

How to Start a Winter Guard

Based on the WGI publication of the same name, modified by the AIA (<http://www.atlanticindoor.org/>).

The following information serves as a general skeleton of things to do when starting your winter guard season. This is only a suggested list and is directed mainly to new units / directors / instructors. It could also serve as a checklist of reminders for existing units.

I. Administration of the Program

- A. Recruit new members (through announcements, word of mouth, exhibitions, anything that will promote interest in the activity.)
- B. Hold auditions for your unit.
- C. Acquire a rehearsal space.
- D. Set your rehearsal schedule and get it to your members upon auditions. Be sure to do some sort of commitment form saying they have read and understand the schedule and can commit to the activity.
- E. Have some sort of "Policy Handbook" with rules for rehearsal as well as travel. It could also include travel permission forms, medical forms, and general student information forms (phone #, etc.). IF your winter guard program is an extension of your marching band program, then the band director may already have such forms in place. Just make sure all members have them. That way you have covered your communication (as a director/instructor) should anything arise during the season.
- F. Once you've selected the music / show concept, get parents or volunteers started sewing flags and building props. Order any equipment that you may need.
- G. Budget - the following expenses should be included in your unit's budget for the season.
 - 1. Instruction
 - 2. Travel (Remember to acquire the buses and drivers ahead of time. Also equipment truck.)
 - 3. Contest entry fees
 - 4. Hotel fees (if applicable)
 - 5. Purchase of material, equipment, props
 - 6. Circuit fees
- H. Some units charge their members a certain fee to help defray some of these costs as well as participating in fundraisers. Do whatever is applicable for your organization.
- I. Set your competition schedule. Suggestion: Try to select shows geographically that will allow your group to compete against as many different units as possible. If you limit your options to only shows that are close to your area, then it's possible that you will arrive at championships competing against units that you have not seen during the season.
- J. Plan and give out a trip itinerary prior to each trip.
- K. Get a commitment from chaperones for each trip.
- L. Send in circuit membership application, dues and performance bond.
- M. Select the appropriate classification for your unit.

II. Planning for Instruction and Show Design

- A. Hire instructional staff for your program. This could be anywhere from one to several instructors depending on the planned budget for your organization.
- B. Instructional Staff responsibilities include:
 1. Designing the show (drill, staging, equipment)
 2. Basic training in movement and equipment fundamentals. (Establishing technique)
 3. Developing and teaching vocabulary in each area.
 4. Teaching the show
 5. Cleaning the show (refine and detail)
 6. Work on "performance." (Selling the show)
- C. Select the music and show concept
 1. Pay close attention to time limits for each class. (See part III below)
 2. Try to select music that is appropriate for the age and ability level of your group.
- D. Do a count sheet of the music. This will be helpful when writing and teaching the show (drill and equipment.)
- E. Plan props, equipment, costumes, etc.
- F. General rehearsal outline once the show is taught (sample for a 2 hour rehearsal):
 1. 15 minutes - stretches and body warm-ups
 2. 15 minutes - movement fundamentals
 3. 30 minutes - equipment fundamentals (developing technique)
 4. 45 minutes - working on the show itself including runthroughs
 5. 15 minutes - review, warm-down, announcements

III. Unit Timing Overview in Minutes (Taken from WGI Rulebook 2004 page 108)

Class	Minimum Interval	Min. Auth Prop Time	Min. Perf. Time	Max. Perf. Time	Equipment Time
Reg A	7	3	4	4	3
A	8	4	4	5.5	3.5
Open	9	5	4	6.5	3.5
World	10	6	4	7.5	3.5

Middle School groups, Scholastic Novice and Scholastic Regional A should follow the times for Reg. A.

IV. Other Rules to consider when planning your show (Also from WGI rulebook 2004)

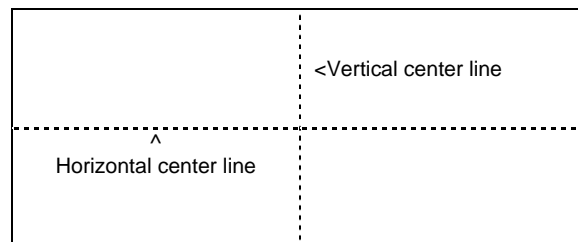
- A. (1.4) No unit may compete with less than 5 or more than 30 members on the floor of competition at any time.
- B. (2.1) ...contest floor shall measure a minimum of 55' X 80' feet...
- C. (5.3) ...Authorized equipment time may be flags, rifles, sabers, or swords.
- D. (6.1) ...Interval time will include set up, entrance, performance, exit and removal of all props floors and equipment.

E. (5.3.1) Authorized equipment must be IN HAND to be considered for accumulating authorized equipment time. (In hand means equipment must be in hand ready to be used or being used. EXAMPLE: Saber hung at side with hand touching is not considered authorized equipment in hand.)

F. (5.3.2) If any unit member is visible to the adjudicators with authorized equipment in hand, the time counts as authorized equipment time.

G. (5.3.3) A unit is considered visible as determined by the timing and penalty adjudicator with a view from the front sideline.

H. (7.2) **NEW RULE For Entrance onto the floor:** For purposes of timing, equipment and props are considered "removed" when they cross a center line either horizontal or vertical depending on the contest site. After the equipment/props have crossed this line, they must continue to make forward progress out of the competition area.



Suggested resource for instructors (especially new instructors): Instructors Guide to Fundamentals - Teacher's Manual and Lesson Plan.

Contact WGI at 303-424- 1927 to inquire about obtaining a copy of this manual.