



The Shrine Temple Unit Director's Administrative Guide

A Leadership Guide for Shrine Temple Unit Directors

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- I Introduction
- II Shrine Unit Establishment and Control (Imperial Bylaws – Article 36)
- III The Unit Director's Leadership Role
 - A. Being The First-Line Temple Leadership Contact with Individual Nobles
 - 1. Creating an atmosphere for developing positive interpersonal relationships among the Unit members and their families
 - 2. Promoting the purpose of the Shrine of North America and cause of Shriners Hospitals for Children among the Unit members and their families
 - B. Fulfilling the Unit's Purpose as a Part of the Working Corps of the Temple
 - C. Recruiting New Members
 - D. Assuring compliance with Shrine Law and the Bylaws of the Sponsoring Temple
 - 1. Unit Financial Reports
 - 2. Unit Fundraising for Fraternal Activities
 - 3. Unit Fundraising Activities for Shriners Hospitals for Children
 - 4. Unit Parade Participation in other than Temple Parades
 - 5. Unit Travel Activities
 - E. Conducting Unit Meetings
 - 1. Using *Robert's Rules Of Order*
 - 2. Applying the concept of "Fair Play"
 - 3. Making Unit Meetings Interesting – A Reason to Attend
 - F. Identifying Individual Members for Future Unit Leadership Positions
 - G. Identifying Individual Members for Possible Future Temple Leadership Positions
- IV Developing Your Leadership Skills
 - A. Defining Leadership
 - B. Distinguishing Between Leadership and Management
 - C. Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Your Members
 - D. Building Your Leadership Team
 - 1. Selecting the right people for the right job
 - 2. Assigning responsibility and authority

Introduction

Congratulations on your selection as a Shrine Unit Director. You have assumed a position on the leadership team of your Temple and within the Shrine of North America. You now have the opportunity and responsibility to contribute to the future success of your Temple, the Shrine of North America and Shriners Hospitals for Children. As a Unit Director, you are responsible for ensuring that your Unit carries out its function as a part of the working corps of the Temple and being the first-line Shrine leader for the members of your Unit. This Administrative Guide has been prepared to provide information concerning your basic duties and responsibilities, and to make you aware of certain provisions and requirements of Shrine Law that govern the operation and activities of a Shrine Temple Unit. Because there are thousands of Units within the 191 Temples in the Shrine of North America, the information presented here will take a general approach, not specific to individual Temples or Units.

Shrine Unit Establishment and Control

Article 36 of the Bylaws of the Imperial Council Ancient Arabic Order Noble of the Mystic Shrine for North America (the Imperial Bylaws) provides for the establishment of Units as a part of the working corps of the Temple and specifies that Units are under the control of the Potentate.

The Unit Director's Leadership Role

In this section, we will focus on your leadership functions as a Unit Director. We begin by emphasizing that LEADERSHIP is your most important role. In the next section of this Administrative Guide, we will provide information on developing your leadership skills, but for now it is important you understand that LEADERSHIP is what it is all about.

Being the First-Line Temple Leadership Contact With Individual Nobles. Because Units are generally composed of Nobles who have made a decision and commitment to becoming an active participant in their Temple, it is often assumed that these Nobles do not require ongoing motivation and support. It is incorrect to assume that because some Nobles regularly attend Temple meetings and functions they require no further guidance with respect to what is going on within the Temple or throughout the Shrine of North America. It is the function of the Unit Director to provide the needed ongoing motivation, support and information that will allow these Nobles to realize their desire to contribute to the success of their fraternity. This function is LEADERSHIP and requires the Unit Director be the first-line leader for the Temple and the Shrine of North America for the Unit's membership. In this capacity, we suggest that one of your most important roles is creating an atmosphere that allows for the development of positive interpersonal relationships among the members of the Unit and their families, and that promotes the purpose of the Shrine and the cause of Shriners Hospitals for Children.

