

*Society for the Preservation and Propagation of  
Barbershop Quartet Singing in the United States*  
**Policy and Procedures**

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# *Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barbershop Quartet Singing in the United States*

## **Policy and Procedures**

**PREFACE:** This manual is intended to supplement the **By-Laws**, and to facilitate actions by Officers, **Board Members** and General Members-In-Good-Standing, hereafter to be designated as “Members”. Policies and Procedures will require occasional clarification and changes, depending on the era and the situation, so official edits are to be expected from time to time.

**SECTION 1 - ORGANIZATION:** The name of this organization is the Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barbershop Quartet Singing in the United States, Inc., aka SPPBSQSUS, Inc. Informally, the organization may be referred to as the “Society”. We are a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation by the Internal Revenue Service.

### **SECTION 2 - MEMBERSHIP:**

**a. Eligibility:** Any man of good character who likes to sing is eligible for membership. If there is any question about his gender, he will be asked to produce a government-issued document (driver license, passport or birth certificate), that identifies his gender as male. No man shall be excluded due to his race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, height, weight, agility, disability, talent or lack of talent.

**b. Age: Males** under the age of 18 must be sponsored by a Member-In-Good-Standing who is older than 18 and agrees to sponsor and be responsible for the formers’ behavior at all **Society events**.

**c. Dues:** Initial payment of **applicable** dues is required to join **the Society**. This payment **covers** a lifetime membership, although the Board of Directors reserves the right to assess the Members for additional **dues** payment(s) ~~from time to time~~, should the need arise, as has been the policy since the Society’s inception. A Lodge may collect additional dues from its members in the amount and with the frequency chosen by the Lodge.

**d. Application:** An applicant may complete the **application form** and pay dues by following the instructions on the **Society website**, at [www.sppbsqsus.org](http://www.sppbsqsus.org). It will be assumed that he is a man of good character, unless an objection is raised by a member.

**e. Auditions:** An applicant is not to be asked to submit to an audition to join **the Society** or one of its Lodges. Only after membership is bestowed upon him, may he be asked to submit to a voice test, solely for the purpose of assigning a voice part, for his participation in the Lodge’s activities. A registered quartet, on the other hand, is an exclusive organization, and may select its members based on any criteria.

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**f. Rosters:** The **Society** Secretary will maintain a roster for each Member. This roster is not to be sold to nor shared with other organizations. A Member may request contact information for another Member(s) from the Secretary. Each Lodge is encouraged to establish and maintain a separate roster for its **Lodge Members**.

### **SECTION 3 - LODGES:**

#### **A) Ten Steps to Creating a Lodge**

**Step 1:** Find a minimum of ten like-minded men of good character, who like to sing the old songs, and hold a meeting to agree upon: “We want to do this, become members of SPPBSQSUS and form a Lodge.”

The threshold number of Members-In-Good-Standing necessary for Lodge creation is ten (10), as prescribed in SPPBSQSUS, Inc. Bylaws, Section 2.02.

**Step 2:** Review the Society Policy Manual section which address the subject of Lodges. In that section you will find a **charter example (exhibit A to this document)**. Review it and then the entire group **must agree** to abide by the Affirmations and Avowals. **Adoption of those in entirety is strongly recommended.** Any deviations from the standard will require approval by the Society Board of Directors.

**Step 3:** Select a Leader and a Leadership Team and document their names on the appendix to this document (on the web site), attesting with the signatures of your Lodge’s proposed leaders, along with a list of initial Lodge members, and their respective Society membership numbers. This Leadership Team will be charged with completion of Steps 4-10.

**Step 4:** Choose a name for your Lodge (**Lodge numbers** are assigned upon completion of the Lodge Formation Process).

**Step 5:** Submit the completed Affirmations and Avowal Document and **Lodge name** to the Society President, with copies to: the Society Secretary and to the Vice President of Lodges for review and approval. Having taken these first five steps, if your application is approved, you are now more than halfway to a Lodge of **Harmonious Fun!**

**Step 6:** File for non-profit corporate status, with the governmental agency that has jurisdiction, where you choose to establish a business address. The rules and fees for incorporation vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Again, you should indicate that you are incorporating as a **non-profit** corporation.

