

Welcome Packet



Welcome!

Welcome to the Michigan Color Guard Circuit! This packet is designed to help you navigate your season from start to finish.

Your MCGC Board of Directors and the Education Committee have assembled this information as a handy guide for both new and seasoned directors and staff members.

Check out our
MCGC Google
Calendar! Add it to
your own so you
never miss a
deadline or
important event!



In This Packet

- Getting started in MCGC
- Financial obligations
- Insurance & scholastic eligibility
- Participant Protection training and background checks for staff
- Show day!
- Making use of judge feedback
- Additional resources
- Get involved!
- Season deadlines
- How to use CompetitionSuite



Getting Started

1. **Register** as a unit in the Michigan Color Guard Circuit. Registration runs Oct. 1-Dec. 1. See “How to Use Competition Suite” on page 10 in this packet for directions.
2. **Review the MCGC Rule Book and Code of Conduct** to familiarize yourself with all rules and procedures pertaining to your unit.
3. **Classification.** Be sure that your unit is registered in the most appropriate competitive class. Examining the judging sheets will give you insight as to the expectations for each class. When in doubt, contact the Board of Directors for guidance.
4. **Obtain insurance or scholastic eligibility** for your unit (more information on page 4) and upload to Competition Suite by Jan. 1. *A penalty will be applied if these are received after the grace period.*
5. **Contest schedule.** Decide on which contests you would like to attend. If you plan to attend MCGC State Championships, make sure you are meeting the minimum eligibility requirements (see the MCGC Rule Book). Payment for each contest is due on the first of the month prior to the contest (for example, February contests must be registered and paid for by Jan. 1).
6. **Performer safety.** Be sure all of your staff have taken the necessary SafeSport training and have a current background check (see more information on Page 8). Upload your staff’s SafeSport certificates on Competition Suite by your team’s first performance.

Questions?

Your MCGC Board of Directors and circuit staff are happy to answer any questions you may have throughout the season.

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Financial Obligations

In order to plan out a successful season, it's absolutely necessary to have a solid understanding of the fee structure required to be a member of MCGC:

MCGC Membership: \$300 (\$600 if paid after the Dec. 1 deadline) PLUS \$25 if attending field day or \$100 if opting out of field day

Contest registration: \$200 per contest

Championships contest registration: \$200

Championship Worker Opt-Out: \$300 (this can be avoided if you supply volunteers for Championships, \$150 per volunteer)

Here are a few other important facts to remember regarding fees:

- Contest registration fees must be either paid online or post marked **by the first of the month prior to the contest**; for example, contests in February must be paid for by January 1.
 - *The deadline for January contests is also January 1.*
- Championship contest registrations must be paid by March 1.
- The Championship worker opt-out fee is discussed in more detail in the MCGC rulebook under "Championship Contest."

Attending a WGI Regional for the first time? MCGC will refund one WGI contest fee for you. Contact the Treasurer in advance to reserve your spot (7 units maximum will be refunded). You must pay for the registration in advance and then send your paid invoice in for reimbursement.

Other Budget Considerations

- Staff salaries
- Insurance (for independent units)
- Background checks and WGI 3P Participant Protection Program
- Rehearsal space
- Costuming
- Props
- Equipment
- Transportation

Make sure to research the costs of these necessities and create a season budget. If necessary, you may decide to charge your performers a membership fee to offset these costs. Scholastic units may need to work with their school booster programs for financial support. **Make sure to keep detailed records of both income and expenses.**



Insurance and Eligibility

Scholastic units must provide proof of eligibility so that their school's insurance will cover them. The forms to apply for scholastic eligibility may be found on the MCGC website (www.mcgc.net) under "Resources."

- The **Single School Eligibility form** is for units whose total membership are students from the same school, schools that feed into that school, or home-schooled students that reside within the school district boundaries.
- The **Combined School Eligibility form** is for units whose membership are students from multiple schools within one district, and/or including parochial, vocational, or charter schools, provided the district offers no other competitive color guard units.

Units competing in WGI events only need to fill out one form and submit it to both organizations.

