

Is Your Guest Qualified?

Frequently Asked Questions about the Private Policy as It Pertains to Guests in Lodges

By David A. Chambers, General Governor

The General Governor's Office routinely answers questions concerning how the fraternity's General Laws govern admission of guests into the social quarters of Moose lodges. Section 50.2 of the General Laws defines three classifications of people who qualify as a guest in a lodge: (1) prospective member (male or female); (2) family member; or (3) lady friend of good-standing lodge member or gentleman friend of good-standing chapter member. The following are frequently asked questions on these matters, with answers:

Q: Are the privileges granted a good-standing Home Chapter member any different from those of a male-affiliated chapter member?

A: **No.** Home Chapter members enjoy exactly the same privileges as an affiliated chapter member.

Q: The dues of a spouse of a good-standing lodge or chapter member have lapsed—but the spouse has not yet been dropped from the membership rolls. Can the spouse be signed in as a guest?

A: **No.** The spouse is still a member, but not in good standing, and cannot enter the social quarters of *any* lodge until either reinstated or dropped from the rolls. Once dropped, the spouse may be signed in as a guest—but only subject to all rules pertaining to guests.

Q: A good-standing lodge or chapter member's spouse is not a member. The member is out of town, and the non-member spouse wants to attend a social event at the lodge. Can another good-standing member sign the spouse in as a qualified guest?

A: **No**—unless the non-member spouse can qualify as an immediate family member of the Moose man or woman signing him or her in, or as a legitimate prospective member to be sponsored by the good-standing member signing him or her in.

Q: The non-member wife or family member of a good-standing lodge member comes into the lodge alone. May any good-standing member sign her in as a guest?

A: **No**—unless, again, she legitimately qualifies as an immediate family member or prospective member of the good-standing member signing her in. A member can't just sign anyone in; the guest must qualify as one of the three types of guests allowed to the member actually signing her in.

Q: Does a good-standing member, visiting another lodge, have to sign the guest book of that lodge?

A: **Maybe.** Even though you are a Moose member, the lodge may require you to sign in as a visitor. (If so, why not look on it as a privilege?)

Q: As a good-standing lodge member, how many times may I sign my 21-year old son into the lodge?

A: **Only twice;** the third time must be for either orientation or enrollment. Why? Once he reaches the age of membership eligibility, he falls out of the "family-member" category and into the "prospective-member" category. *However*—I may bring my 21-year old *daughter* into the lodge as a guest as often as I want—because I cannot sponsor her into Women of the Moose membership! Any person who *can* be sponsored by a member for membership qualifies *only* under the prospective-member category, and is excluded from the other guest categories.

Q: An unmarried chapter member signs in a male friend. How many times can she sign him in?

A: **There is no limit;** this rule is identical for unmarried lodge members signing in a lady friend. (Remember, though, the guest must be identified as a guest and may certainly be approached by a member of the same gender as a prospective member!)

Q: My spouse is not a member. Can he/she make a purchase in the social quarters?

A: **Absolutely not.** No guest in any category is permitted to make any purchase. (This includes food, beverage, pull-tabs or gaming machines where legal, or anything else.)

Q: Can a good-standing lodge or chapter member bring a guest into any lodge of the fraternity?

A: **Yes,** if the House Committee does not object and the guest falls under one of the qualification categories.

Q: Can an expelled former member come in as a guest of a good-standing member?

A: **No,** not in any lodge of the fraternity.

Q: Why all the fuss about all of this?

A: Because in the U.S., the Moose, as a private organization, enjoys both an exemption from income taxes granted by the Internal Revenue Service, and the right of private association guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. constitution. Any violation of the Private Policy places every lodge in the fraternity at risk of being declared a "public accommodation." If we were to be found a public accommodation, we would lose this tax-exempt status, the right to choose our own members, and the privilege of adopting our own laws.