

MEMBER GUIDELINES

SOWER Members are Christians and should strive to emulate our Lord in Christ-like behavior. By our very name, Servants On Wheels Ever Ready (SOWER), we should foremost be servants. Therefore, we should always remember that servants do not ask for special favors, as we are guests. Guests do not impose on their host but rather make themselves amenable to the well-being of others. The SOWER Ministry Constitution, Bylaws, Guidelines, and Policies are the operational rules by which our ministry functions. For the good of the SOWER Ministry as a whole, these guidelines should be followed whenever possible. Any exceptions to required guidelines (“shall” or “shall not” statements) must be approved by a Trustee or the SOWER office.

GENERAL

MEMBERS SHALL:

1. Agree with and abide by SOWER Ministry Statement of Faith, Constitution, Bylaws, Policies, and Guidelines.
2. Work together harmoniously and conduct themselves in a way compatible with the teaching of the New Testament.
3. Refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking, using tobacco or recreational drugs, and respectfully conduct themselves while on projects.
4. Promote and participate in Christian fellowship with other members, persons, and groups with whom they visit and/or work.
5. Attend group devotions and be prepared to take a turn in leading morning devotions. Either husband or wife or both may lead morning devotions, or may ask another member to take their turn. Members shall bring their SOWER Songbook to devotions unless notified by the devotion leader that they will not be needed. Members are strongly discouraged from entering into doctrinal, denominational, and political discussions.
6. Release hosts and the SOWER Ministry from responsibility for personal injury or damage to their property.
7. Not solicit funds for any reason, personal or otherwise.
8. Not attempt to sell products at project locations. A simple sign advertising products is permissible. Members shall not use the SOWER Directory for solicitation.
9. Observe any dress code, listed or unlisted, at a project. If unlisted, notify the Office immediately so that the code can be added to the project’s listing on the member website.
10. Be the Group Leader (GL) for the project if there is GL after their name in the Ministry Project Assignments. At least two weeks prior to the Project, the assigned GL may ask anyone on the team if someone else would be willing to take on the GL role. The office will then be emailed by the originally assigned GL with the new GL copied on it.
11. Bring no more than two non-aggressive outside pets, to include support, medical, and work pets. Always keep pets on leash outside of the RV, clean up after them, and do not permit the pet to disturb others. Be certain pets are allowed before signing up for a project.

12. Wear name badges while on the work project.
13. Not attempt jobs that they feel are beyond their ability, physical strength, or are unsafe. Do not be too proud to ask for another assignment.
14. Abide by local, state, provincial, and federal firearms regulations, as well as any regulations of the SOWER project. The SOWER Ministry is not and will not be responsible for the violation of any firearm regulation by a SOWER or any incident that occurs with a firearm in their possession.
15. Be supportive of the SOWER Ministry. Support may be in the form of prayer, work, and/or financial giving. Donors will receive an annual receipt for all contributions.
16. Reside in their self-contained Recreational Vehicles (RVs) while on project, unless provided on an exception basis by the project host.
17. Not receive tax advice or help from the SOWER Ministry but will receive an annual receipt from SOWER Ministry for contributions.

MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO:

1. Share relevant photos of the SOWERS worked with through a shared drive or another appropriate method. Post pictures on Facebook, preferably with short descriptions.
2. Always get permission from fellow SOWERS before posting on social media or SOWER Newsletter.
3. Share your experience with other SOWERS by writing a short article for the SOWER Newsletter and submit a few pictures.
4. Share the SOWER Ministry with other interested Christian couples. Cards and brochures are available through the SOWER office for this purpose. The ministry's website, www.sowerministry.org, is an excellent resource for more information about the ministry. Those wishing to make a membership application should contact the SOWER office through the "Contact Us" link. Refer Christian Ministries requesting information on becoming new SOWER projects should also use the "Contact Us" link.
5. Contact a Trustee with questions or disagreement with a SOWER Policy.
6. Sing the SOWER theme song, Our Best.

ARRIVAL AND WORK PARTICIPATION

MEMBERS:

1. **Shall not arrive at projects early.** The GL should arrive on Thursday before the project begins and all others should arrive on Friday or Saturday before the project begins. If Thanksgiving falls on the same day as the SOWER GL is expected to arrive (as it often does), the GL should contact the host ahead of time to confirm the preferred day and time of arrival for the GL and the rest of the SOWER team. The GL should then coordinate the arrival schedule with the rest of the team, understanding that everyone may have different travel needs based on the holiday. This is the one time during the year that the arrival day guidelines are very flexible. If at all possible, it is still desirable for the GL to arrive first.

