

Northern California

# **HOSPITAL and INSTITUTION COMMITTEE**



[www.handinorcal.org](http://www.handinorcal.org)

**Policies & Procedures Manual**  
“Our Collective Conscience”

**~ SECTION ONE ~**

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# Contents

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE .....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	2
FUNDING.....	3
COMMUNICATIONS .....	3
REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES .....	4
<i>STIPULATION - PLEASE NOTE</i> .....	4
<i>GENERAL GUIDELINES</i> .....	4
<i>VOLUNTEER PRIVILEGES</i> .....	6
<i>CLEARANCE (ONLY WHERE REQUIRED)</i> .....	6
AREA ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE .....	6
<i>AREA/REGIONAL POSITIONS LIST</i> .....	6
<i>SAMPLE H&amp;I AREA ORGANIZATION CHART</i> .....	7
AREA VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS.....	8
<i>MEETING VOLUNTEER</i> .....	8
<i>FACILITY COORDINATOR (Area)</i> .....	8
<i>H&amp;I GROUP REPRESENTATIVE</i> .....	9
<i>AREA CHAIR</i> .....	9
<i>OTHER AREA POSITIONS</i> .....	10
<i>REGIONAL CHAIR</i> .....	11
MAJOR FACILITY COORDINATOR.....	11
PROCEDURE FOR STARTING AN H&I MEETING .....	12
CONFINEMENT CONSIDERATIONS .....	13
A BRIEF HISTORY OF H&I .....	14
SAMPLE MEETING FORMATS .....	17
<i>SAMPLE FORMAT #1</i> .....	17
<i>SAMPLE FORMAT #2</i> .....	18
THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS .....	19
THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS .....	20

# **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The only purpose of the Northern California Hospital and Institution Committee is to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the alcoholic who is confined. The activities of this committee are governed by the Twelve Traditions, and based on the spiritual principles embodied within the Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Our intention is to simplify and unify the procedures for those who are interested in this type of Twelfth Step work. It is the express desire of this committee that all persons selected for specific assignments have the length of sobriety and experience levels which are listed under the qualifications suggested for that position, remembering that these suggestions are based on "that which experience has taught us".

Our committee is organized to avoid confusion and duplication of effort. This is a service committee and our responsibility has many facets, most important of which are:

1. To the patient or inmate group within a facility.
2. To the facility: courteous acceptance of and compliance with its wishes.
3. To the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous: namely, conducting ourselves in a manner above reproach, to ensure that we will not say or do anything that will reflect unfavorably upon the Committee or A.A. as a whole.

Since our public relations policy is one of attraction rather than promotion, we serve in these facilities at the invitation of the administration, ever conscious of the admonition, "COOPERATION NOT AFFILIATION".

As members of this committee, we cannot, and do not, speak for A.A.; however, each of us who participates is automatically representative of A.A. We maintain our sobriety through adherence to the program embodied in our Twelve Suggested Steps of Recovery and try to practice these principles in all our affairs. In view of this, we:

1. Refrain from swearing and the use of profanity, unrelated and off-color jokes, prolonged monologues of drinking stories and other types of self-indulgence.
2. Respect full anonymity of inside members at all times.
3. Respect all rules and regulations as outlined by the administration.
4. Do not intercede on behalf of any individual or group of individuals.
5. Do not engage in any controversy over management, treatment or personnel, being ever mindful of the single purpose of this committee.

# INTRODUCTION

This document is part of the operating manual of the Northern California Hospital and Institution Committee and consolidates information previously contained in the green pamphlet “Workshop Guidelines for Area Chairpersons”, the yellow pamphlet “Purpose and History of H&I Service Work”, and the previous version of our Pink Pamphlet. The guidelines and policies included are based on our collective years of experience as one of the oldest Ninth Tradition service committees of A.A.

In an effort to be broadly useful, yet comprehensive, we have created two manuals. This pamphlet, subtitled “**SECTION ONE**”, contains information and position descriptions specific to the local areas and to the Major Facilities Coordinators for conducting training and orientations; it is published in bulk for general distribution. “**SECTION TWO**”, published separately, contains information and Steering Committee position descriptions for the entire Northern California area, as well as all written policies of this committee; it is published for use by the NorCal Committee and in limited numbers for the local areas.

The flow of **SECTION ONE** has been designed to create a template for conducting volunteer training, orientations or workshops, which generally fall into the following categories:

- Regular Area Orientations, often held monthly in larger areas, at a regular time and place, whose main purpose is to provide the information necessary for volunteers to knowledgably fill open positions in hospitals, correctional facilities and treatment centers within the areas, as well as to provide volunteers with an opportunity to sign up for such positions.
  - Individual Orientations, with the same purpose as the above, but often conducted in smaller areas or at times when Area Orientations are impractical.
  - Major Facilities Orientations, with the same purpose as Area Orientations, usually conducted by the applicable Major Facility Coordinator and emphasizing information specific to that facility (see Major Facility definition on p.11 of this pamphlet).
  - Outreach Orientations, often held at individual A.A. group locations, especially clubhouses, as an added option to the regular Area Orientations, and with a similar purpose.
  - Informational Workshops, often held in conjunction with other Area Ninth Tradition service committees, where the main purpose is to stimulate interest in our committee and inform members of the local Fellowship where and how to get further involved. Actual orientations for volunteers may also be held in conjunction with these workshops, if circumstances allow.
- Due to the variety of local conditions throughout Northern California, the specific methods of organizing and implementing the above is left to the discretion of the local Area Officers; however, in all instances, the value of sign-in sheets and active follow-up with interested volunteers cannot be overstated.

