

RIMS CHAPTER OFFICERS' HANDBOOK

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Introduction

RIMS Chapters are the front lines of a dynamic organization that is trying to highlight the field of Risk Management. Your role as a chapter officer is vital to the success not only of the local chapter but also to the whole RIMS organization. With that in mind we have put together this handbook to help guide you and your chapter on a successful path.

In order to build or maintain a successful chapter it is important to focus on the **7 Keys to Chapter Success** listed below:

1. Leadership
2. Planning
3. Membership Development
4. Programming
5. Communication
6. Chapter Administration
7. Recognition

This handbook contains information to assist in keeping you and your fellow chapter leaders, new or experienced, educated in the administration & leadership of your local chapter. It covers a wide array of topics and situations that may arise during your tenure.

We will focus on the overall mission of RIMS as well as how these **7 Keys to Chapter Success** can help you and your chapter. This will allow all of your chapter officers and committee members to act as a spokesperson for the local chapter and the RIMS organization.

About RIMS

As the preeminent organization dedicated to educating, engaging and advocating for the global risk community, RIMS, the risk management society™, is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 3,500 corporate, industrial, service, nonprofit, charitable and government entities throughout the world. RIMS has a membership of approximately 11,000 risk practitioners who are located in more than 60 countries. For more information about the Society's world-leading risk management content, networking, professional development and certification opportunities, visit www.RIMS.org.

Mission

To educate, engage and advocate for the global risk community.

Strategic Goals

- Ensure a sustainable and adaptable organizational structure.
- Equip risk professionals to succeed in an evolving environment.
- Enhance engagement with members and the broader risk management community.
- Expand RIMS influence worldwide.

Priorities

Innovate

Develop

Engage

Advocate

Core Values

Strive for excellence.

Embrace innovation.

Foster collaboration.

Act with integrity, respect and humility.

Empower through learning and development.

Strengthen and sustain the profession.

Inspire and excite.

Governance

RIMS Board of Directors is responsible for reviewing and approving the organization's mission and strategic direction (above).

In order to ensure that all conflicts of interest, or the appearance thereof, within the organization and the Board are avoided or appropriately managed through disclosure, recusal, or other means, the Board utilizes a conflict of interest policy.

The Board also adheres to a reserve policy to ensure that the organization manages its funds responsibly.

RIMS FACTS:

- The Risk and Insurance Management Society, Inc. (RIMS) is a proactive voice on behalf of risk managers, dedicated to supporting their function and enhancing their profile as vital elements in organizational success. Founded in 1950, RIMS represents nearly 4,800 industrial, service, nonprofit, charitable, and governmental entities. The Society serves 8,400 risk management professionals around the world.
- RIMS represents nearly 4,000 industrial, service, nonprofit, charitable and governmental entities. The Society serves over 8,200 individuals responsible for the risk management function in 80 chapters across the United States, Canada, and Japan. RIMS Members are kept informed of what's happening on the leading edge of the risk management discipline in every sector of the economy.
- The cornerstone of risk managers' peer-group interaction is RIMS' 79 local chapters. Here, in regular meetings, risk managers exchange ideas and engage in networking with other local companies and industry counterparts. Chapters are the scene of social, educational, and civic activities. Local chapters also team up to sponsor Regional RIMS Conferences, which extend networking opportunities even further.
- RIMS membership also facilitates contact with a broad array of service providers in the insurance industry, with academicians, with regulators, with elected officials, as well as with subject matter specialists and technicians of every stripe.
- The RIMS Annual Conference & Exhibition, widely recognized as the definitive risk management and insurance event, is the largest gathering of risk managers and insurance professionals in the world. Annually about ten thousand participants, including over 400 exhibitors, tackle the issues facing the industry. RIMS members receive a substantial discount.
- RIMS conducts interactive workshops and public seminars on critical aspects of risk management and insurance for risk professionals and others involved in managing risk. These educational sessions are held throughout the U.S. and Canada. Onsite programs are also implemented upon request for the training of staff of a specific chapter. RIMS also conducts workshops that earn attendees credit towards the RIMS-CRMP certification, a credential which demonstrates your achievement in risk management competencies. The Spencer Educational Foundation, Inc., awards annual scholarships to full-time risk management students and educational grants to others.

- The Society publishes the monthly [Risk Management](#) magazine; the online [RIMS Benchmark Survey](#); [Risk Management Monitor Blog](#); the [RIMS Risk Management Compensation Survey](#); and our [Risk Knowledge Library](#).
- RIMS monitors federal, state and provincial regulation and legislation affecting risk management and employee benefits. RIMS also maintains contacts with legislators and regulatory agencies to make sure the voice of the RIMS membership is heard. Learn more about our advocacy efforts [here](#).
- RIMS operating staff is located at 5 Bryant Park, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018
- For questions concerning RIMS Chapters, please contact RIMS Chapter Services Manager at (212) 655-6031 or chapterservices@rims.org.

