

## Procedures for After-Hours Phone Volunteers

Thank you for offering to serve as an “After-Hours Phone Volunteer!” The first step in volunteering for this service is to fill out the “After-Hours Phone Sign-up Sheet” which will be reviewed by the NCMCO Board Subcommittee. On that form you will designate the phone number (cell or landline) that you will use to answer after-hours calls and what days they would be available. (Week nights – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – 1:00pm until 10:00am the following morning; weekend – Friday 1:00pm until Monday 10:00am)

At present the Central Office manager forwards the phone after hours to an auto-attendant system. When someone calls after hours, they get a recording instructing them to press “0” if they wish to speak with someone or “1” if they want to leave a message for the Office. (If you have not yet heard the after-hours recording, we encourage you to call in after hours and listen to the message.)

Within the on-line setup for the auto-attendant system, the phone number that callers will be transferred to when they press “0” can be changed from the answering service number to a particular AA member’s phone number. Since the number that shows up on caller ID when calls are transferred is the number of the caller – not the Central Office number – the AA member who has agreed to take after-hours calls should be prepared to answer all calls during that time period, or at least any number they don’t recognize, by saying, “Alcoholics Anonymous. How can I help you?”

The AA member who is taking the after-hours will need the list of 12-step call volunteers and other area resources. We have compiled notebooks for the volunteers with all of this vital information. When someone calls in wanting to speak with someone, the AA member can talk to the caller him/herself. Most often the AA member should take down the caller’s name and phone number and tell the person they will have someone call them shortly. Then, go through the 12-Step Call list to find a volunteer of the same gender to call the person back, preferably someone in the caller’s area. Although it is important not to tie up the phone with a lengthy conversation, the AA member needs to use their judgment as to whether to continue talking to the caller or offer to have a volunteer call back. **DO NOT give out AA members’ phone numbers.** Also, do not leave messages for 12-step call list volunteers; continue to call people on the list until you get a volunteer to call the person back.

Since the website is mentioned on the recording, there are not as many calls going to the answering service or to after-hours phone volunteers from people looking for AA meetings. However there may be calls from some people who do not have access to the Internet who will be asking for meeting information. It is important for AA members answering after-hours calls to have an updated Where & When and if possible, Internet access for location/map links shown on the website [ashevilleaa.org](http://ashevilleaa.org).

In order to have an idea of how many calls are being transferred, we ask that the AA member handling after-hours calls keep a brief note about each call – name of caller, phone number, nature of the call (meeting information, family help, calls to 12-step volunteers, info on treatment, detox, halfway houses). We can’t make recommendations for treatment facilities, etc. but we do give out info & phone numbers for the various facilities in the area. Notes about the calls can either be sent in an email ([info@ncmco.net](mailto:info@ncmco.net)) or called into the Office (828-254-8539) the following day.

All of this is “a work in progress.” Feel free to call Central Office if you have any questions or suggestions. Thank you!