

Rules & Policies

1. Definitions

1.1- The following definitions shall apply to this Policy Manual:

- MEPA - The Mid East Performance Association
- WGI - Winter Guard International.
- Board of Directors - The elected officials as stated in the MEPA Bylaws.
- Contest Administrator - The person assigned to enforce all MEPA rules at a given event.
- Unit/Ensemble - A color guard, percussion, or winds ensemble competing in MEPA.
- Show Host - The organization sponsoring a MEPA sanctioned contest.
- Circuit Championships - The final event in the MEPA competitive season.
- Bylaws - The official governing documents of MEPA.
- Divisions - MEPA has three divisions: Percussion Division, Color Guard Division, and Winds Division.

2. Affiliation

2.1- Through a general membership vote, MEPA has adopted most WGI rules and policies regarding competitive procedures. MEPA will also continue to adopt future WGI-approved rule changes assuming it does not conflict with existing MEPA rules or is subject to a proposal at the Annual MEPA Circuit Meeting. Anything not found in this manual is addressed in the WGI Rulebooks. In order to have a clear understanding of the activity and rules associated with it, all unit directors must annually read the WGI Color Guard, Percussion, and/or Winds Manual as applicable. The current season WGI Policies and Rulebook is publicly available on the WGI Website in each Division's Resource Area. If any clarification is needed, the unit director is encouraged to contact their assigned MEPA Division Board Representative or Division Education Director.

3. Governance

3.1- The MEPA Bylaws are the association's primary governance document.

3.2- This manual does not set policy but instead, reports it. This manual is a guide for directors and should not be seen as a complete report of all policies on file. Readers are advised to read and have a complete understanding of MEPA Bylaws and WGI policies before reading this manual.

3.3- All items are taken from the MEPA bylaws, WGI policy manual, or minutes of past board of directors or circuit membership meetings.

3.4- Changes to this manual may be made at the discretion of the board of directors by majority vote or in the form of a motion made at circuit meetings but this manual cannot override MEPA Bylaws.

4. Membership and Fees

- 4.1- Any color guard, percussion, or winds unit may request MEPA membership providing they meet all WGI and MEPA requirements for competitive performance.
- 4.2- Membership is established by completing the membership application, paying applicable fees and previous years' penalties, if applicable. Membership is not granted until all of these requirements are met.
- 4.3- Membership is for one year. Units must reapply each year.
- 4.4- Fee structure is established by the MEPA Board of Directors prior to each competitive season.
- 4.5- MEPA does not issue refunds on dues or fees.
- 4.6- Any member unit must compete during one of the first two show weekends.

5. Meetings

- 5.1- MEPA Bylaws require a full membership meeting between April and July.
- 5.2- The MEPA full membership meeting is open to all members in good standing. All member units are highly encouraged to attend the meeting. A member is defined as anybody attending at least three regular season shows.
- 5.3- The MEPA Board of Directors meet at times dictated by the board and are open only to elected board members.
- 5.4- Each unit receives one vote regardless of the amount of unit representatives present at the full membership meeting.
- 5.5- Only an authorized representative of a unit may have voting privileges. Authorized representatives are established on the unit's membership application (must be listed as staff members on the MEPA website/application) and may not be changed once the application is received and approved.
- 5.6 - A person may only vote on an issue a maximum of 2 times regardless of the number of performing group affiliations or status as a member of the Board of Directors
- 5.7- MEPA members can submit a proposal at the yearly membership meeting without being present, however, an authorized representative must be present to vote.

6. Fees & Insurance Requirements

- 6.1- All fees will be announced on the MEPA Membership form or the official MEPA website.
- 6.2- Non-members may enter a maximum of 2 shows.
- 6.3- Sometimes, in order to make schedules in a timely fashion, units are placed on performance schedules before they have paid penalties. Units will not be allowed to perform until the fees are paid. Placement on the schedule does not constitute receipt of payment.

6.4- All fees can be paid for by check, money order, online payment system, or cash. The issuance of a purchase order is not considered as payment until the check is received by the MEPA office. Fees can be paid on the MEPA website. Any unit paying by online payment system will be charged an additional service fee to cover fees/costs. Contact MEPA for more information on our online payment system.

6.5- If membership dues for Member Units are not received in the MEPA office by January 1 a late fee will be assessed and their application deleted from the database. Please note that postmark date is not used by MEPA as payment date.

6.6- All Units must have on file a release of liability form. This must be sent to the MEPA office before the unit is considered a member or dropped off at Unit Check-In of their first competition. This form can be found on the MEPA website. No unit is permitted to perform until this form is on file.