Independent units must furnish their own insurance. This may be done by contacting a local insurance agent, or by using the WGI-endorsed agent, Francis L. Dean and Associates (info may be found at <https://wgi.org/insurance-information/>). **Be sure to add the Michigan Color Guard Circuit as an "additional insured."**

As of 2025, WGI requires all Independent Units have independent management contacts and provide a certificate of good standing to prove they are incorporated. **More information is available at <https://www.wgi.org/getincorporated/>**

Insurance certificates and/or proof of scholastic eligibility should be uploaded to Competition Suite by January 1.

Participant Protection and Background Checks



To protect all involved, MCGC asks that all units background check their staff members (and volunteers, if possible). If scholastic, you can work with your school to do this; if independent, there are many online services to use, including [ICHAT](#). These are valid for 2-3 years in the state of Michigan.

All units must ensure that their staff members are trained in WGI's 3P Participation Protection. Information about this training may be found at <https://www.wgi.org/participantprotectionpractice>. The unit director must compile the certificates of all staff into one PDF document and upload it to **Competition Suite by January 1st**. These forms will be cross-checked against staff rosters on Competition Suite. If a new staff member is added during the course of the season, they must also complete the training; their certificate must be added to the file and re-uploaded. If an initial upload is **not made by January 10th, a \$100 late penalty will be assessed**, in addition to the uploading of the proper documentation, which must be paid prior to the unit's first performance or the unit will be ineligible to perform.

Show Day!

Welcome to the first show of your season! Here are some handy tips and information to help you make the most of the day:

View the contest packet, which will appear on the MCGC website at least two weeks prior to the contest. This packet will contain a detailed schedule for the day and maps of the facility. Verify the orientation of the timing line on the performance floor to ensure that your performers enter and exit the space correctly. The Timing & Penalties Judge will be on the floor when you enter to assist you with this as well!

Unload props and equipment upon arrival (no sooner than 2 hours before your performance time) at the designated unloading area.

Check your unit in and receive your staff and director badges (you will keep these throughout the season). A volunteer will direct you to your unit's home area, where your performers can get ready and store their personal items.

Note: while stretching and some movement exercises are allowed in the home areas, no equipment is to be spun until you arrive at your official warm-up.

If desired, enter the performance gym during a class break or meal break and have the sound booth play a portion of your show music to verify that it is correct and all levels are ideal for the space.

After your performance, remove your personal items from your home area and load your props and equipment as needed.

Encourage your team to sit in the designated area (back or side seating) and support other teams throughout the contest!

If you ever have questions on a show day, please reach out to any member of the MCGC contest staff! Contact information will be located in the contest packet.



Your Music

Your music should be uploaded onto Competition Suite no later than the Wednesday before your contest.

If your music changes during the season, you can remove previously uploaded music and replace it with your new track. It will still need to be uploaded by the Wednesday before you next perform.

It is good practice to bring a backup copy of your music with you to a contest!

Sound checks are available in the gym during class breaks or meal breaks, provided the sound booth staff are available.



Making Use of Judge Feedback

You will receive recorded comments from judges at every contest in four different captions:

- Equipment
- Movement
- Design Analysis
- General Effect (two judges in this caption)

It cannot be stressed enough that you take the time to understand what each of these captions evaluate and what judges are looking for at each level of competition, as these will affect your show design and choreographic choices. Listen to your judges' commentary carefully after every contest, and attend critique after contests when possible. **Critique sign-ups will be made available prior to every competition.**

Remember, critique is not the time to ask judges to justify a score or compare your unit to others. The judges are also not there to design—or redesign—your show for you. Instead, listen to judge commentary prior to critique and generate questions from there:

- Are there any comments you would like them to clarify?
- What moments did they feel were the most/least effective, and why?
- Do the skills demonstrated appear appropriate for the class and for our performers' level of training?
- What should we focus on to improve?

Did you know a judge will come to your rehearsal as a clinician? They cannot review show content, but they can consult your basics program and training. Reach out to learn more!

Understanding Scores, Commentary, and the Sheets

Copies of judging sheets for each caption and each competitive class may be found at <https://wgi.org/color-guard/cg-score-sheets/>.

