



# **New Chapter Organizational Kit**

**GOOD SAM CLUB CHAPTERS DEPARTMENT  
P.O. BOX 8540  
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# WHAT IS THE GOOD SAM CLUB?

## BACKGROUND:

The Club was initially started in June 1966 when Mr. Ray Jones, a reader, wrote a letter to the editor of Trail-R-News (which later became Trailer Life) suggesting some form of identification for RVers, a way that would make it easy for them to get together away from home, be of help to each other on the road and enable them to identify with each other in trading ideas on traveling. It was from this letter that the Good Sam concept materialized.

The Good Sam Club is the largest, fastest-growing and most influential recreational organization in the world. There are one million member families holding membership in the United States, Canada and overseas. The Club provides many valuable benefits to its members including free trip routing, free credit card loss protection, a powerful RV legislative program that fights for RV rights, money savings on all RV insurance and financing, Emergency Road Service, a subscription to **Highways** (the official Club magazine), Credit Card eligibility, discounts on RV books and Good Sam Club merchandise, local Chapter fun and much more. Good Sam members receive discounts on all **Trailer Life** magazines and the Trailer Life Campground Directory, the most valuable RV owners guide published.

One of the most important aspects of the Club is the fun and fellowship available to our members through participating in our International Chapter organization. This is a volunteer organization which includes approximately 1,700 Chapters in the United States and Canada. Annually, there are State, and Provincial Samborees which are coordinated through the efforts of Good Sam members who donate their time and energy to create these spectacular events. In addition, individual Chapters organize and participate in their own campouts, rallies and special activities.

The Good Sam Club also plans and coordinates a broad range of Samborees and Caraventures. The world's greatest RV events and travel tours can take you to Alaska, Baja, New York City, the New England states, National Parks, Nova Scotia and East Canada, and all are sponsored by the Good Sam Club. To learn more about these events, visit [www.goodsamclub.com/tours](http://www.goodsamclub.com/tours).

The Club publishes a monthly magazine called **Highways**. This magazine is sent to all the members of the Club and provides them with the current information on all Club events and activities being held throughout the world, important editorials regarding legislative problems, interesting travel stories, Samboree listings and, of course, helpful hints for maximizing their RV experience.

## **GOOD SAM INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:**

International Good Sam Headquarters has a special department to handle the Chapter operations of the Club called the Chapter Activities Office. All correspondence and communications with the Club's officers are handled in this area. The address is: Good Sam Club, **P.O. Box 8530, Ventura, CA 93002.**

The Events Department handles all planning and inquiries regarding special events such The Rally, Samborees, and Caraventures. Correspondence with this department should be addressed to: The Good Sam Club Events Dept., **P.O. Box 6852, Englewood, CO 80155.**

Membership processing, which includes new memberships and renewals, is handled in the Member Services Department in Colorado. Our Member Service Department handles inquiries or re-quests for the Good Sam Club, for subscriptions to ***Trailer Life, MotorHome*** and other Affinity media publications, or ***Trailer Life Campground Directory***. Correspondence regarding these items should be addressed to: Good Sam Club, **P.O. Box 6888, Englewood, CO 80155-6888.** The toll free number for Member Services is **1-800-234-3450.**

Correspondence regarding Refer-A-Friend should be addressed to: Refer-A-Friend, **P.O. Box 6886, Englewood, CO 80155-9897.**

All other correspondence regarding benefits and services should be sent in the following manner:

Good Sam Vehicle Insurance and Good Sam Health Insurance may all be sent to Good Sam Member Services, **P.O. Box 6888, Englewood, CO 80155-6888.**

Letters of inquiry and those regarding Credit Card Loss Protection and any other member benefits or services should be addressed to: Good Sam Club, **P.O. Box 6888, Englewood, CO 80155-6905.**

## **REGIONS:**

The Good Sam Club is divided into six regions. Each Chapter belongs to one of these regions, which encompass the United States and Canada.

## **STATE/PROVINCIAL COMMITTEES:**

The State/Provincial Committee is the most important body in the State/Province, for it actually governs the State and Provincial activities. It consists of all Chapter Presidents in the State or Province and it is very important to be represented because all Chapters are entitled to one vote in State/Provincial matters. Your Chapter President or his/her appointed delegate represents your Chapter on the Committee.

The Director is the chairman of the State/Provincial Committee and may only vote in the event of a tie. He/she is also responsible for organizing and conducting all Committee meetings.

