

Alateen Requirement Update

- What happened last year?
- What is the requirement?
- What changes are recommended?

In September 2005, a motion will be brought to the Northern California World Service Area assembly. The purpose of creating this presentation was to have a tool to help my group understand the implications of the upcoming vote and to highlight what appeared to me to be key issues and topics that relate to that vote. If you are from another area besides NCWSA, the information here may not apply to you as this presentation contains information particular to our state laws, and our area's adoption of the requirements as stated by the Conference. However if you're like me, and you feel like you need help telling your group about your area's Alateen requirement, feel free to use this as a *template* and fill in the facts as they apply to you and your area.

In writing this presentation, I relied heavily on the reports from the Alateen Safety for NCSWA, the Alateen requirements voted on at the 2004 assembly, and the documents located on the NCWSA web site. I would encourage anyone who plans to use this to avail yourself of these resources and do some reading of those documents before giving this presentation to your group. I found them very useful. The current Alateen requirement information can be found at:

www.ncwsa.org/A22-OPENING_PAGE.html

Other information regarding the upcoming vote should be available through your District or Intergroup Alateen Coordinator. If you're not sure who that is, start asking. Someone will point the way

Alateen Sponsorship

- The term sponsor in the context of the requirement is meant to broadly include anyone involved in Alateen service. This includes the following people:
 1. A person sponsoring an Alateen meeting
 2. A person attending an Alateen conference who is involved in Alateen service
 3. A person responsible for the Alateen portion of a District or Area function
 4. A person traveling with an Alateen to or from an Al-Anon or Alateen function

Item two makes a distinction between a person who has just by happenstance decided to come to an Alateen conference (and doesn't need to go through any requirements), and a person who is already involved in an Alateen service role who attends the conference.

WSO Requirement

- 2004 WSO voted to require Alateen sponsors to register with their Area
 - There had been abuse of teens by sponsors
 - It was determined that Areas could act to prevent such abuse
 - By doing nothing Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole could be put in jeopardy
 - WSO passed down minimum safety requirements for all Areas to adopt

WSO Requirement

- The requirements included the following:
 - Ensure sponsors are who they say they are by reviewing some form of state ID
 - Obtain parent's permission for all teens attending Alateen events
 - Have each Area determine and set a policy that would best accomplishing the two above items
 - Failure to adopt would mean non-recognition by WSO

Assembly 2004

- A committee was convened, reviewed and made recommendation for requirement
- Northern CA board recommended adoption of the requirement to assembly
- The group representatives adopted the recommendation
- The adopted requirements are currently in a three-year trial period

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The Spirit of the Requirement

- Assure safety of teens attending an Al-Anon or Alateen function
- Assure teens, sponsors and parents that these functions produce a safe environment for teens
- To meet or exceed the minimum requirements passed down from WSO
- To be updated with WSO requirements

Legal Ramifications

- Requirements reviewed by an attorney
 - Attorney was familiar with CA law concerning care of children at events and groups

The Northern CA Requirement

- Our policy has the following provisions:
 - Anyone who wants to work with Alateens must answer a questionnaire and have their identity verified
 - Initial verification takes place at the local level and names passed to the Area safety administrator for further verification
 - Alternate Delegate is Alateen Safety Admin
 - Approved sponsors would be added to a Sponsor Candidate list
 - List is given to WSO at least once per year
 - Sponsor Candidates must renew every year

Sponsor Requirements

Sponsors must:

1. Be Al-Anon members
2. Be 21 years old
3. Have two years in Al-Anon (in addition to time in Alateen)
4. Not have been convicted of a felony
5. Not have been charged with child abuse or similar
6. Not have demonstrated emotional problems that could result in harm to a teen
7. Not be under investigation by child welfare or similar agency

Other Requirements

- Requirements also included:
 - Safety and behavior standards for
 - All Alateens
 - All Alateen groups
 - Each district in Northern CA Area
 - The Northern CA Area
 - Provisions for the flow of info to WSO
 - Provisions for appeal by sponsors who are initially not allowed to serve
 - A list of forms required including some CAL and some forms particular to Northern CA

While the Alateen Member, Alateen Group, District, and Area requirements contained more specific provisions the sponsor requirements were by far the most controversial. Because of this fact, only a summary of the other requirements is included here. To view details, please see the safety requirements as published on the Area web site (www.ncwsa.org).

Obtaining Information

- Every piece of information and every form concerning the current Alateen requirement is accessible and downloadable from the NCWSA web site

www.ncwsa.org/A22-OPENING_PAGE.html

- You can also contact your district or intergroup Alateen Safety Administrator for information

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Leftovers From Last Year

- There were a number of items not adopted in 2004, left to be reviewed and recommended for action in following years
 - Background checks
 - Safety of identity information of sponsors
 - Additional safety and behavior standards

Actions Taken

- Implementation of last year's requirement resulted in 150 certified sponsors throughout Northern CA
- A survey of Alateen members and Sponsors regarding future recommendations
- Further review of recommendations by the committee
- An action item for Assembly 2005 has been developed

Background Checks

- The committee now recommends adoption of background checks
- Time is of the essence for current sponsors as legislative changes will more than double cost after July 1, 2006

State Background Checks: Pros

- More thorough than Megan's Law check
- Automatic notification when candidate's status changes
- Verifies both State and National systems
- Makes decision more objective (decision made by by professionals in law enforcement not by Al-Anon volunteer)

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State Background Checks: Pros

- Keeps anonymity of candidate (confidential information only seen by law enforcement)
- Alateen is currently the *only* national organization that works with children that does not require checks for all volunteers
- Recent high-profile molestation cases have raised awareness of issue

State Background Checks: Cons

- Currently not required by state of CA (only strongly encouraged)
- Cost: \$18 currently. Rises to \$50 July 2006

Other Information

- The survey produced results that 75% of sponsors and 56% of teens are in favor of background checks