



WATCHTOWER

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July 14, 2014

TO ALL CIRCUIT OVERSEERS

Re: Appointment and deletion of elders and ministerial servants

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Dear Brothers:

1. As an appointed representative of the Governing Body and in accord with the Scriptural precedent at Acts 14:23, beginning September 1, 2014, you will be responsible for the appointment and deletion of elders and ministerial servants, based on the recommendations of the local elders. Of course, the process of elders notifying you of the names of brothers they wish to recommend for appointment during your next visit will take place prior to September 1. When considering the appointment or deletion of an elder or a ministerial servant at any time, you should **feel free to consult with the Service Department or another experienced circuit overseer** if this would be helpful in making a decision.

2. The responsibility of appointing and deleting elders and ministerial servants is a weighty one. It is entrusted to men who are kind, impartial, and just. (Ex. 18:21) When handling recommendations, whether for appointment or deletion, you should avoid imposing your personal viewpoints and opinions or setting arbitrary rules. (1 Cor. 4:6) You should strive to imitate Jehovah and his Son by caring for matters with love and patience. (Deut. 10:17; 16:18, 19; Isa. 42:1-4) In this way, you demonstrate deep respect and submission to Jehovah and to the Head of the Christian congregation, Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:22, 23) We are confident you will continue to make these thoughts a matter of prayer.

3. **Appointments during a regular visit to a congregation:** At least one month before your visit to the congregation, the Congregation Service Committee will send to you the full name, date of birth, and date of baptism of any brother the body of elders will be recommending for appointment as an elder or a ministerial servant. The *Recommendations for Appointment of Elders and Ministerial Servants* (S-62) form will be used for this purpose. (See paragraph 22.) If the jw.org Web form is used, the names will automatically be sent to the Service Department. If this information is received via the jw.org Inbox feature, hard copy, or in any other manner, you should for-

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ward this information immediately to the Service Department. The Service Department will notify you whether there are any reasons a recommendation should not be considered. If this occurs, you should inform the body of elders accordingly.

4. No earlier than a day or two before the start of the visit, perhaps when other congregation records are provided, the elders will provide you with background information that will help you have a complete view of the qualifications of the brother(s) being recommended for appointment. Such information would include letters of recommendation (or perhaps letters of introduction) from a previous congregation. During the week, you should make an effort to observe those whom the elders are recommending. (*tg* chap. 20 par. 2) During the meeting with the elders later in the week, you should discuss the Scriptural qualifications of each brother recommended.—*tg* chap. 20 par. 1; *ks10* chap. 3 pars. 1-10.

5. Along with this letter, we have provided a checklist to assist you in considering the qualifications of brothers being recommended. The checklist should not be read word-for-word to the elders, since a variety of scenarios are described and not all will apply. Neither should copies of the checklist be given to the elders. If you determine that the brother does not measure up to the Scriptural requirements to a reasonable degree, you will advise the elders accordingly and inform them how they can help the brother to qualify in the future.

6. When you decide to appoint a brother, you and another elder will meet with the brother to inform him of his appointment. If the brother is (1) being appointed for the first time as a ministerial servant or (2) being reappointed as an elder or a ministerial servant for reasons other than his move from one congregation to another, you should ask the following questions: “Is there anything from your past, even before baptism, or in your personal or family life that disqualifies you or that would prevent you from accepting this appointment? Is there any reason why your appointment should not be announced to the congregation? Have you ever been involved at any time in the past with child sexual molestation?” (This revises the direction in the *Shepherding* textbook, chapter 3, paragraph 13.) If the brother answers no to the questions, you should provide the elders with a signed appointment letter that includes the brother’s name in the list of those appointed during the visit. (See paragraph 21.) You should inform the Service Department of the appointment using the *Notification of Appointment or Deletion (S-2)* form. (See paragraph 23.) The appointment will be announced to the congregation at the next Service Meeting.¹

7. If the brother approved for appointment is not present at the conclusion of the visit and it is necessary to ask him the three questions mentioned in paragraph 6, you should not include the brother’s name in the appointment letter, if any, left with the elders at the end of the visit. Rather, when the brother returns, the coordinator of the body of elders will assign two elders to ask the brother the three questions. The coordinator of the body of elders will then inform you of the brother’s answers. If the brother answers no to the questions, you should provide the elders with a signed appointment letter. (See paragraph 21.) At the Service Meeting following the receipt of the appointment letter, the brother’s appointment will be announced to the congregation.¹

