Members’ etiquette – dress code, medals and badges (full article)

What is the dress code for Legion members on formal parade occasions?

Legion members should be appropriately dressed. There is a general consensus that ideally each member present should wear a dark suit/blazer [or for Women's Section a suit or dress, overcoat (if necessary), hat (preferably)], black shoes, etc. A person in a brightly coloured outfit on such a formal occasion seems somewhat out of place.

When should men remove their hats during Legion events?

The Patron has decided that, in view of the inclement weather frequently experienced at Legion parades many of which take place in the winter, hats will be removed only for the National Anthem, the Last Post and the Silence.

What are the general rules for wearing medals?

The following extract from our Ceremonial Handbook states:

'The official rules for wearing medals allow only official awards to be worn. Unofficial purchased medals and foreign medals which do not have the Sovereign’s permission to be worn are not allowed. Standard Bearers, Parade Marshals and other officials on Legion duty are bound by this ruling and unofficial medals must not be worn when on Legion duty.'

For men:

The following notes are based on the 'Guide to the wearing of Orders, decorations, miniatures and medals' published by the Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood:

- Medals are worn parallel to the ground just above the level of the top pocket of a jacket (or on a pocket insert).
- The Royal British Legion membership badge is worn on the lapel one inch above the medal bar.
- The medals may be mounted 'Court' fashion (sewn to the ribbon which extends behind the medal to roughly halfway down) or 'swinging' (where they hang loose from the medal bar). In either case, the bottom edge of each medal should be level, the ribbons should not exceed about one and half inches from the top (medal bar) to the bottom (medal suspender).
- In some cases the length of the ribbons will vary to ensure the bottom edge of the medals are level.
- Medals are worn side by side unless there are more than five in which case they are overlapped with the first one (to the centre of the body) fully visible and subsequent ribbons being only partly visible.
- The medals themselves are overlapped in the same way with the obverse (often the Sovereign’s head) to the front.
- On Legion occasions, such as parades and social events, when medals are worn with lounge suits, full-size insignia mounted on a medal bar or pocket insert are worn on the left side. One neck decoration, suspended on a miniature width ribbon, of an Order, may be worn under the collar.
- With overcoats, only those full-size Orders, decorations and medals normally mounted on a medal bar or pocket inserts may be worn, on the left side.
- With morning dress, full-size orders, decorations and medals normally mounted on a medal bar or pocket insert should be worn, when required.
- With dinner jacket, when invitations specify decorations, it is correct to wear miniatures, and only one star (or the badge of a Knight Bachelor) and one neck decoration.
- With evening dress, one sash and sash badge, one neck decoration, up to four breast stars plus miniature medals on medal bar or pocket insert may be worn.
- The medals awarded to a deceased Service / ex-Service person may be worn on the right breast by a near relative. Not more than one group should be worn by any individual.
For women:

The same rules apply for women where the 'neck decoration' from bows and tails is restricted in the same way as men's neck decorations, but they are worn below the medal bar.

Women who have been awarded medals suspended from bows and tails, but which normally fit on the medal bar, wear them in the normal men's method with straight ribbons if they have more than one. For example a woman with a CBE only, or a CBE and Golden Jubilee Medal will always wear her CBE on bow and tails on her left side and above that her Jubilee Medal from a bow.

If the woman is also an Officer of the Order of St John she wears her CBE as before and her OStJ and Jubilee Medal from straight ribbons, as for men, on the medal bar. In miniature all three will be from straight ribbons on the medal bar.

If she is promoted to OStJ that remains on the miniature bar but in day dress she may only wear one 'neck decoration' so would normally revert to her CBE and her Jubilee Medal, from either a straight ribbon or bow and tails, in full size above it.

What are the general rules for wearing Legion badges?

The general rules for wearing Legion badges are:

- **Legion Membership badge**: This badge should be worn on the left lapel by the position of the button hole. It may be worn upright or in line with the lapel.
- **Gold badge: Members**: who have been awarded the Gold badge, National Life Membership or National Certificate of Appreciation may wear the appropriate badge instead of the standard membership badge. Only one badge should be worn at any time.
- **Affiliated unit badge**: This is a cloth badge which may be worn by uniformed youth organisations on their own uniform when they are affiliated to a Legion branch. The position of the badge is determined by the individual youth organisation.
- **Poppy awards**: These badges may be worn by **members** to whom they have been awarded but should NOT be worn by Standard Bearers when in uniform.
- **Standard Bearer (Flag) badges (The Royal British Legion and Royal British Legion Women's Section)**: These badges may be worn by both past and present Standard Bearers when not in uniform.
- **Veteran badge**: This badge may be worn by those who qualify. It should NOT be worn by a Standard Bearer when in uniform.
- **Blazer badge**: This badge should NOT be worn by a Standard Bearer when in uniform.
- **Long service badges (Legion's Women's Section)**: These badges may now be worn by Women's Section members who have completed 25 or more years' service. They may NOT be worn by a Standard Bearer when in uniform.
- **Competition bars (Legion's Women's Section)**: Awarded to the winner and runner up at County/District, Regional and National competitions. These are worn on the left lapel by Standard Bearers but are NOT worn in competitions. Once attaining five individual bars at the same level, these should be removed and replaced with a five-year bar.

Does the Legion provide any guidance on the wearing of medals outside Legion events?

The Legion has no jurisdiction to issue any guidance on medal wearing at non-Legion events. For information on medal wearing at Legion events, see our [Medals FAQ](#) section.