

Saddleback Valley Fellowship Group Guidelines

2025

The Saddleback Valley Fellowship Group (hereafter referred to as SVFG) is a group of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) members who have followed the 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous since its inception in the early 1980s. These SVFG guidelines will guide us as a group in utilizing the Twelve Traditions as we take each action toward our primary purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics achieve sobriety.

“Today we in A.A. are together, and we know we are going to stay together... we have evolved a set of traditional principles by which we live and work together and relate ourselves as a fellowship to the world around us. These principles are called the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. They represent the distilled experience of our past, and we rely on them to carry us in unity through the challenges and dangers which the future may bring.”

from **Alcoholics Anonymous Come of Age**, page 79

- 1. Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.**

- The SVFG is a group of alcoholics who come together in the spirit of unity to support one another through fellowship. All AA meeting attendees are considered members of the SVFG and all AA meetings occurring in the space leased by the SVFG are considered SVFG meetings. Every individual entering the facility leased by SVFG is responsible for supporting and protecting the Traditions of A.A. and the SVFG Guidelines.

. [\[See Appendix A – SVFG Code of Conduct\]](#)

- 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.**

- The SVFG shall elect Trusted Servants to hold monthly Steering Committee meetings at which the Group Conscience shall be taken using the method recommended in the AA Service Manual which uses Robert’s Rules of Order and AA’s Third Legacy. Specific policies and procedures that are voted into use through our group conscience shall be recorded and archived for future reference. [\[See Appendix B – AA Service Manual\]](#)

- 3. Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence, we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.**

- All individuals with a desire to stop drinking, who attend AA meetings at SVFG, are members of the SVFG.

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“Our traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living. And they are to group survival what A.A.’s twelve steps are to each member’s sobriety and peace of mind...Most individuals cannot recover unless there is a group. The group must survive or the individual will not”.

from **“The Twelve Traditions Illustrated”**

4. **With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.**

- The SVFG shall follow the service structure outlined in the pamphlet ***The AA Group...where it all begins.*** The roles and duties specific to the SVFG shall be voted into use through our group conscience then recorded and archived for future reference. [[See Appendix D – Steering Committee Officers](#)].

5. **Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose - that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.**

- The SVFG’s Primary Purpose, “to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers” is carried out via meetings at the facility.

- The SVFG will “carry its message” through AA Conference Approved Literature.

6. **Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A., such as clubs or hospitals which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the A.A. name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, A.A. managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside A.A. - and medically supervised. While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never to so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one.**

- There shall be no implied or presumed affiliation between the SVFG and anything other than Alcoholics Anonymous.

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- 7. The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this idea; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then, too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.**

- The SVFG shall be fully self-supporting through 7th Tradition contributions.

- 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we might otherwise have to engage non-alcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for.**
- 9. Each A.A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principal newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.**

- The SVFG Steering Committee Officers are elected from the group to serve two-year positions in order to conduct group conscience decisions for the common welfare of the SVFG.

“Those who take part in A.A. service work are assuming responsibility -- not taking on authority.”

from **“The Twelve Traditions Illustrated”**

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10. No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues - particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.

- No member of the SVFG shall make any statement on behalf of the SVFG on any outside issue.

11. Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

- The SVFG maintains an informational website providing meeting types, days, and times.

12. And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

The SVFG shall refer to and be guided by the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts in all its affairs.

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Appendix A

Code of Common Welfare

- Our common welfare comes first—every individual is responsible
- Our premises are drug and alcohol-free
- Smoking, fellowshipping, and vaping are allowed only in designated areas
- Service animals only
- Common courtesy includes appropriate dress, for safety shoes and shirts required
- Respect for persons and property includes quiet behaviors in common areas, attention to cleanliness in bathrooms and hallways, and thoughtful consideration of all persons
- Literature is limited to AA or Al-Anon Conference approved for purchase or use in SVFG meetings

The term “Conference Approved” refers to literature and/or audiovisual material approved by the General Service Conference for publication by the General Service Office. Please see “**AA Guidelines - Conference Approved Literature.**”

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Appendix B

Robert's Rules of Order is the standard for facilitating discussions and group decision-making. Although they may seem long and involved, having an agreed upon set of rules makes meetings run easier. **Robert's Rules** will help your group have better meetings, not make them more difficult. Your group is free to modify them or find another suitable process that encourages fairness and participation, unless your bylaws state otherwise. Copies of the rules are available at most bookstores.

