



2026 National High School Drill Team Championships  
 ARMED & UNARMED COMPETITION SOP  
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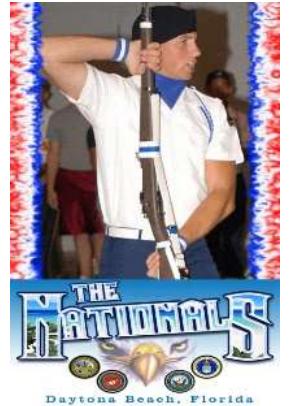
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# ARMED & UNARMED COMPETITION SOP

## SECTION 1 – GENERAL COMPETITION ITEMS

### A. Competition Guidelines

1. The Armed Division competition score sheets and all levels of Color Guard have been written under the guidelines and terminology of the Army TC 3-21.5. The Unarmed Scoresheets (except Color Guard) are written using Air Force Pamphlet 34-1203 guidelines and terminology. Teams may use any one of the three major service manuals for competition at the NHSDTC. The only exception to this is Color Guard where EITHER the MCO 5060.20 OR the Army TC 3-21.5 (most recent version available) can be used. The current Air Force drill regulations are not allowed for use within the Color Guard competition. Air Force teams executing Color Guard must use the latest edition of the Army TC 3-21.5 or they could use the MCO 5060.20 (though rare to see that). The Air Force teams can march and drill under their pamphlet but will execute the Army reg for Wheels & Colors Reverse and uncase procedures during Color Guard.
2. Only the modifications contained within this SOP are allowed. Teams wishing to obtain an electronic copy of any service manual, or any other related instruction manuals on dress & appearance, etc. can use the Nationals event website: <http://www.thenationals.net/judgeregs-MANUALS.htm>.
3. The NHSDTC allows all units to perform in accordance with the requirements outlined in their particular service manual with few exceptions. However, portions of some events WILL REQUIRE the use of the Army manual (as in Uncase Colors procedure in Color Guard or all rifle movements for Air Force teams within Armed basic event drill). Specifics on EXACTLY HOW THIS MUST BE DONE are listed in detail under specific event directions within this SOP. This drill meet SOP has been studied by SMEs in the area of drill & ceremony ensuring that it maintains the fairest all-service drill meet format possible.
4. The Armed Division competition has specific rifle regulations (page 5 of this SOP). There is no longer a “Mixed” Division separating lightweight rifles. Judges will be briefed to look at the routine as presented and judge the “difficulty” in relation to the weight and balance characteristics of the rifle as presented. Rifles are not permitted within the Unarmed Division in any manner.
5. This document will have all items needed to be ready for competition. Therefore, it is suggested both Cadet Commanders for each of the competing events, as well as the JROTC instructor read this document. Instructors should also carefully review the General SOP in its entirety to fully ready the unit to attend the NHSDTC.
6. While teams are encouraged to review their scoresheets, too often teams have decided to come to the scoring table and simply wish to discuss a judge giving low scores or similar. This is not the intent of this procedure. Please review the protest process and the form itself.
7. Swords or sabres or related items may NOT be used in lieu of rifles unless specifically listed and allowed within these regulations. With this, “sabre teams” or other non-rifle based armed exhibition performances are ineligible.
8. No “bladed” or drill using a bayonet of any kind is allowed anywhere at the NHSDTC.
9. Required number of cadets for all team events:  
Inspection – 12 + CDR – All Divisions  
Regulation – 12 + CDR – All Divisions  
Color Guard – 4 person – 2 rifles/2 flags only  
Team Exhibition – 8+CDR minimum – no maximum – All Divisions



### B. National Championship Events

1. The FOUR events counted towards the National Championship in each of the two competition divisions are: **Unit Inspection, Platoon/Flight Regulation, Color Guard, and Team Exhibition**. Other events are held but are not a part of the Overall Championship scoring.

## C. General Performance Regulations

1. A single guide (guidon) is permitted during team exhibition only (NOT ALLOWED in Inspection, Regulation or Color Guard). His or her inclusion does not apply to the number of cadets allowed in the exhibition event.
2. Shoe taps MAY BE WORN DURING ANY FACET of the NHSDTC competition.
3. **New in 2026:** All Schools MUST verify the events they are competing in during Event Registration. Should a school need to drop from an event at any later point, they **MUST COME TO THE SCORING TABLE** and make clear your intention to drop. Simply no-showing at an event can cause your team to receive additional penalties.
4. During report in, the commander must verbally announce the school and/or team name and service affiliation. In basic events they must also state "we will drill in accordance with XXX manual" or words to that effect. (Note: **This is critical -- don't make a judge guess.**) In Inspection, the CMDR should note the service manual used covering the Uniform & Appearance guidelines. Other items may be mentioned during report in but are not required. During report out, they should give their school name and make clear they are completed. It is customary to ask permission to enter & depart.
5. Given that a large portion of the skill in the Color Guard & Regulation Drill competition is marching in cadence (with appropriate penalty deductions for improper cadence), it should be noted that teams are NOW FULLY PERMITTED call standard military cadence, IAW your service manual.
6. Cadets will be considered "performing" if they enter & depart the floor with the unit and actively participate in the routine. Their level, scope or talent of their performance is not an issue. While the team may receive diminished scores in several areas for having cadets not fully participating in the eyes of the judges, they will NOT receive any form of fixed penalty and will meet the regulations for correct number.
7. The standard cadence for all basic drill for all schools at the NHSDTC is 120 steps per minute. In all other facets of the event, cadence is left up to the discretion of the performing team. Also, a 30-inch step is mandatory during the bulk of Regulation & Color Guard events (NOTE: including Air Force JROTC schools drilling in accordance with the AF JROTC Drill Manual). That said, a 30" step measured from heel to heel is not impractical for most cadets. Therefore, judges will seek a 30" step as required. Teams should closely review their use of a full 30" step as those who deviate from this will be marked down by the judges.
8. Many stationary movements listed in Regulation and Color Guard Drill have been both **HIGHLIGHTED & CAPITALIZED IN BOLD PRINT**. These commands must be performed with a **5-SECOND PAUSE** - between *the completion of that movement and the command to begin the next movement*. Failure to perform the required pause will result in a 5-point per-occurrence penalty. While not graded for time, teams should practice what **FIVE SECONDS** feels like to not make a judge wait too long or short.
9. During Regulation and Color Guard Drill, the performance of extra movements not required by your service or the drill sequence (done primarily to avoid boundary violations), will result in a 5-point per-occurrence penalty. Special attention is also given to judges to ensure proper enforcement of regulation movements and recognizing improper actions (i.e., foot stomping, improper flashy movements, etc.).
10. No bayonets, handguns, special effects, props, music or musical instruments, (bugles, drums - ANY musical instrument), pyrotechnics or banners/flags (except those required to perform) are allowed to be used while performing. Additionally, no horns, whistles, or any other artificial noise-making devices may be used inside the Ocean Center by spectators at any time. Inside the Ocean Center sound travels easily.
11. During Exhibition, it is common practice to have spectators deliver signals to let their performing unit know they are approaching a time limit. This is not prohibited by SNI so long as the guidelines described above on whistles and other artificial noise-making devices are followed. Teams/individuals may be penalized or removed from the event for violating this regulation.
12. Should a drill rifle break or become unusable during any performance at the NHSDTC, or if an additional rifle is to be added in any event, a drill rifle may be handed to a performing cadet. This drill rifle hand-off will be made only by a performing cadet leaving the formation, moving to the boundary, and having a new rifle exchanged with someone just outside the competition area. He/she will then rejoin the formation and continue the performance. No time is added. This can be done as many times as necessary during a performance.

