

MP003: Issue 5

Regulations and Guidelines for Regions

Approved by Council

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Scope

These regulations and guidelines define the role and administration of the geographical Regional Organisations within The Society

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Associated Documents: FP003; MP009; DP002; DP003

1. Introduction

Members living in Britain are automatically allocated by postcode to one of sixteen Regions run by a Regional Organiser (RO). The Regional Organiser will normally have a voluntary committee comprising Secretary, Treasurer and up to three other members as required. Support may also given by Headquarters staff.

Members may elect to join a Region other than the one in which they live.

2. Constitutional Position

The Region is formally part of The Royal Photographic Society and as such it must comply with the law concerning charities and finance (e.g. VAT) where these apply to The Society. Non-compliance will be an offence for which ultimately the trustees (Council) are personally liable. The Regional constitution is defined in this document and in The Society's Rules and By-Laws. The Regional Organiser is responsible to Council for the running of the Region.

3. The Regional Organiser's Role and Responsibilities

The Regional Organiser's role is to help The Society to be more available to the membership and to provide the Society with feedback, advice and guidance. In particular:

- To be the friendly personal local point of contact for the membership – particularly with respect to new members to the Society.
- To be the ears and mouthpiece of The Society in the Region.
- To organise and/or facilitate the organisation of events in the Region.
- To welcome new members and to assist in their recruitment.
- To be aware of and implement Society policies and Health and Safety procedures.
- To represent the Region on the Advisory Board and at Regional Organisers' Meetings.

4. Regional Organisation Administration

- The eligibility of the Regional Organiser (RO) is ratified by Council. The RO is elected by the Region.
- Normally the RO is recruited by the Regional Committee. If for any reason this is not possible then Council will recruit and appoint an RO.
- The way the Region is organised is at the discretion of the RO but it is recommended that there should be a committee of at least three - the RO, a Secretary and a Treasurer. (See also financial arrangements)
- An Annual Meeting should be held to allow the Regional membership to influence policy on events, composition of the committee and what the Regional Organisation provides for them. All officers and committee members must be current members of the Society.
- If the Regional Organisation does not comply with these Guidelines then Council has the authority to take corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

5. Finance

Because the Regions are formally part of The Society all assets including money held by the Region are part of The Society's assets. Similarly, debts and commitments made by the Region are ultimately The Society's responsibility.

The Society will not use the Regional 'assets' or seek to influence their use except where failure to do so could adversely affect the interests of the Society.

Regulations and Guidelines for the delegation and control of finance in the Regions are set out in document FP003 which deals with the following topics:

- Banking arrangements, limits and signatories for cheques
- VAT

- Accounting Records
- Approval for major expenditure
- Financing of events
- Allowable expenses and fees
- Pricing guidelines for events

6. Corporate Identity

It is important that the Society presents a uniform and professional image. The Regions are required to follow the corporate Guidelines for its communications and 'literature' including the web sites and Newsletters. (See MP009)

7. Policy and Guidelines on Regional Events

The Regional activities should be focussed on meeting the particular needs and interests of the members in the Region. It is accepted that the number of and type of events may differ widely from one Region to another.

- Aim at quality rather than quantity (Society events need to be special).
- Collaboration with the Groups is encouraged. i.e. offer to provide the local facilities - the Groups to provide the speakers.
- Aim to hold one Distinctions Advisory Day every year.
- Obtain mutual benefit from co-operation with camera clubs and other bodies as appropriate.

7.1 Pricing Guidelines.

See Financial Delegation Guidelines for Regions and Groups (FP003)

7.2 Attendance Policy

- 7.2.1 Because The Society has educational charity status we must welcome members of the public to our meetings.
- 7.2.2 All Regional activities other than business meetings shall be open to all members and to non-members of The Society.

7.3 Publicity.

It is important that events are publicised to all the membership via The Society Website and The Society Journal.

- The Programme of events is published in each issue of The Society Journal.
- The information posted to the Web Site will be used to compile the programme for The Society Journal.
- The Regions and Groups are responsible for ensuring that the data on the Web Site is accurate.
- All known events must be included even if the event is a considerable time ahead.
- NB. It is important that a contact telephone number is given for every event.
- Information for the Journal will not be taken from Regional or Group Newsletters.
- Publicising events to non-members is also important. e.g. Local Camera Clubs
- See anti-clash policy.
- All meetings should be allocated to a Region and Regional Newsletters should include Group events in the Region whenever possible.