RIMS CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS:

Click [here](#) for the most up to date copy of RIMS Constitution & Bylaws.

RIMS VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE:

For up to date information regarding RIMS volunteer Leadership, including please click [here](#).

RIMS STAFF:

Contact information for RIMS Staff members can be found by clicking [here](#).

CHAPTER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

7 KEYS TO CHAPTER SUCCESS

It is the responsibility of the Chapter President to delegate responsibilities to committees and other board members and to manage the volunteers who have assumed roles on the Board. By using the *7 Keys to Chapter Success* listed below you will be able to create both a short-term and a long-term plan for your chapter, as well as, assign key tasks to your board and committee members.

1. Leadership
2. Planning
3. Membership Development
4. Programming
5. Communication
6. Administration
7. Recognition

Below are some guidelines on how you and your Board can use the *7 Keys to Chapter Success* to benefit your local chapter:

1. Leadership

Recommended Structure:

It is important for chapters to have a strong organizational structure and governance. The following is a recommended "core" organizational structure. These are the positions that typically make up the chapter's board of directors.

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Membership Director
Programming Director
RIMS Delegate

Ideally, the chapter board should meet monthly. The board's function is to act on behalf of the general membership and to establish chapter policies in accordance with the chapter's bylaws. In order for the board to function, the chapter must have clearly written bylaws, a mission statement and goals. We recommend that the chapter review these items on a regular basis to make sure they accurately reflect the actions of the board/chapter.

In addition to the board, we recommend establishing committees to work on various tasks, for example, membership, Website, etc. Active participation in committees strengthens the sense of membership for the individual and the chapter. Once committees have been appointed, it is important for them to develop their own goals and objectives and to report on their accomplishments. A committee structure also develops a larger pool of volunteers and helps to develop future leaders for your chapter.

For sample chapter officer position descriptions and guidelines on how to write a volunteer job description, please visit

<https://www.rims.org/membership/Documents/RIMS%20VOLUNTEERJOBDESCRIPTIONS.pdf>.

Tips on Chapter Leadership:

- Identify future local unit leaders; create leadership succession within the unit.
- Attend RIMS Leadership Forum in conjunction with RIMS Conference.
- Encourage and reward local volunteer involvement.
- Participate actively in RIMS Chapter Officers Community on Opis to improve communication and peer sharing between chapter leaders.
- Disseminate information about RIMS to your local Board and other volunteers.
- Develop short-term and long-term goals for your chapter.
- Nominate candidates for RIMS leadership committees.
- Maintain leadership that is open to advice and suggestions; and solicits ideas for improvement.
- Provide RIMS with a copy of your Officer Roster each year, as well as any updates throughout the year.

2. Planning

Pre-Plan:

- Take time to organize your thoughts and desires for your year as a chapter leader prior to your initial planning meeting or retreat. Think about what you would like to see the chapter accomplish in the coming year and over the long term.
- Meet with the outgoing chapter officer in the position that you will be stepping into this year, and discuss what worked and what didn't work during their tenure.
- Have the executive Board (President, VP, 2nd VP, Secretary, Treasurer, Delegate) meet before the whole Board gets together to make sure that you are all on the same page.
- If need be, make key contacts to tie down open Board positions prior to the initial planning meeting.
- Make sure that all chapter Board members have received a copy of this handbook to use as a guide throughout the year.

Have a Plan:

- Set up a planning meeting or retreat so that the whole Board (including committees) can set up a plan for the coming year and a long range plan (this can be a separate Board meeting each year) for the chapter. You can also use this time to determine how you as a Chapter will achieve the goals that are agreed upon.