12. All cadets must drill and perform ENTIRELY on the floor. Any cadet who is elevated off the floor in any manner will cause the judge to immediately move to the team and direct the raised cadet to dismount. The team will then be disqualified from that event by subsequent review by the NHSDTC Competition Director.
13. Units should plan to be at the Ocean Center at least 30 minutes before their team's scheduled performance time as parking, unloading, can take time. Teams changing into Exhibition uniforms should do so immediately following their previous event. Teams will have no less than 30 minutes to change for exhibition competition so plan your time & uniform accordingly! Teams must be in the drill ready area immediately prior to the team up just before them. Teams who delay an event due to tardiness may be removed from that event.
14. Any team planning to utilize a piece of "non-standard gear" within your performance, check with the meet director WELL in advance to ensure it is allowed. Much like 1)lights on a rifle, 2)flint on the sight, or 3)velcro slings ARE NOT AUTHORIZED, this does not mean everything else IS. Just because something is NOT referenced in the rules as banned, does not mean it is allowed – it means it has not come forward to be judged.
15. As per USMC HQ directive, all Marine Corps JROTC teams competing at the Nationals MUST utilize the equipment, marching style and movements outlined within the Marine Corps Order along with permitted JROTC competition drill exceptions. These largely pertain to movements designed to be more standardized to better allow USMC JROTC programs to compete evenly with other services. A big one is executing "Uncase Colors". These procedures have been standardized for ALL units to execute the prescribed movements as per the instructions found on the Scoresheet & SOP section of the NHSDTC website to include Marines with the blessing of USMC JROTC HQ.

## D. Uniform & Rank Regulations

1. All teams competing at the NHSDTC during non-exhibition performances (Inspection, Regulation, & Color Guard) will wear a **MILITARY UNIFORM** of their choosing. This uniform may be dress or standard. **THE UNIFORM MUST MAINTAIN A COVER!** The overriding requirement is that the uniform must be presented in accordance with a written regulation manual that can be clearly enumerated, defined and utilized by a judge to grade & review. Military academies, etc. MUST CALL IN ADVANCE to ensure the uniform they plan to wear will be approved! This information will be presented to the judges in advance to ensure schools who maintain deviations are not wrongly penalized.
2. With a military-style uniform requirement, most popular uniforms are perfectly acceptable. These include:
  - Marine and Army Dress Blue Uniform / Air Force, Army & Navy Academy Uniforms
  - Standard Class "A" or "B" service uniforms. (NOTE: In many cases, ties are not required by the service manual and therefore, are not a required item here).
3. SNI works closely with all JROTC HQs and often support their directives fully. Please ensure your unit is meeting all service requirements for proper dress for both YOUR INSTRUCTORS and YOUR CADETS. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to confirm any regs in place regarding appropriate uniform usage. Failure to maintain required waivers may result in a Major Uniform penalty (-50) in each event where this occurs.
4. Below are uniform items that have come up in discussion previously. THIS IS BY NO MEANS THE ENTIRE LIST OF ITEMS NOT ALLOWED. It is just a good starting point to give all attendees the concept of what we are looking for during all Standard Drill events --- and what we are NOT looking for. These regs apply to Inspection, Regulation & Color Guard events (EXHIBITION TEAMS ARE NOT LIMITED BY SNI ON THE UNIFORM).
  - ◆ **No wristbands, headbands, ASCOTS or other related neckwear** (ascots, scarves, etc. are strictly exhibition wear). **No spats, boot blouses, or related fancy legging items**. Frankly, leather shoes or corfams are what we are looking for here (straight leg pants). Boots are prohibited in regulation events. **A single cord** on each shoulder may be worn. DO NOT wear two cords on one shoulder. **Gloves of any type MAY be worn with ANY uniform**. No web belts, pistol belts, ceremonial belts or similar except when required to wear in Color Guard competition (note: fanny packs/chrome helmets are NOT authorized – the military manuals direct where the casings are CORRECTLY placed. All Cadet Commanders opting to carry a sword in any division may wear the needed peripheral item to carry the sword without this being considered exhibition wear).
  - ◆ **Teams are expected to have a name tag and/or ALL EARNED medals/ribbons on their uniform for Inspection depending on the uniform worn**. If your uniform calls for them and you do not have them, you will look out-of-place and judges may judge you harshly on that segment of the scoresheet! Teams may remove their ribbons/name tags and coats/jackets during BOTH Regulation and Color Guard events. This is FULLY ENCOURAGED to keep from damaging uniforms and to promote more free movement.

5. SNI is loose with the rules for specific regulation headgear because of service variations, however, no helmets (even in color guard!), plumes or other "exhibition" headgear is allowed in regulation events. Berets are common cover here at the Nationals and are allowed in all events. Most services have specific regs regarding what are acceptable colors for berets in JROTC. But check with HQ before deciding on uniform mods.
6. If your uniform presentation is "dressed-up" outside the letter and spirit of what is outlined on page 7-8, you run the risk of gaining a penalty. If a judge believes you have intentionally worn something "stripped down" for Inspection, they may not like that as well. If you have any question about a uniform, email or call ASAP. This is NOT a case where it is easier to beg forgiveness. Teams that wear prohibited reg item(s) (i.e., ASCOTS or other related neckwear, spats, etc.) OR omit a required item will face a PER OCCURANCE penalty.
7. In choosing an exhibition event uniform, remember the event is judged by military personnel with many years of military experience. Dressing in a less-than-military fashion CAN/WILL negatively impact scores.
8. SNI also suggests that all instructors in the absence of service HQ direction, at minimum wear collared shirt and slacks while at the Ocean Center. Teams should also be aware that during the Awards Ceremony, all judges and the official party are in full dress uniform.

## E. General Judging Items

1. With the service manuals being different, SNI works hard to give all teams a fair shot at solid finishes and fair competition. SNI has formulated the rules, performance routines and judgments to also provide the fairest competition possible.
2. Judges are acquired through service training commands, base honor guards, etc. Judges are selected based on availability, knowledge and background. All NHSDTC judges are trained both in advance and on-site to best prepare them to implement BOTH the event regulations and the service regs of the competing teams. Judges are typically placed into 4 person groups with various duties & responsibilities for each. In Solo/Dual Exhibition, judges may be assigned into 3-person groups with service backgrounds spread to ensure diversity of opinion.

## F. Drill Rifle Requirements & Regulations (Armed Division & All Color Guards)

1. To compete at the **NHSDTC** within all armed events and ANY color guard event, the unit's drill rifle must fit a series of standards that qualify it to be "demilitarized". These criteria include the following:
  - A drill rifle must be rendered demilitarized by leading the barrel or removing firing pin
  - A drill rifle must weigh a minimum of 8 lbs.
  - A drill rifle must contain both a trigger guard (if trigger is present) and an adjustable sling
  - A drill rifle must maintain a shape that is familiar to a standard rifle.