6.7- All independent groups must submit proof of insurance.

7. Surety Bonds

7.0- The practice of requiring surety bonds was eliminated in 2012.

8. Contest Policy

8.1- The MEPA Board of Directors will award the right to host MEPA sanctioned contests based on the following board approved criteria:

(a) Completion of the online form – The online form must be submitted along with all accompanying materials on or before the posted deadline. No late requests will be reviewed unless the Board of Directors votes to make an exception.

(b) Regional and calendar distribution – It is a prime consideration of the Board of Officers to provide a schedule in which contest sites are fairly distributed throughout the circuit boundaries to provide reasonable opportunities for all guards to meet their minimum show requirements without undue travel.

(c) Show Hosting History – The Board of Officers will consider previous show hosting performance. Prior show hosting experience does not guarantee a show will be awarded over a group with no hosting history.

(d) MEPA member units will be given preference for being show hosts.

8.2- All Show Hosts must agree with and sign the “Show Host Contract.” Signing stipulates that the host will fulfill the obligations as outlined by the contract.

8.3- All Show Sponsors must provide a signed copy of the show contract, proof of site liability insurance, a copy of the signed facility request from a district administrator, and the show hosting deposit. These items must be submitted prior to the deadline stated on the contract or a late fee of \$200 will be assigned to the host and their eligibility to host the following year placed in question.

8.4- Show host is responsible for paying predetermined fee based on the number of performing units in their show.

- 8.5- All payments must be made prior to the end of the contest day.
- 8.6 – Any non-adjudicated awards (school/host awards) will happen prior to the official retreat/score announcement.
- 8.7- The maximum contest day on Saturday competitions will be 9am-9pm. On Sunday, the maximum will be 9am-4pm. Exceptions may be made for large, regional competitions such as the Nutter Center show or circuit championships.
- 8.8- A Site Selection Committee will be responsible for the selection of appropriate contest venues. This committee will consist of the President, Vice Presidents, and two other board representatives. The committee should be made of at least two representatives from color guard, percussion, and winds. While it is permissible for primary affiliations to exist, only one person on the committee may be affiliated with a school wishing to host a show. The president will chair the committee and may make substitutions to fulfill the stipulations of rule 8.8.
- 8.9- All units will register for shows upon initial registration with the circuit.
- 8.10- Units may add or drop a show up to 21 calendar days prior to the show date. After that, the show is closed and changes cannot be made without the permission of the President. The president is advised to only make exceptions in extraordinary circumstances. Units who withdraw from a contest after the 21-day period are subject to the no show penalty and a \$150 per show cancellation fee which must be paid before their next performance.
- 8.11- Upon arrival at a contest, the Unit Director must immediately sign in at the Unit Check-In desk.
- 8.12- Music should be taken to the MEPA Sound Engineer by a unit representative. It should not be given to contest personnel.
- 8.13- Sound checks may be done on breaks or before the show. This is left to the discretion of the Sound Engineer and Contest Administrator. All sound checks are done using headphones and are to test that a CD or MP3 player work with the MEPA sound equipment, not to adjust or test speed of playback.
- 8.14- All music is played at a pre-set decibel level. For the safety of all spectators and performers, this level will be maintained throughout the unit's performance at the discretion of the MEPA Sound Engineer.
- 8.15 – A 10-foot radius around the sound table shall be deemed a “quiet zone”.
- 8.16- Units are highly encouraged to purchase food from the show site's concession stand. MEPA frowns on units bringing their own meals and taking table space at show sites.

9. Staff Passes

- 9.1- To keep contest experiences consistent from site to site, MEPA follows WGI guidelines governing staff passes for contests. Please review WGI policies.
- 9.3- Full season passes are provided to the Board of Directors and Directors who attend the annual MEPA season kickoff event only. Any person found wearing a season pass that isn't on the Board of Directors or affiliated with a unit who attended the season kickoff event may cause a penalty to be assigned to that unit.
- 9.4- Any unit attempting to gain entry for non-paying staff will be subject to a penalty at the discretion of the Contest Administrator.

9.5- Any unit representative arguing with a show site concerning this policy will subject their unit to a penalty at the discretion of the Contest Administrator.

9.6- Show sites are required to follow MEPA/WGI rules governing staff passes. They are not permitted to change this rule without the permission of the MEPA President.

10. Performance Order Procedure

10.1- Performance order is determined in two parts. First, any unit who registers and pays all dues and penalties prior to January 1 will be placed in a random draw for performance order. After that, the date that the application is received in full or paid completed online is used to determine performance order. Please note that MEPA does not use postmark. Date received in the MEPA office is used to assign order.