7.4 Distinction Advisory Days

Council normally expects each Region to hold at least one Distinctions Advisory Day each year. These days are co-ordinated by The Distinctions Manager, at Headquarters, who arranges the Panel members and print portfolios or projected images to be used as examples. The RO will normally organise the hall, equipment, and make the local arrangements. See DP003 for additional details.

7.5 Distinction Assessment Panels

Distinction Assessment Panels are organised by The Distinctions Manager at Headquarters who deals with all the administrative aspects including organising the Panel members, taking bookings, receiving the submissions, issuing tickets etc. If hosted by a Region the RO will organise the hall, equipment, and refreshments for the Panel members and provide helpers for the day. See DP002 for additional details.

7.6 Certificate Presentations

7.6.1 Certificate Presentation ceremonies should be arranged through The Distinctions Manager and included as part of a special event, either day or evening. The President or other senior officer of The Society will make the presentations. If neither is available the Regional Organiser may do so. Those receiving a certificate are invited to attend the event without charge (except for meals or accommodation). Guests may be asked to pay to attend the event.

7.6.2 Arrangements for photographs of the presentation(s) should be made in collaboration with the Distinctions Manager.

7.7 Insurance.

All regional events are insured under The Society's overall insurance cover. This cover applies to both the individual and the premises but does not cover members' equipment where loaned for such an event. The cover is limited to £5 million with an excess of £250.

7.8 Anti-clash Policy

Regional Organisers should liaise with Special Interest Groups and other event organisers to avoid events in the Region clashing with other RPS events in the Region or nearby in adjacent Regions. The Society's web site event scheduling capability can also be used as an aid to avoid clashes

8. Health and Safety

The Society's Health and Safety Policy, responsibilities, and rules are set out in the Health and Safety Manual. It includes information on the legislation and guidance on aspects of safe practice such as display screen equipment, electrical safety and manual handling. The Manual is available from Fenton House.

The basic Safety Rules and Guidelines for Society events are given below.

8.1 Fire Precautions

Volunteers responsible for organising public meetings must ensure that they are aware of the following:

- The location of fire alarm points and how to use them
- How to contact the emergency services
- Location of fire extinguishers and how to use them
- Building emergency exits
- Fire assembly point

The location of the fire exits and the assembly point must be announced at the beginning of every public meeting.

A register of those present at a meeting must be kept or a Fire Marshal appointed.

The register is to enable the organiser of the meeting to perform a roll call and establish that the building has been evacuated in order to provide advice to the Fire Services attending the fire.

The role of the Fire Marshal is to check, as far as it is safe to do so, that the building, or part of the building in use by The Society, has been evacuated and to advise the fire service accordingly.

Volunteers must not put themselves at personal risk in carrying out the above instructions

8.2 Electrical Equipment

Trailing leads must be taped down, or covered to eliminate a trip hazard.

Equipment must be correctly fused and free from mechanical damage.

If the building does not have installed Residual Current Devices then any extension lead(s) must be connected to the mains supply using a portable Residual Current Device.

8.3 Accidents

Any accident or near miss must be reported to the Director General to be entered in the Accident Book.

8.4 Field Trips

A risk assessment is required before any field trip. The Risk Assessment Form must be completed, all participants must be made aware of its contents before or at the start of the trip and the form must be retained by the RO as a record for 6 years.

9. Collaboration between Groups and Regions

Collaboration between Regions and Groups is encouraged. The following is a suggested mechanism for facilitating collaboration.

9.1 Initiation of Regional Group Programmes

- ROs to determine local interests. (Surveys and/or feedback from members plus historical data)
- ROs to contact Groups and invite participation in events.
- Consider meetings with several Groups participating.

9.2 Finance of Joint Meetings

- Region and Groups to agree and document financial arrangements and liability in advance.
- Council will consider subsidising events as appropriate where special geographic considerations apply or small numbers are involved. Application for subsidy must be made and agreed in advance.

9.3 Responsibilities

If this kind of initiative is to be successful it is vital that both Regions and Groups take joint responsibility for implementation.

10. Newsletters

The Society requires Regions to publish two Newsletters each year for issue to all members in the Region.

