

AMS&NW District Conference/Convention Handbook

(In accordance with District Policies)

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1st Quarter.....Training
2nd Quarter.....Awards
3rd Quarter.....Oratorical/CCDHH
Convention.....Aug 1 to Sept 30

1. Terminology –

Board meeting, District Board of Director’s meeting, District Conference, Quarterly –

All refer to the same meeting. These are the quarterly meetings (1st, 2nd and 3rd) at which the District Executive meeting and the District Board of Directors meeting is held. These are basically a 2 day event, the Executive Committee meeting and a mixer or social of some type on Friday evening as well and the Board of Directors meeting and Governor’s Banquet on Saturday. For the purposes of this document, all references to the above mentioned meetings will be as “Board Meetings”

Convention – A multi day event with meetings and training on Friday and Saturday for the general membership. Thursday is training for the Lt. Governor’s Elects for the upcoming year. This event also has an Executive meeting and a District Board of Directors meeting and will be referred to in this document as the convention.

DST – District Secretary Treasurer

Governor Elect – The Governor who will be in office the next administrative year (Oct 1st.)

LG Elect – Lieutenant Governor Elect who will be in office Oct 1st.

2. Planning a conference/convention -

Through consultation with the Governor or Governor Elect (depending on the timing) and/or Convention Sites Committee Chair (Past Governor), this first order of business is to arrange for a venue and time. This particular step is likely taken months or even years ahead of most of the other planning. Confirming a facility is the first item required. With the pressure on “convention” hotels, most bookings need to be a year or more in the future. The facility should be capable of 100 plus Optimists for a conference and 125 plus for a convention. “Blocking” 75 rooms for a board meeting and 100 for the convention should be sufficient. Meetings and/or other events do not have to be on the same premise as the rooms, however some provision should be made to arrange for transportation (and budgeted in the registration fees) if they are not. Room rates should be considered in the planning as well as the cost for meeting and breakout rooms while evaluating potential venues. Consideration should be given to overall costs of the members but not necessarily be the most important factor in picking your venue.

3. Budgeting –

The host committee is providing a location for a meeting, any profit or loss is the responsibility of the district. An income and expenditure budget should be provided to the District (Governor) along with a registration fee amount. Take into consideration the complimentary rooms and registrations as well as gifts that are required as part of the district meeting (outlined in another area of this document.) Other items that may be charged for but are not necessarily evident are things like, breakout rooms, audio visual (a speaker system for the main meeting and banquet are a must), screens, flip charts and in some locales, coffee. Negotiation with the hotel will sometimes reduce or eliminate these charges. Current attendances indicate that budgeting for an attendance of 100 Optimist/companions for the 3 board meetings and 125 Optimist/companions for the convention are realistic numbers. Certain venues (communities) at certain times will draw more or less and if warranted, should be reflected in the budget.

4. Registration forms –

Registration forms should be available at least at the meeting prior to the event taking place. They should be forwarded to the District webmaster to be placed on our website as soon as possible.

Consideration should be given to include the following items:

Date of Board meeting

Registration cost (Early and late if applicable, typically late registration bears about a 15% penalty, this allows for better planning)

Name, location, cost and contact information of host hotel and meeting venue if different

The names that any “blocked” rooms are being held under. Optimist, Optimist International, AMS&NW District or the host club are typical names.

If there is a choice of banquet dinners, it should be reflected on the registration forms.

An area for special considerations. You may or may not be able to comply with these requests but things like food allergies, etc. may be brought forth to the hotel for solution.

An outline of the companions and kids programs.

Payee for cheques sent for registration; special account, club account, etc.

Contact name and information of the chair should be included (phone, email, etc.)

See attached example

5. Companions/Kids programs –

The District is attempting to encourage more people to attend these events and one way for that to happen is by having good companions and kids programs. It is important to outline these programs so people can prepare properly. For example, if there is hiking involved then hiking boots and jackets are required, or swimming or spa activities require a swim suit. The companions program typically takes place during the meeting time and companions are part of the social events of the board meeting/convention. Various ideas for companion’s programs include museum tours, art or craft galleries, participation in making craft’s, lunch at a tea room, tours of various local historical areas, business tours, etc. Lunch for the companion’s may be with the members or at another locale depending on the remaining program.