10.2- For the random draw, a random number is assigned to each unit and the highest number performs last in their class.

10.3- For the second draw, units are placed in reverse order determined by the date the complete application is received in the MEPA office. (The latest received application performs first)

10.4- Membership status has no bearing on performance order.

10.5- Performance order may be changed so that two units from the same school do not perform within 30 minutes of each other with no unit going on later than the original performance order procedure would dictate.

10.6- In the event that a show fills up prior to January 1, payment date will be used to determine eligibility to perform.

11. Unit Member Restrictions

11.1- All competing units in The Mid East Performance Association must abide by WGI rules and regulations concerning the eligibility of performing members.

11.2- MEPA strongly discourages independent color guards or percussion units from utilizing membership composed of ANY students who were previously enrolled in an active scholastic color guard or percussion program and have not yet graduated from high school.

12. Contest Regulations

12.1- A penalty of 0.5 points up to disqualification may be assessed on any unit which exhibits reckless conduct during entrance or exit in regards to setting and/or clearing props and floor covers. This penalty is assessed at the discretion of the Timing & Penalties judge and/or the Contest Administrator.

12.2- All units, regardless of class, will adhere to the protective padding and footwear rules. Any unit not doing so will be subject to a minimum penalty of two (2) points and are subject to disqualification and will not be allowed to perform

unless corrections can be made without delaying the contest. This policy will be enforced by the Contest Administrator.

12.3- Unit Directors, staff, and parents are expected to conduct themselves in a way that makes them role models to the young people that they teach. Any behavior deemed severely disruptive, disrespectful, or unlawful will result in a penalty to the unit as assigned by the Contest Administrator and a review by the MEPA Board of Directors. Repeated infractions may result in removal from future competitions and a forfeiture of all paid dues and fees.

12.4- WGI has placed limitations on prop height and mandated safety devices. Please see rule 4.5 in the WGI manual.

12.5 – Judges contracted by MEPA are encouraged to complete the WGI Certify Judge Training through the 300 level (when available for their division).

13. Classification

13.1- The Unit Director may choose the classification in which they will compete. Classification is based on the judging paradigm, not the age of the members.

13.2- Units may choose to compete in different classes in different circuits.

13.3 - Once a unit declares a class, they may not change classes without the consent of the Circuit President.

13.4 - Unit classification shall be the responsibility of division vice presidents. Questions of classification may be addressed by a unit director or the judge representative to the circuit vice presidents who will consult with the judges and the unit director as needed prior to rendering a decision.

13.45- MEPA will use a set of review numbers to assist with the review and promotion process. A unit who hits or scores higher than the review number for that week will be automatically reviewed by the Review Committee. A group will only be reviewed once time per season (for that same class). No reviews will occur 2 weeks prior to Championships.

Review Numbers for Color Guard

Scholastic/Independent Regional A

Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk6	Wk7	Wk8
64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78

Scholastic AA

Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk6	Wk7	Wk8
62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76

Scholastic/Independent A

Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk6	Wk7	Wk8
76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90

Scholastic/Independent Open

Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk6	Wk7	Wk8
76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90

13.5 - Should a unit be recommended for review or hit the review numbers for that week, they must be notified in writing by the Vice President as soon as possible. The unit director will be consulted during the review process by the Vice Presidents prior to a final decision being made. This allows the unit to “plead their case,” as part of the review process. Once a final ruling has been made, the Vice Presidents shall notify the unit director in writing of the decision.

13.6 - The ruling of the Vice Presidents is final. There is no appeals process.

13.7 - Any classification change carried out by WGI will also be followed by MEPA.

14. Contest Season

14.1- The contest season will begin no earlier than January 1 and will extend no later than April 30.

14.2- Contest dates and show hosts will be decided by the Board of Directors at a meeting prior to the Initial Membership Meeting. Show bids must be received by a date determined by the Board of Directors and announced through e-mail and the association website.

14.3- All member units must attend a minimum of 3 shows in order to compete in MEPA Championships. Attendance at a WGI show doesn't count toward the 3 required shows.

14.4- Sanctioned contests will be held on Saturday's beginning no earlier than 9:00 AM, and the last competing unit will be scheduled to conclude their performance no later than 9:00 PM. On Sundays, no competition will begin earlier than 9:00AM and end no later than 4:00PM. Exceptions may be made for regional competitions, such as the Nutter Center show or circuit championships.

14.5- Once any contest has reached the time restraints, the contest will be closed to any further submissions.

