

SPOUSAL/LIFE PARTNER (SLP) FORUM

SLP FORUM PARTICIPATION POLICY

EO recognizes the importance and value to an EO member if their SLP participates in certain EO benefits, including SLP Forum. To balance the objectives of SLP participation with the practical realities of such benefits that are in the member's best interests, the following rules shall apply to SLP participation in a Forum:

1. An SLP, as that term is used here, is the life partner of an EO member in a relationship with clear intentions of permanence. "Spouse" status may be attained by a) legal marriage, b) living together for a period of time as defined by the law of the relevant country to constitute a de facto relationship or c) EO member requests for such recognition and approval by the chapter.
2. The SLP may enjoy the benefits of participating in EO (including social events, learning events and Forums) as regulated under the policy and budget guidelines established by EO and local chapters.
3. SLP participation is dependent on and determined solely by the EO member's status. An SLP does not have any independent right to participate in EO activities.
4. SLP participation in EO benefits is terminable under any of the following circumstances:
 - a. Except as provided below, when the EO member's rights or participation in EO ends, so does that of the member's SLP (ie, when the EO member does not renew, all participation rights in EO cease immediately for both the member and the SLP).
 - e. The EO member makes a clear statement to the chapter indicating the termination of the EO member's relationship with the SLP, including, without limitation, legal separation or impending divorce, at which time the SLP's participation in an SLP Forum shall cease within six months and the SLP's participation in chapter social and learning events shall cease immediately.
 - f. Upon the death of the EO member or in the event of the EO member's disability resulting in termination of EO membership while the member is in good standing, the SLP's participation in an SLP Forum shall cease within one year following the EO member's termination of membership, unless a specific exemption is sought and approved by both EO and the chapter.

Under each of these circumstances, the chapter shall involve the moderator of the affected SLP Forum, or such designee from within that SLP Forum as may be appropriate, to facilitate the enforcement of these guidelines and the transition of the SLP out of Forum and chapter participation.

5. An SLP who independently qualifies for EO membership and is a member in good standing in their own right shall be treated as a member of EO, and not as an SLP, under this section.
6. It is suggested that all SLP Forums have clauses to this effect included in their Forum constitutions and the bylaws of the chapter so that SLP participation is clearly defined to all.

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SLP FORUM PARTICIPATION POLICY - *continued*

SLP PARTICIPATION BACKGROUND AND CONSIDERATIONS

When an SLP is no longer eligible for Forum participation, how should the chapter and Forum handle their exit? Also, when is the determination made that an SLP should no longer participate?

Chapters do not have uniform practices or procedures for these issues, so it has become necessary for EO to provide minimum guidelines to assist chapters in handling them.

CURRENT CHAPTER PRACTICES:

1. In the case of separation or divorce, the EO member should alert the chapter when the SLP's EO participation privileges should be suspended. An SLP has no privileges or rights in the organization except those allowed by the EO member.
2. The SLP may be allowed to stay in the Forum based on a unanimous decision of the Forum. The EO member and the chapter must be comfortable with this solution. Another variation on this theme is to allow the SLP to finish out the fiscal year with the Forum before completing an exit presentation and departing.
3. The SLP's participation should be suspended when it becomes clear that the relationship with the EO member is a permanent separation. Most chapters interpret this to be at the point of the couple's initial legal separation.
4. When the SLP must leave the Forum, allow a grace period of six months during which the Forum can support the SLP through a potentially rough time and say a planned and smooth goodbye. (This good transition is necessary to the life of the Forum. A haphazard, forced breakup will affect the health of the group for all participants.) The Forum chair should brief the moderator on the acceptable process and be aware of the timeline in which the SLP will complete their participation.