You will notice each sheet evaluates a team in two basic sections. For example, equipment is scored based on *vocabulary* and *excellence*. While the names for these sub-captions vary, it often boils down to *what* the performers are being asked to do and *how well* they are doing it. The back of the sheet explains the criteria for evaluation and scoring in each of those sub-captions.

If you are ever unclear about judging criteria or the feedback you've received from a judge at a performance, contact our Judge Coordinator at judgecoord@mcgc.net.



Get Involved!

MCGC wants YOU! Our circuit offers many opportunities for unit directors and staff to get involved and help our performers thrive!

Attend Meetings and Educational Events

MCGC hosts a full membership meeting each fall and spring to share important circuit news, vote on rules and policies, and provide quality educational content. It's also a great way to meet others in our activity, form relationships, and network.

Join a Committee

Wherever your interests and strengths lie, there is a committee for you! Education, Rules, Budget, Scholarships, Awards, Branding, or Championships--all are actively seeking new members to further their goals and build our circuit up! Reach out to our President to get connected with the committee chair(s) of your choice.

Become a Contest Staff Member

Every contest requires paid MCGC staff to help facilitate it in a variety of ways. Reach out to our Contest Coordinator for more information.

Host a Contest

If you believe you have access to a suitable space to host a regular season contest, it can be a valuable fundraising tool for your program! Information about hosting is circulated each spring.

Run for a Board Position

Our Board of Directors consists of six positions, each elected at the Spring Membership Meeting and serving a two-year term. The Board is responsible for managing the circuit's business, communicating with its members, and building the culture of our activity here in Michigan. You can ask any Board member about their responsibilities to learn more.

Become a Judge

If you feel ready to take the next step in your color guard career, our Judge Development Coordinator can point you in the right direction! The training process is robust and will offer constant guidance and support.



Additional Resources

Below are several resources you may find helpful for your season:

Equipment and Costuming

[Color Guard Equipment Closet Sale](#) (Facebook Group)

[Guard Closet](#)

[The Guard Room](#)

[R&S Marching Arts](#)

[Orefice Ltd.](#)

Performer Training

MCGC offers a clinician program that brings a fresh set of eyes to your basics block! A qualified mentor will visit your rehearsal and offer advice for training and technique. Contact our Judge Coordinator for more information.

Multimedia Resources

A list of podcasts that discuss a variety of topics about color guard the the marching arts may be found at <https://wgi.org/podcasts-in-the-wgi-community/>

WGI offers a wide range of educational videos on many helpful topics: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEE98E3EEC7AD44C1>

Participant Protection Certification and Background Checks



To protect all involved, MCGC asks that all units background check their staff members (and volunteers, if possible). If scholastic, you can work with your school to do this; if independent, there are many online services to use, including [ICHAT](#). These are valid for 2-3 years in the state of Michigan.

All units must ensure that their staff members are trained in WGI's 3P Participation Protection. Information about this training may be found at <https://www.wgi.org/participantprotectionpractice>. The unit director must compile the certificates of all staff into one PDF document and upload it to **Competition Suite by January 1st**. These forms will be cross-checked against staff rosters on Competition Suite. If a new staff member is added during the course of the season, they must also complete the training; their certificate must be added to the file and re-uploaded. If an initial upload is **not made by January 10th, a \$100 late penalty will be assessed**, in addition to the uploading of the proper documentation, which must be paid prior to the unit's first performance or the unit will be ineligible to perform.

