

APPENDIX A

**OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS REGION 9**  
**Procedures and Suggestions for Hosting Region 9 Assembly and Convention –**  
**(Last updated September 2014)**

This document has been prepared by Region 9 members who have helped to organise previous Region 9 Assemblies and Conventions and whilst it is not intended to cover every eventuality, we hope it will be helpful for service bodies considering taking on this service so they know what to expect and for those in the process of organising to be a useful starting point for your committee discussions. This document will mostly concentrate on the Assembly part and leave the Convention part more open for your service body to arrange.

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## **BYLAWS**

Extract from Article V of Bylaws (following 2010 Assembly)

### **Section 1**

*Region 9 shall hold one Assembly per year.*

*A Region 9 Convention may also be held in conjunction with the Region 9 Assembly if the hosting Intergroup or National/Language Service Board is in a position to do so.*

### **Section 2**

*Notification of this Assembly shall be mailed or emailed to all member groups, Intergroups, unaffiliated groups and National Service Boards at least six months prior to the date of the Assembly. The notification will include an invitation to the Assembly from the organising committee, the registration form to send a delegate, a blank new business motion, and bylaws amendment motion.*

Even though the Bylaws state that the notification need to go out 6 months prior to Assembly – there will be considerable organization beforehand and so it is best for the Region to let the fellowship know about the Assembly arrangements as early as possible to help facilitate travel arrangements and keep travel costs to a minimum etc and thus encourage attendance. The following are some suggestions:-

## **TIMETABLE**

### **2 YEARS IN ADVANCE**

- Service bodies need to be thinking about whether they can host the Region 9 Assembly a few years in advance of the assembly they might host. The service body will need to consider whether they have enough willing members to arrange what is necessary.
- The service body will need to do some research on the venue as to times available / costs / facilities / travel arrangements some two years in advance of the assembly. The venue needs to accommodate the assembly room, the committee rooms, representatives accommodation. It does not need to be lavish. It does however, need to accommodate OA members food plans, be clean and functional and reasonably easily to access by public transport.
- The service body will bring this information to the Region 9 Assembly that same Autumn to be considered by the Assembly along with other service bodies.
- The Assembly will consider the date and venue suitability as well as the committee arrangements together with other service body proposals at that stage and will discuss and vote on all the proposals.
- The place and date of the Region 9 Assembly will be at the latest established at the Assembly prior.
- If successfully elected as R9 Assembly host, and once the date is confirmed then the committee need to book the venue as soon as possible.

### **ONE YEAR PRIOR**

- The hosting service body committee should then begin to put in place the various details of the Assembly and Convention. They will need a theme, speakers, packs of materials for the Convention if necessary, timetables for the weekend, meeting rooms etc.
- Confirm the theme with the Region 9 Board

### **NINE MONTHS PRIOR**

- Ensure the flyer, invitation and registration forms has been prepared and sent to Region 9 Board 6 months in advance of the Assembly

### **SIX MONTHS PRIOR**

- Over the next few months, work on the finer details of the assembly, arrange speakers and any materials you need (voting cards, badges, handouts, etc), exact timetable for convention, liaise with venue, and receive registrations.

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### SIX WEEKS PRIOR

- Liaise with R9 Secretary regarding numbers of attendees

### **ASSEMBLY GUIDELINES AND R9 BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- The Region 9 board are responsible for organising and assembling the materials that the representatives will need for the assembly itself. The hosting intergroup do not need to get involved in the details of the assembly itself. However, the Chair and some of the organisers of workshops will often need various 'handouts' and schedules.
- There is usually 20 – 30 in attendance at the Assembly and to carry 20 – 30 copies of each piece of paper is often not possible due to air craft weight restrictions etc. If possible please arrange with the Chair if anything is needed to be copied – ahead of the Assembly.
- Once the venue has been organized – the Region 9 Board members and OA Region 9 representatives will book their own accommodation directly with the venue and sort out who they are sharing a room with. Traditionally members will share rooms whenever possible to save costs.
- The hosting service body decides on the theme for the Convention (check with R9 Board).

### **FINANCES:**

- Region 9 will pay the expenses for attendance of the Region 9 Board (Chair, Secretary & Treasurer) which will include travel and accommodation and food for the Assembly & Convention. (Wed – Sun)
- Assembly registration fee will be collected by the Region 9 treasurer and will go to Region 9
- This will go towards the various expenses that the Region covers and will be included in the income as covered in the Region Budget.
- The service body that organizes the Assembly will collect any Convention registration fee following the Assembly. This should cover any costs that the Convention will incur. The Convention has historically made a considerable contribution to Region 9 after the Assembly / Convention by the hosting service body which is part of or the entire surplus for the Convention.
- To keep costs down often documents are printed by the hosts to save on luggage weight costs, if you are asked to print items, please consider printing each document on to a different colour paper as it helps delegates to easily identify documents.

