

Section I. – Introduction

1. Purpose and Authority

The Trustee Removal Guidelines and Procedures manual has been prepared by the Board of Trustees to assist area Intergroups and individual Gamblers Anonymous members in following the steps in the complaint and removal process of any currently-sitting Trustee from the Board of Trustees for acts on his/her own part which may be deemed to be detrimental to Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.

The Guidance Code of Gamblers Anonymous states under Article VIII-Board of Trustees, Section 4: Any Trustee is automatically removed from office for gambling by his/her own admission. Current or past Trustees who return to gambling and subsequently come back to G.A. should not have a voice at the BOT meeting until they have 2 years of abstinence, the same qualification as becoming a Trustee. Gambling, for the compulsive gambler is defined as follows: Any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or "skill" constitutes gambling. **Or he or she may be removed for other acts on his or her part, which are detrimental to Gamblers Anonymous as a whole, as per established Trustee removal procedures, or for not attending Gamblers Anonymous meetings. Removal requires 2/3 vote for expulsion by the Board of Trustees at the next physical meeting of the Board of Trustees.**

The conditions that would qualify for fulfilling this provision leading to removal of a Trustee can only be determined by the Board of Trustees. The Trustee Removal Merit Panel is a standing committee and consists of five (5) currently-sitting Trustees and five (5) back-up Trustees to replace any of the Panel members who are unable to fulfill their commitment. This Panel acts as an intermediary in this process between the member submitting the complaint, the Trustee in question, and the Board of Trustees. It is the sole purpose of this Panel to make recommendations, if appropriate, to proceed with referring the matter to the Board of Trustees for removal determination, or to discharge the matter as being unrelated to the provision of the Guidance Code cited above.

There is no satisfaction on anyone's part in conducting any procedure to have a Trustee removed. Irrespective of the decision by the Trustee Removal Merit Panel and possibly the entire Board of Trustees, items that are detrimental to Gamblers Anonymous as a whole cannot continue to exist. Issues that disturb the unity of the Fellowship because of the acts of a Trustee must be dealt with via the group conscience. Upholding the Guidance Code is a responsibility of all the Trustees, and conducting these proceedings is specifically for the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the Guidance Code and Fellowship.

Gamblers Anonymous Board of Trustees
Trustee Removal Procedures – Revised -10/2/11
As of Los Angeles Trustee Meeting – Fall 2011

45 **2. General Guidelines**

46 The purpose of this process is to ensure that all concerned parties are given a fair and
47 honest representation in what has no doubt already become a very contentious issue at the
48 local or national level. The selection of the committee members is meant to give equal
49 representation with the four (4) compass points plus Canada. Since it is a standing
50 committee, there should be no issues regarding Trustee bias from a member selection
51 process made after the issue is brought to the Panel. After the designated period for
52 collecting information, the Panel will openly discuss the matter, using only the material
53 submitted by all parties. The determination as to whether or not the Trustee in question
54 committed an act deemed to be detrimental to Gamblers Anonymous as a whole will only
55 require a majority vote of the Panel. If the determination is that a detrimental act was
56 committed, then the matter will be referred to the Board of Trustees for final action. The
57 Board of Trustees will review the matter and only be able to remove the Trustee after a
58 two-thirds (2/3) vote in the affirmative.
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61 **Section II. - Guidelines and Procedures**
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64 **1. Claimant**

65 Any member of Gamblers Anonymous (claimant) may file a written complaint with the
66 Board of Trustees alleging that a currently-sitting Trustee should be removed for acts
67 deemed to be detrimental to Gamblers Anonymous as a whole and specifying the alleged
68 reasons, but not without first attempting to resolve his or her concerns at its local
69 Intergroup.
70

71 It is strongly suggested that the claimant has regular attendance at thirty-nine (39)
72 Gamblers Anonymous meetings in the previous twelve (12) months and has abstained from
73 gambling for at least two (2) years.
74

75 If the claimant has been a member for less than two (2) years, he or she should be assisted
76 by a co-claimant from the same area who meets or exceeds the claimant's attendance and
77 two-year abstinence levels listed above. The function of the co-claimant is to ascertain that
78 the complaint has been considered carefully and to help assure the preclusion of a frivolous
79 complaint being filed.
80

