



# GUIDE

## International Council Operations

**Navy League of the United States**  
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## Overview

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The Council Handbook is included in the Navy League Operations Manual, Part III. The Council Handbook provides guidance for the operation of Navy League councils worldwide. This Guide *supplements* the Council Handbook to provide guidance unique to councils operating in foreign countries.

Supplemental information in this Guide is organized to coincide with the format of the Operations Manual, with primary emphasis on the Council Handbook.

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# Navy League Policies and Organization

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## 1. Types of Membership, Dues and Rebates

- a. All membership categories described in the Operations Manual, Part Two, Section II Membership apply to international councils. Non-US citizens may join Navy League councils operating in foreign countries as Associate Members. Associate Members participate fully in council operations with one exception: Associate members may not serve as the Council President, Area/Region President, National Director or National Officer.
- b. Collection of dues and rebates present a challenge to international councils because the council often operates using host country currency, while Navy League finances are transacted in US dollars. Payment for individual memberships can be made on the Navy League website, <http://www.navyleague.org/membership/>, using a credit card. International councils that want to register multiple memberships can send an email to [service@navyleague.org](mailto:service@navyleague.org) with a list of the members (name, address, telephone number, and email address required) and a credit card number (with name and expiration date from the card) against which to charge the membership fees. Multiple membership applications can also be mailed to Navy League Headquarters with a check drawn on a US dollar account, although mailing member applications will cause a delay in registering the new or renewal memberships. *Because of currency exchange fees, international councils may choose to send “net dues” (membership dues listed on page 23 of the Operations Manual, less the rebate listed for that category of dues).* “Net dues” must be processed by mail or email as the NLUS website does not accept net dues. Reference: Operations Manual, Part Two, Paragraph II.B.2.a, page 24.

## 2. National Organization

Three levels of Navy League leadership represent international councils: National Vice President, International Relations, Region President and Area President. International Council Presidents should seek advice and support from these leaders when they have questions or issues. Region and Area Presidents may schedule periodic meetings to conduct training workshops and to share experiences and issues. International council presidents are encouraged to attend these periodic meetings because they often provide great ideas valuable to the council’s operation.

## 3. Administration

- a. Mail is often a problem for international councils. Correspondence and *SeaPower* magazine may be received late, or not delivered at all to overseas addresses. Individual council members with an address in the United States may choose to have their mail

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delivered to their US address. International councils can arrange to have their *SeaPower* magazines (for all council members) delivered to a single address using FedEx, UPS or DHL, but the council must pay the additional cost. Basically, **email is the preferred method for communications with international councils.**

b. Council training for international councils must be scheduled at Area or Region Meetings, which should be attended by as many international council officers as possible. International councils may determine that they need to provide financial assistance to meeting attendees due to the cost of travel. There are no financial subsidies from National Navy League for travel. National Navy League will pay travel expenses for the Senior Director of Regional Activities to deliver training workshops at Area and/or Region Meetings. All Council Guides and Training Workshop materials are available on the Navy League website at [http://www.navyleague.org/councils/council\\_resources.php](http://www.navyleague.org/councils/council_resources.php).

c. International councils participate fully in the Navy League Awards Program, including council awards (Outstanding, Meritorious or Honorable Mention Councils), Scroll of Honor, Certificates of Appreciation and Honorary memberships. The National President's Medal is of particular importance to international councils, as this award is presented to foreign dignitaries (see criteria on page 53 of the Operations Manual). International councils can nominate candidates for this award.

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## 1. Council Organization

International councils should consider creating an additional officer position in their organization: Vice President of Protocol. As a guest in the host country, international councils must be careful to honor their laws, culture, customs, history and traditions. The Vice President of Protocol should seek the advice of US Consular or US Embassy officers in the host country when performing their duties. The local US Consul should be invited to join the local Navy League council as a member. The Council Board should assign the duties of the Vice President of Protocol, which *may* include:

- Advise the Council Board of Directors on all matters involving protocol;
- Maintain a calendar of host country national, religious and cultural holidays to ensure council activities do not conflict with these holidays;
- Arrange for or conduct workshops on the laws, culture, customs, history and traditions of the host country;
- Promote the US Department of State's Crisis Awareness program (see [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies\\_1190.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1190.html));
- Ensure Navy League members are not involved in host country politics (representing themselves as Navy League members in their activities); and
- Arrange for translation services so Navy League communications and activities can be provided in the host country's language.

## 2. Council Administration

- a. Membership for international councils should be broadly diversified to include US Consular/Embassy officers, local government officials, elected officials, business leaders and professionals with a broad range of skills and knowledge in host country matters – lawyers, doctors, accountants, clergy, public relations experts, and party organizers are recommended. Successful international councils have discovered there is strength in this diversity. Invite these professionals to join the Council Board of Directors and your council will confidently develop programs and activities that appeal to the local community. Your council should seek involvement from as many members as possible; active councils have many involved players. The Navy League council should be a recognized and respected contributor in the community, as further described below under programs.
- b. Tax-exempt status in the host country must be researched for compliance with host country legal requirements to operate as a nonprofit. International councils may discover they must register as a nonprofit in the host country in order to operate. If nonprofit status is not available in the host country, the council may have to comply with host country tax laws and pay taxes. International councils

