

How to Start an ALOA Chapter

So, you and some local or regional peers are ALOA members and would like to start a chapter? Here's a run down on the "who, what, why, and how" aspects of chapter-starting as well as some helpful hints.

First, let's start off with the initial concept in planning a chapter: Why to start one? An ALOA chapter will allow you to participate more directly with the association's activities. Plus, the status of a chapter will attract more ALOA sponsored programs to members on regional and local levels as well as helping prepare those who have an interest in becoming an association and/or industry leader.

You can learn more about ALOA's programs by simply networking with or speaking with various locksmiths in your area. Perhaps the best way to learn more is to simply participate in as many ALOA activities as possible. That, in itself, is a great way to exchange management, technical information and tricks of the trade with colleagues and peers.

The following is what chapters receive from ALOA:

1. discounts on Ace Classes, along with other continuing education opportunities
2. technical Training videos for chapter use from the chapter video library
3. promotion of chapter activities in Keynotes
4. free mailing labels of all ALOA members in the chapter's region
5. direct support from ALOA chapter liaison staff and the ALOA Government Relations Program
6. assistance in chapter officer training

If all of this sounds good to you, then the next logical question would be, "How do we get started?"

First, contact the Chapters and Regional Associations Liaison at the ALOA Headquarters in Dallas, TX (214-819-9733) to obtain all the proper forms and information.

The next step is to submit a chapter petition. This involves selecting a name (most often in reference to region. i.e. Southwest Texas, Central Michigan, etc.). The name has to be something that quickly defines the area of the chapter.

Then, boundaries must be set up. The ALOA liaison will assist you with this. If there are no other chapters within a 200 mile radius, there should be absolutely no problems. But if you're in an area where ALOA chapter are in abundance (New York City, Los Angeles), then extra care should be taken not to infringe on another chapter's territory. Avoid this by simply drawing a map of the proposed boundaries and forwarding it to the adjacent chapters requesting their input in writing. When final boundaries are completed, attach a copy of the letter of agreement so the board of directors can ensure that all area chapters are in accord.

Also, attach a list of inclusive zip codes for the chartered area to the petition. This is pertinent information for the ALOA Headquarters to use in chapter assignment. It should be noted that this is only applicable for charters within the United States.

There must be at least 20 members in good standing to sign the petition. This shows that there's enough interest to support this chapter.

Then, submit the petition. Include the completed Chapter Charter Petition with all attached documents (Zip code listing, letters from surrounding chapters etc.) to the Chapters and Regional Associations Liaison at the ALOA Headquarters.

Before all is said and done, begin generating interest from prospective members by actively recruiting in your area. Remember, however, that until the board of directors has officially approved the Chapter

Charter Petition and ALOA conducts the initial election of officers, all applications must be endorsed by ALOA. After the petition is approved, an elected chapter officer may endorse applications.

When the petition is approved by the Board of Directors, ALOA Headquarters will send the Chapter Charter, Policy Guide, and other stationary and literature for the chapter. At that time, ALOA will contact the chapter to establish a date for the organizational meeting. There, the ALOA Representative will conduct the initial election and installation for chapter officers and present the charter and other items.

Invitations to this meeting will be issued to all the ALOA members within the chartered area. For the purpose of the organizational meeting, a majority of the petitioners (those actually signing the petition) shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.

These signers of the petition will automatically be assigned membership into the new chapter. If any other individual, currently a member of another chapter, wishes to join, your chapter must submit a written request to ALOA Headquarters. To facilitate the process during the first few months, the chapter would make available a transfer petition for those wishing to transfer to sign.

The transfer petition should read as follows:

"We all members in good standing of the Associated Locksmiths of America, do hereby request transfer to the _____ Chapter."

Each member must sign the petition, print his/her name, give his/her membership number and state from which chapter he/she is transferring.

This transfer petition should be submitted with each month's chapter activity report.