

# WGI COLOR GUARD CONTEST RULES

## 2025

WGI discourages independent groups from utilizing high school students who were previously enrolled in an active high school program and have not yet graduated.

WGI also discourages independent groups from utilizing participants who have outstanding monies owed to a previous group.

WGI strongly recommends that participating groups and their directors/staff use the utmost caution and forethought in planning and use of props that might place participants (and others) in potential danger during assembly or use.

WGI strongly recommends that all participants wear protective footwear while outside the performance area.

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### **1.0 ELIGIBILITY**

1.1 Color guards in the Independent A Classes from the United States composed of participants not over 22 years of age as of 12:01 a.m. on **April 1, 2025**, shall be permitted to compete in contests governed by WGI. Independent Open Class color guards from the United States may utilize participants not over 23 years of age as of 12:01 a.m. on April 1, 2025. Independent World Class Color guards may compete with participants of any age. Each color guard appearing in a WGI contest shall be prepared to show proof of age. International independent color guards are not bound by any age limit except for U.S. citizens performing with that group. U.S. citizens performing with an international group may not exceed the age allowed for that classification.

1.1.1 U.S. Military veterans may be granted one (1) year of eligibility immediately following their end of active service. To qualify, individual must have enlisted prior to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, served for no less than four (4) years, and must have been honorably discharged or medially separated. Veteran must submit a copy their discharge papers and separation documents to WGI prior to December 1 to qualify.

1.2 All participants of any color guard competing in any scholastic class must have approval for participation in any WGI-sanctioned event by the administration of the sponsoring school(s) or educational institution.

1.2.1 Types of scholastic color guards are defined as follows:

**Single School.** A color guard whose total membership are students from the same school, schools that feed directly into that school, or home-schooled students that reside within the school district boundaries. The color guard shall submit the Single School Participating Master Group Agreement signed by the authorizing school principal or administrator and file with the WGI office.

**Combined Schools.** The purpose of the combined schools policy is to encourage participation from scholastic groups that may have limited resources while keeping the integrity of the scholastic classes intact. Combining schools for the purpose of competitive advantage is contrary to this policy and will not be approved.

A color guard in any scholastic class may apply for approval to combine students from multiple schools within a school district under the following guidelines:

- Multiple groups within a school district may be approved to combine on a case-by-case review by WGI. In very rare cases, schools from different districts may combine if approved.
- If approved, combined school groups may be required to compete using a school district name.
- Scholastic color guards utilizing students from parochial, vocational, or charter schools, must apply for approval under combined school guidelines.
- All color guards shall submit the Combined Schools Participating Group Master Agreement signed by the district superintendent and file with the WGI office.
- Color guards applying to combine students from multiple schools within a school district must apply for approval by December 1.
- WGI will have the final determination on whether a color guard will be permitted to combine students from multiple schools. If application for combined schools is denied, the color guard has the option to either not include students from other schools or compete in an independent class.

- 1.3 No color guard participant shall compete in more than one color guard at the same contest.
- 1.4 Color guards may not compete with less than five (5) nor more than fifty (50) participants in the competition area at any time.
- 1.5 Color guards must compete in the same or higher classification at WGI events as they do in their local circuit if the local circuit uses WGI scoring system. The basis for determination is the judging sheets a color guard is judged on locally regardless of classification.

***PENALTY: Disqualification - Any color guard violating any requirement in the Eligibility section shall be disqualified from that contest and must forfeit any scores, placements, or awards.***

## **2.0 COMPETITION AREA**

- 2.1 For the purpose of interpretation, the “competition area” shall measure a minimum of sixty feet by ninety feet (60’ x 90’) and does not include entry ramps, hallways, bleachers or seating area. Color guards are permitted to utilize the entire designated competition area for their performance. All participants must be in the designated competition area when performance time begins. Depending on the performance venue, WGI will authorize additional competition area space whenever possible and include that information in the diagram (footprint) to be made available to all competing color guards to identify the competition area. No competition area may exceed the maximum size of competition area (78’ x 106’) offered at the world championships. While the competition area will be increased whenever possible, all color guards must be prepared to perform within the minimum sixty-foot by ninety-foot (60’ x 90’) area.
- 2.2 All WGI contest sites must have a minimum of seventy feet by one hundred feet (70’ x 100’) to accommodate a “safety zone” of five (5) feet from any spectator seating. This will ensure the minimum sixty-foot by ninety-foot (60’ x 90’) competition area within the minimum seventy feet by one hundred feet (70’ x 100’) of the contest site.
- 2.3 Once performance timing begins, no participant may enter the safety zone. Equipment and props may be placed into safety zones, but not extend more than five (5’) feet beyond the designated competition area. There can be no equipment choreography outside the competition area including the safety zone at any time.

**PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty per participant for each violation of the safety zone.**

- 2.4 All participants must use the designated entry and exit as outlined in the event information provided.

**PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty per participant for failing to use designated entry door, tunnel or ramp**

- 2.5 The front boundary line shall be considered to extend the full width of the competition area and shall be clearly marked at a minimum of five (5') feet from the first row of spectator seating.

**PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty shall be assessed for each member for each boundary offense of violation of the competition area**

- 2.6 The center of the front boundary line shall be marked by a six (6") inch taped line at the front and back of the competition area. The outer edges of the competition area shall also be marked by six (6") inch-taped lines at the corners to designate the safety zone.

- 2.7 110-volt grounded power sources shall be available at the front and back of the center line of the competition area and will be the only power sources available for use. Color guards may not plug into any wall outlet in the competition area and must provide their own extension cords.

- 2.8 Power sources must be dedicated for color guard use only and have no other electrical devices using designated power sources.

- 2.9 All contests must utilize a high-quality sound system and the capability to use external devices such as MP3 players and/or iPods.

### **3.0 SCORING**

- 3.1 The elements to be judged are:

3.1.1 Individual Analysis Equipment = Twenty (20) points, one judge

*Vocabulary = Ten (10) points (A Classes = Seven (7) points)*

*Excellence = Ten (10) points (A Classes = Thirteen (13) points)*

3.1.2 Individual Analysis Movement = Twenty (20) points, one judge

*Vocabulary = Ten (10) points (A Classes = Seven (7) points)*

*Excellence = Ten (10) points (A Classes = Thirteen (13) points)*

3.1.3 Design Analysis = Twenty (20) points, one judge

*Composition = Ten (10) points*

*Excellence = Ten (10) points*

3.1.4 General Effect = Twenty (20) points, two judges

*Composition = Ten (10) points*

*Excellence = Ten (10) points*

3.1.5 Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules

- 3.2 All judges with the exception of the Timing and Penalty judge will be located in the audience viewing area.

## **4.0 EQUIPMENT**

- 4.1 For the protection of the facilities, especially wooden competition floors and easements, all equipment and props must be properly prepared to assure that damage of the facilities will not occur. All equipment will be subject to inspection. Any damage to the facility (wheels on carts locking, improperly prepared equipment, etc.) that may occur will be the responsibility of the color guard.

***PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty per piece of improperly prepared equipment and/or prop.***

- 4.2 Definitions of authorized equipment:

- 4.2.1 Flags are defined as any material attached to a pike, pole, rod or staff other than an authorized weapon and used as a flag, with a minimum size of eight inches by twelve inches (8" x 12"). National colors must be at least three feet by five feet (3' x 5'). Flagpoles must be at least twenty-four inches (24") in length. (Curved and straight poles are acceptable; however, complete circles, squares, etc. to which material is attached are not flags. Material attached to chains, ropes or hoses are not considered flags.) The intent of this definition is to utilize a flag as a flag and not as a scenic element or a prop.
- 4.2.2 Rifles are defined as devices with the outward appearance influenced by a rifle. Rifles must be at least twenty-four inches (24") in length.
- 4.2.3 Sabres/swords are defined as those weapons that are a curved blade (sabre) or a straight blade (sword) and may be constructed of wood, plastic, metal or any other suitable material. Simulated sabers/swords must have either a hand guard or a hilt and must be at least twenty-four inches (24") in length.
- 4.2.4 Authorized equipment may be modified by the addition of visual items, however, attaching a flag, rifle or sabre/sword to a prop does not make the prop a flag, rifle or sabre/sword – it is still a prop. Timing and Penalty judges have the right to inspect and challenge guards for authorized equipment either before or after the maximum performance time with permission of the Contest Administrator.

Any questions on eligibility for authorized equipment should be submitted for approval by the Director of Color Guard.