*NOTE: The use of front/rear sights, and stacking swivel are strongly discouraged by SNI on any drill rifle used at the NHSDTC. They can cause severe injuries and serve little purpose on these items. Other requirements for Color Guard rifles are detailed in the Color Guard section of this document.*
2. Should a drill rifle not meet any one or more of the above criteria, the team will be considered to be using an illegal drill rifle and will be penalized in an amount to be determined on-site by the judging director based on the severity of the drill rifle violation up to removal of the rifles from the competition.
3. The standard drill rifle at the Nationals is set at 8lbs. or greater. Rifles may be weighed using a standard luggage hand scale at every event. Rifles that don't meet the standard requirements (including being underweight) will receive a penalty. NO APPEAL or RE-WEIGH will take place. Claims of a scale malfunction or similar will not be entertained. Therefore, altering your rifle in this manner puts you in danger. Do it at your own risk.
4. Unaltered Glendale and Daisy standard drill rifles meet all of the above criteria.
5. In the Armed Division, drill rifle slings are required drill rifle equipment and may not be "taped down" or otherwise attached to the stocks during any phase of the competition except during exhibition events. During Exhibition, all armed teams may apply tape, rubber bands or other materials to a drill rifle in any manner as they see fit.
6. Judges will be instructed that a DROPPED RIFLE PENALTY must be assessed whenever a cadet **UNINTENTIONALLY loses rifle control and the rifle fully lands on the marching surface, i.e., laying on the deck before being picked up.** All other rifle strikes and accidental hits on the deck will be critically assessed under the Rifle Handling portion of the scoresheet. Rifle control is ESSENTIAL to a solid finish!

7. AS PER DIRECTION FROM EACH SERVICE HQ, the drill rifle cannot be “DRIVEN” into the marching surface by the BARREL! A GENTLE TAP would be allowed for timing. Judges generally do not LIKE IT, and therefore teams should NOT execute it. A subjective deduction will happen if it is witnessed.
8. Drill rifles sometimes break in a way where its continued usage could become a danger to the cadet, nearby cadets and/or spectators. When this occurs, the cadet should carry the drill rifle but UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should the drill rifle be spun or otherwise moved in a dangerous manner. See 4-F-11) for regulations on replacing a broken drill rifle during a routine.
9. ALL exhibition judges WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO take control of and visually inspect/hand-weigh any cadet's drill rifle at random in the event ready area before all solo, dual, & team exhibition performances in armed events. This should be done BEFORE watching the team perform to ensure the judge maintains a clear picture of the degree of difficulty the weapon presents during their routine. A judge MAY seek the rifle afterwards, but this is highly unlikely. In any case, the cadet MUST relinquish the rifle for inspection by the judge.
10. Within the ARMED DIVISION, a rifle, sabre or sword is required for the commander and a rifle is required for every cadet. In the Unarmed Division, no cadet may utilize any form of drill rifle, sabre or sword (except during Unarmed Division of Color Guard).

## G. Cadet Commander Regulations

1. Within each non-exhibition team event, only one commander may lead the unit. This commander must be the person to verbally report in & out and maintain overall “control” of the performance. A 25-point penalty on the head judge's score sheet will be assessed if the commander does not lead the group during the routine or transfers this duty to someone else. It is NOT required that the same commander be used in all team events.
2. Report in/out is required for all events and is done VERBALLY by the CADET COMMANDER. The entire team may salute or also verbally report in WITH the Cadet Commander, but not in lieu of the Cadet Commander (NOTE: MOST judges feel this type of GROUP report is an exhibition-only movement). In Color Guard, the Cadet Commander will be recognized and executed correctly as the National Color bearer. At no time may any commander perform using any form of CUE CARD or other form of prompting.
3. CADET COMMANDERS WILL NOT MOVE TO REVIEW THE CADETS FOR PERFECT DRESS & COVER DURING ANY BASIC EVENT! Cadets at this level are expected to maintain adequate dress & cover without supplemental instruction from the Cadet Commander. Cadet Commanders who move to review the ranks will be graded down for their efforts - DON'T DO IT at the Nationals!
4. Armed competition cadet commanders MUST carry a rifle, saber or sword. When a commander uses a saber or sword, it is not permitted to leave the commander's hand at any time. This prevents any attempt at flipping or tossing. Please *do not ask for an exception, it will not be granted*.
5. An Armed Commander when using a saber/sword must do so in STRICT ACCORDANCE with the manual for using this weapon, maintain EXTREME control at all times, and use the proper distancing around the Head Judge at all times. Violation of this rule will cause the Head Judge to retreat to a safe distance away and produce a specific deduction for this action at the discretion of the Head Judge, up to and including disqualification.
6. Allowing that each drill team is instructed differently, judges will evaluate the vocal projection of cadet commanders in the following manner. During Inspection and Regulation Drill events, an individual's voice projection, confidence, and tone will be the criteria upon which judges will base their evaluations.
7. Previously at the NHSDTC, the calling of cadence while marching (something ingrained within the Marine Corps manual and traditions) has been restricted at the NHSDTC due to noise concerns. This has been rescinded, and Commanders of Navy/Marine teams MAY call cadence where indicated by their manual.



## SECTION 2 - COMPETITION AREA SPECIFICATIONS

### A. The Ocean Center Arena & Conference Center

1. Due to the high ceilings & ceremonial nature of the Nationals, OUTDOOR REGS are in effect throughout all facets of the Nationals. Covers will be worn and salutes will be rendered while performing or receiving trophies.
2. Drill areas and their corresponding ready areas are noted on the drill area layouts located on the event website. Separate drill area schematics have been provided for each competition day to include dimensions.
3. Individuals/teams may not be in ANY competition drill area at any time other than their competition time (no advance “walking off the routine” or practice before the event, during lunch, etc.).

### B. Drill Area Specifications

1. All drill areas are indoors at the Ocean Center. These can best be seen on the event website. The general drill area dimensions and surroundings for each area are as follows:
  - *Inspection events* .....(standard height ceiling - low pile carpet)
  - *Color Guard events*.....(both ballroom low-pile carpet & exhibit hall concrete - high ceiling)
  - *Regulation Drill events*.....(high ceiling - concrete floor)
  - *Exhibition Drill events*.....(high ceiling - concrete floor)
2. Drill areas use blue fluorescent tape connected to 20" blue traffic pylons set on the floor and the natural existing walls. All drill areas use entrance/exit points clearly identified on the floor diagram online. This point will vary depending on the drill area (see maps) but all points are 25' across with the exception of Inspection, Color Guard areas & Solo/Dual areas which are smaller and diagrammed specifically. This is the only point where a team may enter/exit a drill area – (*don't ask for an exception*).
3. Head Judge placements are denoted by an ORANGE cone with a yellow “X” to allow your commander to find this spot easier at a distance. These HJ cones are ALWAYS located at the EXACT half-way mark of the entire side measurement.
4. Boundary violations are penalized when a cadet or his/her clothing comes in contact with any part of the boundary tape or the support cones when properly set. Should the boundary tape or cones become dislodged, a violation will occur when a cadet crosses the point where the tape/cone should have been were it not displaced.
5. Teams should be aware that each drill area maintains 4-5 judge's chairs placed against the boundary tape of the drill area. If you believe they could hinder your team's performance, you may remove these chairs BUT you must replace these chairs immediately following your performance.

## SECTION 3 - NHSDTC SCORING, TIMING & TIE-BREAKING

### A. Event Timing

1. The penalty assessed for a performance not falling between these time periods is ONE (1) POINT PER SECOND OVER/UNDER THE TIME RANGE. Time limits are as follows:
  - Team Exhibition Drill - .....Min. 6 Minutes - Max. 9 Minutes
  - Solo & Dual Exhibition.....Min. 2 Minutes - Max. 3 Minutes

#### Important Note!

*Only exhibition events maintain a time limit. Teams are reminded they should not prolong the report in/out process or the uncase movements in color guard, as a judge may score down in their overall unit evaluation.*

2. During Exhibition, the time starts when the FIRST cadet enters a drill floor and ends when the LAST cadet exits. If space is limited for entry/exit, time starts when the first cadet begins marching into the area and ends when the unit is halted upon departure due to obstruction (even if cadets are still in the area such as with a long column formation).