To accomplish this, you need to make sure your Unit is a "fun and friendly" organization. Remember that the Shrine was founded as the "playground of Masonry," and the activities of a Unit must be things that your Unit members and their families enjoy doing. Yes, the Shrine has a serious side, but if you are going to fulfill the promises of "fun and fellowship," you must provide opportunities that promote fun and fellowship. Like most things worth doing, planning your Unit activities will require effort on your part, and while spontaneous events are often very successful, the reliance on spontaneity alone will not fulfill your responsibility in this area. Family picnics, barbeques, holiday parties, fishing

contests, golf outings, softball games, bike rides, Unit dances or a combination of these are just a few events you might consider including in your activities schedule. The important thing is that your Unit activities be things your members and their families like to do, that they will participate in, and that will lead them to invite others to join.

Promoting the purpose of the Shrine of North America and the cause of Shriners Hospitals for Children is a responsibility of all Nobility. This means you, as a Unit Director, must constantly remind your members that the purpose of the Shrine is to promote “fun and fellowship among its members” while contributing to the cause of Shriners Hospitals for Children in providing pediatric treatment for orthopedic problems, burn injuries, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and palate. Sometimes in our zeal for the work of Shriners Hospitals for Children, we allow our cause to overshadow our purpose and forget that it is through “fun and fellowship” that we attract and retain members necessary to support the work of Shriners Hospitals for Children. The fulfillment of this responsibility requires a delicate balance on your part and is something you will need to work on during your time as Unit Director.

Fulfilling The Unit’s Purpose as a Part of the Working Corps of the Temple. Generally speaking, Units fall into one of two basic categories: Service Units or Performing Units. Service Units primarily provide a service for the benefit of the Nobility or the Temple. Such Units include Stewards or Hospitality Units, Greeters or Reception Units, Registrar Units, Director’s Staff Units, Provost or Police Units, Medical or First-Aid Units, Audio Units, Past Masters Units, Maintenance Units and Ritualistic Cast Units. Performing Units primarily provide entertainment, whether it is for Shriners or the general public. These Units include the many Musical Units, such as the Brass Bands, Dixieland Bands, Dance Bands, Oriental Bands, Drum and Bugle Corps, Pipes and Drum Bands, Chanters and Steel Drum Bands. Other performing Units include Clown Units, Motor Corps Units and Horse Patrol Units. Some Units require a specific type of training, talent or equipment, while others require only the desire and commitment to be active in the Temple.

Regardless of the primary function of the Unit, each is a part of the working corps of the Temple. It is your responsibility to provide your Unit members with the motivation and direction necessary for the Unit to accomplish this function.

A further responsibility for all Unit Directors is promoting Unit member participation in Temple activities. This responsibility requires you be knowledgeable of Temple activities and how your Unit members can contribute to the success of these activities. Only when you, and the other Unit Directors of your Temple, fulfill this responsibility will the activities of your Temple fully succeed. Nobles who join a Unit have made an initial commitment to work on behalf of the Temple, but only when they receive the proper motivation and direction will they be able to fulfill that commitment. It is the leadership they receive that will enable them to perform the Unit’s designated function as a part of the working corps of the Temple.

Recruiting New Members for the Unit. Recruiting new members for a Unit is the responsibility of the Unit Director. Only by recruiting new members will you be able to ensure your Unit will continue meeting its responsibility as a part of the Temple’s working corps in the future. Remember what was said above: It is necessary that the members of your Unit enjoy what they are doing before they will seek others to join in these activities. Your success in recruiting new members will, to a great extent, depend on how your current members view the Unit’s activities. Those of you who lead Units that require special talents or training, such as a Medical or First-Aid Unit, have the added challenge of seeking out Nobility who have these talents and training and providing them with the necessary incentives to share them. It is truly a challenge of leadership to assure the future of an organization.

Assuring Compliance With Shrine Law and the Bylaws of Your Temple. At your installation, you assented to an oath of office in which you pledged to uphold and abide by the requirements of Shrine Law and the bylaws of your Temple. To fulfill this obligation, you must have a basic understanding of what Shrine Law is and have read the bylaws of your sponsoring Temple. In this section, we will define Shrine Law and provide you with general guidance concerning the bylaws of your sponsoring Temple. We will further call your attention to some specific provisions of Shrine Law that are important in the discharge of your duties as a Unit Director.

