

A Lions Club

# "Open House" Guide

*District A-12 Lions  
Membership  
Recruitment  
Model*

November 2009



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A-12 Membership Chair 2008-2009 & 2009-2010

Please note that this manual is intended as a guide only. Feel free to adapt it to suit local customs and your club needs. I would welcome any comments, additions or suggestions which you feel may be beneficial to other Clubs in their recruitment efforts. Send them to [jimhilt381@gmail.com](mailto:jimhilt381@gmail.com)

## LIONS CLUB "OPEN HOUSE" (District A-12 Lions Model)

- The following club membership recruitment model came out of Michigan. Similar membership recruitment models have been identified in other Multiple Districts in North America. Similar programs have been developed by clubs in M-19.
  - A-12's official experience with this membership development plan is in its inaugural year.
  - Clubs who have used these guidelines, have always successfully recruited new members. **The program works!**
  - Minor variations to this program seem to work. However, when significant variations are instituted, the result ends up with fewer new members.
  - **Note: The  indicates specific action items. See the "Open House" action checklist with the attachments.**
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- Following the plan requires a serious undertaking by a club.
  - Several meetings are required for planning the actual presentation to potential new members and the follow-up sessions once the candidates actually become members.
  - The results are worth the efforts.
  - Every Lions Club can use new hands, new ideas and new projects. This is not to mention having enough help so that every member does not have to turn out for every project for it to be a success.
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- One of the reasons this approach seems to work is that a whole group joins together.
- This gives the club a "class" of new members, not just one or two at a time.
- This class can then learn the "how and why" of Lionism together rather than being the lone individual who must assimilate into the club individually.
- Also, the current members are influenced to work with all these new members by giving them jobs and committee responsibility.

## PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

- The first step involves a commitment by the entire club that new members are needed and that the existing members are willing to make a significant effort to gain those new members.
    - Membership is not the responsibility of just the Membership Chairman or the Membership committee.
    - Membership must be approached like any other club project. Everyone must be involved.
  - Set up an Open House Committee (see suggested structure)
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- Once the club has committed to the effort, a special planning meeting must be set by the Open House Committee to begin the process.
- The planning meeting should be the focus program of a regular club meeting.
  - Separate meetings tend to end up with very few members attending.
- At that meeting, dates, times and locations should be set for the "Open House" event.

- A list of potential recruits should be developed and one of the best ways to develop the list is to use the Recruiting Wheel.
    - Use the Recruiting Wheel to brainstorm ideas as to those friends, neighbors, acquaintances and civic leaders who would make good Lions.
    - Not everyone will be able to fill in a name for every blank.
  - A deadline is set for club members to turn in suggested names.
    - Sending the Recruiting Wheel with the club newsletter is a good way to get everyone involved, including those who do not attend meetings regularly.
    - Remember to ask your closest friends and your spouse for recommendations as to who might make good prospective members. You might consider asking your spouse!
    - Be sure to have a specific date for the final return of the forms.
    - Allow minimally two or three meetings for names to be returned. You need everyone's ideas.
    - Don't stop at just those suggestions on the list. Stretch your imagination.
    - Think of those individuals that are not traditionally asked; such as, minorities, members of other service clubs, corporate leaders, community leaders, business owners or those that might have physical or financial resources that could be of benefit to your club.
    - If someone does not turn in a form, be sure to contact him or her.
    - The more names, the greater the likelihood you will get the new members you need.
  - Once all the possible names have been collected, then the committee should review the names thoroughly for "pre-qualification" of membership for the club. Then, the committee's recommendation must go before the club membership committee and the board for approval.
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- Be sure to obtain the mailing addresses and phone numbers for those being suggested as members.
    - Those sending the invitation letters do not necessarily know "Bud" Smith from all other Smith's in the telephone book, so be sure proper names are submitted.
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- When all the names are turned in, a personal letter must be sent inviting the individuals to the "Open House". A sample letter is attached for your convenience.
    - Adjust the letter to accommodate your specific club needs.
    - Be sure to allow your committee sufficient time to type each person's name on the letter.
    - You should consider addressing your invitations to Mr. and Mrs. XXX YYY. (Ms. For single women)
    - Many couples today like to do things together.
    - By addressing the invitation to both you have the opportunity to get two guests with one invitation.
  - Open house invitation letters should be sent about three weeks in advance.
    - Never send them less than two weeks in advance.
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- About three to five days in advance, call each prospective guest to remind them of the open house and to confirm their attendance. This is an important step.
  - Experience has shown that if you call too early, you will have a lower turnout.
  - Three to five days seems to be about right.
  - This will also allow you to plan for the right amount of food.
- Offer to pick up guest. Make specific arrangements to have a club member drive them to and from the meeting