- 4.3 Definitions of other allowed equipment:

- 4.3.1 Color guards may manipulate their soundboard by using a remote-controlled wireless device through a self-supplied network. WGI will provide an area in the stands with a direct line of sight to the competition area for one (1) designated staff member to adjust the mix or control any device using wireless technology. A & Open Class devices must be battery operated as per rule 4.3.3. The soundboard/controlled device must remain in the competition area.
- 4.3.2 Participants playing musical instruments or singing using a 115/120-volt power source provided to allow amplification is permitted in the competition area.
- 4.3.3 World Class color guards may use any electrical device within their program deemed safe by the Contest Administrator. The Contest Administrator has the ultimate decision regarding safety of any electrical device in consultation with the Director of Color Guard and/or Executive Director. Color guards should consult with the Director of Color Guard prior to using any equipment not specifically defined in these rules. Color guard will assume any liability for issues arising out of use of said electrical devices.
- 1.3.4 Battery operated devices using common off the shelf flashlight batteries (AA, AAA, AAAA, C, D, N, 9V, button cells) and dry-cell secondary "rechargeable batteries" including cell

phones, cameras, MP3 players and computers are allowed. Sealed, spill-proof maintenance-free lead-acid batteries such as gel cell, sealed lead-acid (SLA), valve regulated sealed lead-acid (VRLA), and absorbed glass mat (AGM) batteries are also permitted.

4.4 The following are NOT ALLOWED in the Competition Area:

- 4.4.1 Pyrotechnics, discharge of arms, pressurized cannisters, dry ice, smoke machines, compressed air apparatuses, dangerous materials, and/or flammable liquids or gas will not be permitted in or around the competition area.
- 4.4.2 Gasoline or manual powered generators.
- 4.4.3 Live animals.
- 4.4.4 Powder, dirt, or any other substance that lingers in the competition area past the interval time.
- 4.4.5 Helium, including helium-filled balloons.
- 4.4.6 Motorized vehicles such as golf carts, tractors, all-terrain vehicles, etc. Motorized wheelchairs for disabled participants will be allowed.
- 4.4.7 Objects that may break and/or leave shards of glass in the competition area. Mirrors must be of the acrylic type and cannot contain glass. Any light bulbs used must be shatter resistant safety coated.
- 4.4.8 Drones or any remote-controlled airborne devices.
- 4.4.9 Hover boards.

Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Color Guard to inquire about the use of specific equipment or materials when its permissibility under this section or at a specific site may be in question.

The Contest Administrator, Chief Judge, or Director of Color Guard shall have the authority to prohibit the use of any prop or equipment that presents an unreasonable or unacceptable risk of injury or harm to participants or others or potential danger to a venue or its property at any time.

***PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty or Disqualification for use of any prohibited equipment.***

4.5 Signal jamming devices – including, but not limited to, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and cellular – may not be used.

***PENALTY: Disqualification***

4.6 Any special effect lighting must be approved in advance by the Director of Color Guard.

***PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty***

4.7 The following safety guidelines are applicable to the construction, transport, and use of any prop or structure, at any WGI event or facility and to any participant, staff, volunteer, or parent who may be assisting in the construction or transport of the prop or structure. These guidelines are in effect during the entire time in the competition area, including setup and exit.

4.7.1 No participant may be placed on any portion of any prop or structure where the participant's lowest point of contact (i.e., feet, hands, etc.) is more than four feet (4') above the competition floor unless appropriate safety railing, safety harness, or protective padding is in place around prop, structure, or podium to prevent injury.

- Safety railing is a barrier at least forty-two inches (42”) in height at all points and surrounding participant a minimum of 50%.
  - Safety harness is a method to restrain a participant preventing or arresting a fall entirely a minimum of three feet (3’) before contact with the competition floor.
  - Protective padding is compressed foam padding (gymnastic mat type) or other suitable material measuring a minimum of two inches (2”) in depth.
- 4.7.2 If a participant is placed on any portion of any prop or structure and the lowest point of contact (i.e., feet, hands, etc.) is more than four feet (4’) above the competition floor, the following is required:
- If the prop or structure is in motion, the participant must actively use the appropriate safety railing or harness the entire time the prop, structure, or podium is in motion.
  - If the prop or structure is stationary with a safety railing in place, the participant does not have to actively use the safety railing.
  - If the prop or structure is stationary with no safety railing, participant must be harnessed.
- 4.7.3 If a participant is placed on any portion of any prop or structure and the lowest point of contact is less than four feet (4’) above the competition floor, no safety railing, harness, or padding is required for the prop or structure, whether stationary or in motion.
- 4.7.4 A participant executing a lift or stunt while atop ANY prop or structure may not lift another participant above four feet (4’) in height above the competition floor unless protective padding or other adequate safety precautions are in place
- 4.7.5 Participants are prohibited from jumping or leaping off any prop or structure that exceeds four feet (4’) in height above competition floor unless protective padding or other adequate safety precautions are in place.
- 4.7.6 When a participant is on any prop or structure of any height, wheel locks/brakes shall be engaged to prevent movement while stationary.
- 4.7.7 Participants may not be placed on any portion of any prop or structure where the lowest point of contact is more than twenty feet (20’) above the competition floor.
- 4.7.8 WGI shall at all times have the final authority to prohibit the use or prescribe additional safety requirements of any prop or structure that presents an unreasonable or unacceptable risk of injury or harm to participants or others or potential danger to a competition venue or its property.

Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Color Guard to inquire about the use of a particular prop or structure when its permissibility under this section or at a specific site may be in question.

***PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Contest Administrator, including (but not limited to) prohibition of the use of the over height/unsafe prop(s).***

## **5.0 TIMING**

- 5.1 Color guards will be timed to compete at intervals according to class.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Interval Time</b>	<b>Minimum Performance Time</b>	<b>Maximum Performance Time</b>	<b>Authorized Equipment Time</b>
World	10 minutes	4 minutes	7.5 minutes	3.5 minutes
Open	9 minutes	4 minutes	6.5 minutes	3.5 minutes
A Class	8 minutes	4 minutes	5.5 minutes	3.5 minutes
Regional A	7 minutes	3 minutes	4.5 minutes	3.0 minutes

- 5.1.1 Regional A color guards reclassified to A Class during the season will be afforded an exemption from A Class timing requirements for the remainder of the competitive season.
- 5.2 Interval time will include entrance, setup, performance, exit and removal of all participants, props, floors, and equipment from the competition area. Interval time will begin when the Timing and Penalty Judge signals the color guard. Color guards must continue to make a deliberate and obvious exit from the competition area and not impede the entrance of the next color guard.
- 5.3 Each color guard, with all competing participants, shall remain in the competition area and be judged in all captions for a minimum of four (4) minutes with the exception of the Regional A classes which shall have minimum of three (3) minutes. Penalties for under time in the competition area will be waived the first two weekends of the competitive calendar.
- 5.4 Timing for the “maximum performance time” will begin with the first step of body movement, first move of equipment or the first note of music whichever comes first after the announcement ends. Judging will also begin at this time. The end of the maximum performance time is at the obvious conclusion of the show. All captions will be judged until the obvious conclusion of the show.
- 5.5 Each color guard must accumulate a minimum of three and one half (3.5) minutes of authorized equipment time during their performance except for Regional A classes where the minimum is three (3) minutes. Authorized equipment may be flags, rifles, or sabres. Penalties for authorized equipment time will be waived the first two weekends of the competitive calendar.
  - 5.5.1 Authorized equipment must be in contact to be considered for accumulating authorized equipment time.
  - 5.5.2 A color guard participant is considered visible as determined by the Timing and Penalty judge viewing from the front sideline.
- 5.6 Competing color guards cannot be required to perform before the time set in the latest contest schedule for prelims distributed by the WGI office. Schedules for finals may be adjusted up to 15-20 minutes from the published schedule. If a schedule change occurs, color guards will be notified by text message at the conclusion of prelims.
- 5.7 Any color guard unable to make their scheduled performance time will be rescheduled to perform during the next most logical performance slot in their class. Schedule adjustments will be made at the discretion of the Contest Administrator.

***PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for each class interval time of lateness or part thereof up to the conclusion of the class and/or contest***

## **6.0 ENTRY**

- 6.1 All participants must enter the competition area through the designated entry door, tunnel or ramp. Prior to the actual start of the performance time, color guard may utilize the entire arena for setup and pre-show preparations.

***PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty per participant for failing to use designated entry door, tunnel or ramp***

- 6.2 All props must be able to fit through a standard size double door with the center bar removed. No timing exceptions will be made for oversized props. Props will not be allowed in the competition area before the color guard's performance time.

- 6.3 Any color guard creating a delay in the schedule will be subject to penalty.

***PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for each class interval time of lateness or part thereof up to the conclusion of the class and/or contest***

- 6.4 The color guard will line up at a ready line to be designated by the Contest Administrator to enter the competition area.

- 6.5 Authorized equipment and/or props may be placed anywhere in the competition area by color guard participants or anyone prior to the start of the performance. Authorized equipment and/or hand-held props may be placed in front of the front boundary line not to exceed five (5') feet beyond designated competition area.

***PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each non-participant failing to exit competition area prior to performance time.***

- 6.6 Color guards are allowed to use music and/or recorded narration as part of their setup process through the house sound system after one (1) minute of the color guard's interval time. If a color guard chooses to use music or recorded narration, they must communicate this to the Timing and Penalty judge. The color guard is responsible for any music direction required at the sound table, which must be given in person.

***PENALTY: Five tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for starting music or recorded narration before one (1) minute.***

- 6.7 When the color guard first enters the competition area, an announcement of... "Please welcome from (city, state, country), (name of color guard)" will be made. At one minute thirty seconds (1:30) of the interval time for Open and A Classes, two minutes (2:00) for World Class or at any specific time noted to the Timing and Penalty Judge by the color guard, the announcer will be cued to say, "Performing their program (title), WGI Sport of the Arts is proud to present (name of color guard). All color guards are permitted to have this second announcement pre-recorded into their soundtrack but may not deviate from the wording of this announcement.

***PENALTY: Five tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for pre-recording not following prescribed format.***

- 6.8 Any personnel not performing must exit the competition area and safety zones prior to second announcement in Rule 6.7.

***PENALTY: Two tenths of a point for each individual in competition area after the conclusion of the second announcement.***



- 6.9 Once the performance begins, participants must remain in the designated competition area for the minimum performance time as designated in Rule 5.1. Participants may not re-enter competition area during performance time once they have exited, until after performance has concluded.

***PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for each participant failing to remain in competition area for designated time or returning after they have exited before conclusion of performance.***

- 6.10 The front boundary line is inviolate at all times except for participants involved in entrance set up or tear down at the end of the performance. Boundary line violations (including first aid cases) do not constitute permanently leaving the floor.

***PENALTY: One-tenth of point (0.1) penalty for each member per offense***

- 6.11 All floor coverings (tarps) must fit in the designated competition area at each particular contest site and may not cover the front boundary line and/or cannot enter the safety zone.

***PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty***

## **7.0 EXIT**

- 7.1 Exit may be over any line at the conclusion of the performance.

- 7.2 All participants must exit the competition area through the designated exit door, tunnel or ramp.

***PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty per participant for failing to use designated exit door, tunnel, or ramp***

- 7.3 All personnel, equipment and/or props must clear the vertical or horizontal centerline at the conclusion of interval time. The timing line shall be for visual use by the Timing and Penalties judge and not designated by tape.

- 7.4 For purposes of timing, equipment and props are considered removed when they cross the vertical or horizontal centerline. After crossing the timing line, all equipment and/or props must continue to make forward progress out of the competition area in a timely manner or receive a penalty at the discretion of the Timing and Penalty judge.

***PENALTY: One-tenth of point (0.1) penalty for each 3 seconds or fraction thereof***

- 7.5 There will be no flying of tarps (also known as “ballooning”) to clear floor at the conclusion a color guard’s performance.

***PENALTY: Disqualification***

## **8.0 PENALTIES**

- 8.1 Timing and Penalty judges will assess all penalties for infractions in the competition area. Contest Administrators may not waive competition area penalties. The judge must document the reason, approximate location, and time for any penalty during the interval time for the group.

It is always the responsibility of the group representative to identify penalties post-performance. If the group representative fails to initiate a penalty inquiry with the Contest Director within fifteen (15) minutes of the penalty notification, the group will forfeit its right to any inquiry and the penalty will be considered final and not subject to further review. The final two groups in any

round or class must check in with the Timing and Penalty judge while exiting the competition area as they may not have the full fifteen (15) minutes before final score submission

If an inquiry is requested, the Contest Director will consult with the Timing and Penalty judge to confirm the penalty details and respond to the group via text or arrange an in-person meeting, if necessary. No video recordings will be used during any inquiry. Once the inquiry is complete, the group representative will be notified via text of the final decision. The final determination on any penalty rests with the Timing and Penalty judge.

- 8.2 Any color guard violating any rule or part of a rule, breaching standard contest etiquette or failing to comply with directions from contest personnel for which no specific penalty is provided, shall be penalized for each such violation, not less than 0.1 point up to disqualification at the discretion of the Lead Judge, Contest Administrator, Director of Color Guard or Executive Director.
- 8.3 All programs, soundtracks, thematic and costuming choices must reflect the qualities that would be acceptable for performance at a scholastic venue or suitable for marketing to sponsors on a national level.
- 8.4 Groups using the flag of the United States should follow the [U.S. Flag Code](#). Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Color Guard for guidance prior to performance.

***PENALTY: Denial of performance or possible disqualification as determined by the Executive Director in consultation with the Director of Color Guard.***