The kid’s program is required to allow the parents to take part in the district meetings as well as the social events. Proper supervision is a must. This program is hard to run properly as it is very demanding on the supervisors. Ideas here include swimming (hotel pool or another facility), playgrounds, tours of things like McDonalds, movies, etc. Part of the issue here is the differences in ages of the participant’s. Teenagers and 6 year olds have different ideas of fun. One way to handle this is to get the older kids to help with the young ones. A buddy system is one way to make the group tighter.

6. Agenda -

The Governor will ask you to print an agenda for the meeting. He is responsible for the actual meeting agenda but it is your responsibility to put it in the overall agenda document and have it printed for distribution. The Governor will decide when the meetings start and will notify you. Printed agendas are distributed to the registrants at time of registration. The DST is responsible to distribute the meeting agenda to the members 30 days before the meeting. This has become an email distribution so if your full agenda is ready it could be sent out at that time. This provides better information to the members. The agenda includes bio's on the Governor, District Secretary Treasurer, and official Optimist International Representative. These people will send you their bio's to be included. Other items typically included are: Governor's logo, Optimist Creed, Canadian and US National Anthems, Companion program details and Kid's program details. Possible other additions include: more background information on your community, your club, companions/kids program destinations, etc. The Governor should prepare an agenda for the banquet as well but this does not need to be distributed. If children are part of the banquet entertainment, it is important that they entertain at the time allocated and our banquet/speeches need to be interrupted.

7. Registration – Registration forms are distributed at the meeting prior to your's. Also they are available on the web page (<http://www.amsnwoptimist.org/>) once they are sent to the Webmaster to be posted. You can send them to the Webmaster directly or through the Governor, DST, or Bulletin/Publicity Chair. Pre-registration is currently a mail-in process, complete with a cheque to cover the fees. Usually pre-registration is cheaper for the members to encourage people to register early. Typically late registration or registering at the meeting bears about a 15% penalty. The registration desk for the meeting is usually open from 4PM to 8PM on the first night of a Board meeting (Friday night) or convention (Thursday night). It is then open in the morning for an hour or so before the meetings start. This allows for any late arrivals, given the travel distances in our district.

8. Complimentary rooms and Registrations –

Our policies require complimentary rooms and registrations for the Governor, DST and official OI Rep, plus their spouses or significant others. Also, at the convention, the Governor Elect and DST Designate are to receive the same treatment. This is to be budgeted in the event.

9. Gifts –

The board meeting/convention registrations cover gifts to the Governor and official OI rep as outlined in our policies.

10. Duration of board meeting/convention -

Board meetings are typically a 2 day event, the Executive Committee meeting and a mixer or social of some type on Friday evening as well and the Board of Directors meeting and Governor's Banquet on Saturday. Extra social activities (golfing, etc.) can take place in conjunction but consider that most people take time from work and families to attend so attendance may be lower than the board meeting. The convention is typically a 3 day event. Registration starts Thursday evening followed by meetings on Friday and Saturday. LG Elect training takes place on Thursday so a meeting room for 30 is required. The Governor's Banquet closes the weekend Saturday night.

11. Meeting room requirements –

The Executive Committee meeting requires a room for about 30 people. It is the only meeting at that time so can use one of the other meeting rooms. Typically a horse shoe or round table design works best. The social, Board meeting and Governor's Banquet take the largest space. These events require a room capable of about 150 for a Board meeting and 200 for the convention. Allow space for tables and extra space for things like ice breakers, dances, games, etc. Four or more breakout rooms are required for workshops if available. This depends on the training the Governor designates. These rooms should hold 30 to 50 people.

12. Dress Codes –

While no "etched in stone" dress codes exist, typically the Executive Committee meeting is a sports coat affair. The opening social is usually a come as you are event at the convention but may be a theme/dress up event at a Board meeting. Usually the Friday night event at the convention has some type of theme and may be dress up. Typically the Governor's Banquet is a suit and tie affair and some years, the banquet at the convention is formal.