# FUNDING

The approved source of income for the Northern California Hospital and Institution Committee is from the Pink Can collections at A.A. meetings and activities, from other donations by AA groups, and from personal contributions by members of A.A. Funds collected in the Pink Cans are '*dedicated funds*' given by group members specifically for the purpose of supporting the work of H&I and cannot be used for any other purpose.

If it comes to the attention of the committee that an A.A. group is not using the Pink Cans for the above purpose, a member of the committee should contact that group and encourage them to do so.

# COMMUNICATIONS

Because we serve sensitive populations, clear and open communication among all facets of the H&I committee is essential. Many negative situations can be avoided or resolved by responsibly informing our fellow committee members of any potential problems in a timely manner, keeping both those to whom we are responsible and those who are responsible to us informed and aware. Our obligations in this area include:

- **MEETING VOLUNTEERS:** keeping your Facility/Meeting Coordinator informed of any meeting problems or issues in the facility you serve.
- **FACILITY/MEETING COORDINATORS:** keeping your Area Chair or Co-Chair informed on any reported or potential problems, as well as informing your meeting volunteers on any change in conditions at the facility.
- **AREA CHAIRS:** keeping your Regional Chair informed of any problems and ensuring that the NorCal General Chair is aware of situations which could affect other Areas or the NorCal H&I Committee as a whole.
- **MAJOR FACILITY COORDINATORS:** keeping the Major Facilities Chair and/or General Chair informed of any problems and issues, especially those which could affect other facilities or the NorCal Committee as a whole.
- **REGIONAL CHAIRS:** acting as the direct communications link between the areas you serve and the NorCal General Chair; informing other areas in your region of problems which could affect them.

We're all here to help each other and communicating effectively is a major part of every-one's responsibilities, as failure to do so can ultimately affect the alcoholic who is confined. Any members of the NorCal Steering Committee, including the General Chair, can be contacted through our website at [www.handinorcal.org](http://www.handinorcal.org), or through the Area and Regional Chairs.

# REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

## STIPULATION - PLEASE NOTE

We wish to point out that if any member of this committee chooses to resume drinking or conduct themselves in a manner detrimental to the best interest of the committee and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, they automatically resign, and may be appointed only when they agree to comply with the committee's guidelines and have again qualified with the minimum sobriety requirements.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines for briefing speakers and conducting meetings **are the policies and procedures of this committee based on that which experience has taught us - THEY ARE NOT PERSONAL OPINIONS.**

Many of these suggestions, which come as a result of our own experience in this type of Twelfth Step Work combined with suggestions from facility staff members, were originally adopted in San Mateo, June 9, 1956. **All volunteers and guest speakers wishing to accept an H&I commitment should be willing to comply with these suggestions.** Individual Area Committees may adopt additional policies as long as they do not conflict with the policies and procedures of this manual.

1. It is advisable that volunteers who have once been patients of State Hospitals NOT be taken back to the hospital from which they were released for at least six months. This preference is solely in consideration of the possible harm that might be done.
2. The number of speaking visitors should be limited to two or three; this gives each speaker time to qualify and give constructive comments as to how the program works for them. "Drunkalogues" are not sufficient and might afford a source of material for rationalization for the patient or inmate.
3. No individual member should accept appointments with doctors or other staff members of a hospital or institution to discuss procedural problems. If such a question arises, it should be referred through proper channels (See Organizational Structure).
4. Visiting hospitals and institutions is a **privilege** extended to us. We do not serve as a go-between for someone on the inside to someone on the outside, and **THERE IS TO BE NO VERBAL OR WRITTEN COMMUNICATION EXCHANGED.** If anyone violates the rules or regulations set by the administration, our privileges could be revoked.
5. We should avoid any promises, expressed or implied, that we cannot keep; **nor do we exchange personal information.** Patients or inmates may approach visitors for

support of their opinions of staff policy; this is NOT our business. We have no basis for criticism and should not express any opinion of treatment, nor should we voice criticism of any administration or staff.