2. Shall notify the GL and/or Host as soon as possible if arriving late due to unforeseen circumstances.
3. May make day visits to projects where they will be working before the start of the project.
4. Shall not ask the host for specific parking spots.
5. Shall safeguard necessary keys and lock codes provided by Host for the duration of the project, returning them at project end.
6. Are not required to work on roofs that have a pitch steeper than 4/12 or heavy concrete work. If a member is ever uncomfortable with a particular work assignment, especially regarding roof work or concrete work, they should promptly inform the GL. This ensures that safety concerns are addressed and that members are not placed in situations that exceed their comfort level or abilities.
7. Should not count devotions, travel or break time as a part of the 72 work-hour commitment for the month.
8. Should adjust work hours to accommodate the host due to emergencies, local schedules and/or other working volunteers. Alternate work schedules are provided by the host in the additional notes prior to signing up for a project. By signing up for a project, members agree to work when the Host requests.
9. Shall work within the established schedule except for personal emergencies or urgent circumstances, which must first be discussed with the GL. Missed work time shall be made up, if possible, under safe conditions.
10. May choose to work longer than the designated hours (men 24 hours/week, women 12 hours/week); however, they should first discuss the proposed work with the GL and the implications of that work on personal health and safety. No one should be made to feel obligated or guilty if they choose not to work beyond the designated work hours.
11. Should not leave a project early except for emergencies. The GL and Host must be kept informed of all changes on the project.
12. Are welcome to remain at the project location for one week after the end of the project. An RV spot for the incoming GL shall be available by Thursday. All spots must be vacated by 11 AM on Friday. However, a SOWER staying to serve an additional month may remain on their same RV site and the incoming GL shall choose any open site.
13. May be allowed to stay longer when there is more than one week between projects. The member should meet with the project host to request if it is acceptable to stay longer. Members should reimburse the host for the additional expense at an agreed upon cost. Members should not offer to work extra hours for the expense of staying on the RV site. If the host offers work in exchange for staying on the RV site, the member can accept or decline this offer.

14. Must contact a project host that lists overnight parking available to request staying at a project, pending space availability. An overnight stay is not to exceed 2 nights. The host is under no obligation to honor the request. If the host agrees, the member should reimburse the host for the use of the RV site. Members shall not offer an exchange of work for the expense of staying on the RV site. If the host offers work in exchange for staying on the RV site, the member can accept or decline this offer. When staying, the member must leave before the next GL arrives. This guideline is NOT to be used to bypass the member's rule of not arriving early on a project.

ATTENDING WORSHIP SERVICES

MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO:

1. Avoid projects whose doctrinal position they strongly oppose. Always check the project website prior to signing up.
2. Attend the church affiliated with the ministry being helped, or worship at the church of their choice.

SOWER PROJECT GUEST GUIDELINES

SOWER projects are intended to be attended only by SOWER members. At times SOWERs will have guests while they are on projects. SOWERs are reminded that the primary objective and commitment of the SOWER Ministry is to provide work services to our host ministries. Guests should not detract from that commitment. The following guidelines concerning guests on projects have been established to cover most situations. If the guidelines do not cover your guest situation, please use Christian love and a servant's heart in determining what to do. Do not ask the hosts for favors for your guest and do not ask the GL to approve situations that are not covered in the guidelines.

Impact of guests on a project

1. Inform the GL when you expect to have guests. If guests arrive unexpectedly and stay for more than a few hours, the GL should be made aware of the visit as soon as practical.
2. A SOWER couple or single shall not have a guest on more than one workday per project.
3. Any loss of work time (72 hours/project) resulting from guests on a project should be made up with work assigned by the GL.
4. While there is no restriction on SOWER guests during non-work time, remember the project is not a vacation spot for SOWERs or guests.
5. SOWER guests who wish to work at the project must get permission directly from the host and will be a volunteer at the project without connection to the SOWER Ministry. Guest(s) may work with SOWERs if approved by the GL, but the SOWER Ministry accepts no responsibility for any guests on a project.
6. Children (under 18) are to be always attended while on the host's property.
7. SOWER guests are required to abide by all SOWER Ministry and host guidelines.

Guest accommodations and host reimbursement

1. Guests planning to visit a project should contact the host directly for permission to come to the project as guests and the host should be advised if the guest plans to stay with SOWERS or if they will be using separate accommodations.
2. If guests are staying in commercial lodging, they need host permission only to come on host property to visit SOWERS.
3. If guests stay with SOWERS, the host should be reimbursed generously for the added utilities (i.e., water, power and sewer).
4. If the host provides overnight lodging for guests as a normal part of their ministry, SOWER guests may plan for lodging with the host and the host should be reimbursed generously.
5. Guests who wish to bring an RV to the project should make parking arrangements directly with the host without involving SOWERS who are working the project. Guests shall not get permission through the SOWER office, the GL or a SOWER member to bring an RV onto the host's property. A SOWER member shall not ask the host for permission to have a guest bring an RV to a project.
6. If meals are consumed by guest(s), the host should be reimbursed at the established guest rate.

RELATIONSHIPS / OFFENSES

MEMBERS:

1. Should be flexible and adaptable to the host, the GL and other SOWERS.
2. Should do every job as the host desires it done, keeping safety in mind.
3. Who know of a better way to do a job, may make a suggestion to the GL, or with permission, to the host. Work is always to be done the host's way.
4. Should understand that the GL is the liaison between the host and all SOWERS. Comments, suggestions, etc. should go through the GL to the host unless the GL has designated another SOWER to be the liaison on the job. At the request of the host, the SOA may direct the work of one or more SOWERS who are assigned to the project.
5. Should assist the GL.
6. Should work with the GL to determine how best the project work should be done.
7. Should understand that the GL responsibilities are to coordinate the project, not be the boss.
8. Having problems with coworkers should go to them privately, in a Biblical manner, and try to resolve the problem.
9. May graciously excuse themselves in situations in which they are not comfortable or in agreement. If the situation continues, it should be discussed with the GL.
10. Should involve the GL only after having talked privately.
11. Shall not involve the host in inter-SOWER problems.

