

Branch Start-Up Plans (Yeah, it's long, but read and understand this)

Fellow SIR Leaders

I am getting bombarded with questions regarding start-up plans for luncheons, activities and events. As clear as I tried to be with my directions in my April 22 email to all of you, I obviously did not get the message across. I have pasted the relevant start-up information from that email below and followed it with some answers to questions I have received:

We have some directions that supplement those that will be provided by national, state county and city officials; they shall be followed:

- BECs shall not approve any restart plan until all BEC members have viewed the aforementioned BEC Fiduciary Responsibilities video.
- Branch Activity, Luncheon and Event Chairmen shall not begin any activity until its restart has been approved by the BEC, or if a State Activity or Event, the State Executive Committee.
- BEC members shall thoroughly understand the regulations that apply nationally, in California, in their county and city.
- In cases where Branches straddle more than one county, and/or Area activities that do likewise, the most conservative county regulations shall be applied.
- Area Governors shall create a group of Sir leaders in each county who are responsible to ensure the regulations are communicated and understood by all Branches within each county.
- Branches shall take a conservative approach to reopening while incorporating national, state, county and city directions.
- Area-wide and state-wide activities and events shall also follow these directions.
- There shall be no penalty for member non-attendance at any Sir luncheon, activity and/or event until further notice.
- There shall be no pressure applied to any member to attend any Sir luncheon, activity and/or event.
- There shall be an appropriate lag time created between the lifting of regulations and the start up of any Branch luncheon, activity and/or event to ensure any potential problems are identified and dealt with.

Regarding BEC and State Board meetings:

- We encourage Branch BECs and activities to meet using Zoom while shelter in place and social distancing requirements are in place. We are working on a multi-level Zoom training program, and our target is to train Area Governors next week who in turn will train Branch BECs. We have future plans for enhanced training following that effort. In the meantime, if leaders and members have a modicum of technical savvy, Zoom tutorials on their website can get one started. We have also found that many of our members have been using Zoom in non-Sir

applications and are proficient using it. We suggest Branches canvas members to find these early adopters and ask them to help with the Branch implementation of Zoom.

- If a Branch is unable or not capable of using an electronic conferencing method, and if group gathering restrictions are lifted, BEC meetings may be immediately held provided all federal, state, county and city regulations—including social distancing and meeting size, are scrupulously followed .
- Appropriate lag times for the events of golf, bowling, bocce, fishing and recreational vehicles shall be 30 days after BEC plan approval or 30 days after the regulation is lifted, whichever is longer.
- Branch BECs shall consult with their Area Governors regarding any issues and/or questions that arise from these directions – issues and questions requiring further consideration and study shall be escalated to the Regional Director and then the President.
- These directions obviously do not apply to the holding of electronic meetings which are heartily encouraged as long as groups of members engage in social distancing and shelter in place regulations

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why is SIR State placing so much effort on written start-up plans and BEC approval? *The State Board believes that our start-up must be done thoughtfully, reasonably and prudently. None of us want to be a party to exposing our members unnecessarily to COVID 19, or potentially fostering its contagion.*

Why do BEC members have to watch a video before approving a start-up plan? *Because this is serious business. The BECs are the body that approves the start-up plan for Branch luncheons, activities and events. The State Board wants to make it clear that we cannot afford for any Branch to **mess this up**. Should they do so, they will put all of SIR at risk. We came darn close to losing our liability and umbrella insurance policies a few months ago. **We cannot afford a repeat of that**. We have never trained Directors, and this is our first attempt. As long as BECs act thoughtfully, reasonably and prudently, everything will be OK.*

What if the activity is Area-wide and involves multiple Branches. *Then develop a consolidated plan and submit it to the Area Governor for approval.*

Why isn't the State taking the lead on this? Why are they not the approval body? *Rules, regulations, facility requirements are so varied, it would be impossible to centralize any approval process. Further, with 108 Branches and our limited manpower, the task at the State level would be impossible.*

What if we have questions? *Take them to your AG if he can't respond, go to your RD, then to me.*

Do all activities require a 30day lag time between BEC approval and start-up? *NO, only the activities of golf, bowling, bocce, fishing, and recreational vehicles require a 30 day lag time from 30 days after BEC plan approval or 30 days after the regulation is lifted, which ever is longer. Other activities, luncheons and events may start at any time the BEC believes prudent.*

What is the key issue facing SIR today? *Keeping our SIR members engaged with the Branch. If they are not engaged, a number will drift away, and when we are allowed to re-open, we may find those members feel they have no further need for SIR.*

If we can't meet in person, what can we do to engage them? *We are strongly recommending that the Branch hold BEC, luncheon and activity meetings using ZOOM. It's not as much fun as meeting in person, but it beats nothing, and it gets you out of your wife's hair for a while.*

But we've tried to use ZOOM, and it cuts us off after 40 minutes. *We recognize this, and the SIR Foundation has purchased ten ZOOM Licenses; they have granted SIR Branches the use of these licenses if they apply. So far, about 65 percent of our Branches have applied.*

But lots of our members are not technical, many don't have computers, video, mics, etc. *ZOOM can run on many platforms including I or Smart Phones. Encourage their use. There are other ways to keep members engaged. Call them, send weekly emails, send postcards, get creative, please. This is really important to the future health of our Branches.*

My Branch has no technical support to use ZOOM, it's hopeless. *Wrong, we have found that many Branch members were already using ZOOM in non-SIR applications. Take a survey; see what kind of help your Branch already has. We also have a team of SIR volunteers that are prepared to help Branches. If you need help, contact Pat Reed (209+289-3314 or PREED96@YAHOO.COM), and he will assign a volunteer to you. Remember, the Big and Little Sirs do not have to be technical themselves. you can delegate that.*

Ed, any last words? *I cannot stress member engagement strongly enough. Right now, we have about 65 percent of our Branches signed up. If you are not one of them, do it, and help will be provided. If you don't sign up, use other contact techniques. As SIR leaders, you are expected to address this member engagement issue. Please take action. The Branch you save may be yours.*

Should you have any questions or comments, please contact your AG, RD or me.

Best regards, and stay safe.

Ed