

Q – How does a squadron or district set up and use electronic notices?

A – We're all for ways to conserve our funds. The cost of printing and mailing notices and newsletters is often one of the largest line-item expenses in a budget. Sending notices and newsletters by e-mail can save significant funds and may be more convenient for members as well. Some notices, however, have strict timing and distribution requirements, stated in bylaws, the Operations Manual or by state and/or federal regulations. In particular these apply to: (a) calls to meetings; (b) adoption of amendments to bylaws; (c) report of officer nominees and (d) election of officers. (There may be some others, but these are the more common.)

The committee has found that many states have provided for electronic notices (e-mail and facsimile) to members of non-profit corporations. There are generally four requirements:

1. **The group's bylaws allow for it.** There is an optional electronic-notice in the 2010 Model Bylaws for Squadrons (Section 9.6.1) and in the 2010 Model Bylaws for Districts (Section 5.6.1). If your bylaws don't provide for this option, they would have to be amended to add it. The squadron/district should consult with its law officer to assure that the phrasing conforms to state law.
2. **The notice must identify the sender and subject.** These are automatic with most e-mail and fax systems, although your secretary may need to change some settings.
3. **The transmitted notice must be saved by the sender in a form that can be reproduced as a hard copy for proof of transmission.** This is easy to do: Simply be sure that the list of recipients is saved with the message, and print a copy for the squadron/district records at the time of transmission.
4. **The recipient must have agreed to accept electronic notices in lieu of mail.** Squadrons and districts should not set up systems whereby members are sent e-mailed notices unless they specifically opt-out. Such systems will rarely comply with local law.

You might want to consider two approaches for compliance:

- a. Send a message to every member asking for permission to use e-mail for notices. (Don't send an actual notice yet.) Point out the savings to the squadron/district and the convenience for the member. Remember to save the replies from members agreeing to accept e-mail.
- b. Many squadrons use a sign-in sheet at meetings. Try adding a column for e-mail addresses. Put a note at the top of the sheet saying, "Please add your e-mail address if you are willing to receive e-mailed notices in lieu of mail. Every e-mailed notice saves the squadron about \$0.50 for printing and postage.