



The Sig House

A Newsletter from the Board of Grand Trustees

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Jello & Kleenex

Like "Jello" and "Kleenex", the term "house corporation" has a generic meaning for some alumni groups that are operating chapter houses. The typical scenario is that a couple of well meaning brothers decide to take charge of chapter housing to raise money, sign a lease or buy a property. Voilà! A house corporation is born. That's all it takes, right? Hardly.

Corporations by definition are legal entities approved by state governments to operate for a defined purpose. Some corporations are formed to generate profit for the owners or stockholders (like Microsoft) while others are formed as "nonprofit" and all revenue is reinvested in the corporation's purpose. House corporations are formed under the "nonprofit" definition.

Since the goal of each Sigma Chi chapter is to live long into the future, having a house corporation that outlives the volunteers that serve it is important for a number of reasons:

Continuity. House corporation members and officers may come and go but a corporate entity allows the purpose to continue on.

Limiting Personal Liability. Members and directors of nonprofit corporations are generally protected from personal liability, meaning protection for their own assets (money, real estate, etc.).

Legal Standing. Lenders and landlords require a legal entity to open bank accounts, secure notes, mortgage loans and leases. If there is no legal house corporation, individuals will be required to sign contracts and be personally liable for the debt.

Identity & Credibility. Corporations provide an identity which is valuable for fundraising and transacting business.

As far as the steps to incorporating, choose a name like "(Chapter Letters), Blue & Gold or White Cross House Corporation". You should avoid using the name Sigma Chi as it is a link to the general fraternity which has no authority or control over the house corporation.

Incorporate with your state. Every state has a department in charge of this function (often called Secretary of State, but may vary). All states have internet websites that allow the transaction to be handled online. Using one of the internet businesses to assist in forming your corporation is unwise. One size does not fit all. It's best to use a lawyer who regularly forms corporations.

- Hold an organizational meeting to elect directors.
- The directors elect officers from amongst themselves.
- Prepare and follow bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures.
- Open a bank account to handle funds.
- Transact business.

Incorporating your house corporation is relatively simple and inexpensive and provides many benefits. A house corporation in name only is no corporation at all. It might even be construed as a partnership which can place every participant's assets in harms way. Get legal and do it soon! If you have any questions on this process, contact your assigned Grand Trustee. Contact information can be found on page one of every edition of **The Sig House** and in **The Magazine of Sigma Chi. IHSV**

Sigma Chi Fraternity's



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Connecting the Dots

It's a bad rap. Fraternity houses are full of well meaning, well mannered members who are focused on their studies. They don't have loud parties until the wee hours of the morning. It must be someone else that is prompting the neighbors to call the cops. Right?

While house corporations and chapter advisors hope for the best, active brothers can use bad judgment from time to time and events like parties spin out of control causing clashes with the neighbors. Most of the time, the neighbors simply call the police to deal with it. The police, in turn, often make this information available to university officials who monitor such things. If the acts are outrageous enough, the local media makes sure the whole community knows about them. What started as a good time can rapidly become a public relations nightmare.

While the occupant mix at a chapter house changes over time as brothers

move in, move out and graduate, most of the neighbors remain the same. Some neighbors have very long memories and each time there is an "event" at the chapter house that causes them dismay, consternation or outright anger, it is added to their list of high crimes and misdemeanors. The result is cumulative: sins of past brothers are laid on the brothers of the present, guilty or not.

One of the biggest obstacles to overcoming bad press is the "island" mentality that active members can develop. This mind set is akin to "whatever happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas". But the chapter house is not in Vegas. When it's in close proximity to working people, families or seniors, there is a thin line that, once crossed, is difficult to retreat from.

