

## ORANGE COUNTY AA ANSWERING SERVICE GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. CALL THE HOTLINE NUMBER (845-534-8525) and let the person before you know you are taking over the service. **PLEASE DO THIS STEP.**
2. Follow the instructions from the Call Forwarding Instructions sheet given to you by your group phone representative in order to have the calls forwarded to your number. **(See Handout From Your Group Rep.)**
3. Make a test call to ensure you have connected properly.
4. If a situation arises that requires you to disconnect from the service, or if you have a problem you're not sure how to handle, it is **your responsibility** to find someone qualified to cover for you or help you with the situation.  
This can be your group phone representative, another alcoholic, your sponsor, a group member, or anyone you know that has phone service experience.
5. Please call Willoe or Rita if you can't get anyone else to help you. **(See Handout Your Group Rep Gave You for the numbers.)**
6. If you have a non-alcoholic on the phone seeking information for professional reasons, refer them to the referral guide at the bottom of this page.
7. Keep a current meeting list, the 12th Step Confidential List, the Protocol for using the 12th Step List, and the Protocol for the Prank Caller List with you or in your phone. Also refer the caller who is looking for a meeting to our website where they can obtain a list of Orange County meetings. .  
[www.orangenyaa.org](http://www.orangenyaa.org)
8. **If for any reason you are calling the caller back please use \*67 to block the special services such as call return and caller ID, which can allow the 12 stepper to call you directly or even get your phone number.**
9. Be courteous and compassionate, but establish as soon as you can whether the person calling is the person who WANTS HELP FOR

THEMSELVES in accordance with our primary purpose. If not, the party should be referred to the appropriate numbers, as necessary (see Referral Numbers pages).

10. You should not have to talk to the person for more than 5 or 10 minutes before you can establish the best way to be of service. It is suggested that you refer the call to a twelve step volunteer who resides in the same area as the caller. Remember, we do not provide taxis or babysitters. Make that clear if necessary.
11. Tell the troubled person that you will have someone call him/her as soon as possible. If you are unduly delayed in reaching a twelve step volunteer, call the person back and ask them for their patience. The return call will be greatly appreciated by the person.
12. In the event that the party is threatening suicide, try to keep the conversation going and calm the party down. Keep talking and try to get the location and description of the threatening party. If possible, try to call the police on another line or by another means. If that is not possible, make an excuse to hang up to answer the door or go to the bathroom and call the police as soon as you hang up. Then call the person back and keep him/her on the line until the police get to them.
13. If you are unable to contact someone on the Twelve Step call list when you are scheduled to go off duty, please continue with the search to find an appropriate twelve step volunteer to handle the caller. Again, the caller should be kept informed of any delays.

## **DON'Ts**

1. Never give out a different alcoholic's last name or phone number, even to another alcoholic. If the caller insists on speaking to a particular person and you have their number; you may place the call to the person and have them return the call.

2. Do not identify yourself as associated with AA when calling the twelve step Volunteer until you are sure you are talking with the twelve stepper, and not to another member of the family, a friend or babysitter, etc. This will protect their anonymity.
3. In general, do not process a call unless it is from an alcoholic who wants help. Refer all other callers politely to one of the other appropriate numbers on the referral lists or direct them to the Intergroup of Orange County Website and have them locate the number or website they need from there.