Newsletters will be circulated as inserts in the Journal. Please notify Simon James of EC1 Publishing Ltd with details of the Newsletter and he will advise where to send them and how the packages should be marked. His contact details are 0297 692 9961 or e-mail simon@ec1publishing.com

Please also send a pdf version or web link to michael@rps.org for distribution to Council, other Regional Organisers and staff. Alternatively, 40 copies of the newsletter may be sent for the attention of The Director General, The Royal Photographic Society, Fenton House, 122 Wells Road, Bath BA2 3AH

11. Annual Report to Headquarters

The Regional Organiser should arrange for the following information to be submitted to the Director General by 31 January each year for the previous calendar year: minutes of the Regional AGM, including a summary of activities and financial statement for the year; estimate of volunteer hours, record of member and non-member attendees at activities for the Society's 'public benefit' statement in the Annual Report.

12. Support from Headquarters

12.1 Membership Information/Services from Headquarters

- 12.1.1 Headquarters can provide address labels if required provided reasonable notice is given.
- 12.1.2 A monthly report of all members in the Region including new members, changes of address, resignations, deaths and Distinctions awarded. This information will normally be provided electronically.
- 12.1.3 Please notify the Membership Department of any errors or omissions to help maintain the accuracy of the database.

12.2 Data Protection.

- 12.2.1 The Society has notified the processing of personal data to the Information Commissioner and is registered as a Data Controller on the Data Protection Register. The purpose of the Data Protection Act 1998 and associated legislation is to protect personal information held about individuals ("Data Subjects") and to enforce standards for the storage and processing of such data. Regional records are covered by the Society's notification. The statutory rights of Data Subjects (e.g. access to data) must be respected. The Society will take the necessary steps to comply with legislation and will advise Regions of changes to the requirements.
- 12.2.2 Members' personal data must be protected from unauthorised access. For example, electronically stored data should be secured at a minimum by password protected access with data encryption where relevant.
- 12.2.3 Data held must only be used for Society business and not communicated to third parties.
- 12.2.4 Communications by email to a mailing list should use the bcc facility or equivalent to hide the email addresses of other recipients on the distribution list.

13. Provision for the Disabled

- 13.1 It is Society Policy that wherever possible Society events and activities will cater for all participants regardless of their physical limitations. It is however recognised that in some situations such as field trips this will not always be practical. Regions who run regular field events should aim to cater for the physically impaired at least once a year. The elderly will often also benefit from these considerations.
- 13.2 In situations where the attendance of a carer is essential no admission charge should be made for the carer. However, the carer would be expected to pay for food and accommodation.

13.3 The minimum requirements are:

- Wheelchair access i.e. no steps to negotiate, and doors wide enough for wheelchairs to pass through (this requires a standard 30inches/760mm wide door with room to manoeuvre on the other side).
Note: Level access also caters for the visually impaired.
- A disabled toilet facility.
- A hearing loop or, as a minimum, a public address system.

The publicity for an event should make it clear whether the event is suitable for the disabled. See <https://www.graphicartistsguild.org/resources/disability-access-symbols/> for suitable signage.

Further advice and guidance can be obtained from The Society's Headquarters, including contact details of members who have specialist knowledge in this area.

14. Vested Interests and External Contacts

14.1 Vested Interests

To protect individuals from any accusation of using their position in The Society for personal gain, a Volunteer should not be part of a decision making process which agrees to pay a fee to the Volunteer providing services to the Society.

Should a Committee on which you serve wish to consider engaging you and paying a fee, the following will apply:

- You must declare an interest to the Committee and withdraw from the discussions
- The declaration of vested interest must be included in the Minutes of the meeting
- You must not be involved in any way in appointing yourself as providing a service and the level of fee to be paid.
- The Chair of the Committee must notify the Director General with full copies of the correspondence, and receive consent in writing.
- Payment of Society expenses is not included in this item.

14.2 External Contacts

Volunteers must avoid entering into commercial arrangements with third parties where these arrangements exceed their normal Volunteer responsibilities as a Regional or Chapter Organiser or Special Interest Group representative. Outside this remit, the Director General should be approached to give prior approval to such arrangements; this approval will only be given if the proposed arrangements are considered to be of overall benefit to The Society. Before contacting Corporate Patrons please contact the Director General so The Society is seen to be working as one organisation, not disparate part.