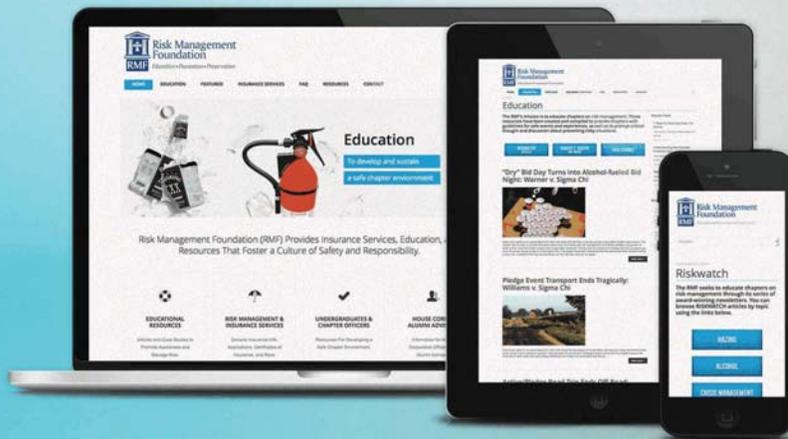
It's said that good judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment. Bad judgment by active brothers creates lasting animosity with the neighbors, university and

community. Besides using better judgment in the future, what can be done to improve relations *today*?

Get Acquainted. It's much easier to stay angry at strangers than friends. Why not host an Open House and invite non-Greek neighbors within a two block radius? A mid week holiday event with hot apple cider and cookies will set the tone. Clean up the chapter house, decorate a Christmas tree and pass out invitations door to door. Use this opportunity to invite key university officials like the President, Greek Advisor and others that can help or hinder your cause. This kind of positive event will reap large and long term results in the public relations department. On the flip side, the brothers will likely be more considerate of the neighbors and lessen the likelihood and number of confrontations.

Lend a Helping Hand. In every neighborhood there are seniors and disabled who could use a hand with raking leaves, washing cars, yard

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cleanup or shoveling snow. Active chapter could spend a few hours on a Saturday afternoon roaming the area offering to help.

Do It Yearly. Connecting the dots needs nurturing. Positive events fade over time and every year there are new brothers that need to be introduced to the benefits of the exercise. Make it part of a strategic plan to host annual events that leave good and lasting memories with the neighbors. Most will be much more forgiving of the occasional bad judgment. [IHSV](#)

Chapter House Checklist

Each year, Sigma Chi house corporations are charged with life/fire safety and maintenance of the chapter house. Due to the customarily “intense” lifestyles of the active brothers, the facilities often experience a higher degree of wear and tear. Keeping up with these tasks in a consistent way is extremely important. Take the time to perform the following each year:

Life & Fire Safety. The highest priority of all for a house corporation is to provide a safe environment for the undergraduate brothers. Here is a list of common life and fire safety issues that chapter houses should review:

- Fire Alarm System.** Inspected and certified in good working order by a qualified contractor.
- Fire Sprinkler System.** Inspected and repaired annually by a qualified contractor. (If your chapter house does not have fire sprinklers, contact your Grand Trustee for further information and resources.)
- Smoke Detectors.** All in place and working, especially in sleeping rooms. (Replace battery operated detectors with hardwired.)
- Exit Signs & Emergency Lights.** All in place and functioning properly.
- Fire Egress.** All required egress windows and doors meet fire code. All hallways, stairwells, egress doors and windows are clear of obstructions.

- Fire Extinguishers.** All are in place and have been inspected and recharged as needed within the last twelve months.
- Housekeeping.** No accumulation of trash, clothes or other flammables.
- Kitchen Range Hood.** Steam cleaned within the last 6 months.
- Central Heating System.** Furnace or boiler has received an annual inspection and repair by a qualified contractor. Furnace/boiler room is free of storage (boxes, furniture, flammables, etc.).
- Fire Doors.** Fire rated doors in all locations required by fire code. All hardware (crash bars, hinges, knobsets and closers) working properly.
- Stairwells.** All hand rails in place and stairs in good repair.
- Flammable Storage.** All flammables (cleaners, gasoline, etc.) are in proper containers and fire code rated storage.

Maintenance & Repair. Keeping the chapter house in good repair is essential to preserving liveability and attracting

and retaining brothers who appreciate high standards.