Section 101.3(l) of the Imperial Bylaws defines Shrine Law as follows: “Shrine law means the articles of incorporation of the Imperial Council, these bylaws and any general or special orders at the time in effect, but it does not include the law of the land.” It is necessary to understand that the activities of your Unit are governed by Shrine Law, and any specific questions concerning a current or planned Unit activity should be directed to your Temple Potentate or Recorder.

Section 336.1 of the Imperial Bylaws provides that Units are under control of the Potentate. There is no provision for the establishment of Unit bylaws included in Shrine Law, therefore, any adopted guidelines are subject to the decision of the Potentate and are considered informational or advisory documents as they relate to the governance or activities of a Unit. The “Annotations To Bylaws” includes interpretations of the Imperial Bylaws, which have been approved by the Imperial Council, with respect to the application of Section 336.1. A Temple’s bylaws must conform to the provisions of the Imperial Bylaws and are subject to the approval of the Imperial Council. Therefore, the bylaws of a Temple must be in conformity with the governance and the activities of Units. As a Unit Director, it is important you understand that your Temple Potentate is charged with the enforcement of Shrine Law within the Temple and that the activities of your Unit are under your Potentate’s control. For those who wish further information concerning Shrine Law, a copy of the Imperial Bylaws and any general or special orders are available from your Temple Recorder to read and review.

Unit Financial Reports. “Annotations to Bylaws” makes it clear that the funds and property of a Unit are the funds and property of the Temple, but it is acknowledged that Temples frequently permit their Units to retain some funds for activities. With respect to such funds, it is required by Shrine Law that these be included in the Temple’s annual financial reports to the Imperial Council and the expenditure and reporting of funds meet the requirements of the Imperial Bylaws and General Order No.1. A Unit is under the control of the Potentate, but the Unit Director is responsible for ensuring that the Unit provides the Temple with the necessary financial reports. Unit Directors are also required to inform Unit members as to the status of funds and approve the expenditure of funds. It is important that you, as a Unit Director, and the members of your Unit understand that any uniforms or equipment purchased with Unit funds, and thus Temple funds, are the property of the Temple. Should a member leave the Unit, his uniforms and equipment should be returned to the Unit, and should a Unit for any reason be disbanded, such uniforms and equipment are to be turned over the Temple.

Unit Fundraising for Fraternal Activities. All Unit fundraising activities must be approved by the Temple’s Potentate. This means if your Unit wants to conduct a fundraising activity for the benefit of the Unit, it must conform to the fraternal fundraising requirements as stated in the Imperial Bylaws and General Order No. 1.

Unit Fundraising for Shriners Hospitals for Children. General Order No. 1 provides that “no Noble (in his capacity as a Shriner), Club, Unit, or organization of Nobles, or affiliated or appendant

corporations shall engage in any charitable fundraising activity other than for Shriners Hospitals for Children.” This means that your Unit may not participate in any charitable fundraising activities other than those benefiting Shriners Hospitals for Children. General Order No. 1 further provides that fundraising activities for the benefit of Shriners Hospitals for Children must be approved in writing by the Temple Potentate and that he must obtain the permission of the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees of Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Unit Public Appearances. Section 336.2 governs the public appearances of Units. Paragraph (a) of this Section provides that “in parades of Temples at the annual session of the Imperial Council or in parades under the auspices of Temples or Shrine Associations, only Nobles shall participate.” Paragraph (b) provides that “no Temple Unit is permitted to participate in a parade or public exhibition without the expressed permission of the Potentate.” Paragraph (c) provides that “public appearances by Units are under the auspices of the Temple with which they are identified and are not permitted in any place outside the Temple’s jurisdiction except with the consent of the Potentate of the Temple having jurisdiction.” Finally, paragraph (d) provides that “Units and their members are prohibited from accepting any reward or compensation for participating in parades or exhibitions.” This means that if your Unit wishes to appear in a parade or other public exhibition, you must obtain the written permission from your Potentate, and you are responsible for ensuring that only Nobles appear with your Unit at the event. If a parade or exhibition is to be held outside the jurisdiction of your sponsoring Temple, you must also obtain the permission of the Potentate having jurisdiction over that area. You are also responsible for ensuring that neither your Unit, nor any of your members, receives any reward or compensation for participating in such a parade or exhibition.