Here are the basic elements of **Robert's Rules**, used by most organizations:

1. **Motion:** To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a group member ("I move that.....") A second motion must then also be made (raise your hand and say, "I second it.") After limited discussion the group then votes on the motion. A majority vote is required for the motion to pass (or quorum as specified in your bylaws.)
2. **Postpone Indefinitely:** This tactic is used to kill a motion. When passed, the motion cannot be reintroduced at that meeting. It may be brought up again at a later date. This is made as a motion ("I move to postpone indefinitely..."). A second is required. A majority vote is required to postpone the motion under consideration.
3. **Amend:** This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered. Raise your hand and make the following motion: "I move to amend the motion on the floor." This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted. Then a vote is taken on the amended motion. In some organizations, a "friendly amendment" is made. If the person who made the original motion agrees with the suggested changes, the amended motion may be voted on without a separate vote to approve the amendment.
4. **Commit:** This is used to place a motion in committee. It requires a second. A majority vote must be ruled to carry it. At the next meeting the committee is required to prepare a report on the motion committed. If an appropriate committee exists, the motion goes to that committee. If not, a new committee is established.
5. **Question:** To end a debate immediately, the question is called (say "I call the question") and needs a second. A vote is held immediately (no further discussion is allowed). A two-thirds vote is required for passage. If it is passed, the motion on the floor is voted on immediately.
6. **Table:** To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time ("I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.") A second is needed and a majority vote required to table the item being discussed.
7. **Adjourn:** A motion is made to end the meeting. A second motion is required. A majority vote is then required for the meeting to be adjourned (ended).

Note: If more than one motion is proposed, the most recent takes precedence over the ones preceding it. For example, if #6, a motion to table the discussion, is proposed, it must be voted on before #3, a motion to amend, can be decided.

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In a smaller meeting, like a committee or board meeting, often only three motions are used:

- To introduce (motion.)
- To change a motion (amend.)
- To adopt (accept a report without discussion.)

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Appendix C

- Individual meeting formats are focused on our Group's primary purpose. Formats include an opening, how the topic is chosen, a 7th Tradition collection, a secretary's report and a closing.
- Individuals wishing to start a new meeting at the SVFG are encouraged to bring their proposed format along with the desired day of week, time and the specific room requested, to a Steering Committee meeting for review and Group Conscience.

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Appendix D

- Each individual meeting secretary is responsible for collecting, counting, and placing contributions in the SVFG safe for each meeting. Each individual meeting secretary is also encouraged to participate in the monthly Steering Committee Meeting.

- The SVFG Steering Committee Treasurer is responsible for banking the group's contributions, paying the group's rent and expenses, and prudent reserve per AA guidelines.

- The SVFG Steering Committee Treasurer is responsible for donating any 7th Tradition contributions over group expenses to AA District, Area, and GSO.

Steering Committee Officers and Duties - The Officers of the Saddleback Valley Fellowship Group Steering Committee shall be Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Archivist. These Officers shall perform the duties described in these SVFG Guidelines.

- ▶ **Chair**: The Chair shall preside over all Steering Committee meetings in addition to all Special Committee meetings. They shall provide general leadership to the group

- ▶ **Co-Chair**: The Co-Chair shall assist the Chair with all duties and preside over the Steering Committee and Special Committee meetings in the Chair's absence. The Co-Chair will also read reports from Service Positions or Officers if the person responsible for the position is absent.

- ▶ **Secretary**: The Secretary shall keep minutes for all Steering Committee and Special Committee meetings. They will create the agenda for the next meeting and send the minutes to the Webmaster for posting.

- ▶ **Treasurer**: The Treasurer shall maintain the Group's bookkeeping and bank accounts in accordance with fiduciary responsibilities. The Treasurer shall coordinate with the Board Treasurer to ensure facility rent, bills, etc. are paid in a timely manner. The Treasurer shall provide the Steering Committee with a monthly Profit and Loss Statement for accurate tax preparation purposes.