6. Any H&I member who is currently employed at, volunteers at, or serves in any capacity at a specific institution, section or yard, shall not serve as an H&I volunteer for that institution.
7. No member will interfere or use any influence in any institution, court, or hospital, nor with any judge, doctor, probation officer, or parole officer. Nor will we make any comments or promises regarding employment, parole, probation, or medical problems for any inmate, patient or resident. We carry only the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.
8. In keeping with A.A.'s primary purpose and to avoid confusion with other Twelve Step programs, members of this Committee shall refer to themselves only as alcoholics when carrying the A.A. message into a facility, as well as at any meetings or functions of this Committee.
9. Since each of us who participates is automatically representative of A.A., we will dress accordingly. This means:
  - Our clothing will be neat and clean and in keeping with restrictions as outlined by the facility.
  - No shorts, tank tops, sleeveless or transparent blouses, short skirts, hot pants, fashionably torn or shabby clothing, etc.
  - Except for unavoidable manufacturers' marks, no product advertising for alcohol, tobacco, clubs, sports logos, political positions or affiliations, religious affiliations, twelve step programs, gangs, etc.
10. In addition to being fully aware of and compliant with all regulations and recommendations themselves, meeting volunteers must brief guest speakers on basic rule requirements of the facility as well as H&I guidelines prior to attendance at hospital or institution meetings. Visitors may face some additional necessary screening at the entrance gate.
11. Pocket knives, metal objects, cell phones and other items that may be contraband must be locked in autos prior to visit. Auto keys and personal wallets may usually be kept during visit.
12. Inappropriate mingling with the patients or inmates is not allowed.
13. Lewd, obscene, profane, and other offensive language will not be tolerated in any facility. The facility host can clarify or advise on matters not otherwise clearly outlined.
14. The anonymity of members should always be maintained, both as alcoholics and as inmates or patients.
15. Literature purchased by this committee is for the use of the committee volunteers who bring meetings to the alcoholic who is confined; it is not to be given away to the facilities themselves, except as authorized by the General Chair. Additionally, no literature purchased by this committee, including Grapevines and La Viñas, is to be given to any persons other than the alcoholic who is confined.

Your participation in the institutional visiting program of A.A. is a most helpful contribution. To avoid oversights and confusion, if you are unable to keep your date as scheduled, it is your responsibility to exchange it with one of the other meeting volunteers or alternates on your schedule, and to notify your Coordinator or Area Chair. If you are not able to continue your commitment, please notify your Coordinator or Area Chair as soon as possible to avoid a gap in meetings.

## **VOLUNTEER PRIVILEGES**

Volunteers are not permitted to give anything to or receive anything from an inmate or patient while volunteering. All volunteers are permitted to speak only with the inmate or patient groups they are visiting.

Former inmates of any California Correctional Institution, or any State or Federal Prison, are in violation of the California Penal Code if they enter one of the California institutions without pre-arranged permission from the Warden or Superintendent.

**Violation of any Hospital or Institution regulation may result in the prohibition of further volunteer privileges.**

## **CLEARANCE (ONLY WHERE REQUIRED)**

The requirements to obtain a clearance to attend Hospital and Institution meetings in Northern California facilities are not standardized, and most non-correctional facilities do not require a clearance.

Each area is responsible for the distribution of clearance forms and procedures to each Facility Coordinator or Meeting Coordinator who will work with the inside Program Coordinators to obtain clearances.

There may be clearance restrictions in the case of H&I members who have a prior record of confinement. In no case will any member of the H&I Committee attempt to circumvent the clearance procedures of any institution to gain admittance for an unauthorized person.

## **AREA ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE**

The Northern California H&I Committee fully realizes, because of limited personnel in some areas, it is not always possible to adhere to the following summation of area structure, but it strongly urges every effort to observe that which experience has taught us.

**ALL AREA COMMITTEES WILL OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING:**

- a. **AREA COMMITTEES MUST OPERATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES EMBODIED WITHIN THE TWELVE TRADITIONS AND TWELVE CONCEPTS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**
- b. **THE AREA ACTIVITIES SHOULD IN NO WAY CONFLICT WITH THE POLICIES OF THE H&I COMMITTEE AS A WHOLE.**
- c. **REGULAR AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS MUST BE HELD.**