14.6- All MEPA contests will conclude with an awards presentation (known as the “retreat”). At MEPA-sanctioned contests, the retreat will consist of captains only. At the Circuit Championships, the retreat will be “full-unit” with all performing members participating. If necessary, due to time or site capacity concerns, one or more “mid-show” retreats will be scheduled to present awards for those classes that have competed.

15. Divisions of Competition

15.1- All recognized WGI classes are utilized in MEPA competitions. All rules governing these classes are written in the WGI manual and are strictly adhered to by MEPA.

15.2- MEPA also employs an exhibition class allowing units who do not wish to compete. These units must designate a class and will be given judges' commentary but no scores. Exhibition units will perform first in their respective class at regular season shows. Exhibition unit's performance slot at Circuit Championships is left to the discretion of the MEPA Board.

15.3 – MEPA also has a general class for units who do not fit into a defined class. An application and board approval are required to perform in the general class.

15.4- MEPA recognizes additional classes not recognized by WGI:

(a) In the percussion division, Regional A is one class lower than the Scholastic A class where elementary skills are employed. This class is an introductory class allowing units to learn the basics of WGI and MEPA competition. It is expected that units will be promoted from this class as soon as skills beyond the elementary level are exhibited.

(b) Color Guard Line Units – introductory class that focuses on one type of equipment skills. Allowed 4-30 members, a 5-minute interval, with a 2-minute minimum performance time and a 4-minute maximum performance time limit, a 2-minute minimum equipment time, no props/tarp allowed, may move drill up to 6 times. Can be Elementary (grades up to 6th), Junior (grades up to 8th, or 9th if your school is set up with 9th graders at the Middle School/Junior High), or Senior (grades up to 12th). Can be from same school or independent.

(c) Elementary Color Guard – for elementary aged performers. Allowed 5-30 performers up to 6th grade, 5-30 members, 6-minute interval, 4-minute maximum performance time, 1:30-minute minimum performance and equipment time, may be scholastic or independent.

(d) Junior Color Guard – for middle school/junior high school aged performers. Allowed 5-30 performers up to 8th grade (unless your school has 9th graders in their MS/Jr High), uses WGI's SRA timing guidelines, may be scholastic or independent.

(e) Scholastic Regional AA – Groups have a basic vocabulary, program concept, and achievement levels and a readiness to incorporate beginner levels. SRAA uses WGI's SRA guidelines, judging sheets, and timing guidelines. This is for units newer to color guard.

(f) Scholastic Regional A – Groups have a beginning vocabulary, program concept and achievement levels and a readiness to incorporate intermediate levels. Scholastic Regional A uses WGI's SRA guidelines, judging sheets, and timing guidelines. **Recognized by WGI for Regional Competitions only.

(g) Scholastic AA – Groups have a beginning-intermediate vocabulary, program concept and achievement levels and a readiness to incorporate more intermediate levels. Scholastic AA will be based on WGI's SA class criteria, guidelines, judging sheets, and timing guidelines.

15.9- For Color Guard classes with 16 or more units competing in a class, the class will be divided into two rounds. For regular season and a one-day championship format, scores and winners will be announced for each round.

15.10-When a color guard competing in Regional AA, Regional A or SAA classes wins that class at circuit championships, the unit will be promoted to the next higher class for the following season. The promoted units may appeal this promotion to a review committee during February of the year they are promoted.

16. Circuit Championships

16.1- MEPA will hold a circuit championships event as the last competitive event of the competitive season.

16.15- If Championships is a Prelims/Finals event, once a classification reaches 6 or more units, MEPA will use the WGI percentages for their color guard regionals to determine the number of finalists. 100% of World, 75% of Open and 50% of all other classes will make it into finals.

16.2- Circuit Championships will be a one-performance event, with the MEPA Board handling logistics.

16.3- The Board of Directors will choose a venue or venues which are of suitable size to host the event.

16.5- MEPA will sponsor circuit championships with proceeds going to MEPA.

16.6- Member Units must fulfill all financial responsibilities and performance requirements to participate in the Circuit Championships. Member Units may appeal to the Board of Directors to be allowed to compete in cases where these responsibilities and/or requirements are not met.

16.7- The MEPA Logistics Coordinator will serve as contest chair for this event. They will oversee a series of committees to handle all aspects of circuit championships with the assistance and direction of the president.

16.8- Each board member will be assigned tasks relating to this event. The Vice Presidents are encouraged to ask MEPA members outside of the Board of Directors to assist in the event.

