



# **Committee Orientation Booklet**

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A Mutual Aid Plan of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite

*Sharing Makes a Difference*



*God has called you to fill a worthy place in His Kingdom. Jesus and the apostles clearly taught that providing for the material needs of our brothers and sisters is part of living the Gospel. Be faithful and you will find a blessing.*

*Occasionally we are asked, “what is the job of the local committee?” This compilation of guidelines and suggestions has been put together to help answer those questions and give some practical insight into your job.*

### ***Organization of a new district -***

*>Elect a local district committee:*

*A secretary and two valuers.*

*>Length of term:*

*To be determined by the local congregation.*

*Longer, overlapping terms are preferable to short terms with frequent changes.*

*We encourage electing mature brethren who are financially responsible. Diligence and timeliness are a must for these brethren. The timeliness of their work will often be the hinge-point for the brotherhood to receive aid in time of need.*

## District Secretary -

The secretary is in effect the local agent for MUA. He should familiarize himself with the guidelines and procedures of MUA as soon as possible and should be prepared to relay information regarding the organization to the congregation in a positive and enthusiastic way. He needs to be a brother who is willing and able to spend some time doing bookwork. Being comfortable with email and online documents is beneficial.

### The duties of the secretary-

>Filling out, signing, collecting signatures, and submitting all forms:

Signature Requirements	Secretary	Valuators	Applicant
New Enrollment Form <sup>1</sup>	✓	✓	✓
Addition Cancellation Form	✓	2	2
Loss Report Form	✓	✓	✓

\*1 Use Addition/Cancellation form for new enrollments.

\*2 Minor additions, items of obvious value, or machinery-  
District secretary only.

Major additions, real estate, items where value is questionable-  
All signatures.

Telephone or text confirmation is permissible when a physical signature is not available. This should be noted on the form. (OK per phone call, OK per email, etc.)

MUA forms should be filled out by the secretary. Asking the applicant to fill out his own forms may result in unnecessary mistakes and delays.

When proof of coverage is requested by a lender, it is the duty of the secretary to forward the lender's request to the office.

When losses are reported to the secretary, he should, as soon as possible, inform his valuers and involve them in determining the amount of loss. In many cases, especially when it involves building damage, a physical inspection by the committee is necessary. However, losses to property such as machinery often require a professional appraisal, estimate, or opinion from someone in the industry who deals with sales or repairs of such items. In these cases, an inspection by the entire committee is not always necessary, but we still encourage a physical verification by the secretary.

It is the duty of the secretary to notify the office when a member in his district is excommunicated so proper procedures may be followed for notification and termination of membership when their grace period is over.

Secretaries together with the valuers should occasionally review the policies of the members in their district to insure that the values of property are current and advise the members if there are concerns.

## **Valuators -**

The duties of the valuers includes appraising properties to be enrolled in MUA, and calculating the value of losses.

It is highly recommended that before entering buildings in the plan, the valuers, together with the secretary, physically inspect the subject property to determine whether the values being entered are accurate. It is important to remember that MUA operates on current market value basis rather than new replacement cost.

If any fire hazards or other undue risks are observed during inspection of the property, it is the valuers' responsibility to advise the member. Carelessness or negligence can make a loss ineligible for payment.

All new applications and all addition forms for real estate need to be signed by the valuers, indicating their agreement with the values being submitted.

When losses occur, the valuers should be involved in determining the amount of loss, especially in the case of real estate or other property of arbitrary value. Losses must be signed by the valuers to validate them for processing.

## *Working Through Losses -*

*Losses rarely, if ever, happen at a convenient time or in ideal circumstances. The committee should endeavor in humility, to maintain a positive, caring, and generous demeanor right from the start. Being prompt with addressing the situation is of ultimate importance. The member will by default not be having the best day of his life. A wide range of emotions, from disappointment or embarrassment to frustration or even criticism can be expected. A calm, understanding approach can do much to make the job more pleasant and help to defuse potential conflict.*

*Submitting loss reports can be challenging at times, particularly when the claim does not clearly fit into the list of approved types of losses, or when there are differences of opinion between the committee and the member regarding the value of the property in question. When a difference of opinion exists, we encourage the committee to work together with the member to find acceptable answers. Following are some suggestions that may help:*

*>Review the guidebook together for answers.*

*>Enlist the help of other experienced brethren such as, previous committee members, committees from neighboring districts, brethren with solid life experience,*

or your deacons. This is particularly important when dealing with large losses.

If you are not able to come to an agreement on whether a loss is payable or how to assess it, submit the loss report to the office and allow the executive committee to assist with that decision.

Feel free to send an additional explanation along which might help the executive understand the situation better. In situations where a loss would technically not be payable, but you feel it is a cause worthy of consideration, include a letter explaining the situation along with the loss report. The executive committee or the office may contact you for more information if anything about the loss report or valuation is not clear.

Some committee members struggle to sign a loss report if they are not sure it meets all the guidelines for payment. Remember that your signature only means that you feel the values stated are fair and accurate and that the explanation of the loss is true to the best of your knowledge. It does not mean that you feel the claim is payable. All claims are reviewed by the executive committee at the office before payment, so when in doubt, send it in for consideration.

*Much of the success of the aid plans rests on the work of the district committees. Without the dedicated service of "boots-on-the-ground" brethren like you, the plan would never function. God bless you for your efforts.*

*The office staff, executive committee, and board of directors are only a phone call away and are glad to help you anytime you need it.*

*Sincerely,*

*The Aid Plans Administration*

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