Running an Effective Planning Meeting/Retreat

- Start planning early and think about short- and long-term goals, as well as leadership succession.
- Have an agenda.
 1. Identify players and get their commitment prior to the meeting.
 2. List each meeting participant on the agenda. Place the name next to their discussion topic or area of responsibility.
 3. Send a meeting notice to the Board two or three weeks before the meeting, attaching a copy of the “preliminary” agenda. Ask for questions, additions, and comments, along with the board member’s commitment.
 4. Send a reminder a few days prior to the meeting to confirm attendance and the agenda.
 5. Keep focused and follow the agenda.
 6. Offer potential areas of discussion/topics:
 - Programming (e.g., educational, informational, networking, etc.).
 - Membership Development: Do we have any prospects? How can we recruit them? Once they are members, how can we welcome them? How can we get these new members interested and involved on the Board? How can we keep our members?
 - Chapter Website.
 - Treasurer report/financial status/Budget
 - RIMS update
 - RIMS Conference/Leadership Forum (Who will be attending this year?)
 - Chapter Recognition Program.
- Create a schedule of events for the entire year.
- Discuss what is expected of all Board and committee members, so that you and your volunteers will understand what their commitment level will be.
- Change and update the plan throughout the year as needed.
- Involve all Board members and committee members throughout the year.
- Determine who is best for each job opening. Assign the right people to the right jobs. Ask your volunteers about their interest and future plans for involvement on the Board.

Succession Planning:

- Ask each officer, director, and committee chair to designate his or her successor for emergency situations.
- Develop a formal succession plan—identify potential members to fill leadership positions. Come up with two or three names per position.
- Name committee vice chairs. Vice chairs are the committee chairs the following year but could fill the position in an emergency.
- Increase Board size to increase the pool of potential leaders.
- Overlap committee assignment terms with Board/officer assignments to allow for continuity on the Board and in the chapter's activity.
- Contact RIMS members for recommendations for new volunteers.
- Use your chapter's membership list and prospect list as a resource for new volunteers for the chapter.

Long Range/Strategic Planning:

Once you have established a one-year planning process in your chapter, the next step to consider is the implementation of long-range or strategic planning. Long-range planning can assist your chapter in accomplishing organized, continuous, and directed growth. Since you are looking to build consensus and direction over a longer period of time, you may wish to invite potential future leaders to be part of the discussions, allowing them to be a valuable resource.

Before you can begin the planning process, you will need a clear sense of your chapter's mission and direction. This can be done prior to, or as part of your planning session. A good mission statement summarizes your chapter's goals, yet is definitive enough to determine whether a potential program or activity will support it. Creating a mission statement allows you to delineate goals and formulate a specific action plan.

Developing a strategic plan is a three-step process. First your strategic plan must be designed and a written document produced. The second step is to implement the plan, and the third step is to evaluate the results to stay on target and to support future planning.

Below is a checklist to keep in mind when developing your Strategic or Long-Range Plan:

- A comprehensive long-range plan not only will assist the current Board of your chapter in achieving its goals, but it will serve as a road map for those that will follow you. Identify core leaders at the Board level who would like to move up the leadership ladder for the chapter. What are your Board members long term plans involving their volunteer work with RIMS?
- Assess current environment/needs. What challenges or issues do your chapter and its members face? (Prior to answering this, we recommend that a member needs survey be conducted.) Example: Our RIMS chapter needs to have greater name recognition.
- Set goals. Gain a consensus as to your chapter's goals for the next two years. Example: To increase public awareness of our RIMS chapter.

- Establish Objectives. Further define the goals and provide suggestions for achieving them. Example: To develop a comprehensive RIMS chapter awareness program directed at CEO's.
- Formulate strategies. Develop methods for accomplishing your objectives. Example: Work with the editor of the weekly business section to start a column on the importance of Risk Management.
- Break down strategies into measurable tasks. Specify the actions necessary to accomplish your strategies. Example: One person will develop the format for the column, another makes an appointment with the editor to discuss the idea, etc.
- Assign tasks with specific deadlines. Assign specific tasks to specific individuals. Nothing can happen if no one is given a definite assignment with concrete deadlines.
- Evaluate success. Monitor your plan, recognize successes and re-structure in areas where progress is not being made in a timely manner. Example: Thank you Joe for all your hard work. Or, Thank you for your hard work Joe, we believe Susan would be able to help with the work you are doing.
- Take an honest look at the Board and determine whether or not you need new blood.
- Look at your membership and determine who is NOT participating in a volunteer role. Have the Board develop a plan to target those groups.
- If attendance is weak at general membership meetings, try a "name" speaker to boost attendance, and use that meeting to recruit new and renewed membership participation. For meetings, try something different in terms of time and place.
- Talk to Chapters that have been successful. See what you can learn from their efforts. A great opportunity to do this each year is at the RIMS Leadership Forum which is held at the RIMS Annual Conference and Exhibition.
- Host an invite only round table for senior level risk managers to provide them with a great networking opportunity. This event can give you a chance to enlist their support and get them re-involved with the chapter.
- Hold a long range or strategic planning session for the Board during the course of the year. Look at what the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) are to the Chapter. Think about where the Chapter would like to be in 3-5 years. This long-range look can be your legacy to the Chapter after you move into your role as past president.

