

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



675 Red Mills Road Walkkill NY 12589-3292 Phone: (845) 306-1100

August 30, 2016

TO ALL CIRCUIT OVERSEERS IN THE UNITED STATES BRANCH TERRITORY

Re: Securing Rental Facilities for Circuit Assemblies

Dear Brothers:

We are pleased to make you aware of adjustments that will simplify how rental facilities are secured for circuit assemblies. Circuit overseers and assembly overseers will no longer be directly involved in selecting and securing rental facilities for circuit assemblies. Rather, branch appointed contract representatives will do so, working under the direction of the Convention and Assembly Desk in the Service Department. Contract representatives will receive a separate letter providing further details. The following material revises chapter three of *Circuit Organization Guidelines* (S-330). A comprehensive revision of the S-330 will be made available in due course.

Circuit overseers and Assembly Hall overseers will continue to receive an annual schedule showing the assigned dates of their circuit assemblies. Since many factors are taken into consideration when preparing this schedule, it is important that each circuit use the dates assigned. Wherever possible, the branch office schedules circuits or sections of circuits to have the program on Saturday one year and on Sunday the next year. Congregations are encouraged to organize group witnessing on the alternate weekend day when no assembly is scheduled. If a circuit has more than one section, the circuit overseer should not change the order of the assemblies without checking with the branch office.

When Not Assigned to an Assembly Hall: If a circuit is not assigned to an Assembly Hall, the branch appointed contract representative will strive, when possible, to secure dates at suitable facilities multiple years in advance under the direction of the Convention and Assembly Desk. For planning the 2018 service year, the circuit overseer may wish to inform the contract representative which venue(s) the circuit has used in the past and any benefits there may be in either continuing to meet there or in another facility. If after a thorough search there are no suitable facilities available on the dates assigned, the contract representative should *immediately telephone* the Convention and Assembly Desk. He should know the dates that are available at all suitable facilities for the period from two months before to two months after the assigned dates so that direction may be given without undue delay.

- During the initial negotiations with the facility management, the contract representative along with his assistant will conduct a complete walk-through of the building, equipment, and parking areas that will be part of the all-inclusive contract. They will look for any unsafe conditions or defects within the building, its equipment, and the parking areas. If these areas are reasonably safe and in good order, the contract representative may attempt to obtain a contract approved by the branch office. However, if the condition of any of these areas is not suitable for our events and would present a hazard to our attendees, the negotiations will be discontinued and he will proceed to locate another facility. If possible, the areas of concern may be

tactfully mentioned to the management. If they agree to correct the unsafe conditions, another site visit can be scheduled for a future time.

- Once the contract is signed by the assembly overseer, the assembly overseer should immediately inform the circuit overseer. The assembly overseer should send an *Assembly Insurance Certificate Request (TO-17)* to the Risk Management Desk in the Accounting Department a minimum of two months in advance of the assembly.
- At the start of the move-in period for the assembly weekend, the assembly overseer and assistant assembly overseer for the Saturday assembly should make a thorough inspection of the facility, equipment, and parking areas that are under contract for the event. They should make a written record of any preexisting defect or damage. It can be helpful to take photos or make a video of the defect or damage. This record should be reviewed with the facility management. Copies of the record should be given to the assembly overseer of the Sunday assembly, facility management, and the contract representative. Even though the conditions noted may be considered minor, it may still be necessary to take appropriate measures to protect the attendees from injury.
- After the assembly weekend, when the facility has been thoroughly cleaned, a final site inspection should be made of the facility, equipment, and parking areas that were under contract for the event. The inspection is performed by the assembly overseer and assistant assembly overseer of the Sunday assembly, and the facility management representative. Damage to the facility, damaged or missing equipment, or a failure to properly clean an area should be noted and, if possible, corrected immediately. Thereafter, the *Site Inspection Release Agreement (CO-14)* should be signed by the assembly overseer and the facility management representative. A copy of the form should be given to the facility management and to the contract representative, as well as attached to the contract to be kept in the circuit file.

If after an assembly the circuit overseer finds that the facilities were crowded, he may wish to consider with the assembly overseer, the assistant assembly overseer, and other mature elders in the circuit the possibility of dividing the circuit for future assemblies. The circuit overseer should then *telephone* the Service Department as soon as possible to discuss the matter. If agreed upon, the circuit overseer will be asked to submit a written request to the branch office. It may be possible for the request to be handled before the schedules for the next service year's assemblies are made.

It is preferable not to have two or more circuits combine for their assembly. However, in the event that the branch office approves of a combined assembly, then further direction will be provided by the Convention and Assembly Desk.

Confirmation and Notification: The circuit overseer should confirm arrangements with the branch office by sending a *Circuit Assembly Confirmation (S-328)* form. This is required whether the circuit section uses an Assembly Hall or not. If an Assembly Hall will be used, confirmation for all circuit assemblies for the *next* service year should be submitted immediately following the circuit assemblies for the *current* service year. If an Assembly Hall will not be

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used, confirmation should be sent to the branch office only after a contract has been secured for the facility. This should be done at least three months prior to the circuit assembly.

Circuit overseers notify congregations of circuit assembly arrangements by means of the *Notice of Upcoming Circuit Assemblies* (S-317) form. Notification for the next service year's assemblies should normally be sent to congregations as soon as the dates have been confirmed. The circuit overseer also sends the congregations a supplementary letter covering certain details of the assembly, such as the schedule of sessions and baptism arrangements.

Cancellations: Severe weather conditions may call into question whether a circuit assembly program may be held. The circuit overseer should consult with responsible brothers who are familiar with travel and other conditions locally. Canceling an assembly is a drastic step that is usually necessary only under emergency conditions. Before a decision is reached, the circuit overseer should telephone the branch office for direction. If the decision is to cancel, it is best to cancel a full day's program rather than just a portion of it. If it is not possible to contact the branch office and the circuit overseer decides to cancel the program, it is important to telephone the branch office as soon as possible thereafter so that alternate arrangements can be made.

We would also like to take this opportunity to highlight and clarify the role of the rooming coordinator in securing hotels for circuit assemblies in rental facilities. The last sentence of *Circuit Rooming Guidelines* (CO-70), chapter 2, paragraph 1, states: "If a commercial facility is used by multiple circuits or for conventions, the branch office may appoint a rooming coordinator for that area." In addition to these situations, there may be other occasions when the Convention and Assembly Desk will assign a rooming coordinator to secure hotels for circuits. If you would like to confirm if a rooming coordinator is assigned to your area or would like to obtain contact information for the assigned rooming coordinator, you may telephone the Convention and Assembly Desk.

It is hoped that relieving you of this assignment will afford you more time to care for your many other theocratic responsibilities. Your cooperation with the branch appointed contract representatives, rooming coordinators, and the Convention and Assembly Desk is greatly appreciated.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

c: Assembly overseers
Contract representatives