### **SUB COMMITTEE**

- As you will be working as a Committee and are part of a Fellowship, please follow the Traditions, making all decisions by group conscience and unanimous agreement wherever possible. Members are expected to liaise closely with each other, consulting with the rest of the Committee when making decisions that affect the Assembly and/ or OA as a whole.
- A subcommittee to organize this sort of event is ideally made up of 4-6 OA members (less people means a lot of work for only a few people, too many and it becomes unwieldy)
- It is useful to have a chair for the committee to oversee the timetable and liaise with the R9 Board and a secretary to make notes of all telephone discussions / meetings / decisions made
- If you correspond by email, it is helpful to keep to one subject per email and to ensure that the subject is clear

### **VENUE REQUIREMENTS**

- With regard to the room for the assembly meeting and any ancillary rooms for the committee meetings – it is normal for the Hosting service body to try to arrange with

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the hotel / venue that these rooms will be free as part of the organization of the weekend.

- This needs to be given careful consideration as there are no funds in the Region 9 budget to cover this aspect. We arrange the hotel in the autumn partly to accommodate the fact that it is cheaper than the summer. Hotels often accept that if a group takes their full quota of rooms – that is enough to then grant them use of the necessary meeting rooms to hold the assembly.
- Establish the no of representatives registered with the Region 9 Secretary approximately 6 weeks before the Assembly. Keep in touch with the Secretary after this date for late registrations. (Recently – this can be as many as 25 attendants to the Assembly + visitors).
- Organise the meeting room so that there is a meeting table space and chair available for each representative – arranged in an oblong style so that the Chair, Parliamentarian, Secretary and Treasurer can be seated at the ‘top’ of this oblong and thus see the representatives for voting and recognition purposes.
- Several people may be using laptops and will need access to power points (please do not agree to any additional rooms costs though without discussing with R9 board first).
- Each representative needs a card in front of them that shows their name, service body and / or Country that they are representing - that will be visible in front of them while they are seated. (NB It is not a requirement but in the past sometimes these cards have had the National Flag on them also).
- The representatives will also require a name badge that they will be required to wear to all meetings in order to be recognized. This will normally be on a string so that it can be hung around the neck or on a clip so that it can be pinned to the representative’s clothing.
- The hosting service body prepares these at the same time as the cards for the places.
- The Chair will normally require a flip chart and pens and flip chart pad to use at the Assembly. This will need to be organized by the hosting service body.
- There may be call for one / two microphones depending on the room.
- Occasionally the Chair / Secretary / Treasurer may require an overhead projector. Once again there is not a budget for these items in the Region 9 finances so it is a good idea that if there is a charge, that we know what they are ahead of time so that the Region 9 Board can make the decision of whether to have these services or not. Often hotels try to raise their revenue / re-coup their expenses by charging for these sorts of services. Region 9 avoid this if at all possible and at best pay only a minimum.
- Committee Meetings are usually held in a different room from the Main assembly room and often are several small rooms so that each committee has enough space to work without disturbing each other.
- The R9 Board hold a meeting at the end of the Assembly, please ensure there is a suitable room for up to 6 people.

### **FOOD**

- Be very clear from the outset about our specific needs (e.g. people bringing in their own food, buffet style meals) and ask the hotel how they would propose to cater for them.
- Discuss a menu, first with the committee and then with the hotel. Usually sugar-free, most sauces served separately, and some wheat-free, dairy-free and vegetarian options.
- Served buffet style works best for all meals. A label in front of dishes on the buffet is helpful saying e.g. “Chicken Stir fry, sugar and wheat free”. It is normal to give the hotel clear guidelines with regard to the food and to monitor this closely near to the date, preferably by agreeing menus.
- Meal times need to be discussed with venue and R9 Board so that the timetable can be worked out.
- It is also useful to provide details to delegates about proximity to supermarkets etc.

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### **FLYERS**

- Put at least 2 contact numbers / 2 email addresses on the flyer and preferably 3. One mobile, one landline and two email addresses is ideal.
- Put an address on where people can send the completed representative registration forms and cheques.
- On the booking form put in a section where they can indicate if they are booking for the Assembly / Convention or Both.
- Put a deadline to receive registrations / book with hotel.
- Put details of the nearest train station and airport, plus the venue postcode for those driving with satellite navigation.
- On the flyer put some directions and or a map.