## PLANNING THE OPEN HOUSE

- The "Open House", preferably should be at your normal meeting time and place.
    - This will give your prospective guest the opportunity to show up at the same time as you would normally meet.
    - With a different time or place, you may get guests to attend who might not be able to attend a regular meeting or you may not get prospective guests who, in fact, could attend a regular meeting.
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- Plan a light meal. What seems to work well is a sandwich buffet.
    - A variety of breads, cold cuts, lettuce, tomato, cheese, catsup, mustard, mayonnaise, chips, dip, perhaps cake for dessert, etc.
    - Drinks should be coffee, tea and soft drinks. **NO ALCOHOL.**
    - This keeps refreshments inexpensive and allows for slight variations in attendance and lets folks go through the food line as soon as they arrive.
    - Do not charge guests or the club members for the meal – The expense is on the club.
    - This may not be what you would normally serve at a meeting but you are not conducting a regular meeting.
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- Plan meeting as a social event with a "Lions information" program.
    - Remember you are having an open house, not a regular meeting.
    - There should be no pledge, no prayer or no tail twisting.
    - Members should agree on a dress code; business, business casual, club shirts or vests all seem to work.
    - Members should dress reasonably the same and be sure to wear their name badges!
  - Have a greeter. Provide name badges for the guests.
  - All present members should approach each guest, shake his or her hand and introduce themselves.
    - Ask something about the prospective member and generally try to make the new person welcome.
    - Inquire what community causes (needs) are most important to them.
    - This is the member's time to get acquainted with the prospective new member.
    - By encouraging them to do the talking, they will feel at home and comfortable with your club.
    - Remember, they are looking you over at the same time as you are checking them out.
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- Plan a formal program not to exceed 30 minutes.
- Past experience shows about 5 minutes on each topic seems to work well without getting into too many details.
  - Cover the following topics: (Maximum 5 minutes each)
    - The International organization and activities, The Multiple District. organization and activities, The Club organization and Activities.
    - Obligations of membership.
    - Categories of membership (1. active, 2. member-at-large, 3. honorary, 4. privileged, 5. life, 6. associate & 7. affiliate.).
    - What goes on at a meeting (speakers, tail-twisting, business sessions, meals, etc.).
    - Cost of membership.
    - Opportunities of Membership.

## HOW TO MAKE THE SALE & CLOSE THE DEAL

- Summarize (Lions provide opportunities for community service, recognition, praise, advancement, leadership development, self satisfaction, pride, teamwork, feeling good, and social contact, for example)
  - Have at least one of the presentations made by a dignitary from outside the club.
    - Have past or present district officials give short five-minute presentations on the International, M.D. and District topics.
    - Remember, it is not important that each topic be covered in depth.
    - Use the club President to tell about the club's community support activities & stress the local community projects.
    - The Treasurer could talk about how money is made on projects and how service money is spent.
    - The Secretary could tell about the cost of membership, how meals are paid for and how dues are billed.
    - One speaker should address opportunities for service, leadership and having a say in which projects are supported by the club.
  - Emphasize that community projects can be accomplished by a group that cannot be done by any of the individual members working by themselves.
    - A broad presentation of what we do is much more important than going into critical detail.
    - Whatever happens, do not try to correct a speaker or add a pet project from the audience.
    - Keep the formal program itself to the one half hour limit!
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- Invite guests to join. Provide them with a membership application and assist them in filling it out.
  - Encourage them to give the applications, along with their cheques, to a club officer before they leave. Have a table where a knowledgeable Lion sits (preferably by the entry-exit door) who can take applications and answer questions.
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- Have enough membership applications available so each prospective member has one.
- Order applications ahead of time from the Club Supplies Division of Lions International (Order Form ME-6)
- Don't use poor copies of a membership application. Remember first impressions are very important.

