) demerits**.
- 3 - When the last rank of firefighter in the abreast rule formation is not complete, for example, one or two people where there should be three, the people in the last rank may march alongside each other or at sides. NOTE: more than one incomplete rank is demerited as mixed formation. **Ten (10) demerits**.
- 4 - All marching groups within the whole marching unit shall march at arms length from the person in front and at arms length from the person alongside, except in close order marching. Uniformity must prevail in all groups for ranks and files. **One (1) demerit each**.
- 5 - A maximum of ten (10) feet spacing is permitted between Fire Groups. See page 8 diagram. Less footage or space is permitted, but there must be uniformity spacing between the groups, as on the diagram. **Two (2) demerits each group**.  
NOTE: Fire Groups start at the Color Guard rank.
- 6 - Fire groups must march in accordance with Fire Unit Parade Formation diagram on page 8 of these rules. Group marching out of position will be demerited, as will mixed groups. Example; firefighters marching in same group or mixed with Officers group. **Five (5) demerits each group**.
- 7 - One or two "Drill Sergeants" are permitted and may be positioned on either side of the marching unit and are not required to salute the reviewing stand. They may be positioned along side of any marching group and must be in step, but will not be judged as part of any rank or file.
- 8 - Firefighter pulling hand-drawn carts, carriages or hose wagons shall not be subject to files-abreast rule out-lined in #1 above. However, they will be counted in total number of members in Uniform on the street to determine the files-abreast number for remaining firefighters marching with the Unit and not pulling apparatus.
- 9 - For "Most Members" or "Most In Line" trophies both marching and riding members in Uniform are included.
- 10- Two or more Departments marching together as One Unit are **disqualified**.

## MARCHING - RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 11- A Fire Unit may be disqualified by a Music Unit marching with them, which drills or stops the forward movement of the parade. A Fire Unit, which drills or stops the forward movement of the parade, may be **disqualified**.
- 12- Any Unit conducting itself in such manner as to bring discredit to itself or the fire service during the parade may be **disqualified**.
- 13- Units shall maintain formation during the parade, except when there is an emergency alarm or ambulance call while parade is in progress. In those instances, all Units will move to right roadside and halt. They will reform after apparatus and/or ambulance passes.
- 14- Maximum space between marching Units (Including Music Unit) is 100 feet from Unit preceding them. There is no division - distance rule. (Report exceptions, for example, holdback - speedup, to HPC who will inform WCPJA). **Five (5) demerits**.
- 15- Out of Step – Each Person **Two (2) demerits each**.
- 16- Talking, Waving, Laughing, Chewing Gum, Sobriety, Smoking. **Ten (10) demerits each**.
- 17- Rank Spacing-Each. **One (1) demerit each**.
- 18- Each Rank off Left to Right. **One (1) demerit each**
- 19- Files Spacing Each. **One (1) demerit each**
- 20- Each File Off Front to Rear. **One (1) demerit each**.

## UNIFORM - RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 1 - Members Uniforms shall be neat and clean. Uniforms which are unkempt, wrinkled, torn, or soiled will earn **five (5) demerits**.
- 2 - Uniforms shall not be mixed, or of different colors, within the groups of officers or firefighters. Company or department officers and ex-officers with different Uniforms or Uniform color shall not march in the same group. Exception is Clergy, who may march alone or with ex-chiefs. **Five (5) demerits each.**
- 3 - Differences in shade color will not be demerited.
- 4 - Ties shall be properly worn and of uniform color. Non uniformity, soiled, wrinkled, unclean, open-at-the-neck, or missing ties earn **one (1) demerit each**. Tie clasps should be uniform, if worn.
- 5 - Uniform buttons shall not be missing or unbuttoned, **One (1) demerit each.**
- 6 - Excepting Clergy, within a marching group uniformity shall prevail in the wearing of the entire Uniform. For example, the mixing of (gold and silver) Uniform hat bands, lapel insignias, and Uniform buttons is not uniform and will be demerited. **One (1) demerit each.**
- 7 - Members wearing earned badges or badges of merit on their Uniform shirts or coats will not be penalized. The wearing of badges within the group must be uniform as to location on Uniform. There is no limit to number of badges, but they must be only company or department badges, badges of rank, or special award badges. Uniformity shall prevail in the wearing of all insignias, special awards, nameplates. and ear rings. **One (1) demerit each.**
- 8 - Uniform gloves, belts, and patches shall be clean and uniform. There is no demerit for an apparatus driver not wearing gloves. **One (1) demerit each.**
- 9 - Hats and helmets shall be uniform, clean, and properly worn, that is level to ground and not tilted to front, side, or rear. **One (1) demerit each.**
- 10- Haircuts and beards shall be neat and well kept. If the hair is not neat trimmed or is disheveled it is subject to **five (5) demerits**. There is no rule on hair length. The rule refers to appearance.
- 11- Shoes shall be laced, cleaned, and polished; socks shall be clean and uniform, excepting orthopedic shoes, there cannot be buckles, tassels, sandals, boots, perforations, heel, or platform shoes. **One (1) demerit.**

## UNIFORMS – RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 12- “Drill Sergeants” shall wear the same Uniform (regulation; non-regulation; dress) as their marching group.
- 13- Sunglasses, other than prescription, shall not be worn. **One (1) demerit each.**

NOTE: See Apparatus Rules #2, 7, & 10 which refer to occupants in Uniform.