Article II, Section 3 of the International Good Sam By-Laws state that "Each local Chapter is authorized to act with other local Chapters within the same State to form a State Committee composed of one Chapter President or his appointed delegate, from each Chapter within the same State."

When formed, the State/Provincial Committee has the voting power to reconcile serious disputes within the State or Province and in any Chapter within the State or Province; the responsibility of electing the Director; the opportunity of working with the Director and/or State/Provincial Officers in the planning of State/Provincial Samborees and other important events; and in voting on the day-to-day business.

In addition, the State/Provincial Committee also has the power to decide to levy State/Provincial dues from Chapter members in your State or Province, as stated in Section 2, Article VI of the International Good Sam Club Constitution and By-Laws. Such a levy can only be enacted if it is decided by a 3/4 vote of the Chapter delegates attending a meeting of the Committee held after thirty days written notice of the purpose of the meeting has been sent to all Chapter Presidents within the State or Province. The vote to levy a fee may be made by mail. All such funds become the sole property of the State/Provincial organization.

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In conclusion, participating in the State/Provincial Committee is the best way for Chapters to have their say in important State/Provincial matters. It is the responsibility of each Chapter to participate in these meetings and to become involved in the Committee. The Director has additional information on the State/Provincial Committee and he/she should be contacted directly to answer any further questions you may have.

## **STATE/PROVINCIAL OFFICERS**

Article V, Section I of the Club's By-Laws gives the Director the authority to appoint State/Provincial Officers as needed, with the exception of the Treasurer, who must be elected by the State/Provincial Committee. It is quite likely that your Director has appointed some Assistant Directors to help him/her form new Chapters and administer to the Chapters in the specific area on a day-to-day basis. If this is the case, your Director may suggest that you work with an Assistant Director to organize your new Chapter.

## **HOW DO I FORM A NEW CHAPTER?**

There are many ways to gather interested people for a new Chapter. Below we have outlined a few suggested possibilities; however, you are encouraged to try your own ideas. Please keep in mind that all members of a Good Sam Chapter must also be members in good standing with the Good Sam Club.

### **BRING A FRIEND MEETING:**

Since all members of your Chapter must belong to the Good Sam Club, one excellent way to introduce new members to the Club is through a "Bring a Friend" meeting. This is simply where Good Sam members are invited to attend a neighborhood get-together, and bring a non-Good Sam friend. This may prove to not only be a good way to get new members for your Chapter, but also to introduce a few new Good Sam members to the Club.

### **REFER-A-FRIEND:**

Another way to introduce new members to the Good Sam Club is through the Refer-A-Friend program. This idea has proved to not only be a good way for you and other Chapter members to become lifetime members of the Good Sam Club, but also to sign up some new Chapter members at the same time.

The Refer-A-Friend program will completely replace the Crimson Circle program. The rewards structure outlined below is what you will receive in place of the rockers and pins from Crimson Circle. You do not have to keep track of your referrals - we will automatically update your account when a friend enrolls.

## **How the Refer-A-Friend program works:**

- Current Good Sam members can refer their friends to the Good Sam Club through the Refer-A-Friend brochure or by email. To order brochures, contact Member Services by calling **1-800-234-3450**, writing to **P.O. Box 6886, Englewood, CO 80155-6886** or emailing [info@goodsamclub.com](mailto:info@goodsamclub.com). Be sure your name and member number are on every enrollment form you hand out to friends! To refer a friend by email or print additional coupons, visit [www.GoodSamClub.com/Friend](http://www.GoodSamClub.com/Friend). You will fill in your friend's name, email address and a personal message. They will then be sent an email with an enrollment link. When they sign up using the link, you will automatically be given credit.
- New members may also enroll over the phone with Good Sam Member Services. Please ensure that your friend gives the representative your name and member number while enrolling. We cannot give credit after they enroll.
- New members will receive a special introductory membership price when they sign up through the Refer-A-Friend program. They may sign up for a 1-year membership for \$12 or a 3-year membership for \$33. If they elect a 3-year membership, they will also receive a bonus Free Night of Camping Certificate. Please note that there is no 2-year option.
- You will earn Free Camping rewards for your membership referrals. For the first member you refer that enrolls, you will earn a Free Night of Camping Certificate. Then, for every 5 additional new members you refer, you'll receive another Free Night of Camping. There is no limit to the number of free nights you could earn. As an added bonus, when you refer 25 new Good Sam members, you will receive a free Life Membership. If you are already a Life Member, you will receive an exclusive gift chosen just for you.
- There may be other Refer-A-Friend promotions that give members the opportunity to earn additional prizes such as an entry into a cruise giveaway, more free camping, etc. These prizes change with each promotion, as does the length of time these promotions run. All new members referred during these special promotions count towards the Refer-A-Friend program. Additional details can be found on [www.GoodSamClub.com/Friend](http://www.GoodSamClub.com/Friend), in Highways and other various locations.