81 **2. Local Resolution**

82 The claimant will have forty-five (45) days from the date of notification to its Intergroup or
83 Area Trusted Servants to have his or her concerns heard, and if local resolution at the
84 Intergroup or Area level fails and the claimant desires to pursue action at the Board of
85 Trustees level, then the claimant must obtain written acknowledgement from its Intergroup
86 or Area that it exhausted all efforts to resolve the claimant's concerns.
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88 If the local Intergroup or Area fails to conduct a hearing, or fails to provide written

Gamblers Anonymous Board of Trustees
Trustee Removal Procedures – Revised -10/2/11
As of Los Angeles Trustee Meeting – Fall 2011

89 acknowledgement within the 45-day period, then it will be deemed to have exhausted all
90 efforts to resolve the claimant's concerns. The Panel committee will confirm such status
91 with the Chair of the local Intergroup. In the event the area does not have an Intergroup,
92 then the local area components that are part of the election process for Trustees will be
93 notified for confirmation.

94
95 Should the matter be resolved at the Intergroup level, then no further action will be taken.

96
97 **3. Complaint**

98 The claimant can now proceed with a formal filing of charges against the Trustee in
99 question. The claimant must submit a detailed listing of the alleged problem, including all
100 the pathways that were taken to resolve the issue(s) in writing to the Chair of the Board of
101 Trustees via the International Service Office.

102
103 The complaint must specify the alleged reasons why the Trustee should be removed,
104 and it must be accompanied with a separate, written acknowledgement from the local
105 Intergroup or Area. The complaint should also include any information or arguments
106 supporting the claimant's assertion that the Trustee should be removed from the Board.

107
108 **4. Directive to Initiate Process**

109 Upon receipt of the complaint from the claimant, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will
110 forward all the material to the Chair of the Trustee Removal Merit Panel. The Chair of the
111 Board of Trustees does not have any discretion in this process. The Chair is the only single
112 source for initial receipt and contact for the complaint.

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115 **Section III. – Trustee Removal Merit Panel**
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118 **1. Function**

119 The function of the Trustee Removal Merit Panel is to determine if there is reasonable
120 cause to believe that a currently-sitting Trustee should be removed based on its review of
121 the complaint and all other pertinent material. The Panel may request further information
122 from the claimant and conduct any investigation deemed necessary.

123
124 The Panel will be a Standing Panel with a continued existence formed on an ongoing basis.
125 The term of service will be two (2) years starting with the fall meetings in the even years,
126 coinciding with the new term of the Trustees.

127
128 The Panel will consist of five (5) currently-sitting Trustees and represent five (5) compass
129 points from the regions of East, West, South, Midwest and Canada (see Zone Mapping,
130 Section III, Paragraph 3.). There will be one (1) back-up Trustee from each compass point
131 impaneled by the Executive Board of the Board of Trustees in the event any Panel member
132 resigns or otherwise vacates his or her position on the Panel.

Gamblers Anonymous Board of Trustees
Trustee Removal Procedures – Revised -10/2/11
As of Los Angeles Trustee Meeting – Fall 2011

133
134 The Executive Board of the Board of Trustees will have the option to appoint different
135 members of the Panel at the initiation of the new term for the Panel.

136
137 If the 2-year term expires during an ongoing complaint process, the current Panel will
138 continue in service and see the process through completion or resolution.

139
140 **2. Actions**
141 The Trustee Removal Merit Panel will conduct a preliminary assessment and determine
142 whether or not there are grounds for further investigation. If the Panel determines that there
143 are no grounds for further investigation, the complaint process ends. If it determines there
144 are grounds, the Panel will move forward with the complaint process. All parties connected
145 with the complaint will be notified that a complaint has been filed with the Panel.

146
147 In moving forward with the complaint process, the Panel may require additional information
148 and in so doing, conduct any investigation deemed necessary. If it determines there is
149 reasonable cause to believe a currently-sitting Trustee should be removed, the Trustee will
150 be notified in writing that the Trustee Removal Merit Panel will recommend to the Board of
151 Trustees it believes there is sufficient evidence to have the Trustee removed from the
152 position, also providing the specific reasons for such action.

153
154 Since the Trustee Removal Merit Panel may only recommend removal of a currently-sitting
155 Trustee, the Trustee remains eligible during the period leading up to any hearing during
156 which time the Trustee Removal Merit Panel reserves the right to continue to collect
157 evidence, and generally investigate the allegations made against the Trustee.