Unit Travel Activities. Unit travel activities, whether a trip to a sporting event, a cruise, or even a visit to a Shriners Hospital, are considered travel activities of the Temple. Such travel activities are “public appearances” and must therefore be approved by the Potentate and be conducted in compliance with the provisions of General Order No.1. It is noted that trips to the Imperial Council Session or a Shrine Association meeting are not subject to this provision.

Conducting Unit Meetings. As a Unit Director, one of your duties is to preside at the meetings of your Unit, and it is important that you follow some basic procedures and rules. The Imperial Bylaws and most Temple bylaws provide that unless otherwise stated, the parliamentary procedure for meetings will be governed by *Robert’s Rules of Order*. For those have never been exposed to this basic parliamentary authority, we warn that attempting to read and understand *Robert’s Rules of Order* is a challenging undertaking. Because it is important to conduct the meetings of your Shrine Club in compliance with basic parliamentary procedure, we suggest visiting your local public library and studying one of any number of more easily read and understood parliamentary procedure books based on *Robert’s Rules of Order*.

Another important item in conducting your Shrine Unit meetings is applying the concept of fair play with each and every Noble. It is important to understand that not everyone is familiar with the requirements of *Robert’s Rules of Order*, and certain leeway must be allowed so all feel fairly treated and equally respected. Fair play applies most importantly to those who may disagree with your personal point-of-view on a given issue or activity.

A final item concerning Shrine Unit meetings is that it is your responsibility to ensure they are interesting, informative and relevant to members. In this regard, the scheduling of speakers and programs on subjects of interest to your members will go a long way. Some ideas you might consider for

such meetings include: investing for retirement; selecting long-term-care insurance; a presentation by a high school or college sports coach or player(s); a presentation by a local tourist attraction or theme park; a presentation by a local public official; a burn prevention or fire safety program presented by your local fire department. The important thing is that you attempt to give your members a reason to attend your meetings and participate in your activities.

Identifying Individual Members for Future Unit Leadership Positions. One of your most basic leadership responsibilities will be to identify members who demonstrate the ability and the interest needed to become a future leader of your Unit. Every leader has the obligation to prepare others to assume his leadership responsibilities. It is important you personally observe the ability and commitment in those you recommend for this responsibility. Remember that the greatest legacy a leader can leave is that of identifying and preparing those who will lead in the future.

Identifying Individual Members for Possible Future Temple Leadership Positions. Because your Unit is part of your sponsoring Temple, you have an obligation to identify those in your Unit who may have the ability and interest in becoming a part of the Temple's future leadership. When you identify a Noble you believe may possess the needed leadership skills and in whom you have observed the commitment to the purpose and cause of the Shrine, you are encouraged to recommend him to the current Temple leadership. You are cautioned that in making such a recommendation, the future of your entire Temple and the Shrine of North America may be influenced by your actions. You should make a recommendation only after careful consideration.

Developing Your Leadership Skills

Serving in a leadership position brings development and personal growth, and it is an ongoing and never-ending challenge and responsibility. While it is not within the scope of the Administrative Guide to provide you with a Leadership Training Program, we encourage you to continue improving your leadership skills. There are numerous resources available to assist you at your local library or on the Internet. In this section, we will provide a basic definition of leadership, emphasize the importance of distinguishing between leadership and management, provide basic information on identifying and meeting the needs of your members, and give you suggestions on building your leadership team.