## **AREA/REGIONAL POSITIONS LIST**

**Depending upon size, areas may include some or all of the following positions:**

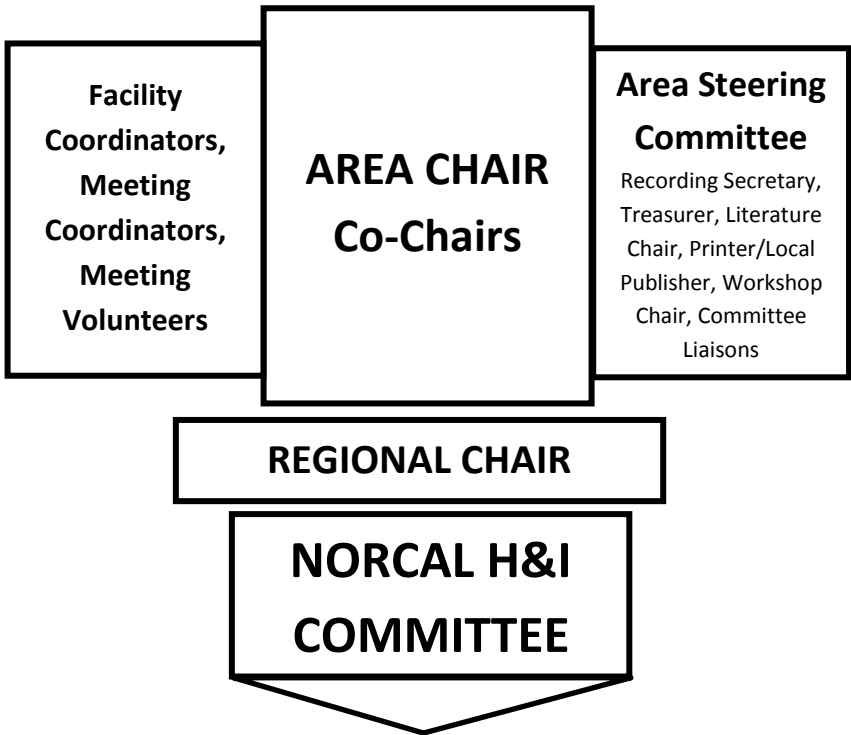
Meeting Volunteers; Meeting / Facility Coordinators; H&I Group Representatives; Area Chair / Co-Chair; Area Treasurer; Area Recording Secretary; Area Literature Chair; Area Printer; Workshop Coordinator; Regional Chair

# SAMPLE H&I AREA ORGANIZATION CHART

## LOCAL A.A. GROUPS

### Local H&I COMMITTEE

(H&I Group Representatives, H&I Volunteers)



**Note:** the above chart represents how a local structure *could* look; smaller areas may choose not to fill all positions.

# AREA VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

**MEETING VOLUNTEER** – person responsible for carrying the meeting into the facility, with a partner or guest speaker, usually once a month on a given week and weekday of the month. Selected by and responsible to the Facility/Meeting Coordinator.

**Term:** no specific time limit

**Qualifications:** For hospitals and rehab centers, it is suggested that one of the Meeting Volunteers have at least six months of current and continuous sobriety and that the other volunteer has at least one year. For correctional facilities, the suggested sobriety requirement is two years of current and continuous sobriety, plus previous H&I experience.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Conducts the A.A. meeting in a specific facility, at an appointed date and time. In some cases, the volunteers will bring in a guest speaker.
2. In the event that the volunteer is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, is responsible for finding a substitute volunteer from the meeting roster.
3. Has a full working knowledge of the rules governing the specific facility regarding visitors and should be thoroughly familiar with the guidelines of this committee. Thoroughly informs guest speakers and visitors of such and will not hesitate to inquire if there is any reason why a particular person should not enter the facility.
4. Ensures that adequate H&I literature is available for the meeting.
5. Does not replace him/herself but may suggest a replacement to the Meeting Coordinator.

**FACILITY COORDINATOR (Area)** – person responsible for oversight of all meetings in a particular facility; may also serve as a Meeting Volunteer. Selected by and responsible to the Area Chair/Co-Chair. (note: some areas also have **Meeting Coordinators**, who are responsible for the oversight of individual meetings in a facility and are accountable to the Facility Coordinator).

**Term:** No specific time limit.

**Qualifications:** It is suggested that the coordinator have three years of current and continuous sobriety, including one year of committee activity.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Is directly responsible to the Area Chair for all volunteers who go into the facility and for each meeting being properly and adequately covered.
2. Where/when necessary conducts Individual Orientations to train new volunteers to fill open positions.
3. Maintains Facility Schedule Forms (rosters) for all meetings, filling openings and replacing volunteers as needed.
4. Regularly provides up-to-date Facility Schedule Forms (rosters) to each volunteer, to the Area Chair, and to the appropriate inside staff

members.

5. Informs Area Chair of any problems - real, imagined, or potential - in a timely fashion.
6. Attends area committee meetings for reports (if unable to attend, may send a representative).
7. For correctional and other applicable facilities, orchestrates clearances for volunteers, providing clearance procedures and forms as required, and resolving difficulties.
8. Serves as the main point of contact with facility staff members.
9. Ensures that adequate H&I literature is available for all meetings.
10. Does not replace him/herself, but may suggest a replacement to the Area Chair.

**H&I GROUP REPRESENTATIVE** - An H&I Group Representative is elected by group conscience of the A.A. group they are representing. This position can be held in addition to other H&I volunteer positions and is encouraged as an adjunct to those positions. The H&I Group Rep is the means whereby our Committee operates fully in accordance with the Second and Ninth Traditions of A.A., ensuring that our authority ultimately comes from God as expressed through the group consciences of Northern California.

