

How to form your RR Group Business Meeting

Refuge Recovery meetings are held by Refuge Recovery groups. It is the responsibility of each Refuge Recovery meeting to establish a group and hold a group business meeting as soon as possible after the meeting is established. Individual RR groups who hold RR meetings are the foundation of our recovery society.

The principle of trusted volunteers comes into being when the regular RR meeting members become willing to delegate the responsibility for running the meeting.

First a vote is held, among those who have been attending the meeting regularly, and have an agreed upon period of continuous time abstinent, to create a Steering Committee. This committee is tasked with creating the group business meeting.

The members who have been elected to create the group make up an informal Steering Committee. Votes are held among Steering Committee members for group officers. For information on how to vote in group business meetings please see *Voting and Quorum in RR Group Business Meetings* link on the Service resources page.

For the purpose of most groups, officers usually consist of a Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer, and where applicable, an Inter-Sangha Representative. In very small

RR Groups the group Secretary and Treasurer duties are often shared by one person. Some groups have additional officers depending on their specific needs.

The officers of a group must be chosen with care because of the responsibilities that their offices carry and the potential effect unqualified officers can have on their group. Recently a number of RR groups have suffered and broken up, due to the election of officers who were unqualified to serve or did not have a history of time abstinent in recovery.

The group Chairperson is responsible for the day-to-day functions of the group. It is the primary responsibility of the Chairperson to arrange for group business meetings, to assure that the group meeting takes place when and where it is supposed to, and to run the group business meeting according to the guidelines described in the How to Run A RR Business Meeting service resource.

The Secretary takes notes so that they can prepare the official written record of the meeting, called the “minutes.” Clear, accurate minutes are very important – they will be used to keep track of the group’s conscience, as well as unfinished business from previous business meetings.

The Treasurer of an RR group is responsible for the funds which are donated to the group and for the distribution of these funds. The money collected in our meetings must be carefully budgeted. There are numerous expenses necessary for running a group.

The Treasurer keeps an accurate record of all the group's financial transactions, he or she maintains the group bank account, and distributes monies to pay the rent, purchase books, buy supplies, and cover the costs of any miscellaneous expenses the group incurs. In order to maintain our groups, the monies which come from group collections and members contributions must always be used to further the Refuge Recovery purpose. After paying its bills and buying a small number of Refuge Recovery books to offer for sale at each meeting, each group should hold a reserve adequate to run the group for 2 or 3 months. After this reserve has been established, all funds are to be passed along to help Refuge Recovery as a whole. A group can do this by making contributions directly to the Refuge Recovery World Service Office. The Treasurer has a serious responsibility and much thought should be taken in selecting a member to perform this function.

As a general guide, we have found that the group Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer are most successful if they have certain assets necessary for the performance of their responsibilities.

These qualifications include:

1. The willingness or desire to serve.
2. A history of time abstinent from all intoxicants and process addictions. We suggest a *minimum* of twelve months time abstinent.
3. A good working knowledge of the Refuge Recovery program.
4. An understanding of the Refuge Recovery Guiding Principles.
5. Active and ongoing participation in the groups they are to serve.
6. Ability to work with others in a constructive manner.

These assets do not guarantee a good officer, however, they do help to ensure that those we choose will be capable of doing the job.

Normally, group Chairpersons, Secretaries and Treasurers serve for a period of one year at which time they are succeeded by other members who have been elected by the group.

Of course, relapse while serving as a trusted group volunteer triggers an automatic resignation for that officer.

One of the responsibilities of group officers is to train group members to replace them. A group can be

strengthened by new officers who are prepared to take over the responsibilities of those they replace. Continuity of service can be aided by staggering the election of trusted volunteers, and overlapping terms of service. choose your trusted officers well, it is you who they will be serving.

In some areas Refuge Recovery groups have formed Inter-Sangha committees to join together and serve our purpose in ways individual groups cannot. In these areas, or when multiple groups decide to form an Inter-Sangha, each group will need to elect an Inter-Sangha representative. Everything stated above regarding how to choose group officers also applies to the group Inter-Sangha Representative service position. Given the increased responsibility for this position, increased time abstinent requirements are appropriate. Our suggestion for the Inter-Sangha rep is twenty four months time abstinent.