### **REGISTRATION**

- It is obviously preferable to get as many registrations in early as possible, although be prepared for some at the last moment.
- Be prepared for quite a lot of enquiries, (often asking about things that you have carefully written on your flyer!)
- Keep a note of who is paying for which day(s) as this obviously affects the money distribution at the end).
- Have a cash box with a float at the Assembly / Convention itself.
- Name badges which also indicate which service body they are representing or if R9 Board member or visitor.

### **SPEAKERS**

- The Board will be on call to take part and speak at workshops during the Convention.
- They have been elected as R9 Board members and act in that capacity – but they are first and foremost OA members in recovery. Please use that recovery. It is important that service is ‘seen’ by those attending the Convention – albeit not in a grandiose way. When OA officers are seen to take part in the business part as well as the convention – it spreads the message of the necessity of service.
- Often – there are motions passed at the Assembly which need circulating to the fellowship as soon as possible. Please consider this when scheduling your Convention workshops / meetings.
- Speakers may need to be timed, have a timer available in case.
- It is best for speakers to be qualified by the committee prior.
- Please ask speakers stay within the spirit of the Traditions, e.g., no reference to outside issues (such as mentioning by name books, therapies, religions, other weight loss programmes, or undue focusing on such outside issues).
- Some thoughts for speakers when they introduce themselves:
  - 1) How long have you been in programme?
  - 2) How long have you been abstinent?
  - 3) Define this abstinence, what it is for you.
  - 4) Outline your physical recovery, weight loss / (gain if anorexic) , how long maintained
  - 5) Describe the daily actions that you take in order to maintain this recovery.
  - 6) Then move onto the topic, following the format of what you were like, what happened, and what you are like now as it relates to the topic. OA members especially like to hear about what you actually did or do to keep well or to change in respect of the topic.

### **VOTING AND TIMEKEEPING**

- At the Assembly votes will need to be taken and possibly ballots which need to be counted by people who are not eligible to vote. Please discuss this with R9 Board and see if you need to have any coloured card on hand, voting ballots, boxes to collect ballots in and non-voting members able to assist with this.

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- A non voting member with a stopwatch and a bell available as a timekeeper is very useful especially during the Assembly.

### **VISITORS**

- Visitors are welcome to attend the Assembly and Convention, at the Assembly it is important that they are not seated with the representatives at the table but preferably in a row / seats behind or at edge of room.
- Visitors should leave the assembly room if they wish to talk to one another.

### **CONVENTION**

The convention is best described by those who have attended a number of conventions, and we recommend speaking to previous organizers.

It is worth considering the following:

- Early Bird and Night Owl Meetings (during assembly as well as convention) – the easiest way to arrange these is with a Pocket Reference Guide and a list of topics (see Strategic Plan if you need inspiration)
- Translating Speakers into your local language
- Free Time
- Entertainment on Saturday evening, this has been done in many forms – plays, meetings, celebration of recovery, free time, dancing, singing, all sorts!

### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

We have a Strategic Plan – many in OA don't know what it is or what we are trying to achieve in having it. This can be used as the theme of the Convention by incorporating just one aspect of that plan:

- Strong Meetings,
- Committed Service Bodies,
- Public & Professional awareness
- Financial Health.

Has the OA bicycle been translated into your language? – In the past we have displayed two big poster drawings of this if possible please by a willing local volunteer– one in your language and one in English!

### **AFTERWARDS**

Please consider the best way to get feedback from R9 Board and representatives so that we can offer any suggestions for things that do or don't work to future hosts. Please ensure if you get feedback from delegates or your subcommittee that this information is then given to R9 Board

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### CHECKLIST

	Select a committee of local OA members willing to work on the arrangements for the Assembly / Convention. (3-8 people on average)
	Approximately 2.5 years before you propose to host the Assembly / Convention commence organizing items below:
	Choose a date (autumn time to accommodate cheaper travel etc. and ensuring to avoid holidays, dates of BOT / RCC meetings) (keep in mind accessibility and cost)
	Choose a venue (accommodating approximately 20 – 40 reps for the OA assembly and additional numbers for the convention) plus allowing for overnight and day visitors.
	Prepare a proposal bid to be brought to the R9 Assembly two years before the Assembly is due to take place.
	Choose a theme for the Convention (refer to local group conscience and OA Strategic Plan) to be approved by R9 Board
	If bid is successful – book venue and make final arrangements
	Locate supermarkets within the venue vicinity and prepare map showing these.
	Finalise travel arrangements to venue.
	Prepare proposed flyer well in advance of the 6 months before Assembly deadline and send to R9 Board for approval.
	Oversee registrations and arrange speakers
	Make rep badges and table name places
	Make copies on different coloured paper of various documents (ask R9 Board for information)
	Set up room for Assembly (flip charts, timer, bell, registration desk, posters up etc
	Set up Convention