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- *FAQs: My Group already has non-profit status 501 (C)3 Is that good enough?* – No, to be covered under our Society’s umbrella of insurance and satisfy our Bylaw requirements, you must incorporate as a Society non-profit entity.

**Step 7:** Within the United States, obtain an Employer Identification Number from the IRS or a **comparable agency** for the jurisdiction in which you will be operating. There may be a small fee. An EIN can be obtained online. If outside the United States, please consult with the Vice President-Lodges.

**Step 8:** File for **non-profit** status with the IRS or **comparable agency** for the jurisdiction in which you will be operating (this is a separate application from step 6). There will be a fee.

**Step 9:** The respective government agencies will send you confirmation of the registration of each of these documents (Articles of Incorporation, EIN and Certification of **non-profit** status, and any other state-specific or government agency required or prescribed documents, licenses and approvals). **You should forward copies to the SPPBSQSUS Corporate Secretary and to the Society Vice President – Lodges for review, and to the Society Board of Directors for final approval for Lodge recognition and charter.**

**Step 10:** Your Society Lodge Charter along with Lodge Number assignment will be issued and forwarded to your Lodge President by the Society Secretary, upon **final** approval of the Lodge Charter at the next Society Board of Directors’ **meeting**.

### **B) Guidelines for Lodge Operations**

Performing Choruses: A Member-In-Good-Standing who has met all requirements assigned to all the Members of a Lodge may not be excluded from a performance by that Lodge’s chorus

**SECTION 4 - GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE:** The Society carries General Liability Insurance that applies to its Lodges and Members. Each Lodge and each registered quartet may request a Certificate of Insurance form, which may be shared with **contact persons for performance venues, rehearsal halls, etc.**

**SECTION 5 - QUARTET REGISTRATION:** An official Society quartet must be registered. To register, the quartet must complete a Quartet Registration Form on the Society website, including the names, member numbers and **voice parts of the four quartet members, along with the contact information for the quartet contact man.** The completed form should be

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sent to the Society Secretary, with a check in the amount of \$50.00. Annual renewal of the quartet registration will cost \$20.00, if paid by the anniversary date. If received after the anniversary date, reinstatement of **quartet registration** will cost \$50.00. Registered quartets' names, personnel and **contact information** will be listed on the Society's web site. A **quartet photo** of adequate resolution will be included if provided by the quartet. In the event the Society sponsors **quartet contests**, only registered quartets will be eligible.

**SECTION 6 - ETHICS PROCESS FOR THE SOCIETY:** After reading the Society Code of Ethics (hereinafter "Code"), if you feel that another member has violated a specific tenet of the Code, you may want to speak with him or with a board member of that member's Lodge. Open, constructive discussion often resolves questions or differences, eliminating the need for further action. If you are still not satisfied, the Society has a formal dispute process that can be started by filing an Ethics Complaint Form, available on the Society website.

When filing an ethics complaint, you are the Complainant and the person you are filing against is the Respondent. You will be asked to cite the tenet(s) of the Code you feel have been violated and provide a narrative and any additional information that supports your case. Since an ethics hearing panel is instructed to base its decisions on clear, strong, and convincing evidence, you will want to include as much information as possible to support your charge, including contact information for up to two persons who can substantiate your allegation(s). Your signature and date are required.

Please note that you must file your ethics complaint within 180 days from the time you realized that the unethical activity took place.

Your ethics complaint shall be filed with the Chairman of the Society Ethics Committee (the name, address and email address of the Chairman shall be listed on the Ethics Complaint Form, which can be found on the Society website for easy reference).

Once the complaint is received by the Chairman, he shall have seven (7) days to:

1. Dismiss the complaint, or
2. Choose to have the complaint heard and resolved by the Respondent's Lodge Hearing Panel, if applicable, or
3. Choose to have the complaint heard and resolved by the Ethics Committee.

If the complaint is assigned to a Lodge Hearing Panel, the Panel shall be appointed by the Lodge Chairman/President and shall consist of an odd number of his Lodge members to avoid a voting tie.

If dismissed, the Chairman shall within two (2) days to transmit a notification to the complainant, including his reason(s) for dismissal.

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If not dismissed, the Chairman shall within two (2) days to transmit a copy of the complaint to the Complainant and Respondent indicating his choice as to who will hear and resolve the complaint.

