

HOW TO ORGANIZE



Good Sam Club

A NEW
GOOD SAM CHAPTER

ORGANIZING A CHAPTER

The first thing to keep in mind in organizing a chapter is to find a group of family member and friends who want to **GO RVING AND HAVE FUN**. We suggest that you start with at least 6-8 family members or friends and build your Chapter from there. Once you have accomplished that, you are 90% complete on organizing a chapter. Do not get bogged down with rules and regulations. Remember you want to have fun. However, in any organization, some structure is needed. The Good Sam Club has taken care of most of the work. They developed a Constitution and a set of By-laws that are used by everyone in the entire Good Sam organization. All you need are some basic guidelines to make each outing more enjoyable and fun. Most chapters establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that they go by. These SOPs include chapter dues (if any), when they want to camp (which weekend), when they want to elect officers, etc. Remember, the basic reason to organize a Good Sam Chapter is to GO RVING and HAVE FUN with other RVers who feel the same. Your State Director is the highest officer of the Good Sam Club in your state, and he/she is available to help you organize your chapter.

The only requirement for someone to become a chapter member is that they be a member of the Good Sam Club in good standing. That basically means that they are a member of the Good Sam Club and their dues are current. It is also requested that all chapter members adhere to the The Good Sam Club Pledge which is as follows - *As a member of the Good Sam Club I pledge to give aid to others in need, respect nature and the environment, give back to the community and those less fortunate, treat others with dignity and respect, and to wear a smile (like Good Sam and Good Samantha's) and promote the pledge of the Good Sam Club to others.*

As in any organization, you will need a person to lead your chapter. That person is commonly referred to as the Chapter President. Most other chapters have additional officer who help. The ones most chapters elect are: Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer (or a Secretary/Treasurer), and Wagonmaster. The method you chose to elect officers is up to you. You can have a formal election or you can just have people agree to assume the positions. It does not matter as long as it is what your group wants to do.
(the suggested duties of chapter officers are on page 3)

Now that you have the basics behind you in your decision to form a chapter, all that remains is the paper work. A New Chapter Registration form must be filled out, and your State Director can assist you with filling out the form. It will be filled out in triplicate. You will keep a copy, the State Director will get a copy and the original will be sent to the Good Sam Club who will issue your Good Sam Charter. Your charter will be presented to you at a later date by the State Director.

Let's hope you did not let yourself get too bogged down with the business end of forming a chapter. Remember, the reason you became a Good Sam Chapter was to **GO RVING** and **HAVE FUN**. There are some final things you may wish to consider. You need to consider having business meetings. Some chapters have them monthly, some quarterly, and some as needed. Your chapter must decide what is best for them. It is a good rule of thumb to always use Robert's Rules of Order as their guideline for your business meetings. There are always things coming up that chapters need to vote about.

Another item is dues. Some chapters charge dues as high as \$25 per year while others charge as low as \$5 per year. It is up to you. There are some chapters that have suspended dues because the chapter treasury reached a specific amount. Others have no dues and just take up a collection if the chapter needs some money. It is your call.

As your chapter moves forward and interacts with other chapters, there will be other things that come up you may wish to do or get involved with. State Samborees or Regional Rallys may be something your chapter wishes to get involved with. Samborees are a time when members from across the state

and from other states get together and have fun. Samborees offer something for everyone. There are games, tours, seminars, entertainment and much more. It is a wonderful time to learn and grow as a Good Sam chapter. While at the Samborees, you will notice chapters wearing vest, hats, shirts, etc. depicting their chapter logos.

Chapter logos, or patches, may be designed and displayed as long as certain requirements are met: All Chapter patches, flags, and decals containing the Sponsor Trademarks must receive prior written approval from the State Director and the Sponsor before being produced or distributed. The Good Sam Club is very proud of its logo and all it represents. Good Sam's smiling face is the most recognizable logo in the RV industry so it is critical that the logo must always be appropriately illustrated. The Good Sam Club asks that you adhere to their requirements whenever you use the Good Sam Club logo. All patches or logos must include either the words "Good Sam" or the Good Sam logo (Sam's smiling face), the majority of the chapters design their own logo to use on their vest, shirt, hat and/or flag and submit it to the State and Regional Director for approval.