8. If the brother approved for appointment is not present at the conclusion of the visit but it is not necessary to ask him the three questions mentioned in paragraph 6, you should include the brother’s name in the appointment letter left with the elders at the end of the visit. When the brother returns,

¹ In the states and territories of Australia where an appointed brother is required to obtain a Working With Children Check (WWCC), the procedure outlined in the relevant policy letter for that particular state (as contained in the congregation permanent file of policy letters (S-22) for Australia), will need to be followed before the brother’s appointment is announced to the congregation.

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two elders will meet with the brother to inform him of his appointment before it is announced to the congregation.¹

9. **Appointments between regular visits to a congregation:** When a brother moves into a congregation with a favorable letter of recommendation for reappointment and your next visit is not in the near future, the body of elders may recommend his immediate reappointment. In such cases, the Congregation Service Committee will submit the *Recommendations for Appointment of Elders and Ministerial Servants (S-62)* form to you along with a copy of the letter of recommendation from the service committee of his former congregation. (See paragraph 22.) If the recommendation is approved, you should generate an appointment letter to be sent to the new body of elders and inform the Service Department of the appointment using the *Notification of Appointment or Deletion (S-2)* form. (See paragraphs 21 and 23.) If there are disqualifying factors mentioned or questions raised in the letter of introduction from the brother's former congregation, you may encourage the elders to wait until your next visit to make the recommendation so they have an opportunity to observe the brother for a time.

10. **Appointments recommended by the Service Department:** At times, the Service Department will assign an appointed elder or ministerial servant, such as a special pioneer or a graduate of the School for Kingdom Evangelizers, to serve in a particular congregation. In such cases, the Service Department will recommend that the brother be appointed in the congregation. Thereafter, you may generate an appointment letter to the new congregation and inform the Service Department using the *Notification of Appointment or Deletion (S-2)* form.—See paragraphs 21 and 23.

11. **Appointments of coordinators of the body of elders:** You are responsible for the appointment of the coordinator of the body of elders. When needed, this appointment will be made during your regular visit to the congregation. You should review the qualifications mentioned in the *Shepherding* textbook, chapter 2, paragraph 11, with the body of elders. This should be done early in the week of your visit, preferably on Tuesday evening following the congregation meetings that night. These points should again be reviewed with the elders later in the week when discussing their recommendations with them. The name of the brother appointed as the new coordinator of the body of elders should be listed in the appointment letter with “(CBOE)” appearing after his name.—See paragraph 21.

12. If a temporary adjustment in the coordinator of the body of elders is made apart from your visit, the Congregation Service Committee should immediately notify you, explaining the reason for the change. Whether the change in the coordinator of the body of elders is permanent or temporary, a *Coordinator of the Body of Elders/Secretary Change of Address (S-29)* form should be sent to the Service Department.

13. **Appointments of assembly overseers and assistant assembly overseers:** You are responsible for the appointment of assembly overseers and assistant assembly overseers. Although no appointment letters need to be generated, you should inform the Service Department of the appointment by means of the *Notification of Appointment or Deletion (S-2)* form.—See paragraph 23.

14. **Deletions during a regular visit to a congregation:** Recommendations for deletion because of poor judgment not of a judicial nature are best considered during your visit to the congregation. At the start of the visit, the elders will provide any background information that will help you have a complete view of the qualifications of a brother recommended for deletion. During your meeting with the elders later in the week, you should discuss the Scriptural qualifications of the brother. (*ks10* chap. 3 pars. 15-24) If you agree with the recommendation, you and another elder should in-

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form the brother of the deletion sometime before the conclusion of the visit. Of course, an elder who attends the meeting to discuss his qualifications will be informed of the decision at that time.

15. If the brother agrees with the decision, you should generate a letter of deletion to be left with the body of elders and inform the Service Department using the *Notification of Appointment or Deletion* (S-2) form. (See paragraphs 21 and 23.) The announcement of the deletion will be made at the next Service Meeting. (*ks10* chap. 3 par. 26) If the brother disagrees with your decision, he should be informed of his right to appeal.—See paragraph 20.

