

# Membership Development Guide

## Educate: A Fresh New Approach to Orientation (formerly Indoctrination)

It is crucial that you teach your candidates the fundamentals of your Lodge: the rules, expectations, customs, and how to carry out every day Lodge tasks that you now take for granted in knowing how to do properly. Think back through to when you first joined. Something so simple to you now was probably not so obvious during your early days as an Elk. Since this is an Orientation, ORIENT your members to your Lodge! This would include:

- **A tour of the Lodge**
  - Tell them what takes place in each area of your Lodge
- **A how-to session**
  - Examples: Sign-up sheets, calling in reservations, bringing in guests, etc.
- **Give candidates a written copy of the Lodge & House rules and customs**
  - When you provide rules in writing, there is no question or confusion as to what is and isn't accepted. Candidates have a right to know all of this.
  - If wearing hats is not permitted in your Lodge, or only at certain times, provide this information. Candidates can't read your mind!
  - Do not put them in the position of being embarrassed. The more you tell them before they encounter it blindly on their own, the more comfortable they will feel at the Lodge!

During Orientation, you also want to make the candidate feel welcome and valued and that their concerns are being addressed, help them to feel a connection to the Lodge and to the order, and explain the importance of being a member. Following these steps should help make this successful:

- Develop a welcome packet for new members
- Develop best ways to assimilate new members into the Lodge
- Explain how to become a good and productive member
- Explain how to use your membership in the Lodge and Order
- Convey the importance of and how to stay in touch - us with them and them with us
- Obtain from them the kinds of information they want, what is available to them, and how they wish to receive it
- Develop a privacy statement on how a new member's information will be used
- Explain how and why the new member needs to get involved
- Assess hobbies and interests of new members - not just what committee they want to be on

### The Purpose of Orientation:

The purpose of Orientation is to positively reinforce the candidate's decision to become an Elk by:

- Familiarizing candidates with the Lodge and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks
  - Lodge rules and expectations
  - Lodge customs
  - How to accomplish basic tasks in the Lodge (e.g. obtaining a new ID card, how to volunteer, who to ask questions of, how to get help, etc.)
- Answering candidate questions about the order and the Lodge
- Explaining what an Elk is and should be
- Answering candidate questions about the initiation ceremony

Orientation is accomplished at a Lodge meeting which all candidates are required to attend prior to initiation into the order. Transfers and reinstatements should also attend since they may not be familiar with the activities and traditions of the Lodge. In unusual circumstances where a candidate cannot attend a regular Orientation, the Lodge should have a procedure to accomplish the purpose of Orientation one-on-one.

The Orientation meeting is best conducted by using various presentation media which includes but is not limited to:

- Presenters:
  - Telling - giving information
  - Asking questions:
    - To find out what candidates know about Elks
    - To find out what candidates want to know
  - Interacting - creating a dialogue with the candidates
- Computer generated materials / computer aided presentations
- Grand Lodge and/or Indiana State Elks Association video media
- Provide written materials not provided in the Lodge Secretary's Packet (Lodge house rules, current Lodge bulletin, copy of obligation, etc. - Check with Lodge Secretary)

The physical setting of the Orientation meeting is as important as its content. The room should:

- Be attractive with comfortable seating
- Be insulated from outside noise
- Be well lit
- Be maintained at a comfortable temperature
- Have workable video and sound equipment
- Have the United States flag present
- Offer hors d'oeuvres or a light buffet before or after the meeting. This is a nice touch which allows time for candidate interaction with the officers and Elks present.
- Offer other ice breakers also serve to welcome the candidates into our Elk "family."

It is recommended that the following attend Orientation meetings to support the effort to reinforce the candidate's decision to become an Elk and Indoctrination/Orientation's importance to the order and the Lodge:

- All officers, not just the chair officers
- Committee Chairmen: House, Lodge Activities, Elks National Foundation
- The candidates' sponsors as the new members' mentors to the organization
- Candidates' spouses and family members should be encouraged to attend

Each Lodge needs to establish its own Orientation meeting format and procedures. What follows is an example your Lodge might want to use as a guide, but since all Lodges are different, you will all want to put your own spin on it.

# Example Agenda for a Lodge Orientation Meeting

## Opening:

### **Meeting Moderator** (*Moderator should be a Lodge officer or PER*)

- Gives the welcome
- Introduces self
- Introduces Chaplain and asks those present to rise for Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

### **Chaplain**

- Gives Invocation
- Leads group in Pledge of Allegiance

### **Moderator**

- Asks group to sit
- States purpose for Orientation
- Asks the candidates for any initial questions (*this gives presenters a sense of what the candidates hope to learn during the session so that it can be addressed in the meeting*)
- Asks Exalted Ruler to come forward for opening remarks

### **Exalted Ruler**

- Welcomes candidates and spouses
- Introduces Lodge officers present
- Asks each sponsor to introduce candidate(s)
- Reviews Orientation meeting agenda (*agendas should be available to each person present - at each seat before meeting, handed out at the door, or given out during this portion*)

### **Moderator**

- Takes charge of meeting content and introduces topics, videos, and speakers.

## Orientation Meeting:

### **Moderator**

Provides brief overview of Elksdom's structure (Grand Lodge, State Association, Lodge, Member)

- **Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America**
  - Grand Lodge (*show current Grand Lodge video*)
  - Elks National Foundation (*have ENF Committee Chairman speak, show ENF video, or both*)  
*- place emphasis on getting more back than we give at state and Lodge level*
- **Indiana Elks Association (IEA)**
  - IEA description
  - Grand Lodge relationship to IEA
  - Lodge relationship to IEA
  - IEA Major Project
  -
-

### **Local Lodge Organization**

- Lodge (*have Esteemed Leading Knight or other designated officer present*)
  - Present Lodge structure (Who does what?)
  - Local charities
  - Community activities/Service
  - Why volunteer at the Lodge? (*many new members belong to other organizations and need encouragement to spend some of their volunteer time on Lodge programs*)
- Social Quarters/Club (kitchen & bar) (*have House Committee or individual in charge of social quarters/club present*)
  - Social activities
  - Volunteering opportunities (*It is recommended that you be as specific as possible when requesting volunteers because vague appeals for volunteerism usually result in little or no response; have a list of needs.*)

### **Closing:**

#### **Moderator**

- Asks Exalted Ruler to give closing remarks

#### **Exalted Ruler**

- Gives closing remarks
- Asks candidates and spouses if they have any more questions
- Welcomes them and encourages participation in all Lodge Activities (*the benefits of Elkdom are achieved through involvement*)
- Reintroduces Lodge Esquire and asks candidates to meet Esquire at designated location
- for Initiation walk-through after the benediction
- Asks group to stand for benediction

#### **Chaplain**

- Gives benediction

### **After Meeting:**

#### **Lodge Esquire**

- Takes candidates to Lodge Room for Initiation walk-through (*it is recommended that the Esquire provide each candidate with a copy of the obligation which they can review prior to the Initiation ceremony*)

#### **Spouses, sponsors, Lodge officers, and others present**

- Socialize in meeting room or lounge

#### **Lodge Esquire & Candidates**

- After Initiation walk-through, they join the others for more socializing (*Those in attendance at the Indoctrination/Orientation meeting should socialize together. Drinks and food provide an opportunity to sit and visit in a less formal atmosphere. This provides an opportunity for the candidates to feel welcomed and meet Elks other than their sponsors.*)