**Term:** Two years - may vary depending on area.

**Sobriety Requirement:** six months continuous sobriety

**Responsibilities:**

1. Attends the H&I monthly business meeting to bring their Home Group conscience and questions to the Area Committee.
2. Attends Home Group's business meeting as the H&I Representative, reporting on H&I activities and issues, presenting the H&I financial statements and gathering questions and concerns to bring back to the Area Committee at the monthly meeting.
3. Makes brief regular announcements to Home Group regarding the need for H&I volunteers, announcing any upcoming H&I activities and generally being available as an H&I resource point for group members.
4. Has available information about current H&I openings.
5. Encourages awareness and proper use of the Pink Can:
  - a) Ensures properly labeled cans are available at every meeting of home group
  - b) Always removes Pink Cans from Seventh Tradition basket
  - c) Encourages treasurer to send collections regularly to address on Pink Can, noting Area # on check

**AREA CHAIR** — the Area Chair is elected by the local area committee members and has overall responsibility for all H&I operations in that area. Note: Large areas may also have Co-chairs. Depending on the area structure, Co-Chairs may either assist the Area Chair in the responsibilities below or perform those duties for a specific segment of the area, for example a Co-Chair may oversee all rehab facilities.

**Term:** Two years (may succeed themselves once).

**Qualifications:** It is suggested that the Area Chair have three years of current and continuous sobriety, including one year of active committee participation, and have firsthand knowledge of the Facility Coordinator's responsibilities.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Serves as a filter for local issues and engages in limited public relations involving H&I within the area.
2. Maintains effective communication and relations with other Ninth Tradition committees in the area.
3. Designates responsibility in order that all meetings at facilities in the area are covered.
4. Ensures that all local officer positions are adequately filled.
5. Conducts regularly scheduled area meetings, conducts or delegates to be conducted workshops and/or orientations.
6. Provides local H&I Group Representatives with timely information for their groups; in conjunction with Regional Chairs, communicates information and issues occurring at General Committee level.
7. Provides Facility Schedule Forms (H&I Form #1, or reasonable substitute) to the Facility Coordinators in the area.
8. Reviews all the Facility Schedule Forms at scheduled area meetings.
9. At least once a year, submits a report listing all meetings in the area to the General Chair.

**OTHER AREA POSITIONS:** The following positions may vary depending on the size of the area; not all areas require all or any of the positions. Additionally, some areas may wish to have the Area Chair appoint the volunteers and some areas may wish to elect the volunteers (note: per our Literature Policy, the Literature Chair is appointed by the Area Chair).

**Treasurer** – collects Seventh Tradition funds at monthly meetings; pays authorized Area expenses for rent, printing, etc. Keeps record of financial activity at the area level, regularly provides copy to Area Chair and makes report at area meetings.

**Recording Secretary** – records and compiles minutes from area business meetings, keeps area lists and other records as decided by local area committee.

**Literature Chair** – with approval of Area Chair, orders, stores and distributes literature in accordance with approved H&I Literature Policy.

**Printer/Publisher** – prints local literature including rosters, pamphlets, etc.

**Workshop Chair** – organizes local *Outreach Orientations* and *Informational Workshops* as described on p.1 of this pamphlet.

**REGIONAL CHAIR** - The Regional Chair is elected by the Area Chairs within a given region and functions as the elected representative of the areas to the Steering Committee and General Committee.

**Term:** Two years (may succeed themselves once).

**Qualifications:** It is suggested that the Regional Chair have a minimum of five years of current and continuous sobriety and three years of active committee work in H&I and have a full understanding of the responsibilities of all assignments at the area level.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Attends regular committee meetings of all areas in the region; brings General Committee issues of concern or interest to areas for their consideration.
2. Attends NorCal Steering Committee and General Committee meetings, reports on activities and decisions within the region's areas.
3. Acts as a filter for problems and policy matters arising within the region.
4. Works closely with the Area Chairs and the General Chair to assure communications at all levels.
5. Handles limited public relations.
6. Acts in an advisory capacity to the Area Chairs.
7. Assists the Major Institution Coordinators in the completion of *Facility Schedule Forms*.
8. With the agreement of the Area Chairs, may initiate periodic or occasional regional meetings to facilitate communication and cooperation among areas within the region.

## **MAJOR FACILITY COORDINATOR** — The

Major Facility Coordinator is selected by the General Chair with the advice of the Major Facilities Chair, and the Regional and Area Chairs serving that facility. A Major Facility is defined as any facility where activities may affect facilities or activities in other areas or the committee as a whole; ANY State or Federal institution is usually considered to be a Major Facility.

**Term:** Two years (may succeed self once).

**Qualifications:** It is suggested that the coordinator have three years of current and continuous sobriety, including one year of committee activity; where feasible, previous experience as a volunteer in the facility is desired.

**Responsibilities:** Is the overall coordinator of all H&I activities taking place in that major facility (note: may concurrently serve as a Meeting Volunteer in the facility).

1. Is ultimately responsible to the General Chair for all volunteers who go into the facility and for each meeting being properly and adequately covered.
2. Where applicable, appoints and oversees Meeting Coordinators who coordinate the volunteers for a particular meeting.
3. In conjunction with Major Facilities Chair, acts as primary contact with the institution.
4. Where/when necessary, conducts Individual Orientations to train new

volunteers to fill open positions.