Follow-Through:

- Check-in occasionally to make sure that the assigned jobs are something each individual is interested in and reassign tasks if necessary. If a volunteer does not feel needed it is hard to retain them.
- To ensure that the plan is successful and timely, establish a reporting schedule to track the progress of events.
- Hold a mid-year meeting to look at what has been accomplished so far and what still needs to be done for the rest of the year to meet your goals.

3. Membership Development

- Appoint a membership chair and committee to take the lead on all membership development activities.
- Identify key prospects within your chapter.
- Make calls on prospects to recruit them as members.
- Welcome new members to RIMS and your chapter.
- Recruit volunteers by involving new and existing members in Board activities.
- Develop retention plans for your chapter by:
 - Identifying companies or individuals that could drop their membership.
 - Calling on existing members to determine their needs.
 - Involving the entire board and, if possible, past officers in membership recruitment/retention efforts.
 - Displaying RIMS membership materials at all meetings.
- Conduct a local membership campaign to recruit new members.

4. Programming

- Conduct regular surveys of your chapter's membership to identify program needs/topics.
- Hold periodic planning sessions to discuss programs.
- Examine attendance at your meetings. Has attendance been dropping off? Are your attendees always the same people? If you need to shake things up for your chapter, consider different options for the locations and times of your membership meetings. Or, consider a new format, like a panel discussion or roundtable.
- Share information about local programs with RIMS by adding your chapter's events to [RIMS Online Calendar](#). Fill in the appropriate information regarding your event. Your event will be reviewed and approved by a member of RIMS staff.
- Use RIMS PERK Program to fill in gaps in your chapters programming schedule. The PERK Program is a partnership between RIMS, its chapters, and RIMS industry partners, which provided quality programming and speakers to the chapters at no cost. To learn more about RIMS PERK Program go to www.rims.org/PERK.
- Publish a schedule of local activities on your chapter's Website or newsletter.
- Research speakers for your meetings - RIMS members are a much courted group. Chapters should feel free to invite anyone involved in the risk management community to address them. It's still possible to get many speakers without paying as long as it fits into his or her schedule. Don't assume that you can't get a speaker because he or is in another state. It doesn't hurt to ask. He or she may have business in your area and can combine the speaking engagement with business. Following are some sources for obtaining speakers:
 - Members as Speakers - Involve chapter members as both moderators and speakers. Every chapter has, among its membership, experienced risk managers who may be less active than they once were. Invite them to address the chapter and/or participate in a question and answer session.

- Member Company Expertise - Draw upon the expertise within your chapter's member organizations. Corporate attorneys, safety directors, financial executives and human resources personnel all should be considered. When such a speaker is invited, members should be encouraged to invite the speakers' counterparts in their own organizations.
- RIMS Board of Directors, or Staff - Consider inviting a RIMS Board of Directors or Staff member to address the chapter once a year to bring the members up to date on RIMS activities. Each Board member has been assigned a number of chapters to liaise with. If you do not know who your liaison is, a list of the Board chapter assignments is available.
- Associate Members/Service Providers - Sometimes your service providers have the best resources and the easiest access to qualified speakers. If you use this resource you should certainly set some ground rules ahead of time. No sales pitch, no company name and logo on each slide or power point screen, or whatever other rules your chapter wants to set. Don't fall into the trap of only having service providers as speakers. It has been our experience that risk managers will take time out of their busy schedules to attend a meeting presented by another risk manager. If your chapter's attendance has dropped off this may be why.
- Host a joint meeting with other organizations associated with risk management - Do not overlook the value of joint meetings with other local groups such as the Society of CPCU, Financial Executives Institute, American Society of Safety Engineers or Bar and CPA Associations, to cite a few. The meeting itself should present a topic of mutual interest. Each group should assign a member that is responsible for coordinating the event. Look to such meetings as a way to expose others to the Risk Management Profession. Depending on the group involved, it could be useful for each president to describe their own group's activities, their members' job responsibilities, and then exchange literature

5. Communication

Chapter Websites:

A Chapter Website can be one of your most powerful marketing and communication tools. It is also a reflection of the chapter and the Society. In addition it can act as an archive for your chapter's history.

RIMS has made resources available for each chapter to create and maintain its own site right from the RIMS Web page. Make sure that someone on your Board has been assigned the task of Webmaster. A Webmaster will act as the individual who makes changes and maintains the chapters Website. For more information on how to create a Web page for your chapter you can contact RIMS at chapterservices@rims.org.

RIMS Member Relations Manager can set up a time to discuss how to create and update your chapter's Website. A brief tutorial on how the Website software works can be done via conference call in less than one hour. You will be provided with written instructions and some helpful hints to make your job as Webmaster easier.