## LIONS LITERATURE TABLE(S)

- Prepare for your "Open House" by having a table of Lions related materials.
  - These should be brochures on various Lions activities and photographs of your club working on projects.
  - Have copies of the International and Multiple district magazines/bulletins as well as your club newsletter.
  - Information on Lions Sightfirst II, Lions Vision Screening, Lions Foundation Canada, No Child Without Program are well received.
  - Provide a Club brochure.
- Provide a door prize or two; it doesn't have to be much.
  - An item with a Lion logo is nice.
  - The prizes should be for the prospective members (guests).

- Plan well in advance in order to obtain a wide range and variety of materials about the club and community services; about the Zone, District, MD & LCI. It is important that the club, brochure and bulletin be displayed. Provide handouts on key materials.
- Impress the prospective members by starting and stopping on time!

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## FOLLOW-UP

- Be sure to send a nice note thanking each individual for coming to the open house.
- Set a meeting date for a formal induction ceremony and include that date in your letter.
- Congratulate those who joined, remind them to schedule the club-meeting dates on their calendars and tell them your club is looking forward to seeing them at the next meeting.
- For those who attended but did not join, send a thank you along with another membership application. Ask them to consider joining in the near future and invite them to attend a regular meeting.
- Remind them of the costs and be sure to tell them where to send their membership application (or bring it with them to their first meeting) should they decide to become a member.

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- For those who were invited and were unable to attend, send a letter with a membership application noting the membership initiation fee, dues, etc.
  - Invite them to attend a regular meeting of your club and encourage them to attend at their convenience.
  - All new members must be formally inducted.
  - Have a District Officer, Governor, Past District Governor or Past International Director perform a group induction of the new members.
  - The induction ceremony must be memorable for the new members.
  - Be sure to have a membership pin and new member packet for each of the new members.
  - The Sponsors should pin the Lions pin on their newly sponsored members.
  - Be sure to schedule the new member induction soon after the open house; and most importantly take photos of the induction ceremony, and provide photo prints to the new members at a subsequent meeting.
  - Adopt the LCI Mentoring Program as proposed by the A-12 and District MERL Teams and utilize to build the new members into productive Lions.

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- New members should participate in a new member orientation session.
  - This is generally a two-hour session expanding on the items covered briefly at the open house.
  - There are a number of outlines available on orientation programs. Be sure one is used.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Who gets credit for the new member?** Generally, most clubs give credit to the member that suggested the new member's name. Ties: two members that suggest the same person; go to the first member suggesting the new member.
- **How many will sign up?** Experience has shown that about 50% or more will accept your invitation to the "Open House". Of those, approximately 50% will actually sign up.
- **Should we let them take the application home and "think about it"?** The majority of those that take the application home are not likely to join unless a proper follow-up is made by a club member. So, if a prospective member does take an application home, it is very important for them to receive a follow-up phone call within a week's time.
- **How do we handle the normal requirement of board approval for membership?** Our club likes to invite new members to several meetings to see if the new member will "fit in" with our club and our members. Then, we vote on asking them to join.
- **How can we make this program work?** Lions Clubs are slowly going away from this type of membership approvals. Ask your members to carefully select those you invite. Pre-qualify prospective new members using the previously described guidelines prior to sending out invitation letters. You might consider changing your standards and/or your method of bringing new members into your club. If your old methods are not working and your membership is dropping, perhaps it is time for "change".

### Included & Attached:

1. **Open House Committees Organization**
2. **Sample Invitation Letter**
3. **Recruiting Wheel**
4. **Potential New Lions Club Member List**
5. **An Open House Action Checklist**
6. **LCI Membership Issues – 7 categories**
7. **Membership Categories/Obligations, Rights and Responsibilities**