5. Maintains Facility Schedule Forms (rosters) for all meetings, filling openings and replacing volunteers as needed.
6. Regularly provides up-to-date Facility Schedule Forms (rosters) to each volunteer, to the General Chair, and to the appropriate inside staff members.
7. Informs General Chair of any problems - real or potential - in a timely fashion.
8. For correctional and other applicable facilities, orchestrates clearances for volunteers, providing clearance procedures and forms as required and resolving difficulties.
9. Ensures that adequate H&I literature is available for all meetings.

In conjunction with the Major Facilities Chair, maintains close communication with Warden, Associate Wardens, Community Resource/Partnership Managers and inside partners.

## **PROCEDURE FOR STARTING AN H&I MEETING**

As stated in our Purpose, the first prerequisite to starting a new H&I meeting is an invitation from the facility. An invitation to start an A.A. meeting should not be accepted until it has been considered and evaluated at an area meeting.

Among the questions to consider:

1. Will the A.A. meeting be one where the **ONLY** purpose will be for H&I members to carry the message of A.A. to alcoholics who are confined?
2. Has the host facility committed itself to providing adequate space and, if required, supervision?
3. Can the Area Committee support the meeting with a Facility Coordinator and sufficient Meeting Volunteers?
4. Does the requesting institution qualify as a Major Facility<sup>1</sup> as defined below? If so, please contact the Northern California Major Facilities Chair or the General Chair to discuss how to proceed.

If it is the consensus of the Area Committee that the proposed meeting can be supported and maintained, the following steps should be taken:

1. A Facility Coordinator is selected.
2. The Facility Coordinator visits the facility and coordinates the time, date and place of the meetings.
3. The meeting volunteers are selected.
4. The Facility Coordinator completes a facility schedule form (roster) and provides a copy to each Meeting Volunteer, the Facility Sponsor and the Area Chair.

Due to the different types of facilities the NorCal H&I Committee serves, it is not

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<sup>1</sup> A Major Facility is defined as any facility where activities may affect facilities or activities in other areas or the committee as a whole; ANY State or Federal institution is usually considered to be a Major Facility.

possible to outline uniform procedures for conducting all meetings. It is suggested that the following points be utilized when practical:

1. In those facilities where the inside members will be confined for long periods, they should be informed about the advantages of electing a Steering Committee from among their own members, and how best to hold their own meetings when circumstances prohibit the outside members from entering the facility.
2. Only insiders who are members of Alcoholics Anonymous as defined by our Third Tradition should hold positions of responsibility on an Inside Meeting Steering Committee, and those positions should be rotated on a regular basis.
3. The H&I Facility Coordinator and Meeting Volunteers are the most qualified to conduct a productive A.A. meeting for the following reasons:
  - a. They are more knowledgeable about the provisions of this Policy
  - b. They are familiar with the approved A.A. literature and what is available for distribution.
  - c. They are better able to resolve problems in coordination with the Facility Staff
  - d. They can better promote unity among the patient/inmate members.
  - e. They can share the experience of sobriety while maintaining their freedom.

## **CONFINEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

### **If There Is a Question Whether Patients or Inmates Are 'Confined'**

When the H&I Committee was first organized, the facilities we served were primarily correctional facilities. The proliferation in recent years of many other types of facilities (treatment centers and rehabs, detoxes, psych wards, shelters, senior centers, veteran's programs, etc.) providing help to the alcoholic has been beneficial both to the suffering alcoholic and to the H&I Committee.

Many A.A. members attracted to this type of Twelfth Step work have been afforded an opportunity to visit a facility and share with another alcoholic when they otherwise would have been unable to do so.

When an area committee has been invited to visit a facility for the purpose of carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the residents of the facility, the General Committee will rely on the good judgment of the area concerned to adhere to the purpose of the Committee - namely to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the alcoholic who is confined.

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF H&I

“When a nation goes down, or a society perishes, one condition may always be found; they forgot where they came from.”

Carl Sandburg

The Northern California H&I Committee is an independent Ninth Tradition service committee of Alcoholics Anonymous, carrying the message of recovery to the alcoholic who is confined. The initial spark of hospital work was set in motion on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1935 when Bill W. and Dr. Bob (only three days sober at the time) made their first visit to a hospitalized alcoholic and thus found Bill D., the third member of A.A.<sup>2</sup>

Word of A.A.'s success had spread, and by 1942 San Quentin Prison Warden Clinton Duffy, recognizing that many of the inmates were incarcerated for reasons related to alcoholism, and concerned about the high rate of recidivism among alcoholics, realized the potential for A.A. to carry its message “behind the walls”. The visionary Warden Duffy contacted an A.A. member from the San Francisco Groups, who along with an inmate at San Quentin named Ricardo, in 1942 conducted one of the first known correctional institution meetings of A.A., reportedly with twenty members in attendance.<sup>3</sup>

An incident related by Warden Duffy in his book, The San Quentin Story, illustrates the early influence of A.A. in San Quentin:

In their constant and over-ingenious quest for alcohol, several prisoners had consumed a highly toxic printing fluid containing wood and grain alcohols and various commercial solvents.