16. **Deletions between regular visits to a congregation:** If serious questions arise concerning a brother's qualifications and your next visit is not in the near future, the body of elders should follow the procedure outlined in the *Shepherding* textbook, chapter 3, paragraphs 22-24. If after reviewing a brother's qualifications the elders decide to recommend his deletion, the Congregation Service Committee may submit their recommendation to you immediately. Their letter should provide complete details and indicate whether or not the brother agrees with their recommendation. (*ks10* chap. 3 par. 25) If you agree with the recommendation and believe it should be processed immediately, you should send a letter of deletion to the body of elders. (See paragraph 21.) Upon receipt of the letter, the coordinator of the body of elders will assign two elders to inform the brother of your decision. If the brother accepts the decision, the announcement will be made at the next Service Meeting. (*ks10* chap. 3 par. 26) You should inform the Service Department using the *Notification of Appointment or Deletion* (S-2) form. (See paragraph 23.) If the brother does not accept the decision, he will be informed of his right to appeal, the announcement to the congregation will be held in abeyance, and the coordinator of the body of elders will inform you.—See paragraph 20.

17. If the letter recommending a brother's deletion indicates that the brother disagrees with the elders' recommendation or if the reason for the recommendation is an issue of poor judgment that is not widely known, you may decide to wait until your next visit to consider the matter. In such cases, you should inform the body of elders accordingly. Meanwhile, the brother will continue to serve as an elder or a ministerial servant, and the body of elders will determine what congregation responsibilities he will have in the interim, according to the circumstances.

18. **Transfers to another congregation:** At the start of each visit, the elders should inform you of any elders or ministerial servants who moved out of the congregation since the last visit. If jw.org still lists the brother as serving in the congregation, you should inform the Service Department by means of the *Notification of Appointment or Deletion* (S-2) form. (See paragraph 23.) In such cases, a letter of deletion should not be provided.

19. **Resignations, deletions for judicial reasons, and deaths:** The Congregation Service Committee will immediately inform you of (1) the deletion of an elder or a ministerial servant because of resignation, judicial reproof, disfellowshipping, or disassociation or (2) the death of an elder or a ministerial servant. You should thereafter inform the Service Department using the *Notification of Appointment or Deletion* (S-2) form. (See paragraph 23.) For deletions resulting from judicial reproof or the resignation of a brother, you should also generate a deletion letter to the body of elders. (See paragraph 21.) No letter of deletion should be sent in cases of disfellowshipping, disassociation, or death.

20. **Handling appeals of deletions:** If an elder or a ministerial servant disagrees with his deletion and wishes to appeal the decision, he should immediately write a brief letter to the Service Department, with a copy to the body of elders and you, explaining why he disagrees with the dele-

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tion. The announcement of deletion will be held in abeyance, and the letter of deletion will be destroyed (if one had been generated). Thereafter, the Service Department will select an experienced circuit overseer who will then rehear the entire matter with you. You should listen to the brother carefully and deal with him kindly and justly. You may consult the Service Department for advice. After you and the other brother hearing the appeal reach a joint decision, there is no further right to appeal. If it is decided that the brother should be deleted, you should generate a letter of deletion to the body of elders and inform the Service Department using the *Notification of Appointment or Deletion* (S-2) form. (See paragraph 23.) Once the body of elders receives the letter of deletion, the announcement of deletion will be made at the next Service Meeting.

21. **Letters of appointment and deletion:** At the end of this letter, a sample letter of appointment and deletion has been provided. Please note that the letter should include your own circuit letterhead, should be addressed to the body of elders, and should include the names of those being appointed or deleted in the congregation. The original, signed letter will be left with (or sent to) the elders for them to place in the congregation confidential file. The date of the letter will be considered the official date of the appointments and/or deletions noted therein. Please use the wording exactly as shown, which will make it clear that you, in your capacity as an appointed circuit overseer, are making the appointments or deletions.

22. **Recommendations for Appointment of Elders and Ministerial Servants (S-62) form:** Beginning August 1, 2014, the Congregation Service Committee should use the *Recommendations for Appointment of Elders and Ministerial Servants* form to submit to you the names, birth dates, and baptism dates of brothers being recommended for appointment in conjunction with a regular visit. Effective September 1, 2014, this form should also be used to submit recommendations for appointments between visits. Enhancements to jw.org are under way to provide a Web version of the form. In the event that this new Web form is not available by the time it is needed, the service committee should submit this information by means of the PDF version of the form, using the jw.org Inbox feature. The PDF version of the form, containing editable fields, will be posted in the "Forms" section of jw.org in the near future.