Defining Leadership. Webster defines a "leader" as "A person that leads, directs or commands a group activity." "Leadership" is defined as "The ability to lead." In his futurist treatise on leadership entitled "*Leadershift*," Joel Barker defines a "21st Century Leader" as "Someone you would chose to follow to a place you wouldn't go by yourself." In "*The 21 Irrefutable Laws Of Leadership*," John C. Maxwell states: "True leadership cannot be awarded, appointed or assigned... It must be earned." Reading other leadership text may provide slightly different definitions or descriptions, but there are certain things they will have in common: 1) Leadership involves directing the activities of others; 2) The leader is one who must decide where it is that a group needs to go and then determine how to get them there; and 3) Leadership is not something that can be appointed, it must be earned; thus leadership is not a privilege, it is a responsibility. What does this mean to you as a Shrine Unit Director? It means that: 1) You are going to be responsible for directing the activities of your Unit members; 2) You must determine the needs of your Unit and how you are going to address them; and 3) Regardless of what anyone says, you will only be the leader you need to be if you earn it.

Distinguishing Between Leadership and Management. It is necessary to emphasize that “leadership” and “management” are not the same. “Leadership” focuses on people, while “management” focuses on systems and processes. Because the Shrine is in the “People Business,” it is important you understand that, as a Temple Unit Director, you are seeking to lead people, not manage them.

Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Your Members. To be a truly effective leader, you must identify the needs of your members and then determine how you are going to meet them. You need to determine what your members are looking for in your Unit. While Units have a specific function within the Temple, your Unit activities should still center on providing the environment that encourages and promotes a positive and friendly experience for your members.

In seeking to identify the needs of your members, ask the following questions: 1) Are your Unit meetings well attended? 2) Are the activities of your Unit well attended and do the majority of your members express general satisfaction with events you are holding? 3) Do the members of your Unit actively participate in the fraternal fundraising activities? 4) Do the members of your Unit actively participate in parades? 5) Is your Unit regularly represented at the meetings of the Blue Lodges in your area? 6) Do the members of your Unit actively seek out men of good character to become members of your area Blue Lodges and your Temple? 7) Do the members of your Unit actively participate in community activities, celebrations and parades? 8) Do the members of your Unit invite non-members to participate in your social and fundraising activities? 9) Are the members of your Unit regularly informed of your Temple’s activities and is attendance at Temple meetings and participation in Temple events and activities encouraged? 10) Are new members of your Unit stepping forward and accepting leadership positions in the Unit? 11) Do the members of your Unit actively seek out children who could benefit from treatment at Shriners Hospital for Children? 12) Does your Unit schedule periodic visits at the Shriners Hospitals for Children with which your sponsoring Temple is affiliated?

The preceding are a few questions you should ask to determine if your Unit is meeting the needs of your members. Those questions that cannot be answered in the affirmative identify a need for your Unit and you must decide how you are going to meet these identified needs. We suggest you have a plan, and in the development of this plan, you need to involve the leadership team of your Unit. This suggestion leads us to the concluding section of this Administrative Guide.

Building Your Leadership Team. Shrine leadership, at any level, is not an “I, me, my” activity. Successful Shrine leadership requires building a “leadership team” where each member of the team contributes to the accomplishment of the organization’s established goals and objectives. In building a leadership team, it is important the leader (in the case of your Unit, you) exercise care to ensure that those selected for this team are the right people for the right job. We cannot overemphasize this last statement. The selection of an individual for a leadership position because he happens to be a long-time friend or relative is the wrong reason to select that person. Select the best person for the position. It is often difficult to make this type of decision, but it is a responsibility of leadership that cannot be avoided or overlooked. A second important item in the development of a leadership team is the assignment of the authority necessary to accomplish a delegated responsibility. Failing to give those the authority necessary to accomplish a task is a sure formula for failure.

Conclusion

Again, congratulations on your selection to a Shrine Leadership position as a Unit Director. We wish you well in meeting the challenges and opportunities that await you. Your success will depend on your commitment to meeting your leadership responsibilities, and we hope what we have provided here will assist you in this effort.