- Many units after being requested to enter the floor by a judge, conduct team/individual motivation displays just prior to the unit entering the drill area causing a judge to wait. Therefore, these displays ARE defacto a part of your exhibition display. Teams performing any choreographed team display just prior to entering the drill floor after being asked to enter by a judge *MAY have the clock start and judging begin to include this display*. We are not discouraging this action, we are simply ensuring this display is judged as a part of the performance time as you are “performing”. *Please ensure your performance does not go over the max time if you do this.*

## B. Scoresheets

- Complete scoring packages are given to each school immediately following the Awards Ceremony. Schools will also receive a scoring report for their Division in this package. Also all team pictures are intended to be in this event wrap-up package. Questions or issues regarding any of these items can be best addressed following the event by telephone or in writing when we can better answer specific questions in detail.
- Every scoresheet is triple-checked by SNI personnel, as well as inputted & totaled on a computer system and program designed for the **NHSDTC** by SNI. The scoresheets to be used at the **NHSDTC** are located on-line on the PaperworkHQ segment of the NHSDTC website. [https://thenationals.net/dt-sops\\_scoresheets.htm](https://thenationals.net/dt-sops_scoresheets.htm).

## C. Overall Scoring

- Judges can and do look at many other items when it comes to degree of difficulty of a team performance (largely in exhibition drill) that have nothing to do with the actual marching and/or rifle maneuvers and this is expected. These items can include the total number of competitors performing on the floor, type of covers/jackets worn, rifle weight, and other related items.
- Judges have always been monitored throughout the day and reminded about the boundaries and consistencies needed to provide fair judging for schools regardless of when they compete during the day.

## D. Proportional Scoring & Tie-Breaking Information

- All team & individual events are trophied based on raw points earned.
- For overall championships, the scoring in use for the NHSDTC is known as a “Proportional Event Scoring System”. In short, scoring in this manner will ensure all facets of the competition receive the exact percentage of points available, while taking into account the level of excellence each school displays in their raw score total compared to their competitors (which other systems do not).
- All team events are worth 1,200 points (even Regulation which has a raw total of more than 1200). The school who is the winner of any particular event receives the maximum points available within that event. For example, the school with the highest raw point total earned in Inspection will receive 1,200 points (regardless of the actual points awarded by the judges) The team finishing in 2nd place will receive a percentage of the 1,200 points identical to the percentage they finished behind the first place team. 3rd, 4th, etc. to the final team will all receive points in the same manner.
- A practical example of this application is shown in the shortened table below. The judges raw points earned is listed, along with the percentage each team finished behind the winner. These percentages then multiply into the total max points available to generate a Scoring Points total for each school within that event.

Event Finish	Judge Raw Score Earned	Actual Score/ % of Winning Score	Proportional Scoring Points Earned
1st place team	1080 pts.	100% (1080 of 1080)	1,200 pts. awarded (100% of 1,200 pts)
2nd place team	990 pts.	91.7% (990 of 1080)	1,100 pts. awarded (91.7% of 1,200 pts)
3rd place team	888 pts.	82.2% (788 of 1080)	986 pts. awarded (82.2% of 1,200 pts)
4th place team	733 pts.	67.9% (733 of 1080)	815 pts. awarded (67.9% of 1,200 pts)
5th place team	680 pts.	62.9% (680 of 1080)	755 pts. awarded (62.9% of 1,200 pts)
6th place team	540 pts.	50.0% (540 of 1080)	600 pts. awarded (50% of 1,200 pts)

4. For all Solo & Dual competitions, if the number of entrants warrant, SNI reserves the right to implement “pool competition” to determine a champion. In this situation, cadets will be split into two or three groups and the top finishers in each will compete against one another in the “medal round” where the top finishers will be crowned. Judges’ scoring in the initial pool competition will be tossed out and cadets will be assigned performance times in the final medal round event. In any case, the medal round event would immediately follow the pool competition.
5. All efforts are made to prevent scoring ties at the **NHSUTC**. All event and Overall Championship scoring ties will be broken by re-totaling scoresheets utilizing the applicable tie-breaker in the following order:

**For Team Events/Individual Events:**

- Level #1 - raw Head Judge’s scores
- Level #2 - total overall evaluation scores
- Level #3 - total raw Judge #2, then #3, etc.
- Level #4 - team w/least total penalty points

**For Event Championship Totals:**

- Level #1 – Lowest placement point total
- Level #2 – Highest total raw points earned
- Level #3 – most 1st place trophies earned
- Level #4 – most team trophies earned total

**Cadet Commander ties:** Level #1 - Highest finishing Regulation team

## E. Official Scoresheet Review

1. SNI will allow your team’s scoresheets to be reviewed by a military instructor within your program (note: no parents, trainers or other individuals) immediately after the team has left the drill floor. In Inspection, this will happen just outside the exit doors. In all other areas, this will happen just off the drill area near the exit point. The team may then have a JROTC instructor look through the sheets. Scoresheets may have a cell picture taken by this individual before the runner leaves as well. Procedurally, only if you are a school attending with more than 1 team and only 1 JROTC instructor, you may contact us to in advance to designate an individual to serve as your second adult who can review scoresheets. NOTE: *Any missing score is handled RIGHT THERE.*
2. A JROTC instructor MAY accompany the event runner DIRECTLY to the scoring table and ask to file an official review. The instructor will be given an official Scoresheet Review Form by the scoring table. This form will state who is making the review, what section of the event SOP/Service Manual is being questioned, or that they believe a judge misunderstood an SOP or service manual rule, or a judge made a technical error. The JROTC instructor may take this form with them to properly fill it out should they need to gain documentation, SOP information, etc. or complete it right there. After submission of this form, the Judging Director will review this with the judge and/or manuals. No discussion or interaction of any kind should happen between team officials and judges. You will be contacted ASAP via cellphone.
3. In NO CASE can a review be requested to ASK why “low scores” were given BY a judge, nor many other subjective questions not within a rule-based mistake. **This review is not designed to be used as a training session or a fishing expedition. It will not EXPLAIN what a judge meant by a certain comment.** This review is designed to catch glaring errors, and gives the team an ability to review some mistakes (NOT ALL) that can be caught immediately. History shows from the tens of thousands of score sheets, it will be the rare sheet affected, but teams have this right. Obviously, judges will push on without any delay – review is done through SNI.
4. A team may have their protest upheld or denied for one of many reasons. If a rules error or similar was found, scores will be adjusted by the judges in question and/or the Judging Director and be considered UPHELD. If the protest does not reveal a solid reasoning to change a score but also is seen as a valid protest, the result will be deemed NEUTRAL. No change will occur but the school can make future protests. If a protest is deemed baseless and/or frivolous, the protest will be adjudicated as REJECTED and the SCHOOL will FORFEIT THEIR RIGHT TO OFFICIALLY PROTEST AGAIN FOR THE DURATION OF THE MEET. A sample protest form is posted along with the scoresheets. Please familiarize yourself in advance.
5. A protest may involve the use of team video (not enough cadets, dropped rifle, boundary or cadence penalties or similar). If a team goes this route, the video must **CLEARLY SHOW** the offense to be resolved or please don’t bring this forward as it will be rejected.

6. Lastly, after the event score sheets have been turned into the scoring table by the runner, THE TEAM CANNOT REQUEST TO SEE THEM. Pulling them out at that point causes confusion, raises the chances of a score sheet misplacement, and will no longer be done under any circumstances. You have one opportunity only and it is immediately after the routine.

