

# Handbook for the Property Committee

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**SIGMA KAPPA  
SORORITY**

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# **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

## **Introduction**

This handbook has been prepared especially for those who serve as a committee to oversee the chapter property and/or housing facility. Such facilities may be a dormitory, suite, small rental house, or any other facility that a chapter might rent or lease, when there is no corporation. A property committee is necessary when other fees, in addition to housing/furnishing fees, relating to housing/property are collected and expenses are incurred other than decorating and furnishings. If a house or other living facility is purchased or employees hired, a corporation must be formed and incorporated according to the laws and regulations of the state where the property is located.

These guidelines also contain information and material of interest to the collegiate chapter, advisory board and members-at-large. The success of the collegiate chapter is interlocked with the successful operation of each of these functional entities. Each should be well informed of the purposes and responsibilities of the other.

## **Definition**

1. The property committee is formed for the express purpose of furnishing and maintaining property, building, suite or room, which serves as a collegiate chapter's meeting and/or recruitment site.
2. This committee is responsible for making wise decisions relating to the furnishing and maintenance of the chapter facility. While the committee makes the final decision on how the project is completed, suggestions and opinions of others within the chapter should be considered.

## **Purpose**

1. In most cases, the responsibilities of the property committee are purchasing furniture, redecorating the facility when needed, and making sure property repairs are made by the owner of the property.
2. The property committee is also responsible for assuring that all funds are managed properly, and that all rent, insurance, maintenance issues and all matters relating to the property are taken care of in a timely manner.

## **Membership of the Committee**

1. The voting members of the committee should consist of at least three and no more than five alumnae not already involved in an advisory capacity to the chapter. Two collegiate members of the colony or chapter must also be voting members of the committee. It is suggested that the house manager and the colony/chapter president be the collegiate representatives. This provides the

chapter with an opportunity to provide input to the committee and ask questions regarding the furnishing and/or decorating. A member of the advisory board should serve as a liaison from the advisory board for open communication purposes. The advisory board liaison is a non-voting member of the committee. **NOTE:** Sigma Kappa Sorority National Policy indicates that no one may serve on both the Property Committee and the Advisory Board simultaneously.

2. When a collegiate chapter is colonized, the initial personnel for the property committee will be selected and organized by national council or their appointees. This initial property committee will be trained by the assigned National Housing Corporation Coordinator (CC). The newly established property committee must secure an Employer Identification Number from the IRS. In the case of an established chapter, the committee will be appointed by the CC with recommendations from the collegiate chapter. The term of each committee member's appointment is two years.

#### Procedure.

The CC is responsible for property committee recruitment.

The chapter president recommends to the CC, in October, alumnae they would like to serve as property committee members. If the chapter is unaware of any possible alumnae, the collegiate province officer (CPO) may be asked for suggestions. The CC approves and extends invitations to serve on the property committee and arranges training of new property committee members.

### **Officers of the Committee and Their Duties**

Officers of the committee are elected by the committee members from within the committee. The committee should have a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

#### **A. Chairman**

1. Presides at all meetings of the committee using a set agenda.
2. Signs all contracts and agreements as directed by the committee.
3. Communicates with the college/university administration regarding concerns and issues of mutual interest.
4. Facilitates goal setting and long range planning.
5. Communicates with the advisory board of the chapter as needed.
6. Communicates with the CC assigned to the committee as needed.

7. Coordinates and directs maintenance of property.
8. Assures the lawn is properly maintained, if applicable.
9. Personally inspects the property on a regular basis.
10. Coordinates and directs cleaning or other maintenance of the property during school breaks and/or the summer.
11. Evaluates the need for redecoration and recommends repair or replacement of furnishings and equipment to the committee.
12. Reports vandalism or damage to the insurance company or owner promptly.
13. Performs such other duties as may be assigned to her by the Sigma Kappa National Housing Corporation or CC.

**B. Secretary**

1. Keeps an accurate record of the business transacted at meetings of the committee (minutes), sending copies to each committee member, the CC and the Advisory Board Chairman for information purposes.
2. Submits reports to the National Housing Corporation officers and staff and informational reports to Sigma Kappa Sorority as required or requested.
3. Maintains a permanent file of all contracts, leases, minutes, etc.
4. Prepares, issues and collects room contracts to/from the members of the chapter, where applicable.
5. Prepares and maintains signed key agreements, if applicable.
6. Prepares and sends correspondence on behalf of the Committee.
7. Performs such other duties as may be assigned to her by the National Housing Corporation or CC.