Once a Website has been created, it is extremely important that it is maintained and kept up to date. Review [RIMS Chapter Website User Guide](#) for more information.

Meeting Notices:

Prior to your chapter's general membership meetings you will send out a meeting notice to for the event. When writing a meeting notice, always remember to answer the key questions below.

1. Who is the Speaker?
2. What is the topic?
3. What is the time of the meeting?
4. What is the cost to attend?
5. When is the meeting?
6. Where is the meeting being held?
7. What do you know about the speaker (bio)?

By answering these key questions you will be able to write an informative, simple meeting notice. Always look at your meeting notice with the eyes of someone that rarely shows up. Have you enticed them or informed them with ample information to move them to show up. Keep in mind that detail does not necessarily mean long!

Below are some tips on how to make the most of your next meeting notice:

- **Catch Their Attention!** Use a catchy title to highlight what your event is covering. Highlight any big name speakers and include as much pertinent information as possible.
- **Use the official RIMS logo** along with your chapter name and chapter logo (if applicable).
- **Include information regarding the topic and the speaker(s).**
- **Make sure that you have included member and non-member pricing information for the event.**
- **Include Contact Information.** Including a board member's name on the announcement so that participants can ask questions, register, etc.
- **Registrant Information,** include a space for the registrant's name, company, title, address, phone, fax, and e-mail, so that you can collect the most up to date contact information for your attendees.
- **Method of Payment & Registration –** Explain how individuals can pay for the event (Check or credit card, as well as how they can register for the event (fax, online, e-mail, etc.).
- **Create your meeting notices well in advance!** Provide information regarding your event early, often, and late.
- **Include event information on your chapter's Website.**

Newsletters:

Good communication skills are critical to the success of an organization hoping to improve, enhance, and strengthen its member relations. The modern world of electronics and computers has made it very easy for chapter officers to communicate with their members. However, while most of us now have access to the Internet and Web pages, it is also necessary to communicate via a chapter newsletter. Chapter newsletters are viewed by your members as a benefit to belonging to the local chapter. RIMS makes it easy to create a newsletter with our [Chapter Newsletter Templates](#), which are available on the RIMS Website.

Getting Started

The first thing you need to do is decide who is going to be responsible for coordinating this project. You will have to recruit a volunteer to serve as editor of the newsletter. This position does not have to be filled by an officer. The important thing to remember is to find someone who has an interest in writing and is willing and able to commit the time necessary to produce a good newsletter.

Once you have found an editor, you must be willing to provide whatever resources are needed to publish the newsletter. Along this same line, the President should volunteer to write a regular "message from the President" article for each edition.

Your newsletter should include:

- An update of what's new at RIMS.
- Local news and event.
- A welcome note from your chapter's president.
- A calendar of upcoming programs and events for your chapter.
- A listing of your chapter's officers.
- New members.
- Chapter Success Stories.
- Recognition of chapter board members and volunteers.
- An invitation to become involved in RIMS.
- Chapter progress on issues significant to Risk Managers.
- Chapter Services available to members.
- Reports on Board and Chapter meetings.
- Developments in the state that might affect your members.
- Risk Management Tips
- Nominations, elections, and appointments of officers.
- Regulatory Issues
- RIMS Professional Development Courses
- Reports on RIMS meetings.
- Editorials.
- Requests for volunteers.
- A column where members can submit questions.
- Job listings.
- Surveys

The following are tips for the editor of your newsletter:

Preparing and organizing your newsletter copy will be easier if you first determine what you want to accomplish by sending the newsletter to your members. Listed below are some suggested newsletter objectives. You may also want to discuss other specific issues that you want to address with the other board members.

- Objective: To inform members in a timely fashion of developments such as proposed legislation, government regulations, etc.
- Objective: To inform members of what their chapter is doing for them. (What they are receiving for their dues)
- Objective: To generate a feeling among members of participating in an effective organization.
- Objective: To communicate information about RIMS on a national level.

Style will vary from chapter to chapter. Some editors prefer a formal, journalistic style, while others opt for a more personal touch. Remember it is the content that is important. If you are having trouble with the layout, most computers have templates or will have guidance on how to set up a newsletter.

It is a good idea to publish the newsletter on a regular basis. It is always better to publish smaller newsletters with current information, then to wait until you have collected a lot of news, as you will usually be publishing old news.

Please be sure that a copy of your chapter newsletter is sent to the RIMS Membership and Chapter Services Department so we can have a file for your chapter's history.