## SECTION 4 - UNIT INSPECTION

### A. General Information

1. Teams will formulate their Unit Inspection team in the same way that they do every other team at the Nationals. The team selects the cadets who stand Unit Inspection, as well as select the Cadet Commander for the detail. The Cadet Commander MUST be armed with a rifle, sabre or sword within the Armed Division (and may not maintain any arms in the Unarmed Division). ALL DIVISIONS, ALL LEVELS will maintain 12 cadets in “the block” with a single Cadet Commander leading – no more, no less.
2. **Beginning in 2026**, Cadet Commanders in Inspection **MUST** enter the inspection room simultaneously with their team. No longer may a C/CDR march in when called, gain their position, THEN bring the team into the room. Teams who enter in this manner will be marked down by the judges for using incorrect procedures.
3. Inspection at the Nationals is designed to be a relatively intense experience. The judges will be briefed, trained and monitored to ensure a common standard is displayed. Inspection questions will come from several primary areas. **These will be military, governmental, historical, current events and first aid**. These questions will NOT be given to the teams in advance. There will be THOUSANDS of questions available to the judges for use and therefore they will likely not be many except the most basic that could be repeated throughout the day. Judges will likely have more difficult questions in the DIV I Level than in the DIV III Level, however all cadets should be well trained in solid bearing and be versed in areas of the target questions that all good citizens should know.
4. Judges will also be encouraged to ask cadets thought provoking questions involving moral issues, likely ending with, “and WHY” where the cadet will be expected to explain their logic, reasoning or answer in detail to the judge.
5. The Head Judge will be centered in the room on the wall directly on a cone with a yellow “X”. This is the report-in/out point for the team.
6. Judges will maintain a strong presence and cadets should be expected to have impeccable bearing. Judges will provide immediate feedback on deficiencies to the cadet during the review.
7. The scoresheet should be studied to see how your performance can receive the maximum score in each area.

### B. Inspection Procedures

1. Just prior to the Inspection, spectators with the performing team will be asked to enter and sit inside the Inspection room in the spectator seating area. The unit forms outside the Inspection room near the entrance door. Cadet Commanders with rifles must utilize the position of Sling Arms if using a rifle throughout the Inspection.
2. The Head Judge will approach the cadet commander outside the entry door as the parents enter the room, impart a few words of wisdom, ensure the unit is ready, and then return back into the Unit Inspection room. The Head Judge will ensure the other judges are ready, and then command in a loud voice, **“XYZ High School, REPORT”!** The Cadet Commander will then verbally command the unit to enter the Inspection area through a 72” doorway (double doors – 36” each). Extra cadets, parents or team follower should open, hold and close the door(s) for this entry.
3. The unit will be formed with 4 squads/elements of 3 cadets each and centered on the Head Judge in the formation as shown on the next page. Teams forming into three squads will be scored lower by the judges for using improper procedures! Judges want to see a unit commanded and marched into the inspection room. How you choose to do this is up to your team.
4. Once inside the room, the Cadet Commander will command, “Open Ranks, March”, “Dress Right, Dress” “Ready Front”, execute an About Face, salute the Head Judge, and Report In to the Head Judge with the unit at attention. Due to the room size, units should not “crowd” the Head Judge when executing “Open Ranks”. Done correctly, the C/CDR should be 3 paces away from the Head Judge.

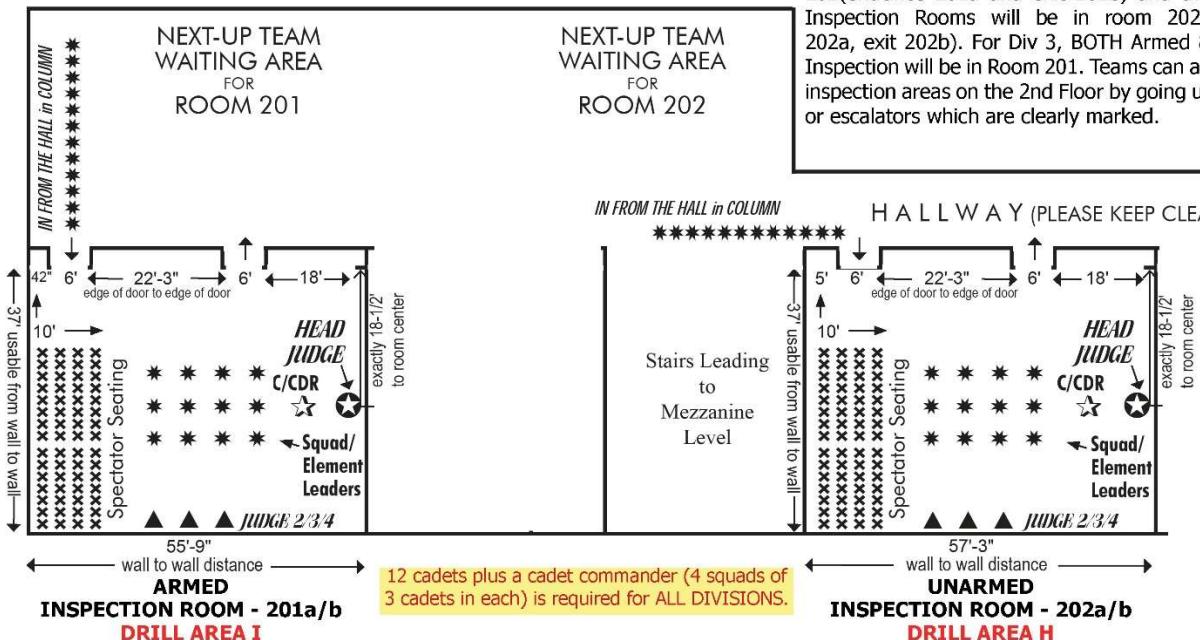
5. Instructors, you control visitors in the Inspection Room! Only those spectators who are with your program should be inside your inspection. If someone enters and after speaking with them you do not wish to have them viewing, tell the head judge to ask this person to be removed from the room. If this is unsuccessful, call for the Competition Director and that individual will be removed ASAP. Please note that VIPs may be present in the room, but ideally will be wearing name badges identifying them.
6. To Verbally report in correctly, the Cadet Commander should state: 1)school name & team name; 2)city & state you are from; 3)the drill manual you will perform in accordance with and 4)the military "reg" your uniform is inspected under (AR 670-1; MC Order P1020.34F; AFROTC 36-9, etc.). **NOTE: DO NOT have the entire formation salute the judge – this will likely be considered an exhibition movement!**
7. After Report-In, the Head Judge will inspect the commander briefly (commander remains at Sling Arms). The Head Judge will state to the commander, "PRECEED ME through the Inspection" or similar. The head judge will step off and begin the inspection with the rank 1 squad/element leader. Cadet Commander will simply about face and move in front of cadet #2 in rank #1. Doing this, the Cadet Commander will LEAD the Head Judge, staying one cadet slot ahead of the judge during the face to face inspection. The remaining three judges will concurrently step off and begin their Inspection of the other ranks.
8. Procedurally, there will be a sign outside the Inspection room that will list the Inspection judges by their name, rank, and service (along with how they wish to be addressed). This sign will be posted the evening before competition.
9. As an inspector halts in front of each cadet. The cadet in ranks should provide a very brief greeting to the Inspection judge when a judge halts in front of them (For ARMED cadets, BEFORE they move to "Inspection, Arms"). An example would be, "Good morning Staff Sergeant, Cadet Phillips ready for your inspection" or similar.
10. When the Head Judge inspects the final cadet of the 1st squad, the cadet commander is "in space" to the judges right. When the final cadet inspection is completed, the head judge then cuts in front of the cadet commander and moves to the rear of the 1st squad. At that point the cadet FOLLOWS the head judge. When the judge reaches the end of the rank, both the judge and the cadet move to their original positions at the front of the formation. The cadet will then execute About Face to see the formation to ensure ALL judges have completed their inspection and when they are completed, will About Face to give the closing commands.
11. When the Cadet Commander is sure all judges have completed their inspection, the cadet commander will then execute "Close Ranks, March". The Cadet Commander will then execute "About, Face" and verbally report out to the Head Judge making clear they are finished. The judge will then return the salute. The Cadet Commander will then execute "About Face", and then command the unit out of the room. This is generally done with a "Column of Files/Files from the Left" (squad/element leaders give appropriate supplemental commands) to exit through the exit doorway.
12. On the command, "Close Ranks, March", extra cadets, parents or team followers move quickly and quietly to open/hold the exit door(s) for the team. The Cadet Commander should remain inside the room and follow the 4th squad out the door as they leave.
13. A single instructor is encouraged to wait for the runner to execute the Scoresheet Review outside the exit doors.
14. A map is enclosed describing entrance, formation and exit of the Inspection drill areas (H & I). The formation of the unit must be done exactly as shown in the map and in this description. Please do not ask if you can use a similar formation, entry or execution method; all teams use the method outlined.