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- cannot register as a tax-exempt organization under US law.
- c. The Navy League of the US does not provide liability insurance for international councils. International councils may choose to obtain a local insurance policy, if available. Knowledge of local laws and the potential exposure to lawsuits is a key element of any decision to operate with or without insurance coverage. The Navy League's insurance carrier provides the following guidance:
    - “The coverages in place for Navy League and affiliated Councils does not cover International Councils. Generally, overseas councils would have their own coverages placed locally and could add coverage for any special events to that coverage.”
  - d. Employees of international councils must perform their duties and be compensated in accordance with applicable host country employment laws.
  - e. Websites are an effective communications medium for international councils. Web pages in the host country language will improve communications and encourage membership in the international council. Notify Navy League Headquarters if a council website is established.
  - f. Newsletters are effective in countries where the mail is reliable and timely. The question each international council must answer is whether to publish its newsletter in multiple languages. Copies of council newsletters should be shared with community leaders if they are not members of the council.

### 3. Council Programs

- a. Navy League international councils, although not representing the United States government, are often perceived as US ambassadors. Therefore, international councils should try to focus their activities on programs that add value to the community as well as promote the mission of the Navy League. Adding value can include supporting local charities, responding to local emergencies, supporting host nation sea services, and establishing collaborative relations with local leaders, both elected leaders, community leaders and business leaders. The Council Board of Directors should collaboratively establish a vision and mission for the council and promote this strategy in the community. A Council Strategic Planning Workshop can be requested from the Senior Director of Regional Activities to assist in this effort. Council activities can then be prioritized against the council's vision and mission. International councils must take care that each activity undertaken is well supported and properly executed since your activities are constantly being evaluated by the community!
- b. In general, National Navy League programs (Operations Manual, pp 78-79) may have limited application for international councils. For example, support of sea service units may be limited to adopting the US Marine Corps' Embassy Security Detachment. International councils located close to a host country naval base or major port may find their efforts best focused on encouraging and supporting port visits by US Navy ships and Coast Guard cutters, or the ships of US allies. When

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- port visits occur, the international council can provide liaison with local charities to identify community relations projects for the visiting sailors, Coast Guardsmen and Marines.
- c. International councils should strive to maintain an active speakers program utilizing host country and local US resources, as well as US military regional commands. The Embassy's Naval Liaison Officer should be invited to speak to the council about opportunities for ship visits and to identify other projects that the council can support. Programs that describe how the US military has or can provide assistance during regional disasters are generally of interest to local communities and these programs support the education mission of the Navy League.
  - d. International councils can seek to adopt Navy ships and Coast Guard cutters that are based in their geographical area. Host nation sea service units may also be considered for adoption and/or support if adoption is not a protocol issue.
  - e. Youth programs are a key element of successful Navy League councils. International councils can sponsor a Naval Sea Cadet Corps (NSCC) unit if there are adequate numbers of American youth in their community. Otherwise, local youth groups can be identified for support (e.g. Sea Scouts). International councils can sponsor scholarships for host country youth to further their education. Other possible youth programs for international councils are supporting a local school that promotes the values of NLUS youth programs or even assisting in the formation of a local youth program that is modeled after the Naval Sea Cadet Corps.
  - f. Social activities are very important for international councils as they foster good relations with host country members and guests, as well as provide recruiting opportunities. Social activities are also excellent fundraisers when linked to community service projects. Councils must comply with host country laws regarding fundraising when planning these events. International councils can sponsor club activities – bridge, golf, tennis, etc. A key element for success is to find council members who like to plan these activities and organize social functions. Most important, these activities should be fun and exciting. Associate members who are well-connected in the community are a key element for successful social programs.
  - g. Support from the business community can provide an international council with active members and additional funds for projects. Local businesses can join the council as Community Affiliate members, particularly local hotels, restaurants and club facilities who are involved with the council. A good place to look for business members is the US Chamber of Commerce office in the host country. Information on US Chamber of Commerce affiliates in foreign countries is available on the Chamber of Commerce website at <http://www.uschamber.com/international/directory/default.htm>. Host country businesses may also be interested in joining an international council, particularly if they support a US defense contractor, have business with host country sea

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services, or support local port facilities. The International Chamber of Commerce website can assist international councils in locating host country businesses at <http://www.iccwbo.org/id100/index.html>. A final resource is the Navy League's existing Corporate membership roster. Corporate members may have local offices in the host country. The local office of an NLUS Corporate member should be encouraged to join the local council as a Community Affiliate member. A list of Navy League Corporate members is on the Navy League website at [http://www.navyleague.org/membership/corp\\_membership\\_roster.php](http://www.navyleague.org/membership/corp_membership_roster.php).

## Summary

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The operation of a Navy League international council provides unique challenges as well as opportunities. One challenge is to operate the council in compliance with all host country legal, cultural, and religious norms. Another challenge is to participate fully in Region and Area activities due to the great distance and cost often involved for travel to these meetings. Most council leaders find that sharing experiences, issues and solutions greatly improves the operation of their council.

Opportunities for international councils are also significant. As “good will ambassadors”, the council can promote a positive image for all Americans residing in the host country. Identifying community needs using the expertise of community leaders and Associate Members is critical to planning successful activities that promote a positive image for the council. Council leaders should be aggressive in establishing service programs that match the capabilities and interests of the council’s membership. As membership expands, programs can be expanded. Remember, the council that provides community services will be welcome and will grow. Opportunities are limited only by the imagination and energy of the council’s members.