2026 Deadline Checklist

Notes	Task/Event Date	Where	Deadline
<p>Required to compete within MCGC</p> <p>Registration fee of \$300 PLUS \$25 for Field Day OR \$100 to opt out of Field Day</p> <p>Late fee of \$300 assessed after December 1</p>	<p>Registration as an MCGC Competing Unit</p> <p>Field Day Registration Belding High School January 17</p>	<p>Competition Suite—log in and click on REGISTRATION</p>	<p>December 1</p>
<p>Required to complete within MCGC</p> <p>Scholastic eligibility forms for scholastic units located on www.mcgc.net; insurance for independent units purchased from the provider of your choice</p>	<p>Proof of Insurance or Scholastic Eligibility form</p>	<p>Scholastic eligibility forms located on www.mcgc.net; insurance purchased from the provider of your choice</p> <p>Competition Suite—log in and click ORGANIZATIONAL DATA</p>	<p>January 1</p>
<p>Registration fee of \$200 per contest and online registration required</p>	<p>Novi HS January 31</p> <p>Reeths-Puffer HS February 7</p> <p>Lakeland HS February 14</p> <p>Belleville HS February 22</p> <p>Jenison HS February 28</p>	<p>Competition Suite—log in and click on REGISTRATION</p>	<p>January 1</p>
<p>Organization Information Due</p> <p>*Penalty charged for late submissions</p>	<p>Upload unit staff information, show information, and Participant Protection certificates of completion for staff</p>	<p>Competition Suite—log in and click on ORGANIZATIONAL DATA</p>	<p>January 1</p>
<p>More information on Google Forms</p>	<p>Bid forms for Championships volunteers</p>	<p>Online forms available at mcgc.net</p>	<p>February 1</p>
<p>More information available at www.mcgc.net</p>	<p>Scholarship applications</p>	<p>Submission link available at mcgc.net</p>	<p>February 1</p>
<p>Registration fee of \$200 per contest and online registration required</p>	<p>Stoney Creek HS March 7</p> <p>Carman-Ainsworth HS March 14</p> <p>Troy Athens HS March 15</p> <p>Caledonia HS March 21</p> <p>Lake Orion HS March 22</p>	<p>Competition Suite—log in and click on REGISTRATION</p>	<p>February 1</p>
<p>Registration fee of \$200 and online registration required</p> <p>Two Championships volunteers per unit, \$300 opt-out fee, or one volunteer and \$150 opt-out fee</p>	<p>MCGC Championships March 28</p>	<p>Competition Suite—log in and click on REGISTRATION</p>	<p>March 1</p>

How to Use Competition Suite

To register your unit as an MCGC member, register for contests, or make any updates to your unit information, you will need to log in to www.competitionsuite.com with an account that has administrative access.

Unit and Contest Registration

If your unit has previously held membership in MCGC, log in as a unit administrator and select your unit from the lefthand list. If you are a new unit to MCGC, you will need to set up a new account and create your unit.

Click “Registration” from the options across the top of the dashboard and follow the prompts to register your unit as an MCGC member.

“Registration” is also the area you will need to visit to sign your unit up for contests. Click on the green “Register” button for every show you wish to attend. When clicking on the first event, you will see the following screen. Make sure to choose whether you wish to pay by credit card or check.

- If you choose credit card, you will be asked to pay after finishing registration. **Your registration will be complete instantly after submitting payment.**
- If you choose check, you will be emailed an invoice for all of the shows for which you are registering. **Your registration will not be completed until your check has been received and processed by the treasurer.**

Michigan Color Guard Circuit - Payment Options

How would you like to pay for your events with Michigan Color Guard Circuit?