Public Relations

Public relations is a planned activity which will enable your chapter to communicate with and be recognized by key groups which are important to you including local businesses, industry groups and important constituencies. The purpose of public relations is to influence and provide information to key target audiences.

By following a few simple guidelines, a public relations plan can have positive and lasting results for your chapter and your members. Public relations can help increase your chapter's visibility, increase participation in your meetings, let your business community know your activities, enhance the prestige of your programs, and increase understanding of the risk managers' role in their corporate environments. Often a good public relations resource is your company's own PR or corporate communications department. They respond to media requests daily and can help you by giving the company's perspective on issues. They can be a resource for lists of editors in your local newspapers.

Where to start

A. Do you have an upcoming event, fundraiser, newly elected president or interesting guest speaker?

- Communicate information regarding an upcoming event, fundraiser, guest speaker, etc. to the media (newspapers, radio, TV) through a press release.
- Use the formula below for writing a release:
 - Include a contact name and telephone number at top of page for a person the press can contact for additional information.
 - Create a headline that is 8-10 words long.
 - Make sure the 1st paragraph includes WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHY, and WHERE.
 - Include additional information about the event or program in the 2nd paragraph.
 - Use the 3rd paragraph for a generic statement about your chapter and RIMS. Use this standard text for the bottom of every press release:
 - The Risk and Insurance Management Society, Inc. (RIMS) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing the practice of risk management, a professional discipline that protects physical, financial and human resources. Founded in 1950, RIMS represents over 5,000 industrial, service, non-profit, charitable, and governmental entities. The Society serves more than 10,000 individuals representing its member companies/organizations in 79 national and international chapters across the United States and Canada.
 - Put the release together with any additional information you have about the event such as a flyer. Include a RIMS annual report and/or copy of Risk Management magazine for background about RIMS. If you have an appropriate black & white 5 X 7 photo for the release, include it.
- Send the release to the business editor, if the release is about a meeting or speaker. If your event is a fund raiser, send it to the lifestyle editor, as well as the calendar editor. Let the photo editor know about the event and any personalities or business leaders who will be participating and give them a time for sending a photographer. Just phone the newspaper or station and ask for the name of the appropriate contact and they will give it to you.
- Designate someone from your Boars to meet any press that attends the event, and ask if there is someone in attendance they would like to talk to. As a rule, media attend any meeting or event complimentary. The reporter's host should introduce him/her to your executives and key members. Also, let the reporter know whom to contact if there are any follow up questions.

- Respond to media requests and questions. The first type of request that your chapter may receive from the local media is for a local resource person with a particular expertise on a subject about which the reporter is writing an article. Chapter officers are good resources for this type of query and should be encouraged during the interview to mention their RIMS chapter affiliation and title. Sending out press releases when a new slate of officers is elected will introduce your chapter to the local reporter for follow up when he/she is doing a story on a local event which calls for a risk management viewpoint. The second type of request that you may receive from the press is for information on a position that RIMS has taken and request for a quote on that subject. These questions should be referred to the Public Relations Manager in New York (212-278-9292). The RIMS president and/or the appropriate Board of Directors spokesperson will respond.

Mail vs. E-mail:

Communicate with your members on a regular basis through e-mail, newsletters, websites, meeting notices etc., in order to make them feel connected to RIMS and the local chapter. Make sure that you are using the most up to date membership information when sending out chapter information by downloading current [membership reports](#), or by sending e-mails through [RIMSmail](#).

Be selective in the information that you send out to your members and be respectful of members' wishes to not be included on your mailing lists by informing RIMS when they make that request.

The Personal Touch (Phone Calls & Face-to Face Visits):

Although this type of communication is often the most time consuming, it also usually reaps the biggest rewards. An occasional phone call by a Board member to check in on your local members can make a big difference by making your members feel connected to what is going on. It also helps them to feel welcome at the next meeting. Personal phone calls or visits can provide great opportunities to talk about what your members are looking for from the local chapter. You will also have the opportunity to discuss their membership status and future plans with RIMS.

6. Administration

Incorporation:

In order to protect the officers and directors of your local chapter, all RIMS Chapters must be incorporated. In every state there is an agency responsible for registering and maintaining records on corporations. This agency is usually known as the Corporation Commission of the Secretary of State. Information on a corporation's status can be obtained by writing or calling the appropriate state office, which is listed in your local telephone directory or by calling directory assistance. RIMS can also have CT Corporation maintain your chapter incorporation status and records each year at your chapter's request. This service is offered at an annual fee that can be deducted directly from the dues that are collected for your chapter by RIMS.

