

GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING POTENTIAL CIRCUIT OVERSEERS

1. Training a brother to serve as a circuit overseer is a great privilege. Circuit overseers have a significant impact on the spirit and activity of the congregations. Thus, the trainer should instruct the trainee in the proper “ways” and “methods” that will enable him to strengthen and encourage the congregations. (1 Cor. 4:17, ftn.; Acts 14:22) During the training period, the trainer should progressively review relevant material from *Circuit Overseer Guidelines* with the trainee. The trainer’s personal example of zeal for the ministry and his kind, principled way of dealing with the elders and other publishers will help the trainee to shoulder any new responsibilities he may receive.—John 13:13-15.

2. When a substitute circuit overseer is approved to receive training as a circuit overseer, the Service Department will arrange for him to receive two weeks of additional training as described below. The trainer will be a different brother than the one who provided the initial training as a potential substitute circuit overseer.

- **Week 1:** The trainee should observe as the trainer presides at all meetings, including meetings for field service.
- **Week 2:** The trainee should conduct all meetings for field service, deliver all the service talks and the public talk, and preside at the meetings with the pioneers and the elders and ministerial servants, while the trainer observes. The trainer should be present for all congregation activities during the week and should schedule time at the conclusion of each day to discuss the day’s activities in order to answer any questions the trainee may have and to provide any suggestions.

3. **Review of Records and Preparation for Visit:** During the first week, the trainer should follow through as noted below. During the second week, the trainer should observe the trainee as he reviews the records and prepares for the visit.

- The trainer should review what is involved in reviewing congregation records. (*tg* chap. 4 par. 3) He should explain how he obtains the information he needs to encourage the congregation and to complete the report to the branch office.
- The trainer should review what is involved in reviewing congregation accounts.—*tg* app. C.
- The trainer should review how to prepare the agenda for the meeting with the elders. He should review any recommendations for appointment so that both he and the trainee can observe the brothers during the week.—*tg* chap. 4 par. 12; chap. 17 par. 4.
- The trainer should discuss the service talk to be delivered that evening and how to incorporate points gleaned from the review of the records.—*tg* chap. 18 par. 7.
- The trainer should discuss any questions that need to be asked of the coordinator of the body of elders or another elder after the review of the records. (*tg* chap. 4 par. 4) The trainee should be present during any such discussions or during other significant conversations with elders before or after the congregation meeting.

4. **Field Service:** With regard to the meeting for field service, the trainer should highlight the importance of providing practical suggestions that publishers can use in the ministry, of making sure that all in attendance have arrangements, and of concluding the meeting within five to seven minutes. If practical, the trainer and the trainee should work together in the same group each day. The trainer should work with the trainee’s wife at least once during the training period, if practical. The trainer should discreetly evaluate the trainee’s skills in the ministry. Is he zealous for the ministry? Is he effective in initiating conversations? Does he use the Bible effectively? Does he make

good use of the publications? Is he willing to share in various forms of the ministry? How does he interact with other publishers with whom he works?—*tg* chap. 10 pars. 3-5.

5. **Shepherding Visits:** The trainee should accompany the trainer on at least two shepherding visits each week. During the first week, the trainer should take the lead on the calls. During the second week, the trainee should take the lead on the calls. The trainer should provide as much background as he can in advance of the call. When the trainer takes the lead, he should invite the trainee to comment and to use the Bible at his discretion. If the trainer will ask for the trainee's comments on a specific verse, it would be a kindness to inform him in advance. After the call, they should discuss the visit and why it was handled the way it was. They should discuss what commendation was given, what Scriptural encouragement was offered, what might be done differently on a future visit in order to be more effective, and what key information should be conveyed to the local elders.—*tg* chap. 4 par. 9; chap. 19 pars. 1-3, 6-7.

6. **Meeting With Pioneers:** Prior to the meeting with the pioneers, the trainer should discuss the pioneers' activity and the points that will be shared in order to encourage them.

7. **Meeting With Elders and Ministerial Servants:** Prior to the meeting with the elders and ministerial servants, the trainer should review with the trainee the outline provided by the branch office. They should also review the agenda for the meeting with the elders. They should discuss what needs or matters of concern have come to their attention during the week and how those needs can be addressed in a kind way that will be genuinely helpful to the appointed men. The trainee should be reminded of the importance of understanding a situation as completely as possible before attempting to offer advice or counsel.—Prov. 18:13, 17.

8. **Recommendations for Appointment or Deletion:** If there are recommendations for appointment, the trainer should confirm that the branch office has been informed and that the brothers have been cleared for consideration. The trainer should discuss with the trainee any questions or concerns about the brothers being recommended. The trainer should remind the trainee of the need to be thorough when reviewing recommendations and should review relevant material from chapter 17 and appendix D of *Circuit Overseer Guidelines*.

9. While the trainee will preside at the elders' meeting during the second week, including the portion of the meeting when any recommendations for appointment or deletion are considered, the trainer should be involved in the discussion. It should be made clear that the trainer, as the appointed circuit overseer, will be making the appointment or deletion. The trainee should accompany the trainer and the local elder when meeting with any brothers whom the circuit overseer has decided to appoint.

10. **Report on Circuit Overseer's Visit With Congregation (S-303):** The trainer should review the importance of properly completing and promptly submitting the report to the branch office. During the first week, the trainer should prepare the report, preside at the brief meeting with the Congregation Service Committee, and submit the report. During the second week, the trainee should prepare the report, preside at the brief meeting with the Congregation Service Committee, and submit the report.—*tg* chap. 4 par. 14; chap. 5 par. 14.

11. **Interaction With Others:** During the entire training period, the trainer should discreetly observe the brother and his wife. How do they interact with others? Do they take the initiative to greet and converse with the brothers and sisters? Do they demonstrate appropriate personal interest in them? In view of the weighty responsibility of appointing and deleting elders and ministerial servants that has been entrusted to circuit overseers, the trainer should be especially alert to the trainee's manner of dealing with the elders. Can he communicate in a forthright but kind manner?

Does he demonstrate good reasoning ability? Do humility and love characterize his dealings with the elders? Does he hold faithfully to the Bible and our publications when assisting the elders?

12. **Circuit Organization:** The trainer should discuss with the trainee selected portions of *Circuit Organization Guidelines* and chapter 3 of *Circuit Overseer Guidelines*.

13. **Conclusion of Training Period:** The trainer should meet with the trainee on the final Sunday of the training period. He should answer any questions the trainee has and ensure that the trainee understands any suggestions and counsel that may have been offered. If there are *significant* deficiencies that the trainer will mention in his report to the branch office, he should kindly—but frankly—discuss these concerns with the trainee. The meeting should conclude with commendation and encouragement.

14. **Report to the Branch Office:** Soon after the training period has concluded, the trainer should submit a *Personal Qualifications Report* (S-326) on the trainee and his wife. When evaluating the trainee, the trainer should endeavor to be clear, honest, and factual. The trainer should objectively describe the trainee's strengths and weaknesses, being as specific as possible. If the trainee is married, the trainer should comment specifically on whether the trainee's wife would be willing and able to move from congregation to congregation, week after week, living in the homes of the brothers and sisters. The trainer should clearly indicate whether he recommends the trainee as a circuit overseer. If the trainer believes that the trainee will need additional time and experience before serving as a circuit overseer, he should explain how the brother might be helped so that he can qualify for circuit work as soon as possible.