## Open House Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club "Open House" – \_\_\_\_\_, 2009

- **General Chairman:** Responsible for overall planning, delegations & coordination
  - Club Membership Chairman
  - Assistant (co-chair)
- **Planning Committee:** Responsible for specifics of planning, delegation and coordination
  - Includes general chairman and chairmen of sub-committees
- **Guest List (Recruiting Wheel) Committee:** Responsible for collection of names/addresses of potential guests from club members from their "Recruiting Wheel" forms. This includes reviewing names, qualifications and completeness of addresses, etc.
  - Chairman:
  - Sub-Committee members:
- **Invitation Letter/Follow-Up Committee:** Responsible for preparation of basic letter text for review and approval, preparation of letters/mailing & follow-up personal contacts, arrangements to attend meeting, etc.
  - Chairman:
  - Sub-Committee members:
- **Meeting Program (30 minutes) Committee:** Responsible for preparation of agenda for meeting including lining up M.C. and speakers.
  - Chairman:
  - Sub-Committee members:
- **Literature Table Committee:** Responsible for planning and organizing of table including obtaining appropriate literature.
  - Chairman:
  - Sub-Committee members:
- **Application Information Table Committee:** Responsible for setting up, membership applications, and "closing the sale" activities.
  - Chairman:
  - Sub-Committee members:
- **Greeter Committee:** Responsible for greeting guests and seeing that they are properly taken care of at all times.
  - Chairman:
  - Sub-Committee members:
- **(Venue) Meeting Room Arrangements:** Responsible for scheduling the venue, arranging space, set-up for meeting, food, etc.
  - Chairman:
  - Sub-Committee members:
- **Media:** Responsible for informing media of event, invitation to attend, and follow-up to obtain media coverage.
  - Chairman:
  - Sub-Committee members:

## MEMBERSHIP IS EXCITING - GROW YOUR CLUB

**EMSDALE LIONS CLUB**  
Clear Lake-Bay Lake Hall  
Hwy 592 at Bay Lake Road  
Emsdale, ON P0A 1J0

Fred and Mary Smith  
456 Highway 592  
Emsdale ON P0A 1J0

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith,

Your names have been given to us as leaders in our community, those who are concerned with the well being of our fellow citizens.

The Emsdale Lions Club, formed over 30 years ago, is part of an international organization founded with a desire to serve our communities. The club has several projects we use to raise funds to purchase eyeglasses for needy children and adults. Our club helped finance and build the pavilion at the Emsdale Fairgrounds, near Highway 519. Our Camp program has grown to the point where four camps receive our financial support. We also sponsor Leos and Army Cadets.

The Emsdale Lions sponsor local school students in the Lions Effective Speaking, sending qualified students to the local and Multiple District competitions in sites around the province, We sponsor the Lions Quest program at the local High School, considered one of the most effective youth life skills programs in the nation.

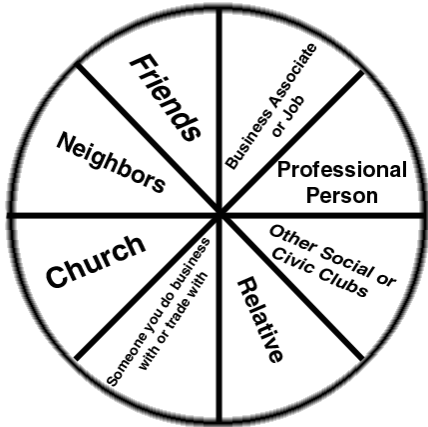
We extend a cordial invitation to both of you to attend a special Lions Club Open House on Thursday, October 15 at 6:00 PM at our meeting room in the Emsdale Lions Clubhouse at the address above. A light meal is planned along with a short informative program about Lions community service. We should adjourn no later than 8:00 PM. *(Note to letter writer: Provide here information on the proper "dress" for the evening)*

A few days before the meeting, one of our Lions members will phone to confirm your reservation. We hope you realize the importance of making a positive difference in our Emsdale community, and will make plans to attend this special Lions Club meeting.

We have enclosed a brochure, "The Lions - We Serve", which gives an excellent outline of what we do as an organization.

Very truly yours,

Bob Payton-Stewart  
Membership Chairman



CLUB  
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TEAM \_\_\_\_\_ MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ BUSINESS ASSOCIATE OR JOB
- ❖ CHURCH
- ❖ NEIGHBOR
- ❖ FRIEND
- ❖ SOCIAL OR CIVIC ORGANIZATION
- ❖ SOMEONE YOU DO BUSINESS WITH
- ❖ RELATIVE
- ❖ PROFESSIONAL PERSON

Name _____ Address _____ City _____ Prov. _____ Postal _____ Phone _____ Work/Business _____	Occupation _____ Marital Status _____ No. of Children _____ Length of Time in Community _____ Years Phone _____ Home _____
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## POTENTIAL NEW LIONS CLUB MEMBERS LIST