## **SAMBOREES, MINI-SAMBOREES AND OTHER EVENTS:**

State Samborees, Mini-Samborees and other events provide good opportunities for forming new Chapters. You and your Director can arrange to have a special Chapter organizational meeting and gather all interested people to help form a new Chapter. Your Director has details on upcoming events, so contact him/her for more information if this idea interests you.

## **LETTERS OF INVITATION:**

Another suggestion is to work with your Director and ask him/her to compose a letter announcing a new Chapter organizational meeting. Your Director has had great experience with these mailings and will provide you with the information. This letter should be mailed to a selected, small, local group of Good Sam Club members in your area who may be interested in joining a new Chapter.

## **LOCAL NEWSPAPERS:**

Contact your local community newspaper for procedures on printing an announcement of a new Chapter organizational meeting and/or a request for interested parties to contact you. Use the Media guide we provide to prepare a press release on your event.

# **HOW DO I CONDUCT AN ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING?**

In the beginning stages of your New Chapter, we suggest that you hold an organizational meeting to establish such things as meeting procedures, temporary officers (these will carry the title "Pro Tern" after their titles, i.e. Chapter President, (Pro Tern), and setting a date for your next meeting. The International Good Sam Club Constitution and By-Laws should be discussed with the entire group, in particular, the Preamble.

## **PURPOSE:**

As well as establishing rules of procedure, you should discuss what your Chapter purpose will be. In keeping within tenets of the Good Sam Pledge, we like to encourage all Club Chapters to engage in some community spirited activities for the benefit and welfare of all concerned. You might give thought to including a provision of such activity within your Chapter Constitution and By-Laws. Many of our present Chapters are active participants in the Adopt-A-Highway program throughout the United States.

Your new Chapter may also want to become involved. International Headquarters also conducts a Chapter of the Year contest that may interest your group. Awards are given to the Chapters for the most outstanding community service group projects. Check with your Director for more details on this contest in your State.

## **CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS:**

Your Chapter Constitution and By-Laws serves as your Chapter's organizing document. It is simply a basis for establishing policies and need not be too detailed. When your Chapter has established its Chapter Constitution and By-Laws, we ask that you submit a copy to Headquarters for our approval and files. The Good Sam Recreational Vehicle Club has an International Club Constitution, which is recognized as the ultimate body of law for the organization. All Chapter By-Laws, while local in nature, must abide by the International Constitution and By-Laws in order to be considered a part of the Good Sam Recreational Vehicle Club organization.

The following three items must be included in your Constitution before Good Sam Headquarters will approve it:

**A.** All members of the Chapter must first be members of the Club, and such membership must be in good standing.

**B.** They are a Chapter of the Club. By-Laws cannot state that they are a club of the Good Sam Club. Club always refers to the International Good Sam Recreational Vehicle Club.

**C.** The Chapter will only use the Good Sam name and logo in good taste and to promote the Good Sam Pledge and Chapter activities, and in a manner consistent with the Club Constitution, By-Laws and-General Policies of the Club. The Chapter agrees to cease and desist from all use of the Good Sam name and logo upon loss of its charter from the Club for any reason.

Your Director is ready and willing to help you and your Chapter develops its Constitution and By-Laws. He/she can provide you with suggestions and answer any questions regarding what should be included, how to set it up and other areas where you may need some help.

## **MEMBERSHIP:**

Another important part of your organizational meeting should be the establishment of some membership rules. We suggest that you start with at least 6-8 family members and build your Chapter from there. Although

Good Sam Headquarters places no limit on the number of members in each Chapter, we feel that the optimum number of families should be between 25-35 rigs. A group of this size is ideal because most campgrounds require 10 or more rigs to get a group discount.

Other things to consider when determining the size of your Chapter are mailings and meetings. Too large a group could make mailings costly and meetings and campouts more difficult to organize. If more Good Sam members are interested in joining your Chapter, let your Director know. He/she can form another Chapter from this group of interested individuals.