Credit Card *

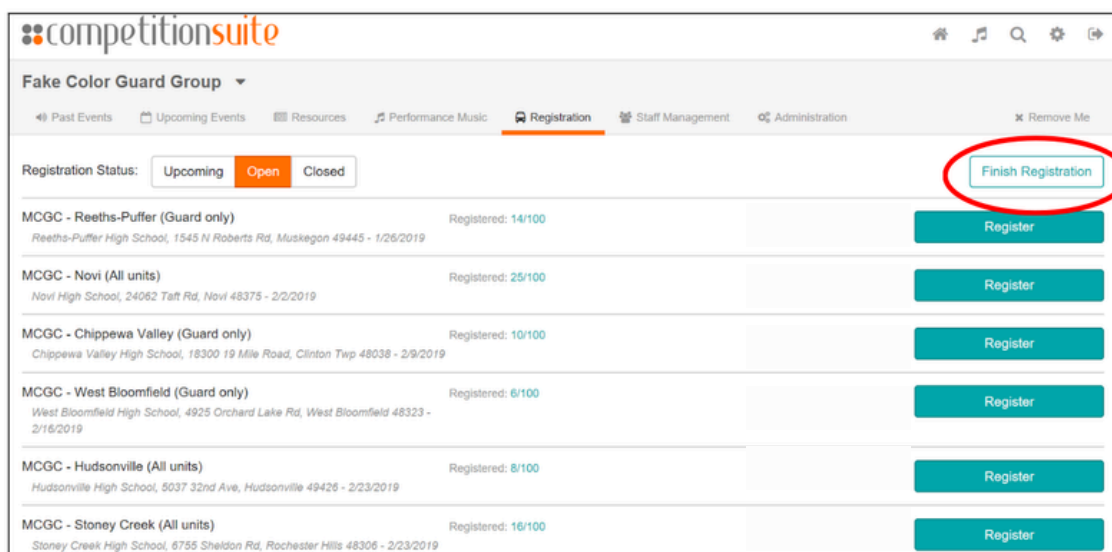
Invoice

* Michigan Color Guard Circuit has elected to pass the credit card processing fees to the groups. By paying via credit card, you will be paying slightly more than the amount listed. The credit card processing fee is the total amount plus \$0.30 plus 2.9%.

If you have any questions, please contact the **Michigan Color Guard Circuit** administration.

Close

When you have clicked on all the shows for which you would like to sign up, click on the white “Finish Registration” button at the top right corner of the page.



Filling In Unit Information

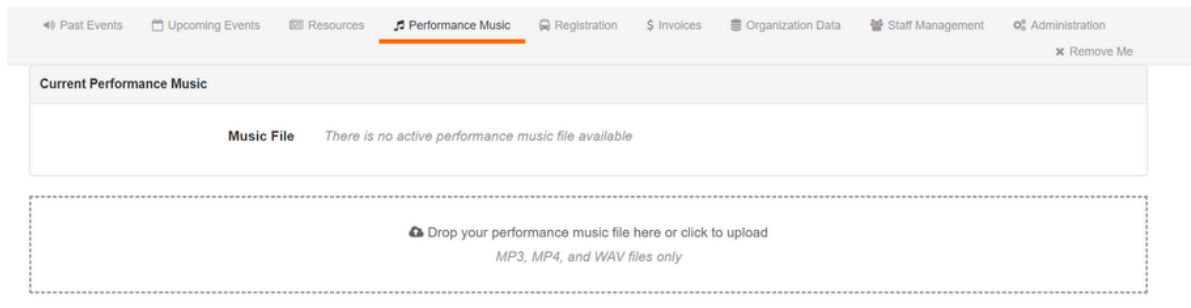
1. Click on the “Organization Data” menu up at the top of the window
2. Input your Contest Information.
 - a. “Show Title” will be announced at every show
 - b. “# of Members” will be used during unit check-in and will be verified by the Timing and Penalties judge at each show
 - c. “Scholastic Eligibility or Proof of Insurance” is where you will upload either a completed scholastic eligibility form OR a certificate of liability insurance by the designated deadline
 - d. “Show Description” provides a way to share helpful information about your show and will be shared with judges
 - e. “SafeSport Certification Files” is where you will upload SafeSport training completion certificates for all of your staff members, **in one single file**, by the designated deadline.
3. Input or edit your Unit Contact Information and answer all of the questions below it.

This information may be updated during the season as needed.

Uploading Performance Music

1. Click on the “Performance Music” menu up at the top of the window
2. Click on the box below to select a music file to upload
3. You will need to listen to the entire music file to verify that it is correct before it will be accepted by Competition Suite.

You may remove music files and upload different ones at any point in the season; however, **it must be uploaded by the Wednesday before a competition for the sound staff to use it.** It is always recommended to keep a spare copy with you as a backup.



The screenshot shows a web application interface with a top navigation bar containing links: Past Events, Upcoming Events, Resources, Performance Music (highlighted with an orange underline), Registration, Invoices, Organization Data, Staff Management, and Administration. A 'Remove Me' link is also present in the top right. Below the navigation bar, the page is titled 'Current Performance Music'. Under this title, there is a section labeled 'Music File' with the text 'There is no active performance music file available'. Below this section is a large dashed rectangular box containing the text 'Drop your performance music file here or click to upload' and 'MP3, MP4, and WAV files only'.