*Run down this list and it may help you in finding new lions Club member prospects:*

1. Friends of yours (check your Christmas list).
2. Fellow church or synagogue members (check the roster).
3. Business Acquaintances (check customer and supplier lists).
4. Your son, daughter, nephew, niece, brother, etc.
5. Someone in business for themselves, who needs contacts in the community.
6. Someone in business for themselves, who is community service minded.
7. A business executive or professional who needs contacts in the community. (Especially a major employer in the community)
8. Administrative staff or teachers from the community.
9. Merchants or professionals from the local shopping or business areas. (Especially those who might benefit from your projects or charities)
10. New managers of any franchise business in your area.
11. Speakers at club meetings.
12. Golf or sports friends (check team or club rosters).
13. A former Lion who has moved into our area.
14. A former Lion from a club that has disbanded.
15. Son or daughter of a former Lion (especially deceased Lion).
16. Friends, associates, business contacts of new members.
17. Women in business (check rosters of business women's clubs).
18. Managers of community services organizations (YMCA, Scouts, etc)
19. Executive from a community service which is supported by Lions.
20. A recently retired person. (They may be looking for some involvement).
21. Young business people.
22. Merchants and owners in the area (check the Chamber roster).
23. Former members, their situation may have changed.
24. Your doctor, dentist, accountant, etc.
- 25.



## Lions Clubs International Membership Issues

(as described in Article III of the Standard Form Lions Club Constitution and By-Laws)

### Section A

Subject to the provisions of Section B hereinafter, **any person of legal majority and good moral character and good reputation in his/her community, may be granted membership in this Lions club.** Wherever the male gender or pronoun presently appears in this Constitution and Bylaws, it shall be interpreted to mean both male and female persons.

### Section B

Membership in this Lions club shall be as follows:

1. **ACTIVE:** A member entitled to all rights and privileges and subject to all obligations which membership in a Lions club confers or implies. Without limiting such rights and obligations, such rights shall include eligibility to seek, if otherwise qualified, any office in this club, district or association and the right to vote on all matters requiring a vote of the membership; and such obligations shall include regular attendance, prompt payment of dues, participation in club activities and conduct reflecting a favorable image of this Lions club in the community.
2. **MEMBER-AT-LARGE:** A member of this club who has moved from the community, or because of health or other legitimate reason, is unable regularly to attend club meetings and desires to retain membership in this club, and upon whom the board of directors of this club desires to confer this status. This status shall be reviewed each six months by the board of directors of this club. A Member-at-Large shall not be eligible to hold office or to vote in district or international meetings or conventions, but shall pay such dues as the local club may charge, which dues shall include district and international dues.
3. **HONORARY:** An individual, not a member of this Lions club, having performed outstanding service for the community or this Lions club, upon whom this club desires to confer special distinction. This club shall pay entrance fees and international and district dues on such a member, who may attend meetings, but shall not be entitled to any privileges of active membership.
4. **PRIVILEGED:** A member of this club who has been a Lion fifteen or more years, who, because of illness, infirmities, advanced age or other legitimate reason, as determined by the board of directors of this club, must relinquish his/her active status. A Privileged Member shall pay such dues as the local club may charge, which dues shall include district and international dues. He/she shall have the right to vote and be entitled to all other privileges of membership except the right to hold club, district or international office.
5. **LIFE MEMBER:** Any member of this club who has maintained Active membership as a Lion for 20 or more years and has rendered outstanding service to this club, his/her community, or this Association; or any member who is critically ill; or any member of this club who has maintained such active membership for 15 or more years and is at least 70 years of age may be granted Life Membership in this club upon:

(1) recommendation of this club to the association,

(2) payment to the association of \$300.00, or its equivalent in the respective national currency, by this club in lieu of all future dues to the association, and

(3) approval by the International Board of Directors. Nothing herein shall prevent this club from charging a Life Member such dues as it shall deem proper.

A Life Member shall have all privileges of active membership so long as he/she fulfills all obligations thereof.

A Life Member who desires to relocate and receives an invitation to join another Lions club shall automatically become a Life Member of said club.