As the symptoms of their poisoning began, they were brought to the prison hospital and harrowing hours followed, during which several of them died. The whole prison was tense as the fatalities continued to mount.. The San Quentin A.A. Group volunteered instantly and spent the rest of that long night and the next two days donating blood, foregoing meals and tirelessly assisting the overworked doctors administer treatment to their fellow alcoholics.. Previously A.A. hadn't been any too popular, but now prison support for A.A. hit an all-time high and stayed there. Many of the survivors joined up. The first Prison Group had made its mark; A.A. had come to San Quentin to stay.<sup>4</sup>

With regular meetings in San Quentin the parole figures suddenly dropped from the usual return rate of 80% to a remarkable 20%<sup>5</sup> and held that way.<sup>6</sup> Seeing this success, Folsom Prison also clamored for AA and in 1943, in an unprecedented

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<sup>2</sup> AA Comes of Age, p. 72. AA World Services, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.89

<sup>4</sup> Duffy, Clinton T. The San Quentin Story, pp 169-170. Doubleday & Co., Inc.

<sup>5</sup> AA comes of Age, p. 90

<sup>6</sup> AA Archives, Vol. 31, #1 (this writing indicates the rate may have stayed closer to 25-40%, still a spectacular drop)

action of the Prison Board, inmate Ricardo volunteered and was permitted to transfer from San Quentin, a relatively progressive medium security facility to Folsom Prison, a hardened maximum security facility just north of Sacramento, for the sole purpose of helping to start A.A. there.<sup>7</sup> A.A. work in jails, prisons and penitentiaries began to take hold in Northern California as well as in other states across the country, and later that year Bill W. visited Northern California and was a guest speaker at both prisons, an experience which he found profoundly moving<sup>8</sup>.

Enthusiasm among A.A. members on the outside to participate in this type of service work grew rapidly. Rumor has it that when two groups from different cities showed up at the same time to conduct the evening's meeting, the result was an altercation in the prison parking lot to determine who would go in - perhaps not the most spiritual way to decide the issue. This was before the existence of the A.A. General Service structure as we now know it, so in order to coordinate and organize the efforts of the many volunteers who wished to participate, our Committee was officially formed in 1946.

Since those pioneering days, the Northern California H&I Committee has evolved into a fully functional, independent service committee, with over 40 local areas represented and thousands of volunteers participating in our service work. As of 2013, Northern California H&I provides almost 42,000 meetings a year, serving 22 major state and federal institutions and hundreds of local jails, hospitals, rehabilitation/recovery centers and other community facilities.

One of the greatest factors in our success has been the implementation of our Pink Cans. Until 1957, volunteers had to either provide the literature for H&I meetings themselves or beg it from their groups, often stretching the group's funds beyond their ability to pay for other A.A. services. Once again, God supplied the inspiration – why not pass a special can for contributions, entirely separate from the Seventh Tradition and solely for the purpose of providing the much needed literature? Oh, and we've got a bunch of PINK paint around.... The irresponsible had found another way to become responsible, common sense became uncommon sense and the solution has provided A.A. literature for confined patients and inmates for over 50 years, without detracting from the groups' Seventh Tradition responsibilities. As a result of the funds available from the Pink Cans, the Northern California Hospital & Institution Committee has for many years been one of the largest purchasers of literature from the A.A. General Service Office in New York, thereby contributing greatly to A.A. World Services income.

The question is often asked, "Now that A.A. has a fully developed General Service structure, with its own Corrections and Treatment Committees, why should NorCal H&I remain a separate, independent service structure?" Firstly, due to the above-mentioned funding structure of the Pink Cans, NorCal H&I has the financial resources and the ability to purchase literature that would otherwise put a severe strain on our World Service funds to match. Our Committee is answerable and responsible to those who fund us through the Pink Cans – the A.A. groups of Northern California. Secondly, and perhaps even more important, our committee pre-dates the General Service structure, giving us the many blessings of over 70

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., and Clinton T. Duffy article, reprinted *AA Grapevine*, July 2001

<sup>8</sup> AA Archives, Vol. 31, #1; also Pass It On, p.289. AA World Services, Inc.

years' experience in carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who is confined. We work closely with and are always ready to assist our brothers and sisters in General Service, and they with us; we are often asked to serve as consulting members of their committees, and we maintain a relationship built on mutual respect and common purpose.