DISCLAIMER: Colors and styles should never be modified. The Good Sam name and logo (Sam's smiling face) are registered trademarks of Good Sam Enterprises. The Good Sam Club name and/or logo are not to be used for commercial enterprises. Logo versions of the logo are available from the State Director. The official red color that represents the Club is PMS 485. This PMS color should be used as the red color in any materials you print. The sponsor Trademarks shall only be used in good taste and to promote the Good Sam pledge and Chapter activities in a manner consistent with the spirit and written text of the Constitution, By-Laws and other policies of the Club, which shall be determined in the sole and absolute discretion of the Sponsor. The Club has given state organizations and Chapters permission to use the Good Sam name and logo on state and Chapter patches, flags, decals, etc. when these items are made up for non-commercial identification purposes only. This means that any item must include the state or Chapter name and/or logo in addition to the Good Sam name and/or logo. The Good Sam logo cannot be used alone for any state/province or Chapter purpose including stationery, business cards, and notepads, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc. for you or your staff.

By this time, several questions may have come up. As times goes on, most of the questions will be answered. If not, just ask your State Director. Remember, the only dumb question is the one that is not asked. One question most often asked is about state officers. As was said earlier, the highest officer of the Club in the State is the State Director. The State Director has the authority to appoint other State Officers as needed, with the exception of the State Treasurer, who must be elected by the State Committee. Most likely, your State Director has appointed some Assistant State Directors (ASDs) and other State Staff members to help. ASDs help in the formation of new Chapters and administer to all Chapters in their geographical area. The State Director may suggest that you work with an ASD in your area during its formative phase.

This concludes the basics. Thank you for deciding to become a Good Sam Chapter. You have decided to become a member of the largest RV organization in the world and one that prides itself in its volunteer spirit. The name Good Sam was taken from the story of the Good Samaritan in the Bible who helped a stranger in need. Always keep that in mind as you are rolling down the highways and by-ways with that Good Sam smile on your face. Also, remember you can contact your State Director if you have any questions.

The following pages have some suggestions you may wish to read about Suggested Duties of Officers, Suggestions for Planning Campouts, and the State Committee and its functions.

THE SUGGESTED DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS ARE:

PRESIDENT: Presides at all meetings; appoints all committees, supervises all Chapter activities; represents the Chapter as a member of the State Committee at all State Committee meetings.

VICE-PRESIDENT: Conducts meetings in the absence of the President; coordinates activities of all committees.

SECRETARY: The secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Chapter with the time and place of the meeting, how called or authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at Chapter meetings, number of members present at membership meetings and proceedings thereof. Receives, reads and answers all correspondence after action taken by membership at meeting, or at the direction of the Chapter President.

TREASURER: The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds, securities and assets of the Chapter; shall be responsible for keeping full and accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements, and report to all Chapter members all such receipts and disbursements made on a monthly basis.

WAGONMASTER: Responsible for contacting the campgrounds and serving as a liaison between the chapter and the campground. They usually negotiate a special rate for chapter members and relay the number of chapter members planning to attend the outing to the campground. Also, they usually relay to the chapter members the best and safest route to the campground. Some Wagonmasters drive to the campground so that they may see the facilities before the campout. This helps the Chapter know what is going happen before the event occurs.

THE STATE COMMITTEE

The State Committee is the most important body in the State, for it along with the State Director governs the State's activities. It consists of the State Director and each Chapter President in the State. When formed, a State Committee has the voting power to reconcile serious disputes within the State and in any Chapter within the State with each chapter being entitled to one vote in State matters. Generally, the Chapter is represented on the State Committee by the Chapter President. If he/she is unable to attend, he/she may appoint a delegate to take his/her place. The State Director is the chairman of the State Committee and he/she organizes and conducts all State Committee meetings. The State Director is only allowed to vote in the event of a tie.

The State Committee works with the State Director and other State Officers in the planning of State Samborees and other important State, Regional, or National Events.

