Writing a Report of Investigation/Inspection

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the completion of a concise Report of Investigation or Inspection, which is the official closing document for an investigation or inspection ordered by the State Commander of the Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars.

As an assigned investigator for an issue or an inspection that the State Commander needs more information on, you will need to write an investigative/inspection report and this document is designed to help you complete that report. Depending on the findings of your investigation/inspection the State Commander may use it per the VFW National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure for further action as deemed necessary.

If you have never written an official Investigative Report do not worry, this guide will help you and the State Adjutant/Quartermaster is available to assist as needed.

Texas VFW Investigative/Inspection Reports follow a simple outline. They are;

Title Page

Synopsis

Alleged Offenses

Facts

Findings

Conclusion

Texas VFW Department Letterhead/stationary will be used for all pages as this is an official report. The State Adjutant/Quartermaster may have you write your report in a word processing software document and then copy and paste onto Department Letterhead once all final revisions have been made.

1. Title Page

Title:	Title statement and Investigation or Inspection Report centered on page.
Predication:	Basis for Investigation/Inspection – Describe the initiation of the investigation: who brought the information forward, who requested the investigation, who authorized the investigation, and date authorized. Typically done in one or two sentences.
Member(s):	Write the full name, correct address(s), and telephone number(s) of each subject or Post. Boldface the names.
Investigator:	Type your name and title below the line provided and any other Investigators/Inspectors assigned to work with you
Date of Report:	Date the case report was last prepared or edited by the Investigator, presented in the following format: January 1, 2004
Disposition:	Use one of the following statements for Investigations –
	Substantiated Allegations, No Violation, Lack of Evidence
	For Inspections – No findings, Action Needed, Recommendations Made.
Signature:	Signature lines for all Investigators/Inspectors.
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Follow this reference guide to name, then refer to a subject for ease of reading.

- Member(s): first name, middle initial and last name, upon first mention of the person i.e., John J. Doe. Then every subsequent reference to the person capitalize last name, i.e. DOE.
- An entity or Post: use entity name or Post and number, i.e. Scout Troop, Post 1234.

2. Synopsis – Provide a brief summary of the investigation in a narrative format. Identify the subject(s) in the case. The expected length of the synopsis is 2-5 sentences per subject or alleged violation.

- Use the reference guide (above) to introduce each subject.
- Write in Chronological Order.

3. Alleged Offenses – List the alleged offenses. Each listed offense will be supported at the end of the Findings section.

- Subject (s) – may use reference guide.
- Dates(s) – date of violation (if known). If the same offense has been violated repeatedly, write "Multiple."
- Offense(s) – Cite the offense as listed in Section 9 of the National By-Laws.

4. Facts – This serves to provide comprehensive information on the subjects and their activities as well as witnesses and actions of the Investigators. This will provide details of the Investigators actions and how the conducted the investigation. Each activity/interview is listed in chronological order as it happened.

- Subject(s) Information: List who is pertinent to case and available information,
- Question(s) asked. What questions were asked to gather information and or verify information,
- Document(s) reviewed. What documents were reviewed to gather information and or verify information. Provide copies of documents pertinent to the investigation.

5. Findings – The purpose is to provide concise explanations of how the investigation started, detail the findings of the investigations, then evaluate any evidence.

- The introductory paragraph: This paragraph provides an explanation of the initial information. This narrative should:
    - Introduce the initial information acted upon in the Predication section of the Title Page also known as the Basis for Investigation
    - Describe the claim(s) or situation the initial information presented to warrant investigation.
- The findings paragraph(s): These paragraphs narrate and chronicle when and how the investigation proceeded, what was done, and what was found.
    - Upon reading the explanation, the reader should be able to answer the following question: "What are the facts and exhibits that demonstrate a subject met, or failed to meet regulatory requirements?"
    - These paragraphs typically start with a date, an action, then lead into facts pertinent to the action. Example:
    - Support each fact succinctly, and reference each to a supporting exhibit or enclosure.
        - To support a violation, introduce all pertinent exhibits.
        - Check referenced exhibits are stamped, secure, and correlated.
        - The reference may be an attachment # or unique date.
    - Include any mitigating or aggravating factors and important decisional information.

- The transition statement: Provide a transition statement between the finding's paragraphs and the citation. The transition statement typically has three blank lines above and below it to create separation and will have one of the following transition statements:
    - "These findings substantiate the following alleged violations:"
    - "These findings indicate that there is insufficient evidence to substantiate an alleged violation."
    - "These findings indicate that there is no violation."

- The offense citation: If there is an alleged offense, this section of the Investigative Findings is cited and indented and lists the offense(s) in Section 9 of the National By-

Laws and then gives specifics of each violation with a factual description of the alleged violation.

- All offenses in the Alleged Offenses table are presented in this section this time with Specifications of each offense(s)
  - Offenses are listed in bold font as stated in Section 9 of the National By-Laws. Each offense will start with Charge 1: Charge 2:, etc.
  - Specifications are written in supportive narrative under each charge to demonstrate how the offense occurred and should include date, if known and other pertinent information to support the charge. This can be brief or detailed depending on the complexity of the information.
  - List each specification separately as Specification 1: Specification 2:, etc.
  - Check to ensure that the Specification is specific to the offense Charge.
  - Only bold the Charge, not the narrative explaining the allegation.
  - Provide blank lines above and below the citation to create separation.

6. Conclusion – This part is used to declare the closure of the investigation and recommend actions by using one of the following statements;

- "Based on the information provided, I recommend closure of the investigation with no further action taken or recommended."
- "Based on the information provided, I recommend closure of the investigation with a recommendation to the State Commander that disciplinary action be initiated per Section 9 of the National By-Laws using this Investigative Report as the basis for the Disciplinary action"
- "Based on the information provided, I recommend closure of the investigation with a report to the officers and members of the Post of the findings and recommended corrective action that should be taken."