13. Notification to the official OI Rep –

Once the social events for the Board meeting/Convention are set, this information should be sent to the Governor to pass on to the rep. This allows the rep to prepare and include any "special" clothes in their suitcases, depending on the events. This could be sent at the same time the Governor sends the rep the meeting agenda.

14. Social Nights –

Theme nights and dress up are a fun event but only if they fit with your overall event. At a Board meeting, some people will have driven all day and may not want to dress up. This is not usually an issue; we take people however we can get them. Lots of your Executive Committee people will come directly from the meeting in sports coats. Dress up affairs on Friday night of the convention are much better events as everyone has time to prepare.

Notification of the food available for these "socials" is required, ideally on the registration form or at the registration table, so people know if it'll be snacks or something a bit more substantial. This is not intended to be a supper but travellers may plan their meals as they travel so if you have cold cuts, it may be sufficient for them, but chips/pretzels would not be.

15. Protocol –

While our District is not strict on protocol, there are a few things that are required during the meeting and banquet. The Governor usually handles most of this or designates someone else to handle it but it doesn't hurt to be familiar with the Protocol Handbook

<http://www.optimist.org/Publications/Protocol.pdf>.

The protocol items pertaining to the Board meeting/convention that you may be involved with:

The flags (District owns them) are required, usually presented by a youth group;

Both National anthems are sung; District and club banners are hung and the Governor will determine how people are to be seated at the head table for the meeting and the banquet. Other items include arranging for greetings from civic and state/province governments.

1st Quarter – This is the 1st meeting of the new administration year. Extra training may be required at this meeting so the number or size of the breakout rooms may need adjustment. The Governor will set the number of workshops. Typical 1st Quarter workshops include some training for President's, Secretary Treasurers, Essay, Communications, Membership, New Club Building and any other workshops the Governor deems necessary. Usually these workshops are run at different times so 4 breakout rooms, one large enough for 50 people and 3 for 30 are sufficient.

2nd Quarter – This is the meeting at which most of the awards from the previous year are distributed. This may be a larger or smaller than normal Board meeting based on a number of factors, not least of which is the success of the previous year. This meeting may offer some extra workshops depending on the Governor's wishes. This is the meeting that the "Catch a Rising Star" program is held. This is a leadership development program for Club and District leaders.

3rd Quarter – The District Oratorical and CCDHH contests are held at this meeting. This takes about 2 hours of the "normal" morning meeting time so workshop time is limited but may mean more workshops are held at one time, putting pressure on the facilities.

Convention – A three day event held between August 1st and Sept 30th, usually involving large amounts of training and social activities.

An incoming team BBQ is typically held on the Wednesday night prior to the actual convention. This is an event hosted by the Governor Elect to meet with the incoming team (LG Elects and Committee Chair Designates) on an informal basis. The host club, a number of clubs, the zone or an individual is encouraged to provide sponsorship for this "training event". The BBQ cost is to be outside the registration budget of the convention.

LG Elect training is held during the day on Thursday (requiring a room for 30 people).

Registration starts Thursday afternoon and a social is held Thursday evening. The Executive Committee meeting is typically Thursday late afternoon or early evening, sometimes held in the same room as the LG training. Friday is the 1st business session with training for the incoming President's and Sec/Tres. Two rooms, one for 50 and one for 30, are required for this training. Depending on the agenda, additional training for other members may be held at the same time, requiring extra breakout rooms. Friday night is a "fun night", dance, theatre, improv, shows are all possibilities. This is a supper event. If there is to be a theme or dress up night, this is it. Saturday has meetings in the morning and typically free time or golfing in the afternoon. If planning a golfing event, take into consideration travel time as well as time to "clean up" after golfing for 6PM cocktails. The Governor's banquet (always a suit and tie but sometimes formal event) ends the weekend.

The District may lend the convention committee \$1000 to cover "upfront" costs if required.

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