12. May ask a fellow SOWER to accompany them if the problem is with the GL and it has not been solved privately.
13. May contact a SOWER Trustee to seek help in solving the problem.
14. May contact the SOWER office to help solve the problem, if no Trustee is available.

UNSCHEDULED WORK PROJECT PARTICIPATION

MEMBERS MAY:

1. Want to help during an active project month and may do so after consulting with the GL to confirm work availability and schedule. RVs are not permitted onsite except for daily transport. The GL must get approval from the project host and check with the SOWER office to ensure background checks are completed and recorded. Once verified, updated skill sheets will be sent to the GL when possible.
2. Work on SOWER projects during periods when no official project is scheduled (such as weeks or months outside of regular assignments), but this must be arranged directly with the project host. Members are not allowed to work at any site in the week leading up to a scheduled project where they are assigned, unless they participated in a scheduled project at that site the month before. Under these guidelines, members must leave the site by Thursday morning, prior to the arrival of the GL for the next scheduled project month. To avoid confusion, members should notify the SOWER office whenever they attend a project.
3. Not remove themselves from a project assignment, unless it is an emergency. Email notification to the office is required.

PROJECT SIGN-UP

MEMBERS SHALL:

1. Select their project choices from the Ministry Projects on the member website. If they wish to be put on a wait list for a project, make that known in the request. The office fills each project need on a “first received, first served” basis. Once an assignment is made, member shall be removed from all wait lists for that month.
 - a. If a member has served a minimum of two projects, the GL position is assigned to the first member to sign up for a project. If a member checks the box indicating “I prefer not to be the GL at this time”, then they are placed on the wait list until a qualified member signs up to be the GL. If at seven weeks before the project start date, a GL has not been assigned, the office will contact those members on the wait list who are eligible to serve as GL and will be given a chance to serve as GL to avoid that month’s project cancellation.
 - b. If the project is full, the member may request to be put on the wait list in case of a member cancellation.
2. Limit requests for wait list up to three projects per month.

3. Be responsible for fulfilling their committed work hours, men and singles working 72 hours per project and wives encouraged to work 36 hours per project. Men and SOWER singles who are unable to commit to the 72 hours and who wish to sign up for a project will only be considered for assignment during the six weeks preceding the project start date.
4. Inform the office when plans change and cannot work for a complete three-week project. If there is a Wait List, they may be replaced by SOWERs who can work the entire three weeks.
5. Notify the GL as soon as possible, but at least one week before the project begins, if either the husband or wife of the SOWER couple cannot work the entire three-week project. This allows the GL to inform the host for work planning purposes.
6. Cancel project with reason on the member website under My Projects.
7. Understand that if a SOWER member cancels a project within six weeks of the project start, the member will not be able to request another project for that month. If there are extraordinary circumstances for cancellation within the six-week window, any change requested will be directed to the office for Trustee and host approval.
8. Notify the office to change a project assignment. If change is greater than six weeks prior to the Project start date (see Calendar), the change will be honored with one exception. If assigned as the GL at the project and others have been assigned with you, the change requires Trustee approval.
9. Understand that if requesting a project less than six weeks from the project start, request requires project host approval.
10. Not go to a project as an independent, bypassing the regular sign-up procedure.
11. Not be permitted to transfer to other projects unless previously approved by the SOWER office.

ANNUAL UPDATE

MEMBERS SHALL:

1. Complete and sign an Annual Registration each year on the member website.
2. Update any changes in skill levels, health restrictions, limitations, emergency information, and changes in size of RV on the member website.
3. Honestly indicate level of skills, health restrictions and limitations.
4. Complete a new background check if previous check is more than 10 years old. Contact the office for instructions.
5. Complete a new background check after 5 years of inactive status. Contact the office for instructions.

SINGLE MEMBERS

SINGLE MEN:

1. Will refrain from the appearance of inviting themselves to meals or needing assistance in such chores as mending, laundry, cleaning or shopping. Men will not abuse their SOWER family relationships with their SOWER sisters.
2. Who marry are required to have their wife become a member of SOWER Ministry to continue as a SOWER.
3. Who marry will retain their SOWER number.

SINGLE WOMEN:

1. Will not be permitted to sign up for construction/building projects until authorized by the SOWER office.
2. Will pay attention to dress code requirements listed in the Ministry Description. A dress code may prevent or greatly hinder the performance of some jobs due to decency and safety; i.e. wearing a skirt may restrict some light construction, painting or maintenance jobs.
3. Will not work alone in unsafe conditions.
4. Will be expected to work 72 hours during each project.
5. Who marry and desire to continue with SOWERs are required to have their husband join SOWERs. He then becomes the primary member. If the husband was a SOWER, his number is retained; if not, the wife's number is retained.