- ▶ **Archivist**: The Archivist shall keep a record of the Group's decisions made during Steering Committee group conscience procedures. The record shall include the full motion as stated in the Steering Committee meeting, any notes of discussion, the final vote, and whether the motion is carried. Dissenting or minority opinions will be recorded.

Eligibility for Election - Candidates must have 2 years of sobriety, Time requirement can be waived by group conscience.

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Election and Term of Office - The Officers of the Steering Committee shall be elected as needed. Notification of pending elections shall be posted for all group meetings. Interested, qualified candidates will be nominated and voted on during the next Steering Committee meeting. Term of Service shall be a 2-year commitment. An Officer may be terminated or re-assigned at the Steering Committee's discretion after missing 3 or more consecutive Steering Committee meetings.

Removal from Office - Any Steering Committee Officer who misses Steering Committee Meetings for two (2) successive regularly scheduled meetings, except for illness or absence from town, may be removed from the position. The Steering Committee is authorized to grant a temporary leave of absence to any Officer of the Steering Committee for good cause.

Service Positions and Duties - The Service Positions for the Saddleback Valley Fellowship Group shall be in accordance with standard Alcoholics Anonymous Traditions and Concepts as well as establish Special Positions to serve the needs of the Group and the Center. These current Service Positions are: Supply Person, Co-Supply Person, Chips & Literature, Grapevine, Event Coordinator, Webmaster, Deposit Personnel (up to 3 persons), GSR, Intergroup Representative, Registrar, and Commitment Coordinator. All Service persons will be required to attend the regular Steering Committee meetings to report.

- * The Supply Person and Co-Supply Person shall make sure that the Center has the necessary items on hand for the day-to-day use of the groups as directed by the Steering Committee. This includes but is not limited to, coffee supplies, cleaning supplies, and bathroom supplies.
- * The Chips & Literature Person shall make sure all books, pamphlets, meeting directories, chips and all Alcoholics Anonymous literature as outlined by the Steering Committee are available to the groups. This includes items for sale as well as for use by the groups.
- * The Grapevine Representative shall receive the monthly Grapevine magazine and maintain the Grapevine lending library.
- * The Event Coordinator shall interface with the Saddleback Valley Fellowship Board and Steering Committee to assist in special events or special holiday functions. Also, they will be the main point of contact and organizer should the Saddleback Valley Fellowship Center Board desire to hold a special fundraiser.
- * The Webmaster shall update the Saddleback Valley Fellowship Center website with information that has been approved by the Steering Committee.
- * The Deposit Personnel may include up to three (3) persons. This will allow 2 people together to regularly count the 7th Tradition collections, deposit the collections, and report to the Treasurer.

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- * The GSR Representative shall attend the GSR meetings and functions for our District and report at the monthly Steering Committee meeting.
- * The Intergroup Representative shall attend the Intergroup meetings and functions for our District and report back to the monthly Steering Committee meeting.
- * The Registrar shall keep track of all meetings held at the Center and update all secretary information for the groups.
- * The Commitment Coordinator shall run a Secretary Meeting every quarter and help facilitate commitments at the group meeting level.
- * The Zoommaster shall ensure Zoom is properly set up and functioning for hybrid meetings.

Eligibility for Service - Candidates are recommended to have 2 years of continuous sobriety and be willing to serve for 2 years. Time requirements can be waived by group conscience.

Special Committees - Special Committees will be formed as needed. A Special Committee may be requested by the Board, an Officer of the Steering Committee, or any member of the fellowship. The request will be reviewed by the Steering Committee Officers, and, if a majority agree, this will be voted on by the general membership.

Elections and Terms of Service - Elections will be held as needed at the regularly scheduled Steering Committee meetings. Notification of openings will be posted at all group meetings. Interested, qualified candidates will be nominated and voted on during the next Steering Committee meeting. Term of Service shall be a 2-year commitment. Any Service Position holder who lapses in sobriety may be terminated or re-assigned at the Steering Committee's discretion. Position holders who miss 3 or more meetings may be terminated or re-assigned at the Steering Committee's discretion.

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Appendix E

Archival Record of SVFG Group Conscience Decisions