23. **Notification of Appointment or Deletion (S-2) form:** You should use this form to inform the Service Department of any appointments or deletions you make, whether in conjunction with a regular visit to congregations, between visits, or in conjunction with the formation of a new congregation. Enhancements to jw.org are under way to provide a Web version of the form. In the event that this new Web form is not available by the time it is needed, you should submit this information by means of the PDF version of the form, using the jw.org Inbox feature. The PDF version of the form, containing editable fields, will be posted in the "Forms" section of jw.org in the near future.

24. **Substitute circuit overseers:** In the event a substitute circuit overseer will serve a congregation, it may still be possible for him to contact you and discuss any recommendation(s) sometime after the meeting with the elders but before the conclusion of the visit. At the conclusion of the visit, the substitute circuit overseer should forward his recommendation(s) and those of the body of elders to you for consideration. You will handle the recommendation(s) as you would other recommendations for appointment or deletion that are received between visits. You should inform the elders that the substitute is not authorized to make appointments or deletions.

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25. In due course, *Traveling Overseer Guidelines* will be updated to reflect the changes described in this letter. It has been decided that substitute circuit overseers will be provided access to *Traveling Overseer Guidelines* once the revised version is completed. In the meantime, please provide them with a copy of this letter and its attachments. We send our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. & J. Society
OF AUSTRALIA

c: Substitute circuit overseers

CONFIDENTIAL (RC)

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN MAKING APPOINTMENTS AND DELETIONS

(1Ti 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9; 1Pe 5:2; Jas 3:17, 18)

Before making appointments of **elders and ministerial servants**, please consider the following, keeping in mind that each brother must “measure up to a reasonable degree” (*ks10* 3:1-2):

Experience and Maturity

- Sufficient age, life experience, and respect of congregation—*tg* 20:6-7; *km* 5/00 8; *w89* 7/1 29.
- Baptized at least one year—*w11* 4/15 11 par. 11.
- If baptized many years ago, why only now being recommended?

Family

- Wife and any children living at home good examples—*tg* 20:2; *ks10* 3:5; *w96* 10/15 21 pars. 6-7; *w88* 3/1 24 par. 5.
- Regular family worship—*ks10* 3:5.
- Scriptural marriage—*ks10* 3:8; 12:9-17.
- Separated or unscripturally divorced—*ks10* 3:9.

Field Service Activity

- Meaningful, zealous share—*ks10* 3:4; *od* 56 par. 1.
- Restricted share because of other spiritual obligations or theocratic projects—*tg* 20:33; see also *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22).

Tested as to Fitness

- Shows himself to be a spiritual man—*ks10* 3:3.
- Cares for responsibilities—*od* 57 par. 1; *km* 5/00 8.

Viewpoint of Elders

- Recommendation is not unanimous—*tg* 20:20; *ks10* 2:8-9.

Past Difficulties

- Reproved within the past three years or reinstated within the past five years—*ks10* 3:7; *w90* 9/1 24 par. 5.
- Notoriety subsided due to past deletion or wrongdoing—*tg* 20:17; *ks10* 3:7-8, 10.
- Pornography—See *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22).
- Child abuse—See *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22).

Before making appointments of **elders**, please *also* consider the following:

Shepherding

- Received training by elders—*tg* 20:6.

Teaching

- Able to teach from platform or on one-to-one basis—*tg* 20:2; *w90* 9/1 27 par. 20.

Past Difficulties

- If deleted as an elder, should he serve first for a time as a ministerial servant?—*ks10* 3:10.

Before **deleting** an elder or a ministerial servant, please consider the following:

Sufficient Scriptural disqualification?—*ks10* 3:15-21.

Two witnesses to establish accusation?

Extenuating circumstances that affect field service average, meeting attendance, and so forth?—*tg* 20:31; see *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22).

Sufficient firm but loving counsel given by elders?—*tg* 20:31; *ks10* 3:22.

Basis to show extra consideration because of faithfully serving for many years?—*ks10* 3:22.

Brother agree with decision?