



February 16, 2008

A while back, the Bylaw Review Committee was asked to try to develop a set of generic bylaws that could be used by new chapters or by chapters that are currently trying to use the ABATE of Illinois Bylaws to govern their operations. As any chapter that is using the state bylaws can tell you – they don't really fit a chapter's operations.

The attached bylaws are intended to fill this request. These were initially drafted by Ray Heck, and modified with the input of the committee members. The end result is what we feel can work as a good set of bylaws for a chapter simply by filling in the chapter name in the appropriate places. However, they can also easily be modified by a chapter to fit the way that chapter's members choose to operate.

These generic chapter bylaws are being made available to the chapters as a service to them, for use in developing accurate documents that both describe how they operate, and act as a guide for future operations. However, we also realize that many chapters have already undertaken the difficult task of developing their own bylaws from scratch. This document is not intended to supersede any bylaws that you currently have in place. At this time, the choice to use these generic bylaws "as-is", modify them to fit the chapters situation, or use your own bylaws, is a decision that is left to each chapter to decide.

The real test of how well these generic chapter bylaws are written is when a chapter begins to use them. If your chapter decides to use these, please let the Bylaw Review Committee know how they work out for you. Were there any changes that needed to be made to them? We will use this information to update these so that other chapters can more easily use them.

Respectfully,

Bylaw Review Committee:

Chair	Ed Domine	
Northeast Region	Aloha Terry Hopkins	Ray Heck
Northwest Region	Mike May	Neal Toepfer
East Central Region	Denny Turner	Jeff Marsh
West Central Region	Rodney Stage	Elizabeth Kren
Southeast Region	Bill Bennett	Doc Jones
Southwest Region	Ed Show	Rich Kinkaid

Generic Chapter Bylaws Guidelines for Chapter Implementation

Modifying the Document -

These Generic Chapter Bylaws were written in Microsoft Word, and can be modified using any word processing software that can open, edit and save an MS Word document. The following steps are specific to MS Word, but similar steps can be used in most other programs.

- 1) Open the document.
- 2) Use the menu path Edit > Replace. In the Find what box type "(NAME)". In the Replace with box type the name of your chapter (do not add the word "Chapter". Click on the Replace All button. This will insert your chapter name in all the places where it is needed.
- 3) Add the date that the chapter votes to accept the bylaws on the first page.
- 4) Add the chapter business address on the first page.
- 5) Use the menu path Edit > Select All. Use the highlight button to un-highlight all the yellow highlighted areas.
- 6) Add the date that the chapter votes to accept the bylaws to the Revision History table on the last page. Delete references to the generic bylaws.
- 7) Once a chapter adopts the bylaws all revisions should be recorded in the Bylaw Revision History table.
- 8) Review the bylaws and make sure they accurately describe how you want your chapter to operate.

Implementing the Bylaws

Whether you are a new chapter establishing your first set of bylaws, or an existing chapter that wants to begin using these new bylaws, they must be voted on and accepted by your members. An existing chapter that has pre-existing bylaws will have procedures documented in those bylaws regarding how to modify or replace the bylaws. New chapters, or chapters that have been operating without bylaws can follow this process:

- a) Modify the document as described above.
- b) A group of officers / members should review the bylaws as written and determine if they accurately describe how you want the chapter to operate. If revisions are needed they can easily be made at this time since the chapter has not accepted this document yet. Once the chapter accepts these bylaws, there are strict procedures to follow in revising the bylaws.
- c) Present the bylaws to the members at a meeting. Do NOT vote on the bylaws at this time. All members should get a copy of the proposed bylaws to review in detail, and a date should be set for when you expect to vote on adopting the bylaws (usually the next general membership meeting).
- d) At the appointed meeting, motions can be made to adopt the bylaws as written, to make minor modifications to the document, or to reject the document and re-write it.
- e) Adopting the new or revised bylaws requires a two-thirds majority of the members in attendance (67% or more).
- f) If a motion to adopt the bylaws as written passes with a two-thirds majority, then the new bylaws go into effect and will govern future chapter operations.
- g) If the motion to adopt fails, or a motion to revise or reject passes, the bylaws should be revised as needed and presented to the chapter at a future meeting following the above process.

Once the bylaws are passed and adopted, the date of adoption should be entered both on the cover page and in the Revision History table on the last page. Future revisions should follow the procedures in the Bylaws, and the date of revision and description of the revision should be entered into the Revision History table, and the most recent revision date entered on the cover page.