The Respondent shall have fifteen (15) days from the date of his receipt of the complaint to file his response to his Lodge or the Chairman. The Complainant shall be sent a copy of the Respondent's response, or notice of no response, within two (2) days of receipt.

The Complainant and Respondent may modify their complaint or response at any time prior to the complaint being heard by a Hearing Panel. In those cases, the other party shall be given an additional fifteen (15) days to review and respond.

At the end of fifteen (15) days and the Hearing Panel having not been notified of any modification, a hearing shall be established. The hearing shall be via video conference (e.g., "ZOOM"), except that a hearing conducted by a Lodge may be in person. At the hearing the Complainant, Respondent and Hearing Panel shall have the opportunity to have an attorney present, present any evidence and bring forward any supporting witnesses.

The hearing will proceed as follows:

1. The Chairperson cites authority to hear the case, explains reason for hearing and makes everyone involved aware of the hearing process.
2. The complaint shall be read into the record.
3. The testimony of all parties and witnesses shall be sworn or affirmed. All witnesses shall be excused from the hearing except while testifying.
4. Opening statements shall be made first by Complainant, then by Respondent, briefly explaining his basic position.
5. The parties shall be given an opportunity to present evidence and testimony on their behalf and they may call witnesses.
6. The parties and their legal counsel shall be afforded an opportunity to examine and cross-examine all witnesses and parties.
7. The panel members may ask questions at any time during the proceedings and may request an executive session to clarify any matters, in which case all persons except those on the Hearing Panel shall be temporarily excused from the room.

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8. The Chairperson may exclude any questions which he deems irrelevant or argumentative.
9. Each side shall make a closing statement. The Complainant shall make the first closing statement and the Respondent shall make the final closing statement.
10. Adjournment of hearing and everyone not on the Hearing Panel is excused.
11. The Hearing Panel shall go into executive session to decide the case.

Upon the conclusion of a hearing or at the expiration of the fifteen (15) days allotted for a response from the Respondent, the Hearing Panel shall within two (2) days to submit its findings and recommendation to the Complainant, to the Respondent, and to the Society President and Society Secretary of any one of the following decisions:

1. That the Respondent be found NOT IN VIOLATION of the charges and that the charges be dismissed.
2. That the Respondent be found IN VIOLATION of the charges and that:
  - a. The Respondent be placed on probation for a certain period of time not to exceed two (2) years and if the Respondent is not shown to have violated any tenets of the Code during that probationary period, the probationary period shall expire and the Respondent shall return to full membership in the Society.
  - b. The Respondent have his membership in the Society suspended and be prohibited from participating in any Society activities for a certain period of time not to exceed two (2) years.
  - c. The Respondent have his membership in the Society revoked and not be eligible for reinstatement.

The Respondent may submit an appeal to the Society President and the Society Secretary (whose names and addresses may be found on the Society website) within thirty (30) days of his receipt of the Hearing Panel's decision. The Society President shall then have seven (7) days to consult with the Society Board of Directors to decide whether or not to hold a hearing on the matter or make a determination based on the evidence previously presented to the Hearing Panel. All decisions by the Society Board of Directors shall be final.

The Society Secretary shall maintain a secure file of all complaints, including filings, notifications, findings, recommendations and appeals.

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All FILINGS and NOTIFICATIONS shall be typewritten and transmitted by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested. Absent a return receipt from the sending of said filing or notification via Certified Mail, the time period shall begin to run from the date deposited in the USPS mail system.

Reference to “days” shall mean calendar days.

### **SECTION 7 – Philanthropy: Servi-SING**

Servi-Sing is the Philanthropic arm of SPPBSQSUS supporting both External and Internal ways to make a difference.

**Charitable Contributions:** As a 501(c)(3) organization, SPPBSQSUS offers two ways to support our Society’s Mission. Donations can be made to the Barbershop Preservationist Club which supports Barbershop activities and Society strategies, i.e.: Chestnut Learning tracks, barbershop festivals, etc. or to Singing Memories to Life, which supports the non-profit organization “Music and Memory,” which uses music to treat Alzheimer’s with personal playlists of a person’s life.

