

# AA District 61 Answering Service Guidelines

**WHAT IS AN AA ANSWERING SERVICE?** An AA answering service offers a local gateway to reach Alcoholics Anonymous. The service receives inquiries from those seeking help and may refer callers to a nearby AA group or may have an AA member contact them. District 61 chooses a rotating committee of up to 6 volunteers to receive phone calls.

The 12-step volunteer list also includes individuals willing to meet someone at a meeting or to call back a caller, if interested.

- It is suggested that the Twelfth Step volunteer should have at least six months' sobriety.
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## **When an alcoholic calls for help...**

1. Answer by saying, "A.A. answering service."
2. Try to find out what the caller wants.
3. If the caller is reluctant to give a name or other information, don't insist.
4. Never argue with callers. Explain that you are an answering service and will provide information such as meeting times/location (Zoom/In-person, open/closed) and/or try to put them in touch with an AA member.

Resources: Meeting Guide App, AA.org, NIA20, District 61, Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous

5. Please remember that alcoholics and members of their families who call for help are sick people; dealing with them can sometimes be frustrating unless this is kept in mind. Be inviting. Practice compassion and empathy, and do not give advice. Ask when they last drank if they seem to have been drinking. Suggest a meeting or offer to do a twelfth-step visit to pick them up (with at least 2 AA members) or meet them at a meeting. Talk to them about AA's successes and the many lives it has restored. Let them know that the only requirement is a desire to stop drinking.
6. If you are criticized, tell the caller that you are acting on instructions from the answering service committee. Problems or questions should be referred to this committee.
7. Record each call with the name of the caller (if possible), date, volunteer, and reason for the call into the group message to add to the Answering Service call log.

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