

RISK MANAGEMENT

Over the years, members of the Business Practices Committee have observed Elk Lodges doing many things in an effort to raise funds for their Lodge. This is good as it takes money to keep the Lodge going and to obtain funds to give to our charities. However, we are also seeing many Exalted Rulers and Lodge Officers putting their Lodge at risk.

Each Exalted Ruler took an oath when they were installed and assumed their responsibilities. The "Installation of Officers" in the "Ritual of Local Lodges" manual states in part "You will guard the Charter as the most important possession of your Lodge and you will be vigilant in preserving it for posterity. This you will consider a sacred charge." When all Lodge Officers were installed, the "Ritual of Local Lodges" manual stated in part "It is your duty to promote the programs of the Grand Lodge and to encourage participation by the Members of your Lodge in our charitable works."

Each Lodge has a certain amount of risk just serving their Members and the Guest of Elk members. The Grand Lodge provides an insurance policy, at a cost to the Lodge, to cover those risks. The risks increase tremendously when a Lodge advertises "their Lodge is having an Event and the Public is invited" or "open to the Public" which is against the Grand Lodge rules and regulations. The Grand Lodge says "The Order has a closed-door policy; Lodges must not be opened to the public and alcohol cannot be served to the public." In addition, the Grand Lodge "Accident Prevention/Insurance Risk NewsLetter, Winter 2022/2023 states "The service of alcohol is a privilege the Lodge extends to Members and their guests, not a means of revenue for the Lodge." When a Lodge violates The Grand Lodge rules and regulations, the risk to the Lodge is extremely high because the Grand Lodge does not provide insurance. If a Lodge gets a lawsuit filed against them, the Lodge will be held liable. There have been cases where Exalted Rulers and Lodge Officers went to jail. Why put yourself, your lodge officers and your Lodge at risk?

There are ways to reduce some of the risk and one of them is to get a Certificate of Insurance for each event/fund raiser to be held. Being the Exalted Ruler will be held responsible, the Exalted Ruler should be the one who approves any and all events and fund raisers, ensuring a Certificate of Insurance is obtained for every event prior to scheduling an event. An event/fund raiser should never be held without the approval of the Exalted Ruler.

For additional information, go to the Grand Lodge website (elks.org) and the Business Practices Library on the Florida Elks website (floridaelks.org)

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The Business Practice Committee of the B.P.O. Elks of the State of Florida has prepared this information to assist the Local Lodges of this Fraternal Order. The FSEA Business Practice Committee is neither responsible nor empowered to be responsible for the establishment of such procedures. The Business Practice Committee acts as a resource to assist Local Lodges. You should always consult your Lodge's tax and legal advisors before engaging in any endeavors or transactions to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and Local Laws.