**SECTION 8 - STAFF:** Currently we have no paid staff. We intend to run our operations with volunteers who are Members-In-Good-Standing. We may have to pay for clerical help and will fill Executive Staff positions with qualified volunteers.

### **SECTION 9 – BARBERSHOP QUARTET STYLE:** Style Definition:

Barbershop quartet music is a style of four-part a cappella singing with some particular characteristics.

- The four parts are called lead, tenor, baritone, and bass.
- The melody is sung by the lead, with brief transfers to other singers permitted.
- The tenor sings a harmony part which is almost always above the melody.
- The bass almost always sings below the lead part.
- The baritone sings notes in the middle which complete the chord.
- Barbershop music is primarily homophonic.

Polyphonic passages are not only permissible but a musical necessity, as the creative use of embellishment is an essential part of the barbershop style, including:

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- call & response
- swipes
- echoes
- bell chords
- back-time
- patter refrains
- rhythmic propellants
- sustained or rhythmic neutral syllable support of brief solo passages.
- melodic embellishment
- brief solo passages

Short portions of a song may be sung by fewer than four voices for effect and musical contrast.

The style is characterized by songs sung predominantly in English with clear, relatable lyrics and easily singable melodies. Harmonically the songs should largely suggest the use of major and minor chords with frequent use of barbershop seventh (dominant and secondary dominant seventh) chords which resolve around the circle of fifths and sometimes other resolutions. The music should have an easily discerned tonal center and a balanced, symmetrical form. Thus, the song's arrangement, and by implication the arranger, play an important part in creating the presentation of the song and closing it effectively.

**SECTION 10 - EVENTS:** The Chairman of the Events Committee will negotiate with hotels, venues, airlines, etc., to organize meetings and other events on behalf of the Society. He and the President are authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the Society, with prior Board approval. Non-Members are excluded from attending some events but are to be allowed and encouraged to attend others. The amount of recommended fees charged for registrations and tickets are to be approved by the Board of Directors. The Society's website will post instructions and fees required to register for events.

**SECTION 11 - TREASURY:** The Treasurer oversees all organization funds and issues a report to the Board of Directors prior to each board meeting. The treasury is to be audited annually by another qualified Member-In-Good-Standing. Copies of monthly statements of the Society's asset accounts from banks, trusts, foundations, credit card providers, etc., are to be sent directly to both the Treasurer and the President. Any request for a refund or reimbursement of an expense of more than \$500 must be approved by email by the President before payment can be issued by the Treasurer.

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### **SECTION 12 - COMMUNICATION:**

1. Electronic Mail: Officers, Board-Members and Committee Chairmen **may communicate with the Members en masse through electronic mail, using the e-mail addresses on the roster.** Such messages shall be void of political or religious comments, as well as disparaging remarks about other singing organizations, Members-In-Good-Standing or Non-Members.
2. Social Media: The Society maintains a closed **Facebook page** (limited to Members-In-Good-Standing), which requires **setup** for each Member by the Social Media Chairman. All new Members are invited to join the Facebook page **immediately.** Any Member can make an announcement, ask a question, offer opinions, and engage in relevant discussions. Such messages shall be void of political or religious comments, as well as disparaging remarks about other singing organizations, Members-In-Good-Standing or Non-Members. Name-calling will not be permitted. Messages violating any of these rules will be deleted, at the discretion of the Social Media Chairman, who monitors the page.
3. Website: The Society's website ([www.sppbsqsus.org](http://www.sppbsqsus.org)) is to be edited and monitored by the Website Chairman (Webmaster), with such edits approved by the President or other **officer**, based on direction from the Board of Directors.

**SECTION 13 – QUARTET COMPETITION:** (World Barberhop Quartet Contest Rules are displayed in the Document tab on the Society website.)

### **SECTION 14 – The CHESTNUTS Project:**

The "**Chestnuts**" bring to life the essence of that which we are trying to preserve and propagate. They will become the lifeblood of our Society, sung by quartets and Lodge members the world over. Chestnuts are short arrangements of songs in traditional barbershop harmony style. They are intended to be quickly learned, illustrate the style, and be used as material that members can enjoy with other members, newbies, or other folks curious about the style. The full collection of Chestnuts will be placed on the SPPBSQSUS website, a member only access page from which they can be downloaded.