158
159 If the Panel determines the complaint is unwarranted, the complainant, the Trustee in
160 question, the local area Intergroup and/or trusted servants, and the Chair of the Board of
161 Trustees will be so notified and advised that all action has been stopped at the Panel level.

162
163 During this period, the Trustee may continue his/her functions and responsibilities to the
164 area; however, a voluntary resignation of the Trustee will be allowed. Such action by the
165 Trustee will stop the Panel's actions and no permanent record of the complaint will remain.
166 The Trustee will have all previous rights to be elected as a Trustee in the future, without
167 prejudice, providing the member meets the requirements of being a Trustee, as outlined in
168 the Guidance Code of Gamblers Anonymous.

169
170 If the Panel determines the complaint is warranted, then such opinion will be forwarded by
171 the Panel chair to the person submitting the complaint and the Trustee being charged. This
172 will act as official notice for a formal hearing by the Panel. Both parties will have fourteen
173 (14) days from their receipt of the determination to pursue the issue and provide all the
174 detailed support information they both believe will better outline the merits of their individual
175 positions. If the material is not received by the Panel chair within fourteen (14) days, the
176 Panel will utilize only the information it has received by both parties up to that date. The
177 Chair of the Board of Trustees will also be informed of the decision of the Panel.

Gamblers Anonymous Board of Trustees
Trustee Removal Procedures – Revised -10/2/11
As of Los Angeles Trustee Meeting – Fall 2011

178
179 The Trustee Removal Merit Panel will convene via conference call at some time
180 subsequent to the fourteen (14) day material submission deadline. All Panel members will
181 review and discuss the circumstances for possible removal of the Trustee. When the Panel
182 has completed its review, it will render a majority decision.

183
184 If the decision is to proceed with submission to the Board of Trustees with the
185 recommendation for removal of the Trustee for act(s) committed that are deemed to be
186 detrimental to Gamblers Anonymous as a whole, all involved parties will be notified
187 accordingly.

188
189 If the decision is to not proceed with submission to the Board of Trustees, then all parties
190 will be notified and the matter will be deemed to be closed. The Trustee Removal Merit
191 Panel recognizes that such a decision may actually embolden the Trustee in question to
192 continue questionable behavior or acts that initially caused the filing of the original
193 complaint. It is the right of member who originally filed to resubmit the matter for
194 reconsideration by the Trustee Removal Merit Panel. It is suggested that any additional
195 information on the matter should be put into action via the procedures outlined in this
196 document.

197
198 **3. Zone Mapping**
199 See attachment.

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202 **Section IV. - Board of Trustees Meeting Procedures**
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204
205 **1. Notification and Placement of Item in Meeting Agenda**

206 All matters under consideration by the Trustee Removal Merit Panel will be dealt with as
207 expeditiously as possible taking into account both the need for such matters to be resolved
208 quickly but also the Trustee's right to be treated fairly.

209
210 The Chair of the Trustee Removal Merit Panel must notify the Chair of the Board of
211 Trustees in writing by submitting an agenda item to the Board Chair no later than fourteen
212 (14) days prior to the beginning of the first session of the Trustees meeting. The Item will
213 be placed on the meeting agenda under the category entitled "Items Omitted from the
214 Agenda". The Board Chair will not have an option to refuse to hear the item formally
215 brought forth by the Trustee Removal Merit Panel.

216
217 The Chair of the Board of Trustees must provide written notification of the agenda item to
218 both the claimant and the Trustee in question. Both the claimant and the Trustee should be
219 urged to try and make a final attempt to remedy the situation before matter is heard by the
220 Board of Trustees. If a resolution is arrived at by both parties prior to the item being heard
221 by the Board of Trustees, the entire matter will be canceled without prejudice.

