

Starting Up

We at the General Service Board and the General Service Office know that many members will be excited by the prospect of meeting in-person again.

Specific guidelines have been and will continue to be set by government agencies of various nations that are covered by our service structure. Please check what is applicable where you live and where your meeting takes place. Be particularly careful where members homes and meeting venues might come under different jurisdictions.

The facilities in which we meet may also have their guidelines which should be taken into consideration.

We urge groups to consult and follow these suggestions to protect our members, our fellowship, and others with whom we come in contact

Other Important Considerations

Our Traditions

Each group is autonomous," we often note when making group decisions. The second part of the 4th Tradition is just as important: "except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." Tradition 1 tells us "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." These traditions remind us that we must ensure that our group decisions do not negatively impact our fellow members or A.A. as a whole and that we as individuals act in ways that ensure our common welfare. Traditions 1 and 4 are important now more than ever. We should always consider the health and well-being of both A.A. members and non-members, as well as protect the positive reputation and goodwill of A.A. in the community.

Questions to Consider

1. Does your group have a complete contact list to communicate with group members? Do you need one?
2. How will your group confirm the maximum number of people permitted in your meeting space?
3. How will your group ensure that this maximum is not exceeded?
4. How will your group ensure the appropriate social distance is maintained?
5. How will your group ensure face masks are worn where appropriate?
6. Will your group require members to have temperature checks, for instance, at home before the meeting, or even at the meeting?
7. How will your group sanitize contact surfaces before and after each meeting?
8. Will your group provide sanitizing gel or wipes for those arriving?

9. What if someone in your group needs to be tested for COVID 19? Will you keep a record of each attendee at each meeting so they may be informed while results are awaited? Who will hold this list? At what point may this list be destroyed?

10. What if contact tracing is necessary? How will your group help local health officials do contact tracing? Note: It is not necessary to break another member's anonymity for contract tracing. Members may simply say they met as friends or as part of a spiritual gathering.

11. If passing a physical basket is impossible, how will your group collect Seventh-Tradition contributions? Has an electronic account been set up? Some groups are using contactless card readers. Another suggestion was to restrict donations to coins dropped into a small sack that can all be disinfected before being handled? [Click here to go to GSO banking page](#)

12. How will physical materials (Steps, Traditions and Concepts banners, literature, meeting and phone lists, etc.) be handled? What about the set-up and breakdown of a meeting? Can physical meeting materials be replaced with virtual ones?

13. Will your group eliminate the distribution of coffee and food?

14. What will be your group's policy if an attendee is openly sick (e.g., coughing or feverish)?

15. Does your group have insurance cover? If not, should your group get a policy?

Please note the above list of questions is not intended to be exhaustive.

Practicing Step 12

Please be sure to consider older A.A. members or those with compromised immune systems who may not be able or comfortable returning to your physical meeting until there is an effective COVID 19 vaccine.

Hybrid or Concurrent Meetings

If your group decides to make a physical meeting accessible via Zoom or other electronic platform, we suggest procedures be put in place to alert attendees that the meeting is being broadcast via a virtual platform, and how anonymity will be protected when doing so. Meetings should not be recorded.

An alternative is to have both physical and virtual meetings of your group to ensure the hand of A.A. is always available to those who need it.

Please be sure to keep the General Service Office updated on both your physical meetings and virtual ones, the General Service Office's meeting list is the only one referred to by members doing service as first point of contact to the still suffering alcoholic, if they don't have up to date information, they cannot pass it on.

[Click here to go to meeting changes section](#)