Forfeit of Chapter membership could include failing to maintain active International membership, overdue fees, improper conduct or moving away from the area, or other reasons in accordance with your Chapter By-Laws. These policies should be understood by all from the very beginning to avoid any problems, which may occur later on.

A provision for reinstatement should also be included in your Chapter Constitution and By-Laws. This should possibly include payment of fees, and/or approval of the Chapter officers.

### **CHAPTER DUES:**

Chapter dues should be discussed at your organizational meeting. Your Director can help your Chapter decide on an appropriate amount for your Chapter budget and also discuss with you whether your State/Provincial Committee requires that any fees be paid to the State/Provincial treasury.

## **HOW DO WE REGISTER OUR CHAPTER WITH THE CLUB?**

Now that you have decided to form a Chapter, the next step is to fill out the pink New Chapter Registration form. Please note that this form must be completed in triplicate with one copy to be kept for your files, one copy sent to your Director and the third copy sent to International Headquarters, **P.O. Box 8530, Ventura, CA 93001-8540**, Attention: Chapter Activities Office.

When Headquarters receives your registration form, a beautiful charter will be issued for your Chapter. At this time your group officially becomes a Chapter of the Good Sam Club. Along with the charter, we will send a Chapter President's Kit (which includes valuable information and suggestions to help insure the success of your Chapter), and a few other goodies.

# HOW DO I CONDUCT A MEETING?

Even though we are a non-political organization, Robert's Rules of Order is the procedural form for holding a business meeting. For this purpose, it might be worthwhile to appoint a parliamentarian to preside at these meetings with the chapter officers for the purpose of advice. It would be his/her duty to explain how a motion is made, voted upon and carried, explain the order of precedence, discussion and such technical matters.

## Robert's Rules of Order:

1. Call to order
2. Introduction of guests
3. Roll Call
4. Order of business
5. Old Business—Wagonmaster's report on the previous trips
6. New Business—next weekend's trip, etc.
7. Announcements—itinerary of projected trips, etc.
8. Adjournment

# CAMPOUTS - WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

Campouts are great fun and something all Chapters enjoy. Usually the Wagonmaster handles the planning responsibilities. Here are some campout tips so that each event will be successful:

- 1. Make campground reservations** at least 30 days in advance. During peak camping periods, allow for additional time. If at all possible, drive to the campground to make the reservations so that you may see the facilities. This will give you the opportunity to discuss the campgrounds with your Chapter before the event. Since most campgrounds require a deposit, collect one night's fee in advance and be prepared to pay it at the time you make the reservations.
- 2. Find campgrounds** in the Trailer Life Directory, National Parks and City Parks lists, or through local tourist information centers. Always good are word-of-mouth referrals from other campers or groups. Many Good Sam members take the time as they travel to stop and look campgrounds over and bring back brochures for future use.
- 3.** There are many things to look for when selecting a good campground. Always ask about water, electricity, sewer and bathroom/shower availability. Ask about the number of rig spaces, laundry facilities, night lighting on the grounds and the accessibility of nearby markets, restaurants and entertainment. It is more convenient if they can park you all together.

Inquire about a clubhouse and if your group can use it exclusively. During bad weather periods it is wise to see if the campground has an indoor facility so that you don't have to meet in a rig. The building could also be used for nighttime activities. It is always a good idea to know the park rules to make sure that your group can adhere to them. If you visit the campsite prior to the event, look around for overall cleanliness and the staff's willingness to make your campout successful. Lastly, check the park's rating in the Trailer Life Campground Directory.

**4. When negotiating campground rates**, ask about group rates for the number of rigs that you are expecting to attend.

\*When staying at a Good Sampark, always check for group rates as they may be less expensive than the usual 10% discount off the full overnight rate given to Good Sam members. Rates at each Sampark may vary and each campground owner has the right to set their rates as they wish. Some parks may charge an extra fee for the use of their clubhouse; some may waive camping fees for the Wagonmaster or Trailboss. It is wise to ask if the campground charges a cancellation fee or how far in advance they will allow cancellation of all or partial units. The advantage of checking out campsites prior to the event allows you the opportunity to know which campgrounds offer you the best discount for your group.

**5. Some activities** are more successful than others at a campout. Indoor games might include cards, dominoes, board games or bingo. Group games are important so that everyone may participate. Silent auctions and flea markets are always fun. Weather permitting, outdoor activities during the day might include horseshoes, bocce ball, or beanbag baseball. Organize a carpool and take local sight seeing trips or eat out. Some Chapters plan a theme for their campouts, especially if a holiday is soon approaching. You might want to plan a meal or two according to your theme or even have a rig "theme" decorating contest. Campouts are a good time to celebrate monthly birthdays and anniversaries and also an excellent time for a monthly business meeting.