6. **ASSOCIATE:** A member who holds his/her primary membership in another Lions club but maintains a residence or is employed in the community served by this club. This status may be conferred by the invitation of the board of directors and shall be reviewed annually. The club shall not report an Associate Member on its Membership and Activities Report.

An Associate Member may be eligible to vote on club matters, at meetings where he/she is present in person, but may not represent the club as a delegate at district (single, sub-, provisional and/or multiple) or international conventions. He/she shall not be eligible to hold club, district or international office, nor district, multiple district or international committee assignments through this club. International and district (single, sub-, provisional and/or multiple) dues shall not be assessed on the Associate; PROVIDED, however, nothing shall prevent this club from assessing an Associate such dues as it shall deem proper.

7. **AFFILIATE:** A quality individual of the community who currently is not able to fully participate as an Active member of the club but desires to support the club and its community service initiatives and be affiliated with the club. This status may be conferred by the invitation of the club's board of directors.

An Affiliate Member may be eligible to vote on club matters at meetings where he/she is present in person, but may not represent the club as a delegate at district (single, sub, transitional, provisional, and/or multiple) or international conventions.

He/she shall not be eligible to hold club, district or international office, nor district, multiple district or international committee assignment. An Affiliate Member shall be required to pay district, international and such dues as the local club may charge.

### Section C

**Classification:** In the event the membership of this Lions club elects to grant and maintain membership on a classification basis, the following rules shall apply:

- (1) Classification shall be defined as any major phase of, or interest in, a business or profession.
- (2) Not more than two (2) active memberships shall be granted in any classification.
- (3) Classifications may be established for Associates, Father and Son, Proprietors, Partners, Officers, Managers and such other categories as this club may determine.

### Section D

No person shall simultaneously hold membership, other than Honorary or Associate, in this and any other Lions club.

### Section E

**Membership in this Lions club shall be acquired by invitation only.** Nominations shall be made on forms provided by the international office, which shall be signed by a member in good standing who shall act as sponsor, and be submitted to the membership chairman or the club secretary, who, after investigation, shall submit the same to the board of directors. If approved by a majority of said board, the prospect may then be invited to become a member of this club. A properly filled out membership form duly signed, as well as, the entrance fee and dues must be in the hands of the secretary before the member is reported to and officially recognized by the association as a Lion member.

### Section F

**Reinstatement of Membership:** Any member dropped from membership in good standing may be reinstated by the club's board of directors, and will retain their prior Lions service record as part of their total Lions service record.

### Section G

**Transfer Membership:** This club may grant membership on a transfer basis to one who has terminated or is terminating his/her membership in another Lions club, provided that (1) a completed transfer member form is received by the secretary of this club within six (6) months following the date of termination of membership in his/her former club or if the form is not available, the members current membership card; (2) such termination was in good standing; and (3) such transfer member form or membership card is approved by the board of directors. If more than six (6) months have elapsed between termination of his/her membership in another club and submittal of completed transfer member form or current membership card, he/she may acquire membership in this club only under the provisions of Section E of this Article 111.

## Membership Categories

### Obligations, Rights and Privileges

Category	Obligations			Rights and Privileges			
	Regular Attendance Expected	Dues (club, district, Int'l)	Participate in Activities	Hold Office	Voting Privilege	Delegate At Convention	Dual Membership
Active	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	As Associate or Honorary in another club
Affiliate (not able to fully participate as active)	No	Yes	Yes when available	No	Club matters only	No	No * (May change at next Int. board meeting)
Associate (active in home club, associate in secondary) (review every 12 months)	Yes home club No secondary	Yes, full at home club.  Club only at secondary (no MD or Int'l)	Yes when available	No	District convention for home club Club matter for both	No	Yes (in more than one Lions club)
Honorary	No	No, club pays district and Int'l dues	No	No	No	No	Yes (in any other service club)
Life (US\$300 1-time fee, with 20 years service, or with 15 years service and over 70 years old)	No	Yes, club and district, no Int'l dues (one time fee of US\$500)	Yes when available	Yes, if fulfills obligations of active member	Yes, if fulfills obligations of active member	Yes, if fulfills obligations of active member	No
<b>Member at Large</b> (review 6 months)	No	Yes	Yes when available	No	Yes, club matters only	No	No
Privileged (15 year or more Lion, cannot be active due to illness)	No	Yes	Yes when available	No	Yes	Yes	No