## APPARATUS and VEHICLE - RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 1 - All apparatus and vehicles must drive to rear of last group. Maximum spacing is twenty (20) feet from last group and twenty (20) feet between each apparatus and vehicle. **Two (2) demerits** each.
- 2 - A Fire Chief's vehicle may be first in line. Occupants must be in Uniform. Maximum occupancy is two people in front and three in rear. Uniforms may be mixed e.g. firefighter with Ex-Chiefs, Charter Members, etc.
- 3 - A Ladies Auxiliary vehicle may be first in line.
- 4 - Excepting "antique", to be eligible for an award, all apparatus must be fully equipped, in service, and belong to the preceding Fire Unit.  
**NOTE:** The HPC will advise Chief Judge on service.
- 5 - For all apparatus, the year shall be identifiable by sign. This sign shall be located on the passenger side, lower half of the windshield. **One (1) demerit.**
- 6 - The first eligible apparatus in line is the one judged if there are no specific apparatus category trophies. For specific apparatus trophies (Example; Best Engine. Best Rescue, etc.) The "Best" apparatus is the one scoring highest in each category. The first in line of that type in the Fire Unit is the one judged for specific category or class trophies.
- 7 - A fire department "antique" vehicle cannot be in service. It must be visibly identifiable as "antique" and may carry no more than driver and two passengers. Occupants must be uniformed. Uniforms may be mixed e.g. firefighter with Ex-Chief, etc. The "antique" must be owned by the Fire Unit.
- 8 - Each Fire Unit decides its apparatus and vehicle formation.
- 9 - Each apparatus may carry no more than driver and two (2) passengers  
**NOTE:** Other members, who are disabled, may raise the occupancy limit. However, the HPC must be notified concerning disabled passengers. , **One (1) demerit each**
- 10- Apparatus occupants must be uniformed. A driver may wear a duty Uniform. A driver does not have to wear gloves. A driver will not receive demerits for answering judge's questions.
- 11- Any apparatus that has any type of permanently mounted aerial device e.g. ladder, boom, telescoping - shall be considered an aerial apparatus, not a pumper. Examples; Truck, Quints, Tel Squirts, Snorkels, Cherry Pickers, etc.
- 12- Cab interiors must be clean and neat. **Zero to five (0 - 5) demerits.**

## APPARATUS and VEHICLE - RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 13- All windows must be clean. **Zero to five (0 - 5) demerits.**
- 14- A minimum of one (1) compartment may be opened and available for inspection on each competing apparatus, unless the HPC requests none to be opened. All compartments must be clean and neat, **Five (5) demerits each.**
- 15- Equipment unkempt and not maintained will be subject to **one (1) demerit each.**
- 16- Missing equipment will be subject to **three (3) demerits each.**
- 17- Refreshments or non-firematic equipment are not permitted on apparatus or vehicles. **Five (5) demerits.**
- 18- Current dated inspection tags must be on extinguisher. **Two (2) demerits each.**
- 19- Talking, waving, smoking are not permitted. **Ten (10) demerits.**
- 20- Intentional sounding of bells, siren, and audio systems is unit misconduct and may cause disqualification.  
**NOTE:** All disqualification in all Rules and Regulations are made by the entire Judges group after the event or parade and before scoring commences.
- 21- Additional demerits for **Pumpers**: Covered hose beds **Ten (10) demerits** (Full covers need not be completely removed, but must allow hose bed viewing for inspection.)  
All hose beds and reels clean and neat **Zero to ten (0 - 10) demerits.** **NOTE:** Doughnut rolls or packs on hose are not demerits.  
Nozzles - all open or all closed **Two (2) demerits each.**
- 22- Additional demerits for **Aerials**: Turn Table/Jacks clean no dirt/grease **Zero to ten (0 - 10) demerits**  
Ground ladders/ropes clean and no fraying **Two (2) demerits each.**  
Nozzles - all open or all closed **Two (2) demerits each.**
- 23- Additional demerits for **Rescues**: Patient Body compartment, clean and neat **Zero to ten (0 - 10) demerits**  
Equipment not secured in Body compartment **Two (2) demerits each.**

## **LADIES AUXILIARY - RULES AND REGULATIONS**

- 1 - The formation of the Ladies Auxiliary shall be as follows:

**COLOR GUARD** (not required)

10 feet maximum

**BANNER** (not required)

10 feet maximum

**OFFICERS**

10 feet maximum

**MEMBERS**

20 feet maximum

**VEHICLES**

- 2 - The spacing is the maximum footage permitted; less spacing is allowed, but uniformity must prevail between the groups within the unit. The unit must have a minimum of five (5) marching in Uniform on the street in order to compete for trophies.
- 3 - Neither Color Guard nor Banner is required or demerited. The unit is subject to the same Marching and Uniform Rules and Regulations as the Fire Unit which precedes them.
- 4 - If worn, excepting wedding rings, jewelry must be uniform.