



Telephone Answering Service Guidelines

June 8, 2023

1. The names, numbers, and email addresses on the roster are confidential and for your use only. **This information is not to be given out to anyone at any time.**
2. It is suggested that each group elect a Telephone Answering Coordinator to manage the Telephone Answering System (TAS) for their group.
3. Make sure each volunteer has the following at their disposal:
 - a. An up-to-date Al-Anon Telephone Answering Guidelines (what you are currently reading)
 - b. An up-to-date Meeting List, published, as needed, by AIS Meeting List Co-Ordinator. **Please destroy all copies of the roster and meeting list once they become outdated.**
 - c. A Newcomers Resource information sheet
4. Phones are to be covered by members of the TAS group according to the roster. Please remind your volunteers to keep current in terms of checking the TAS number for messages and clear message once they have been responded to.
5. Please remember that Al-Anon members are not professional counselors. **The goal is to connect callers with meetings, so they can connect with others, benefit from a meeting, and get questions answered.**
6. Please Review the DO's and DON'Ts prior to your week of coverage as follows:
DO:
 - Have an up-to-date Telephone Answering Roster and Edmonton and Area Meeting List.
 - Reassure the caller that she/he is not alone.
 - Explain that Al-Anon is a mutual aid support group for those whose loved ones drink too much. In the case of callers concerned about someone's drug abuse, explain that alcohol abuse is often also involved, and that the caller may still benefit from the Al-Anon program.
 - REMEMBER that your goal is to connect the caller with a meeting, not to provide counseling, relieve emotional pain, etc. If you do relieve emotional pain, you may prevent the caller from accessing a meeting.
 - Smile, it carries right through the phone lines :-)

- Offer callers an email that includes: a current meeting list, direct links to Alberta meetings at <https://al-anon.ab.ca/meetings/> and/or the link https://al-anon.org/series/welcome-newcomers/?utm_source=AllPrint&utm_medium=print&utm_campaign=newcomers for a Welcome to the Newcomer

DON'T:

- Don't give advice, ex: leave the alcoholic. Please focus on encouraging the caller to attend a meeting.
- Don't get personally involved, ex: feel that you should rescue the caller from their physical environment.
- Don't criticize the alcoholic
- Don't feel you have to tell all the negative things that ever happened to you.

7. Al-Anon Information Line is 780-443-6000

- Press * to interrupt the greeting, Password 1212
- Press 1 for messages, (Pressing 11 will rewind to beginning of message if needed while listening to it)
- Pressing 7 will delete message
- Pressing 9 will Save Message, Pressing # will skip to next message).
- Please ensure you call in and check for messages a minimum of twice per day!

8. **Talking to Callers.** Many people do not pick up when we return calls. Leave a message and **do not say that you are from Al-Anon.** ex: "I am returning your call and will call you back in 10 minutes. My number will come up as unknown name and number" or "I am returning your call from 10am this morning and I will try you again between 5 and 6 tonight". "My number will come up as unknown name & number".

Try to follow through with that caller, even if it is the next day and you are not still responsible for TAS – as they could end up not talking to anyone from Al-Anon!

9. Note: **Call Blocking** is available on your phone lines, accessible free of charge. If you wish to block your number from display, simply press ***67** on your landline phone before you call (rotary users dial 1167). To block cell phone numbers, google your provider or check "settings" on your phone.
10. The City of Edmonton Public Libraries have some of our Al-Anon and Alateen Books. Edmonton AIS is currently in the process of donating more program books to libraries.
11. Alateen – We are still working with WSO to have Alateen recertified in the Area. All local Alateen chats and meetings are cancelled until further notice

- a. You can direct inquiries to <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/find-an-alateen-meeting/> or the Al-Anon mobile app. Older Alateens will usually be welcome to attend Al-Anon meetings.
- b. If the caller has questions regarding Alateen or the safety of teens attending meetings, whether online or in person, please have them email Edmonton Alateen at edmontonalateen@al-anon.ab.ca

12. Other resources

https://al-anon.ab.ca/	Home page for Area website REMINDER – there is a special Online Session for Newcomers on Saturdays at 11-Noon.
https://al-anon.ab.ca/meetings/	Al-Anon meeting information on Area website including contact information for Area including information for AIS contacts in Red Deer and Central Alberta, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray
https://al-anon.org/	Home page for WSO website
https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/find-an-al-anon-meeting/	Al-Anon meetings listed on WSO website
https://al-anon.org/newcomers/	Information for Newcomers on WSO website
https://al-anon.org/for-members/members-resources/literature/downloadable-items/	Free downloads available from WSO website

13. For immediate concerns, please phone or text John Hearn at 780-860-7284.

LET IT BEGIN WITH ME ... When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and *let it begin with me.*

John Hearn
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