**6.** Plan on having at least one meal as a group. Potluck meals are always fun and everyone gets to participate. It is best to appoint someone to oversee the meal so that there is a variation of foods. Another choice for group meals is a BBQ. However, before planning one, always contact the campground for rules on outdoor cooking restrictions.

One thing to keep in mind when planning your campouts is that the more exciting you make the event, the better the chances that your Chapter will want to continue having them. If possible, try to arrange to meet as a group for breakfast or lunch the day of the campout and then caravan together to the campsite. ENJOY!!!

# OUR LEADERS--WHAT WILL THEY DO?

## CHAPTER OFFICERS:

We suggest that Chapter elections are held on a date specified by your Director. Only those individuals whose membership is in good standing with both the International and local organization are eligible for office.

The Chapter officers shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Wagonmaster, and Legislative Representative (optional), and such additional officers as deemed necessary by the members of the Chapter.

## SUGGESTED DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS:

**PRESIDENT:** Presides at all meetings; appoints all committees, supervises all Chapter activities; represents the Chapter as a member of the State/Provincial Committee at all State/Provincial Committee meetings.

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Conducts meetings in the absence of the President; coordinates activities of all committees.

**SECRETARY:** The secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Chapter with the time and place of the meeting, how called or authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at Chapter meetings, number of members present at membership meetings and proceedings thereof. Receives, reads and answers all correspondence after action taken by membership at meeting, or at the direction of the Chapter President.

**TREASURER:** The Treasurer shall be elected by the Chapter members and shall have custody of all funds, securities and assets of the Chapter; shall be responsible for keeping full and accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements, and report to all Chapter members all such receipts and disbursements made on a monthly basis.

**WAGONMASTER:** Responsible for organizing Chapter campouts under the direction of the Chapter President and includes responsibility for selecting campout sites, making all necessary arrangements for outings, arranging tours and activities at campouts; responsible for appointing a trail boss or committee to assist with parking, collecting fees and coordinating activities at campouts.

**Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee will consist of all elected Chapter Officers.

**Legislative Representative:** Responsible for keeping track of potential laws affecting RV owners in the Chapter's geographical area and notifying Chapter officers and International Headquarters of such, and other duties as required. (Optional officer).

## **Suggested Committees:**

Below we have outlined the suggested duties and responsibilities of some possible committees. However, please keep in mind that these are only suggestions and each Chapter may have as many or as few committees as it wishes.

**Campout Committee:** Under the direction of the Wagonmaster, handles the details for Chapter outings, sets locations and makes arrangements for Chapter events; responsible for organizing and conducting potlucks.

**Publicity committee:** Provides news of Chapter projects, etc. to local newspapers and/or Chapter newsletter. Collects Chapter news items for forwarding to State Director so that he/she can send them to the Club newspaper (*Highways*).

**Entertainment Committee:** Handles details of entertainment and helps to make arrangements for Chapter events.

**Scrapbook Committee:** Responsible for the Chapter Scrapbook and the necessary photographs, newspaper clippings etc. of Chapter events and activities.

**Chapter of the Year Committee:** Responsible for organizing and handling the details for a special activity or project to be submitted to International Headquarters for the "Chapter of the Year" award. This is the highest award a Chapter can receive from International Headquarters.

**Legislative Watchdogs:** Keeps up-to-date on local RV legislation and informs the Legislative Representative of any new changes in laws affecting them.

Other committees that may be formed include: Membership; Ways and Means; Arts and Crafts; or any other committee that either the President or a majority of the members present decide is necessary.

## **HOW DO WE IDENTIFY OURSELVES?**

Chapter patches are fun to design and also help identify the various Chapters.

We require that each Chapter's patch include either the words "Good Sam" or our logo (Sam's smiling face). Patches may be any color or size, just as long as one of these requirements is met.

When your Chapter decides on a design, submit a sketch of the patch to your Director for approval.

At International Headquarters we have very colorful Chapter Patch Board displaying patches from our Chapters all over the world. We request that each Chapter send us one of their patches so that they can be represented in the display. Good Sam members from all over the world visit Headquarters and view this board and other displays. We'd love to have your new Chapter represented!!!!

**AND, MOST OF ALL, HAVE FUN!!**