Chapter Bylaws:

Each RIMS Chapter has its own Constitution & Bylaws, which are directly related to RIMS Constitution & Bylaws. A chapter's bylaws can be broader but not narrower than the Society's. Whenever a change is made to RIMS Constitution & Bylaws it is communicated to the RIMS Chapters, and your chapter's bylaws should be changed to reflect these changes. Most often, these changes are voted on and approved at the RIMS Conference each year. In order to most accurately reflect these changes in your chapter's bylaws, make a point of having your Board review your chapter's Constitution & Bylaws during the meeting following the conference.

A template of a [model chapter Constitution & Bylaws](#) is available for your use online.

Insurance Coverage:

Chapters are covered under the following insurance policies purchased by RIMS:

- Automobile Policy
- Foreign Liability
- Blanket Crime
- General Liability
- Crime Policy
- Package Policy
- D & O Liability
- Publishers Liability
- Excess Umbrella Liability
- Umbrella Liability

Regional Conference cancellation coverage is also available through RIMS. You may contact RIMS at chapterservices@rims.org for more information.

For more information regarding your chapter's insurance coverage, a [Summary of RIMS Insurance Policy](#) is available online on the RIMS Website.

Tax Issues:

U.S. Chapters

Tax Exemption:

RIMS is a not-for-profit organization under Section 501(c)6 of the Internal Revenue Code. This section affords RIMS tax exempt status. Unfortunately, RIMS chapters are not automatically tax exempt but must seek exemption by filing Form 1024 with the IRS. Many states require additional filings for tax exempt status, check with your state government about such requirements.

In most cases, 501(c)6 organizations, normally are obligated to pay state and local tax for purchases and services rendered, in the name of the chapter. Check with your state/local tax departments if you have questions regarding local tax requirements.

Federal Tax Identification Number (SS-4):

All chapters are required to obtain a Federal Tax Identification (I.D.) Number. This I.D. Number is used, for example, when opening a bank account and when filing tax returns. The form involved to obtain an I.D. Number is available from local IRS offices and is known as Form SS-4. A copy should be forwarded to the RIMS NY office.

If you are unable to locate your chapter I.D. number, check with your bank as it is now required for all accounts.

Form 990:

Form 990 - Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax - must be filed with the IRS annually if chapter gross income exceeds \$25,000. In many cases chapters may be able to file Form 990EZ. For copies of the forms and complete instructions look on the IRS website www.irs.gov

The deadline for filing, according to regulations, is "on or before the 15th day of the fifth month, following the close of the accounting period." If, for example, a chapter's fiscal year closes on December 31, the tax return is due on or before May 15.

The form will typically be sent by the IRS to the address shown on the prior year's return. Return mailing instructions will be included.

Tax Payer Right to Know:

Under current legislation, anyone has the right to request certain information and documents from a tax exempt organization. The exact rules on how quickly and in what format this must be supplied can be found on the IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov/>.

Tax Record Keeping:

The Treasurer or Secretary should have available copies of the following:

- The application for tax exemption, including all attachments.
- The IRS determination letter.
- The last 3 tax returns (Form 990 or 990 EZ) filed. (Note: Names and addresses of contributors may be omitted)

Canadian Chapters

Revenue:

Questions should be referred to a Problem Resolution Program coordinator. You can find the telephone number under "Revenue Canada" in the Government of Canada section of the telephone book.

In order to qualify for tax exempt status, the terms an association must satisfy are the following requirements which are set forth in paragraph 149(1)(1) of the Income Tax Act:

- a. it must not, in the opinion of the Minister, be a charity;
- b. it must be organized exclusively for social welfare, civic improvement, pleasure, recreation or any other purpose except profit;
- c. it must in fact be operated exclusively for the same purpose in b. for which it was organized or for any of the other purposes mentioned in b.; and
- d. no part of its income may be paid, payable or otherwise made available for the personal benefit of any proprietor, member or shareholder, except in connection with the promotion of amateur athletics in Canada.

The organization will have to file the Non-Profit Organization (NPO) Information Return (Form T1044) even though it qualifies as an exempt organization if any of the following apply:

1. the organization received or is entitled to receive dividends, interest,
2. rentals or royalties in the fiscal period totaling more than \$10,000;
3. the total assets of the organization were more than \$200,000 at the end of the immediately preceding fiscal period; or
4. such a return had to be filed for a preceding fiscal period.
5. An organization that has to file the Non-Profit Information Return may also have to file other returns such as the T2 Corporation Income Tax Return, the T2 short, or the T3 Trust Income Tax and Information Return. The T2 Corporation Income Tax Guide, and the T3 Guide and trust Return contain information to help you file your T2 or T3 return.