An enduring legacy - in an article for the special issue of "The A.A. Grapevine" commemorating A.A.'s twenty-fifth anniversary, Warden Clinton Duffy, who was by then a member of the California Parole Board, said the following of Alcoholics Anonymous in prisons:

"The A.A. program is presented in a humble and humane manner, without high-pressure frills. This is the approach necessary to reach the man who has developed a highly suspicious nature. It helps him to face truth and reality, without self-pity or dodging of responsibility. It rids him of fears, hates, jealousies and suspicions that have been his for so long. He learns to eliminate his drinking – to fight the urge, the desire – to get help and Fellowship from his A.A. friends."<sup>9</sup>

In 2005 the 25-millionth copy of the book Alcoholics Anonymous was presented to Jill Brown, Warden of San Quentin Prison, in commemoration of the historic role San Quentin played in the development of Hospital and Institution work in A.A. <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The AA Grapevine, June 1960, "I Didn't Want To..."

<sup>10</sup> [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org), FAQs about AA History

# SAMPLE MEETING FORMATS

## SAMPLE FORMAT #1

### FOR H&I MEETINGS IN SHORT to MEDIUM TERM FACILITIES

**NOTE:** in certain medium-term facilities, the meeting can be run by an inside secretary, if desired.

Good evening ladies / gentlemen. This is the regular meeting of the (weekday) H&I group of Alcoholics Anonymous. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am an alcoholic and your secretary.

Let's open the meeting with a moment of silence, [optional: followed by the **SERENITY PRAYER**].

Read **A.A. PREAMBLE**

Have inside member read "**HOW IT WORKS**" from Chapter 5 of the A.A. Big Book (pp. 58-60) and another member read the steps.

Thank you all for coming to the meeting – we're glad you're here. In keeping with our singleness of purpose and our Third Tradition which states "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking", we ask all who participate to confine their discussion to their problem with alcohol. Also, in keeping with our Twelfth Tradition, we ask that you respect the anonymity of those present and that all discussion held at this meeting remains confidential.

**OPTIONAL:** go around room and have members introduce themselves.

**OPTIONAL:** ask for A.A. anniversaries that have occurred since the last meeting.

Introduce yourself and briefly qualify for 5-10 minutes.

Introduce speaker, who qualifies for 15-20 minutes (speaker can be guest speaker if meeting is structured as such).

Choose a discussion topic, but, since most of the inside members will have relatively short-term sobriety, or are entirely new to A.A., make it clear they are also free to ask questions.

Experience has shown that the following should be encouraged during discussion:

- Focus on the solution – sponsorship and the steps.
- Keep the discussion confined to what A.A. can do to help and away from outside issues.
- Side conversations and other disruptions should be discouraged as disrespectful to the person who is speaking.

**OPTIONAL** after discussion: have someone read "The Promises" from p.83 of Alcoholics Anonymous, or other suitable reading.

In closing, the Meeting Secretary should stress the following:

1. Literature available (provided as a gift by members of A.A.), especially meeting schedules.
2. Contact with local A.A. office or A.A. member immediately upon release – hand out Bridging The Gap cards if appropriate.
3. A.A. is not: a religious organization, an anti-alcohol movement, a social service organization, an employment agency, a loan office, a dating service.
4. A.A. does not: accept outside funds, run hospitals, prescribe treatment, pay for hospitalization of alcoholics.

Thank members for attending and close with the Serenity Prayer.

## **SAMPLE FORMAT #2**

### **FOR H&I MEETINGS IN LONG-TERM FACILITIES**

The members of the inside group should be encouraged to elect a steering committee of A.A. members consisting of at least a chairperson, secretary, and a literature person; this structure will provide continuity for the inside group and offer opportunities for service to the inside members.

- 1) The inside secretary opens the meeting with the Serenity Prayer and reads the preamble of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is the regular ... meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are glad you are all here. In keeping with our singleness of purpose and our Third Tradition which states, "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking", we ask all who participate to confine their discussion to their problem with alcohol.
- 2) A previously selected inside member reads a portion of the Fifth or Third Chapter from the book Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 3) The inside secretary introduces the outside participants to the group, and turns the meeting over to the inside chairperson.
- 4) If the meeting is to be a speaker meeting, the chairperson qualifies briefly and introduces the speaker(s).
- 5) If the meeting is to be a discussion meeting, the inside chairperson qualifies briefly and introduces the H&I meeting volunteer who also qualifies briefly and introduces the topic. These two then act as co-Chairs for the discussion, calling on inside and outside participants alternately. *(Remember, some inside members may have longer term sobriety and wider A. A. experience than do the outside participants).*
- 6) Every effort should be made to encourage participation in the discussion by the inside members. This fosters fellowship and demonstrates that A.A. is a society of equals.
- 7) The last five minutes of the meeting should be reserved for the H&I meeting volunteer to stress the importance of A.A. literature, sponsorship, and working the twelve suggested steps of recovery. Special note should be made of the importance of making an outside A.A. contact prior to release or discharge.

The inside chairperson makes announcements, and asks an inside member to lead the group in the closing prayer.

# THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principals in all our affairs.

# **THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF** **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God as He may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose -- to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



# I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere,  
reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of A.A.  
always to be there.  
And for that: I am responsible.

*Declaration of 30th Anniversary International Convention*