## C. Related Inspection Matters

1. Hair length and other grooming issues should correspond to the team's particular service regulations. General appearance should be well-groomed and uniforms should be impeccably clean. SNI is FULLY AWARE that new grooming standards are in many ways more LAX than previous standards. This is an inspection competition.

## UNIT INSPECTION DIAGRAMS

Both rooms have high ceilings, fluorescent lighting and low-pile carpet.  
Both rooms are nearly identical but differences & dimensions have been noted!



The Inspection Rooms will be upstairs on the 2nd Floor. For Div 1 & 2, the Armed Inspection rooms are 201(entrance 201a and exit 201b) and the Unarmed Inspection Rooms will be in room 202 (entrance 202a, exit 202b). For Div 3, BOTH Armed & Unarmed Inspection will be in Room 201. Teams can access these inspection areas on the 2nd Floor by going up the stairs or escalators which are clearly marked.

It is essential all units thoroughly read the SOP in order to fully prepare for Unit Inspection. Units assemble in the hallway just outside the Inspection area as shown. The Head Judge will come to the hallway and obtain information from the Cadet Commander. The judge will return into the Inspection room and ensure all judges are ready. The Head Judge then places themselves against the wall at the exact half-way point as shown. When called by the Head Judge, the unit enters the room through the double, 36" doors in any manner they choose following all procedures outlined within the SOP. Entering teams must ensure squad/element leaders are lead the formation. DUE TO SPACE LIMITATIONS, teams should practice entry & Open Ranks procedures to center the unit and not crowd the judge. Done correctly, the C/CDR should be two paces MINIMUM from the Head Judge at Report-in. Upon completion of the Inspection process, the Cadet Commander will request permission of the head judge to exit through the EXIT doors. The Head Judge will grant this. The C/CDR should then turn about, close the unit, and command the unit to exit through the EXIT doors. Exactly HOW a team chooses to do these moves will be up to the team HOWEVER, do not give a simple "fall out" or "dismissed" command, it looks sloppy! Teams are requested to have a team follower close the entrance door IMMEDIATELY after the team has entered the inspection area, as well as open the exit door immediately after the team closes ranks just before leaving the Inspection room.

- 2 Teams will be inspected using their own uniforms as "the standard". The way one looks, is the way they all should look. The difficulty any given uniform takes to ready itself for Unit Inspection (amount of brass and other peripheral items) will certainly be taken into consideration when judging the appearance of a cadet. Cadets ARE EXPECTED to wear THEIR uniform to include ALL authorized ribbons, etc. appropriate for that uniform – no exceptions!
3. Leather shoes or corfram shoes are appropriate wear for all portions of the **NHSDTC**. While corframes are comparatively easy to maintain, leather shoes require more effort to achieve the same appearance and must be so maintained. Should corfram shoes be worn, absolute perfection will be needed to achieve the same score as a well-maintained leather shoe due to the additional difficulty involved.

### D. Cadet Verbal Responses

1. Unit Inspection will include roughly 3-4 questions for each cadet to determine a cadet's poise, confidence, and overall military/governmental/historical/first aid/current events knowledge. Again, judges will be strident and possibly imposing to a high school cadet, however they will not be screaming, nor touching the cadet or anything on the cadet. Study, but know that a Nationals' Inspection will test knowledge, thinking on your feet and bearing!
2. If a cadet doesn't know the answer to a question posed to him/her, a confident, "*MSgt, this cadet does not know at this time!*" or similar is the best response.
3. If a judge incorrectly applies a regulation to your team's service branch or other type of mistake, do not belabor the point with the judge during Inspection! If the judge presses a point a cadet knows is incorrect, the correct response should be "Sir, this cadet has been instructed that "thus & so" is correct, sir". Do not lose military bearing! After ending the Inspection process, immediately reach the SNI judging director and the issue will be resolved.

## SECTION 5 – PLATOON/FLIGHT REGULATION DRILL

### A. General Information

1. The required sequence must be done regardless of the team's service affiliation, in the order they are listed and from memory. The team may call the identical commands in THEIR service vernacular. This allows every team to perform in other languages/dialects, along with allowing service variations (i.e., "rear march" vs. "to the rear march", etc.), so long as the movement is correct. Obvious mis-statements by the C/CDR may result in deductions. Air Force units competing in ARMED Regulation will use the JROTC Drill Manual (which parallels the military manuals)..
2. **ALL UNITS MUST UTILIZE A STANDARD, FULL 30" STEP REGARDLESS OF SERVICE AFFILIATION.**
3. **The cadet commander should verbally report In & out centered on the Head Judge.** The distance between them should be as called for on the scoresheet..

### B. Judging & Scoring

1. The Regulation Drill sequence is composed of many individual scoring opportunities. Also, teams will receive point scores for their report in and report out, and points for the judge's overall impression of the routine.
2. Some of these movement combinations are relatively easy while a few are quite difficult. While the execution of many of these movements within the given drill area is challenging for any drill unit, it can be executed by any well-prepared team worthy of attending the Nationals at any competition level. The unit's ability to perform this sequence without extra commands or shortening steps is vital to the team's overall success at this meet.
3. The position of the Head Judge is fixed and denoted by a large yellow "X" placed on an orange cone, and centered along that side of the drill area. Teams will report in & report out to this spot and execute "Eyes, Right" (even if the judge fails to maintain the correct position!). See enclosed drill area layout for the exact position of the Head Judge.
4. To report in correctly, the Cadet Commander should state: 1)school name & team name; 2)city & state you are from; 3)the drill manual you will perform in accordance with. NOTE: DO NOT have the entire formation salute the judge – this is an exhibition movement!
5. A single instructor can wait for the runner to execute the Scoresheet Review just outside the exit point of the drill area.
6. The specific movements for 15-Count Manual, Arms (14-count for Navy/Marines) can be reviewed within the Army drill manual and will be noted on Armed scoresheet. NOTE: movement is executed at Quick Time (120 cadence).

### C. Regulation Drill Sequence Movements

1. The sequence is designed to be executed with 3 squads/elements. No other formation is possible to execute the drill correctly as 3 SQUADS/ELEMENTS are required. Therefore, 12 cadets plus a Cadet Commander in Regulation is required for all teams. Teams choosing to compete with up to two fewer cadets and accept a penalty for each missing cadet.
2. All of the prescribed movements in the Regulation Drill sequence are located on the event scoresheet.
3. All teams should carefully review the Regulation Sequence to ensure their entry and/or exit from the drill floor keeps the squad leaders in the correct position to execute the drill as written. Teams may find the need to execute SEVERAL column movements to properly enter and/or exit the drill floor.