## **C. Treasurer**

1. Responsible for the financial management of the chapter property in cooperation and collaboration with the National Housing Corporation.
2. Oversees collection of deposits, room/board payments, housing/furnishing fees and parlor fees from chapter members and forwards the monies to the National Housing Corporation headquarters promptly.
3. Prepares the annual budget (included in supplies sent to Committee Chairman annually).
  - a. This budget should be prepared with the input of the Chapter Vice President of Finance and her Advisor.
  - b. Submits the budget to the CC for advance approval.
  - c. Submits the budget for adoption at a committee meeting.
  - d. Submits the budget to ALL recipients designated on the form by the deadline date.
4. Submits all bills promptly to the National Housing Corporation headquarters office. Such bills include, but are not limited to: rent, loan payments, property insurance, major property maintenance, repair or replacement of furniture/equipment, and other expenses related to the management of the property.
5. Monitors financial status of the committee and reports on it monthly to the committee.
6. Recommends adjustments to charges for room/board, parlor and housing/furnishing fees to committee annually, prior to contracts being disbursed.
7. Performs such other duties as may be assigned to her by the National Housing Corporation or CC.

## **Meetings**

1. The time and place of meetings of the committee are the decision of a majority of those serving on the committee. Both the time and place must be a reasonable time and place for the majority of the committee members to be present, especially collegiate members.

2. Reasonable notification of all members of the committee by telephone, electronic mail, or US mail must be given prior to any meeting or changes in a scheduled meeting. No decisions can be made without a majority of the committee present and voting in favor.
3. Minutes of each meeting are to be filed by the secretary or her appointee within one week of any meeting. This report must be filed with the CC and, for informational purposes, the Advisory Board.

### **Duties of the Committee and Steps for Managing Successful Projects**

1. The property committee manages all chapter property including furniture, equipment, and other items purchased for the facility.
2. The committee shall complete initial inventory of all personal property and furniture belonging to the chapter. This inventory should be updated annually. Inventory forms are provided in the Property Committee's **Supplies for the Year** from the National Housing Corporation.
3. The committee shall make recommendations as to furniture and equipment repair and/or replacement, any needed decorating such as paint or wallpaper, curtains, blinds, drapes, fixtures, pictures, or any other items that the chapter suggests or requests. These recommendations are made to the chapter with final approval coming from the committee.
4. After requests have been made, the committee decides on a budget, scope of work to be done, and the deadlines by which any project must be completed.
5. If possible, at least two and preferably three interior design or decorating stores should be contacted to make suggestions, provide ideas, and provide an estimate on the cost of any project.
6. If the project requires painting or other types of minimal repair work, three bids should be presented by area contractors. It is imperative that only bonded, certified companies are asked to submit bids. Companies must also provide proof of insurance, workers' compensation coverage and an IRS Form W-9.
7. Contact the CC to determine the amount of money available for each project.
8. If the parents of collegians, husbands of advisors, and/or alumnae or other entities in which an alumna or spouse has a business interest wish to provide services, it should be a monetary gift. If they wish to provide professional services, they should participate in the bid process. If they are the successful

bidder, they must have a written contract that has been approved in advance by the CC.

9. The next step is to select the contractor, interior designer, furniture store, etc. The lowest bid is not always the best bid. It is more important to select those people in the area that have the best reputation and provide the plans that best suit what the committee has in mind. Ask for references and follow up on them before making your decision.
10. Submit all design boards, contracts, bids, etc. for the project to the CC for approval. Any expenditure of \$2,400 or more must be approved in advance by the CC.
11. When approved, get contracts signed with providers of the services, retaining a complete signed copy, and notify the other bidders with a note thanking them for their time and effort.
12. Continue to check at least weekly if there is an on-going project. This could include the making of drapes, refinishing/upholstering furniture, laying carpet, etc. so that if it becomes apparent the time frame cannot be met, other arrangements can be made.
13. Notify your CC when bills are due. Provide complete descriptions of all items along with the invoice, as well as items that must have partial payment up front.
14. The committee may enforce rules governing the use of the furniture, suite or the facility if housing/furnishing fees were used. Funds contributed to the housing/furnishing fees account are expected to be spent carefully and the items purchased properly maintained.
15. The committee chairman must file a list of members of the committee with names, addresses and telephone numbers, with the CC, and for information purposes with the Advisory Board. Copies must also be on file with the staff of the National Housing Corporation at national headquarters.
16. To obtain approval, the committee must decide and submit in writing:
  - A. What needs to be done;
  - B. How it will be paid for;
  - C. Submit at least two, and ideally three, bids; and
  - D. Prices must be quoted for every item proposed.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **National Panhellenic Conference Housing Agreements**

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## **National Panhellenic Conference Housing Agreements**

Representatives from the 26 National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sororities collaborate from time to time regarding housing situations on certain campuses. Housing agreements are often negotiated designating that either no housing will be pursued or that all groups will cooperate on comparable facility projects. These agreements are initiated and/or reviewed at each NPC meeting, signed by national presidents or NPC delegates from each group and are binding for two years. Copies of these agreements are sent to the panhellenic advisors on each campus affected.