The State Committee is responsible for electing a State Treasurer. The State Treasurer is elected by the State Committee to serve a two-year term concurrent with the State Director. The State Treasurer takes office on January 1st of the year following the election. The State Committee is given the authority by the Good Sam Club to establish, regulate, and control a State treasury. The Good Sam Club has also empowered the State Committee's right to levy a reasonable fee to be paid by all Chapter members within the State, to be placed in the State treasury. Such a levy will only be recognized by the Club if made by a three-fourths vote of the Chapter delegates attending a meeting of the State Committee held after thirty (30) days written notice of the purpose of the meeting to the Chapter delegates within the State. The vote to levy a fee may be made by mail if a delegate from a chapter cannot attend the meeting. All such funds shall be the sole property of the State Committee and regulated by the State Treasurer.

It is the responsibility of each Chapter to participate in these meetings and to become involved with the State Committee. If you need any additional information about the State Committee, you should contact your State Director.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANNING CAMPOUTS

1. The first thing to do is find some campgrounds where you want to camp. There are many ways of locating potential campgrounds. Some ways to find campgrounds are to look in the Trailer Life Directory, State Campground Owners Association Book, State Parks and City Parks lists, or through local tourist information centers. Probably, one of the best ways is by word-of-mouth referrals from other campers or groups. Many chapter members stop and look at different campgrounds when they are out on their own and bring back brochures.

2. After you have chosen your campgrounds, it is recommended that chapter members make campground reservations. It is a good idea to make those reservations at least 30 days in advance. Keep in mind that some campgrounds require reservations earlier than 30 day, so it is a good idea to make your reservations A.S.A.P. Also, most campgrounds require a deposit for at least one night. Be prepared to pay it at the time you make the reservations. Also, check with the cancellation policy when you make your reservation.

3. There are many things to look for when selecting a good campground. Always ask about water, electricity, sewer, cable and bathhouse facilities. Ask about the number of rig spaces, and all amenities the campground may offer. Also, check to see if the campground has a clubhouse that your chapter can use. During bad weather periods and at night it is wise to have use of an indoor facility so that you don't have to meet in a rig. Some parks may charge an extra fee for the use of their clubhouse, but most do not. It is also a good idea to check on the accessibility of nearby markets, restaurants and entertainment. Ask if your group can be parked together. It is always a good idea to know the park rules to make sure that your group can adhere to them. If you visit the campsite prior to the event, look around for overall cleanliness and the staff's willingness to make your campout successful. Lastly, check the park's rating in the Trailer Life Campground Directory.

4. When negotiating campground rates, ask about group rates for the number of rigs that you are expecting to attend. In most chapters, it is the Wagonmaster who contacts the campgrounds and negotiates the "deal" for the chapter. Most campgrounds will honor the 10% Good Sam discount while others will give a Good Sam chapter a better rate. Also, some may waive camping fees for the Wagonmaster or Chapter President. The advantage of checking out campsites prior to the event allows you the opportunity to know which campgrounds offer you the best discount for your group and has the best overall facilities. When checking out the campground, always look to see if they

5. Most chapters have some planned activates during their outing while others do not. If you wish to plan activities, some are more successful than others at a campout. Indoor games might include cards, dominoes, board games or bingo. Group games are important so that everyone may participate. Weather permitting, outdoor activities during the day might include horseshoes, bocce ball, bean bag toss, (corn hole), bean bag baseball, murbles, and washers toss. Organize a carpool and take local sightseeing trips or eat out. Some Chapters plan a theme for their campouts, while others have a host that plans the weekend activities. Other chapters plan meals together at the campground. Campouts are a good time to celebrate monthly birthdays and anniversaries and also an excellent time for a monthly business meeting. You should plan on having at least one meal as a group. Pot luck meals are always fun and everyone gets to participate. It is best to appoint someone to oversee the meal so that there is a variation of foods. Another choice for group meals is a cookout. One thing to keep in mind when planning your campouts is that the more exciting you make the event, the better the chances that your Chapter will want to continue having them.