#### Important Note!

*Judges are encouraged to discuss matters of rule interpretation, boundary violations, and missed commands among themselves immediately after both Regulation & Color Guard sequences. With the all-service format of the event, this remains the best way to ensure a school is graded correctly. Judges DO NOT discuss matters of preference or opinions regarding a performance AT ANY TIME.*

## SECTION 6 - COLOR GUARD DRILL

### A. General Information

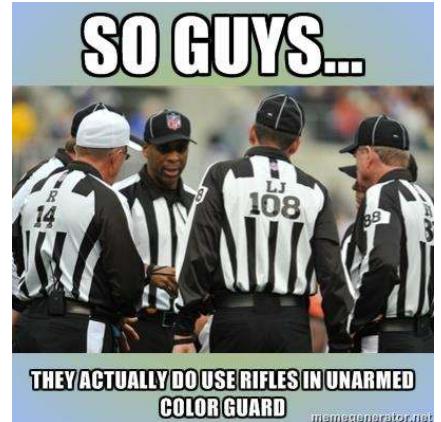
1. ONLY Army TC 3-21.5 OR MCO 5060.20 manuals are permitted for use for color guard competition at the NHSDTC. (NOTE: the NJROTC Cadet Field Manual, while nearly identical to the MCO, is not an officially recognized manual). The current USAF Drill Pamphlet is NOT authorized for use at this meet for color guard.
2. ALL UNITS will use the movements from the Army manual for uncase procedures. Doing this is CERTAINLY easier for your team and the judges. However, for clarity, we wish to spell out for competitors and judges what is expected of NON-ARMY teams wishing to compete using either the Army manual or USMC manual.
  - a) Air Force or Navy schools choosing to use the Army manual for their entire Color Guard routine MUST state this intention during report-in. With that, all functions of their routine MUST be done in strict accordance with the Army TC-3-21.5 manual (including using the Army TC 3-21.5 verbiage and movements to complete the sequence).
  - b) Navy/Marine Corps unit drilling in accordance with the MCO 5060.20 will do that for all items OUTSIDE standardized uncase procedures (rifles outboard, no arm swing, etc.), HOWEVER, when the unit uncases, **judges and teams are instructed to have Marine units move the rifles to Right Shoulder Arms and then complete all items listed under uncase procedures as outlined within the Army manual.** Judges and teams are directed to allow the ability for the USMC/Navy units to march utilizing a "2" toe/4' heel", but all other items during uncase should be done as per the Army manual. When the unit has COMPLETED the uncase procedure, the unit should move the rifles back to outboard and continue. This will signify to the judges that the unit is back in full-on MCO 5060.20 mode.
3. Specifically: 1) teams must use hardwood poles of minimum 8' and equal height; 2) The Colors must be a minimum of 3' x 4'; 3) the organizational flag must be a state flag or JROTC flag ONLY; 4) Fringe is REQUIRED now on all flags; and 5) All teams MUST use a SPADE as their top finial except NJROTC units which must use a service-approved battle-ax IAW their service manual. Violations to any of these parameters will be an illegal equipment deduction of 20 to 50 points.
4. All of the required movements in this event must be done regardless of the team's service affiliation. However, the actual language used to accomplish these are at the discretion of each unit. Only extra movements required by your unit's service manual to complete any movement prescribed are permitted.
5. SNI is making the call that ALL UNITS WILL EXECUTE SLING ARMS BY USING THE ARM TO BEAR THE WEIGHT OF THE RIFLE (as opposed to some rifles correctly executing by GRASPING the rifle). This can be done by "blading" and laying the rifle on the arm, by cradling, or using the crook of the arm.
6. The flag casings may be made out of any material, use any closure device, and may contain any personalized markings (school name, color, service, etc.) you desire. This is not regulated by SNI and is left to your discretion.
7. Teams should be CENTERED on the head judge meaning the close interval maintained between the two Color bearers should "split the colors" on the head judge OR the National Colors may be in front of the judge. Either will be considered fully correct.
8. Teams must ENTER THE FLOOR to begin grading their routine. Do not execute the sequence before entering the floor. Be mindful of the scoresheet regarding the distance between the Head Judge and CG.
9. Several drill events across the country maintain "exhibition" or "special" color guard. These events often allow fancy foot movements, facing movements and other creative maneuvers. **THIS IS NOT A PART OF ANY FACET OF COLOR GUARD at the Nationals!** Every command, movement and procedure you undertake throughout your CG performance needs to be DIRECTLY and STRICTLY from regulations.
10. All Color Guards are reminded that the general Color Guard areas are a low-noise zone. Please ensure your team and spectators maintain no loud chants or other loud celebrations or outbursts that could disturb other color guard competitors just a few feet away during their Color Guard performances.

## B. Judging & Scoring

1. The position of the Head Judge is fixed and denoted by a large yellow "X" placed on an orange cone placed midway on that side of the drill area. Teams will report in and report out, as well as execute Eyes, Right to this spot. It is the responsibility of the Head Judge to ensure he or she is at this spot during both the report-in and report-out. See enclosed map layout for the exact position of the Head Judge.
2. The sequence for drill is comprised of many graded movements and a Judge's Overall Impression. Please review these scoresheets on-line to prepare your team.

## C. Color Guard Regulations & Performance Issues

1. As the sequence outlines, CG units should enter the Color Guard area, then uncase the colors (WHERE this occurs is left up to the competing unit but MOST do so centered on the head judge). The team should THEN report in with uncased colors and complete the routine. A special area has been set-up adjacent to the Color Guard area for these schools to re-case the colors (ungraded) before proceeding back to their seats so as not to walk through the venue with uncased colors.
2. All units must contain FOUR cadets only. Two cadets will bear arms and two cadets will bear colors. The rifles must meet all rifle regulations detailed herein and must have a fully functional sling to execute the drill properly. This sling must have a standard issue metal buckle. The National Colors will be the senior flag with the correct organizational color as dictated by your service regulations. While the Cadet Commander must be the National Color bearer, at the Nationals the Cadet Cdr is not required to be the highest ranking member of the unit.
3. Units should ensure their entire uniform in Color Guard is in full compliance with the NHSDTC regulations on page 4 entitled, "*D. Uniform & Rank Regulations*". Jackets and ribbons/nametags may be removed to ensure they are not damaged.
4. Nowhere in the NHSDTC is perfect synchronization more heavily scrutinized than Color Guard. Practice these movements to uncase Colors until the two rifle bearers are a mirror image of each other with their eyes closed!
5. ALL UNITS MUST study the Army manual to be able to correctly perform each of the items listed below for Uncase Colors. Many nuances are maintained within EACH of the stated commands in relation to executing the movements correctly. CAREFULLY REVIEW THE MANUAL!
6. **CASING & UNCASING THE COLORS:** To case & uncase the Colors, the Color guard forms in a line formation with the cased Colors at the Carry Position. The National Color bearer (NCB) commands "Sling, ARMS". The Color guards immediately adjust slings and assume Sling Arms. The NCB commands "POST". The Color guards face to the Half Left (Right) in marching, take four steps, halt, and execute About Face. The NCB then directs "UNCASE THE COLORS". The Color bearers lower the Colors (same as Present Guidon-NOTE LOOK THIS UP). The two guards then move forward and uncase the Colors. The Color bearers unfurl and immediately return the Colors to the Carry (Order) Position. While the Colors are being unfurled, the guards fold the cases and grasp them in their left hand. When the Colors are in the Carry Position, the NCB commands "Present, ARMS". The Color guards and the organizational Color Salute. The NCB then commands "Order, ARMS", and then commands "POST". On the command of execution POST, the Color guards move to the rear of the formation and place the folded canvas cases inside the cartridge belts (center rear of the back) of the Color bearers. The Color guards then move back to assume their original positions, adjust slings, and return to Right Shoulder Arms.
7. **New in 2026:** A penalty has been added to all Color Guard events at the NHSDTC which will be assessed should either flag touch the floor at any time while in the drill area. This penalty will be - 50 points.