Gamblers Anonymous Board of Trustees
Trustee Removal Procedures – Revised -10/2/11
As of Los Angeles Trustee Meeting – Fall 2011

222
223 Trustee removal actions can only be handled at physical meetings of the Board of
224 Trustees, and they will be heard immediately after the Rules and Procedures portion of the
225 meeting agenda. If the Trustee being charged is unable to be present at the meeting
226 session in which the item will be heard, the Trustee will have the right to be represented by
227 another current or past Trustee. If the Trustee being charged is present at the Board of
228 Trustees meeting but is physically unable to attend the meeting session due to illness, then
229 the item will be postponed until such time as the Trustee is in attendance at that physical
230 meeting of the Trustees; otherwise the proceedings will continue and be concluded before
231 the last session of the meeting is completed. No motions to table or attempt to delay the
232 proceedings will be allowed due to the serious nature of this item, other than that which is
233 listed in this section.

234
235 **2. Responsibilities of the Chair of the Board of Trustees**
236 The Chair of the Board of Trustees will chair this item paying special attention to make sure
237 that current Trustees speaking in the discussion or during the question period restrain
238 themselves to matters of principles, not personalities. The Chair should make best efforts to
239 communicate and reinforce brevity and directness of the questioning to allow for maximum
240 participation by the Trustees.

241
242 **3. Meeting Presentation and Proceedings**
243 The order of speakers will be: 1) a designated member of the Trustee Removal Merit
244 Panel; 2) claimant or his/her appointee; 3) and Trustee in question or his/her appointee.
245 Each speaker will be allowed a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes for such presentation, with
246 no extensions of time.

247
248 All procedural questions and processes, including points of information and order,
249 challenges to the Board Chair and voting, will not interfere with the allotted time during the
250 presentation segment of these proceedings.

251
252 The Trustee Removal Merit Panel designated person will make the appropriate motion and
253 submit it in writing to the International Executive Secretary.

254
255 Subsequent to each speaker's presentation, the Trustees will be allowed fifteen (15)
256 minutes during each segment to:

- 257 • Directly question the designated person of the Trustee Removal Merit Panel as to
258 the facts of the Panel's deliberation and the procedures and processes used to
259 determine that the matter was indeed a bona fide issue for consideration by the
260 Board of Trustees to remove the said Trustee. No opinions or discussions from the
261 Trustees of the item will be allowed during this question period. Questions will be
262 only from current Trustees, and each Trustee will be allowed a maximum of one (1)
263 question with a related follow-up question. No Trustee may ask a second question
264 unless all other Trustees wishing to ask a question of the Panel Chair have done so
265 first.

Gamblers Anonymous Board of Trustees
Trustee Removal Procedures – Revised -10/2/11
As of Los Angeles Trustee Meeting – Fall 2011

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- The Chair of the Board of Trustees is empowered to immediately curtail a Trustee's time at the microphone if the questions turn into opinion or discussion on any aspect of the matter in question.
 - Directly question the claimant or his/her appointee as to the facts and reasons surrounding the initiation of action and subsequent issues that brought the item(s) to the floor for consideration by the Board of Trustees to remove the said Trustee. No opinions or discussion of the item will be allowed during this question period. Questions will be only from current Trustees, and each Trustee will be allowed a maximum of one (1) question with a related follow-up question. No Trustee may ask a second question unless all other Trustees wishing to ask a question of the claimant or his/her appointee have done so first.
 - Directly question the Trustee being charged as to the facts and reasons surrounding the initiation of action and subsequent issues that brought the item(s) to the floor for consideration by the Board of Trustees to remove the said Trustee. No opinions or discussion of the item will be allowed during this question period. Questions will be only from current Trustees, and each Trustee will be allowed a maximum of one (1) question with a related follow-up question. No Trustee may ask a second question unless all other Trustees wishing to ask a question of the Trustee being charged have done so first.

289 **4. Voting and Final Determination**

290 When the presentations by all concerned parties on the motion has finished, the Board will
291 then determine whether to remove the Trustee in question. There will be no general
292 discussion on the matter by the Trustees. The voting will be by written ballot, with results
293 counted by three (3) past Trustees chosen by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Removal
294 will require an affirmative vote by two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members of the Board of
295 Trustees who voted. Abstentions will not be counted in any part of the voting total to
296 determine the two-thirds (2/3) voting results.

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298 The results will be final and not subject to appeal, or review by the Trustee Removal Merit
299 Panel or Board of Trustees Executive Board. The results will be in writing through recorded
300 minutes. In the event of a decision for removal by the Board of Trustees, that Trustee will
301 cease to be a Trustee as of the decision and will be restricted from being eligible as a
302 Trustee for a period of two (2) years from the decision date.