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## **APPENDIX B**

### **Acceptance of Donations**

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## Acceptance of Donations

While Sigma Kappa appreciates and understands that parents' clubs, individual parents, alumnae and other members want to provide "extras" for the sorority house, suite or lodge, no donations of equipment, furniture, appliances, accessories or money to purchase such items may be given directly to the chapter or items placed in or on the property without the approval of the corporation board/property committee.

**Article I. The corporation board/property committee must approve all gifts that any individual or group wishes to place in the facility or on the property. These items include, but are not limited to: paint, furnishings, equipment, wallpaper, window treatments, repairs (including labor and/or supplies) and landscaping. The corporation board/property committee must oversee any project, purchase, installation and/or labor.**

If there is no corporation board or property committee, the approval must be requested of the advisory board and National Housing Corporation Coordinator for that chapter. Any furnishings of any kind placed in the house, suite or lodge without prior approval may be removed from the property.

Cash donations for furnishings, appliances, decorating or landscaping from parents or individuals must be made through the corporation board/property committee. Suggestions for the use of money are welcomed and the corporation board/property committee will make every effort to abide by the wishes of the individual or group making the donation. Donations of any kind to chapters or corporation boards/property committees are not tax deductible to the donor. The donor must be so informed.

Any solicitation of contributions by the house corporation/property committee or chapter, must include the following statement as required by federal law:

"Contributions or gifts to (name of organization) are not tax deductible as charitable contributions."

When any contractor comes to the house to perform work, whether requested by the house director or the corporation board/property committee, the house director or a member of the corporation board/property committee must be present to give access and must remain on the premises to supervise any work that is performed by the worker. All contractors hired by the house director or the corporation board/property committee must provide proof of insurance before beginning work on the premises.

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## **APPENDIX C**

### **Insurance**

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# INSURANCE

Sigma Kappa requires all house corporations to participate in the Sigma Kappa national insurance program that covers director/officers liability, buildings, contents, loss of income, liability, boiler, fidelity bond and/or workers compensation. Premiums are billed directly by the insurance agency to each corporation annually. Liability insurance premiums are billed by the Sorority annually.

## **Liability Insurance**

Covers General Liability, D & O, Automobile, Bond, and Employer's Liability.

One of the areas of coverage in the Sigma Kappa insurance program is liability insurance to cover the board of directors. In keeping with a notification issued by the national treasurer dated October 17, 1991, if a corporation board does not maintain current and accurate reporting to the national organization during the year, Sigma Kappa will be unable to continue coverage for the corporation board through the Liability insurance program. In order for the national organization to indemnify members of each board, it must have current information regarding the corporation's financial status, corporation board personnel and assurances of legal compliance by the board. (Annual meetings, filing required tax returns, maintaining tax exempt status, state registrations)

## **Individuals' Personal Property**

The personal belongings of individual members are not insured under the house corporation policy. Undergraduate members should be informed of this restriction. Frequently, homeowners' coverage carried by the parents/guardians can be endorsed to include such personal belongings, but only if the agent is properly notified of the location and nature of the property. Another alternative for members is renters insurance. Personal belongings also includes private passenger/personal automobile of the member(s).

## **Are You "Under-Insured?"**

It is very important that the board review the corporation's insurance coverage annually to make certain the property (building and contents) are adequately insured. Upon renewal each year we will authorize an inflationary increase of 2% to each property limit of insurance. The valuation method used for the insurance is called replacement cost which does not depreciate for age.

## **Workers Compensation Insurance**

The annual compensation of each employee must be reported to the insurance agency in order to provide adequate workers compensation coverage. Please note that the following states require workers compensation compliance through the state's program: Washington, Ohio, West Virginia, Maine and Rhode Island.

**Current Issuances:**

Please insert all mailings from the national organization or from the insurance agency concerning insurance coverage into this section of this manual for easy reference. Be sure to discard outdated materials when new guidelines are received.