## SECTION 7 - SOLO, DUAL & TEAM EXHIBITION

### A. General Information

1. A single Team Exhibition event is required to compete for the overall title as one of the four compulsory events at the Nationals. Armed Solo & Dual Exhibition events are also offered to individual cadets from all schools competing within the armed division at the NHSDTC. Only Dual Exhibition is offered for individual cadets within the teams entering the Unarmed Division of the NHSDTC
2. All exhibition routines consist of stationary/marching drill movements as well as trick rifle maneuvers (armed) that are limited by the imagination & creativity of the drill unit, and the rules of the Nationals. Please keep in mind however that this is a ***military competition with military judges***. Cadets may not use a thrown or flip dismount, basket catch/basket toss or other "cheerleading-style" maneuvers during any facet of exhibition drill.
3. Armed teams should design their routine to ensure dangerous or very long rifle tosses DO NOT have the rifle travel in a manner that places anyone except the receiver at risk of being hit. This prohibition is due exclusively to safety concerns where rifles are sent soaring and placing non-involved team members in physical danger. If undertaken, this may result in your unit being subjectively disqualified from this Exhibition event.
4. The unit commander for ARMED Team Exhibition MUST BE armed with a rifle, sword or saber. During all facets of exhibition drill, cadets MAY utilize blindfolds, hoods and/or up to one additional drill rifle per person during routines. These are the only "props" allowed to be used. Cadets may also utilize a replacement drill rifle if theirs gets broken (see General SOP page 7-8 for rules on this allowance).
5. Within Solo, Dual, or Team Armed Exhibition Drill, cadets may perform with one or two rifles as listed. These rifles may NOT be pre-placed in the area – they must be brought in when the team marches in/out OR the rifle(s) can be handed to performing cadet(s) at the tape line under the same regulations as a broken rifle is replaced and a new rifle is entered into the competition floor.
6. **No cadet may be lifted off the marching surface by any means.** Therefore, all cadets must drill and perform ENTIRELY on the floor. Any cadet who is raised off the floor in any manner will cause the judge to immediately move to the team and tell the raised cadet to dismount and the team to leave the floor. The team will be disqualified from that event at that point.
7. The Head Judge position **IS FIXED ON THE FLOOR DIAGRAM** for Report In & Report Out for every type of Exhibition Drill. Expect the judge to move around during the performance but be here for report in/out.
8. Along with the standard Report-in/Report-Out procedures used during all NHSDTC events, Solo and/or Dual Exhibition competitors **ARE REQUIRED** to state their last name(s) **during BOTH the Report-in & Report-out.**
9. AS PER DIRECTION FROM EACH SERVICE HQ, at no time may any drill rifle be DRIVEN into the marching surface by the BARREL! A gentle tap for timing will be allowed. Judges generally do not LIKE IT, and therefore teams should NOT execute it. A subjective deduction can be maintained by the judges if it is witnessed.
10. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Exhibition performances have in the past maintained team/individuals motivation displays prior to the actual unit moving onto the drill area but after the judge has verbalized for the team to enter and therefore before event timing began. Teams performing any synchronized, team display of any kind just prior to entering the drill floor (after the judges are ready for you to begin) may have the clock start and judging will begin to include this exhibition display. **Please ensure your performance does not go over the maximum time limit if you plan to include this in your routine.** Post-event displays (done outside the drill area) are not regulated as judges have their head down and are scoring at this point.
11. After several years of review, it has been determined that Armed Exhibition must be primarily focused on the **movement of the unit with rifles.** Unarmed exhibition drill is a separate competition and combining the two has proven too dissimilar for judges to focus on the activity at hand which is armed exhibition drill (for the same reason we do not allow sword or sabers in Armed Exhibition). Therefore, in simple terms, "Hybrid" or any combination of both Armed & Unarmed Exhibition drill movements, will not be authorized within the Armed Exhibition drill competition. These rules below should make things more clearly understood what IS allowed.

- a) All cadets **MUST Report In & Report Out holding a rifle in a standard, military fashion**. Rifles may be stacked, laid down or otherwise intentionally placed on the floor when not in use OR picked up later and used without penalty. Also, Rifles used during the team routine **MUST remain in the drill area throughout** (obvious exception for a broken rifle replacement) Also, no individual NOT inside the competition area may materially participate within the routine in any manner.
- b) The routine **MUST** maintain all cadets **functionally manipulating their rifles during the bulk of the sequence to gain a top score in armed exhibition drill**. No longer will cadets be permitted to maintain extended periods of traditionally “unarmed” exhibition movements or even non-activity and qualify for a good score.
- c) Within these rules, much flexibility exists but please remember the fundamental reason you are on the floor – ARMED EXHIBITION DRILL! That means Armed Rifle movements and exchanges along with Armed team marching and Armed movements & transitions. Those choosing to put forth non-standard movements that do not reflect the items listed above ***you do so at your own risk*** You accept the very real risk that this routine will be rejected as an Armed Exhibition routine.

## B. Judging & Scoring

1. The UNARMED and ARMED Exhibition competitions will be held to the standard their name designates. The Unarmed Division is just that. No rifle, sabers, swords or any other instrument may be used within events in this division at any time. Conversely, the Armed Division will require all cadets to enter, exit and perform for the judge using a rifle in all aspects of their routine. NOTE: Those teams seeking to have an exhibition drill with extended period(s) of time with many team members without **rifle movements** will likely NOT be happy with their score. Your job is to impress the judges as a team in the style denoted in your entry within the areas covered on the scoresheet. This CANNOT happen by doing nothing for long stretches or doing other items not delineated on the sheet.
2. Judging during any exhibition event is obviously quite subjective. However, all judges are asked to look primarily at the mechanics of the routine as well as the togetherness and “snap” the unit presents -- while also reviewing with equal intensity the overall style and flow of the performance. The scoresheet maintains points for many disparate areas of the routine and judges are trained to look in ALL OF THESE AREAS ONLY to provide scores.
3. While the degree of difficulty a unit displays is also a strong consideration in judging, flawless perfection cannot be overlooked. These are the two basic components in play in all exhibition drill.
4. Nobody receives bonus points for large groups of competing cadets in the team exhibition component, however judges are told when computing scores they **MUST** take into consideration the size and complexity of the routines when scoring several areas on the scoresheet. Certainly more cadets would likely make more difficulty.
5. The scoresheets for Team, Dual & Solo Exhibition are all virtually identical. **These scoresheets should be studied to learn how your performances may be tailored to have the best chance of receiving the maximum points available in these events.**
6. Space limitations just outside the entrance to exhibition areas may force a team utilizing correct formation spacing to start their performance with cadets just inside the entrance boundary, or complete their performance with halted cadets still just inside the drill area exit. **If this should occur, the team will not be penalized for boundary or time related issues related to insufficient space to enter exit the drill area with a correctly spaced formation.**
7. A 5-point penalty will be assessed on a “first drop” of a rifle in the Armed Division. All subsequent drops during a routine of that or other rifles in the performance will maintain a 25-point penalty assessed on the Head Judge’s scoresheet. This change has been made because a dropped rifle realistically generates are far higher overall score drop than just the penalty. Handling of the Weapon, Precision and even Overall Impression can lose points. While rifle control is of huge importance, one drop is something we wish to make less of a “death sentence”. See Page 5 of this document for definition of a dropped rifle.

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END OF SOP – REV2