INSIDE

- Bathrooms.** All fixtures are working properly. No evidence of mold.
- Carpet/Vinyl.** No tears or seam separation.
- Electrical Outlets/Switches.** Intact and working properly.
- Furnace/HVAC.** In good working order.
- Furniture.** In good serviceable condition.
- Hot Water Heater/Boiler.** Flushed to remove sediment and working properly.
- Kitchen.** All equipment is working properly.
- Lights-Interior.** All working properly including light bulbs.
- Plumbing.** No leaks.

OUTSIDE

- Broken/Missing Glass.** All window and door glass is in good repair.
- Concrete Safety Repair.** No tripping hazards.
- Entry Door Locks.** All locks are in good repair.
- Roof.** In good condition; no torn, missing or broken shingles.
- Fire Escape Stairs.** In good repair and free of obstruction.
- Roof-Gutters & Downspouts.** In good repair and running clear (test with hose if necessary).
- Siding & Trim.** In good repair, caulking around windows and doors in tact.
- Paint-Exterior.** No cracking or peeling.
- Lights-Exterior.** All in good working condition including light bulbs.

Curb Appeal. Looks matter to the city, college, neighbors, rushees and pledges. To encourage self respect, pride in the chapter house and to make it attractive for actives and pledges, the following should be done weekly:

- House.** Cleaning to remove trash, vacuum, mop, dust, clean kitchen and bathrooms. (This is also a fire safety issue.)
- Grounds.** Yard and parking lot free of trash and debris. Bushes and trees

are pruned. Lawn is regularly mowed and watered.

Doing a chapter house walk through to address these specific issues is extremely important and should be done at least twice a year. Performing this checklist will help develop your To Do List and keep the chapter house in good and safe repair. **IHSV**

House Corporation Training Webinars

Based on the overwhelming success of our November 2015 Fundraising 101 Webinar, more webinars are planned for 2016. Watch your Inbox for registration information! **IHSV**

House Corporation Resource Directory

ARCHITECTURAL & PLANNING SERVICES

Aynesworth Architects & Consultants 512.328.2272
G. Tim Aynesworth tim@aynesworth.com
PO Box 161434, Austin TX 78716 www.aynesworth.com
Architectural design and construction management.
Texas Registered Architect, Certified by National Council of Architectural Registration Board.

Hug & Associates, LLC 678.297.2929
Mike Hug mhug@HugArchitects.com
5250 Avalon Blvd
Alpharetta GA 30009 www.HugArchitects.com
Specializing in the design and renovation of fraternity housing.

Reid Studio Architecture LLC 217.390.7403
Rod Reid rod.reid@comcast.net
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CHAPTER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Pierce Education Properties, L.P. 619.297.0400
Matt Maruccia, VP for Acquisitions
www.PierceEducationProperties.com National developers, buyers, owners and operators of student housing with specific expertise in Greek Housing acquisition, disposition, development, finance, etc.

CHAPTER HOUSE FINANCING

Constantine Capital, Inc. 816.300.0604
Bob Schock robert.schock.zo@sigmachi.com
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CHAPTER HOUSE RENOVATION & DESIGN

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OmegaFi www.omegafi.com 800.276.6342
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Member Planet 888.298.8845
Patrick Terrian C 310.590.4413
pterrian@memberplanet.com www.memberplanet.com
Email newsletters and text messaging, chapter websites, member database, donation sites.

Pennington & Associates 785.843.1661
Patrick Alderdice palderdice@penningtonco.com
www.penningtonco.com Capital campaign coordination, gift management, alumni relations programs, website development

The Laurus Group 770.903.3987
Bill Paris bparis@thelaurusgroup.net C 404.441.9630
www.thelaurusgroup.net Fundraising consulting specializing in capital campaigns, gift management, alumni communications, annual funds

HOUSE DIRECTOR SEARCH & SCREENING

Greek House Resource 361.450.0818
greekhs@gmail.com www.greekhouse.net
Screen, interview and placement for chapter house directors.

INCORPORATION ASSISTANCE

Grand Trustee Harvey Silverman 703.319.8806
harveyas@aol.com

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