16.9- All Member Units are asked to volunteer two (2) adults to work at a post position assigned to them by the Contest Chair. Providing these volunteers allows a unit to recoup their Championships Fee. Only the Board of Directors can waive any fees or fines. Units may ask other units to provide extra personnel in their place. Units that do not provide volunteers will forfeit their Championships Fee.

16.10- The order of performance will be determined by random draw for classes of six or less. For classes with seven or more units, the approved MEPA method of seeding will be used. Refer to the seeding policy at the end of this manual for an explanation of seeding.

16.11- Trophies or plaques will be awarded at Circuit Championships for First, Second, and Third place in all competitive classes. Finalist plaques will also be awarded to units who do not place. *Refer to rule 16.15 for classes with 16 or more competitive units.*

16.12- Championship medals will be awarded to each performing member of the units that place first, second, and third in each class at Circuit Championships. The number of performers will be taken from the timing and penalties sheet. Up to seven (7) additional medals will be awarded to these units for directors and support staff.

16.13- As circuit finances allow, MEPA will award up to four scholarships based on the approved scholarship application process. A committee chaired by a board of director member will review all applications and make recommendations to the president.

16.14- Performers who are engaging in their last year of eligibility with their unit because of age restrictions or high school graduation will have their name read during the championship finals. Directors must submit the names of these performers to the designated circuit representative by the deadline communicated.

16.15- For Color Guard classes with 16 or more units competing in a class, the class will be divided into two rounds. For regular season and a one-day championship format, scores and winners will be announced for each round. For a two-day championship format, there would be two rounds for prelims, and one round for finals with eliminations from to prelims to finals using the currently elimination process. In a one-day championship format, performance order will

be determined from the current seeding process. In a two-day championship format, finals order will be based upon prelim scores in reverse order with the highest scoring group performing last.

17. Critique

17.1- Units should read the WGI manual for a complete explanation of the critique process.

17.2- MEPA makes every effort to provide a critique at each event. Sometimes, due to show scheduling, travel arrangements, and other variables, critique cannot be offered.

17.3- As a general guideline, Saturday shows will always have a critique. Sunday shows will have a critique for the division performing first but no critique for the second division. Exceptions to this policy may be made for large, regional competitions such as the Nutter Center show or circuit championships.

17.4- In order to participate in critique, a unit is asked to listen to all judges' commentary prior to attending.

17.5 – When possible, show hosts will provide an area for critique separate from the hospitality room.

18. Inclement Weather

18.1- Inclement weather is defined as any weather-related incident that has a significant impact on show operations.

18.2- The president, in consultation with the contest host, may cancel an event. In the event that the president is unavailable to make this decision, the Vice President of Color Guard or Vice President of Percussion and Winds may be charged with the decision.

18.3- If a weather situation does not cause a show to be cancelled, yet a school administrator does not allow a unit to travel, the unit must submit a letter from the school administrator stating the reason. The president must have the letter in his/her possession no more than 7 calendar days from the original show date. The unit director must also send an e-mail to the MEPA president at least one hour prior to the start of the show. If the unit is not in compliance with either of these two rules, they will be charged the penalty for not performing at a scheduled show. The 3-show rule also remains in effect. If a unit cancels due to weather, that unit must perform at another show if needed to meet the 3-show rule. The President may make exceptions in rare circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

18.4- If MEPA cancels a show, all units will be given credit for attending. They will not have to make up the show to meet the 3-show rule.

18.5- If a unit would like to enter another show as a result of the original show being cancelled, they must notify the MEPA Logistics Coordinator or President within 48 hours of the cancelled show. In order to enter an alternative show, there must be room in that alternative show to accommodate the unit within the normal contest day.

18.6- If a unit adds a show due to the cancellation of another show, they will perform first in their class. If more than one unit in the same class adds the same show, they will be placed at the beginning of their class but in the order they would have performed in the cancelled show.

18.7- Any unit performing during the weekend following a show that was cancelled due to inclement weather, should expect schedule changes. These changes will take place no later than Tuesday before the weekend.

Championship Prelim Seeding Procedures

*****Seeding will only affect those color guard classes with 7 or more units.*****

At the July 2009 board meeting, the MEPA Executive Board adopted a seeding process more like WGI's and once again in 2015, MEPA adjusted our process to keep with WGI's. To determine the performance order for MEPA Championships, we will use your last score from a MEPA event. To this score, MEPA will add 1.5 points per week until the end of the competitive calendar.

Once scores are adjusted, there will be a draw in groups of 4. If the class is not divisible by 4, groups of 3 or 5 will be used. Groups with identical scores will use a random draw within their identical scores.

*****If the class has 7 or fewer performing units, there will be a random draw for performance order.*****