For information on how you may need to file see Interpretation Bulletin IT-83, Non-Profit Organizations - Taxation of Income from Property.

A non-profit organization is not required to include financial statements with the NPO return. Your organization has to file its NPO information return, without receiving notice, within six months after the end of its fiscal period. Contact "Revenue Canada" for complete details and answers to questions.

Chapter Record Keeping, Reporting, & Budget Guidelines:

Record Keeping Guidelines:

The following is a list of items that your chapter might have, with suggested retention periods. It is suggested that you maintain a "history" file to be passed to your successors. This history will become an invaluable resource to future chapter leaders.

Documents	Length of Time
Minutes of Board Meetings	Permanent
Bylaws	Permanent
Constitutions	Permanent
Approval of Federal ID Number	Permanent
Incorporation	Permanent
Approval Permanent	Permanent
Application for Tax Exempt Status	Permanent
IRS Determination Letter	Permanent
Tax Returns (Support Information)	7 Years
Chapter Newsletter	Permanent
Chapter Activity Forms (Names, Meeting Dates, Topics, Speakers)	3 Years
Regional Conference Records	1 Permanent Copy
Chapter Monthly Financial Reports	1 Year

Chapter Annual Financial Records (Includes: Bank Statements, Annual Financial Reports, Checks showing payment of Taxes)	7 Years
Membership Prospects	Permanent
Officer/Committee records/reports	3 Years
Correspondence with RIMS office	1-3 Years
Canceled Checks	5 Years
Paid Invoices	5 Years
Meeting Receipts	3 Years
Photographs	Permanent

Reporting Responsibilities:

As Treasurer, you have a responsibility to keep your Chapter, and particularly your Chapter's Board, informed of its financial status. This includes the following:

1. All receipts should be deposited promptly and recorded including source information.
2. All bills should be paid within a reasonable period of time. Significant or unusual expenses (such as printing or Officers Travel) should be approved in advance by the Board during the budget process or by Board members involved with the activity.
3. The Board should be given monthly reports of Assets and Liabilities (Balance Sheet) and change in net assets (called an Income Statement by for-profit companies).
4. Members of the Chapter should be given the financial reports at least once year.
5. Financial reports to the Board should include any anticipated cash flow concerns or unusual activity.

Some Chapters have significant cash resources. The Board should determine if these funds should be invested. It is best to have other Board members work with the Treasurer and determine the best approach. If there are investments, the results should also be reported regularly.

Budget Planning Guidelines:

An annual budget will assist in planning your income and expenses. Financial requirements for various chapter projects must be estimated in order to establish a realistic budget based on anticipated income.

The following is a general set of guidelines for budget planning:

1. Start the planning process at your annual Board Retreat.
2. Review all existing programs and activities to assure they should continue.
3. Identify each new activity that the chapter will be working on.
4. Each committee should complete their own activity worksheet(s) if there are budget dollars attached to the project. The worksheet should include a complete description of the activity.
5. All activity sheets should be submitted to the Treasurer prior to the Board Retreat so that a comprehensive budget can be created.
6. In the event, you do not have a balanced budget, individual projects should be prioritized and voted on by the group at the retreat.
7. All anticipated expenses should be shown on the budget worksheet and should indicate the month expenses are expected to be paid by the chapter. The same should be done for income.
8. An outside auditor should reconcile your chapter's books annually.

Budgets can be done on an Excel Worksheet or put into an Accounting Software package.

7. Recognition

Recognizing the contributions of your chapter officers, board, and committee members is extremely important to the long term success of your Board. Public recognition for people who are doing a great job communicates the value of their involvement. It serves as a thank you to the individual performing the service, as a way to recognize performance in front of peers, bosses, and other members, and as motivator for others to become involved.

Tips on how & when to recognize volunteers for their efforts:

- Publicly recognize and reward the contributions of volunteers at local unit meetings.
- Have a “volunteer of the month” section of your Chapter’s Website and highlight the great job that one of your volunteers is doing for your group.
- Present a Past President Plaque each year. This plaque is available through RIMS at no cost to the chapter. For more information contact RIMS at chapterservices@rims.org.
- Send a letter to a volunteer’s supervisor to inform them of the good work they are doing for the chapter. These letters serve the dual purpose of rewarding volunteers and informing organizations about valuable Chapter programs.
- Say “thank you” often and sincerely—volunteers are making your year successful. Celebrate progress and successes at Board and Chapter meetings
- Use special name badges or ribbons at meetings to identify your board members and volunteers.
- When appropriate, present gifts of appreciation to volunteers for their hard work. Some great gift ideas are available at the [RIMS Store](#). Use RIMS Store to purchase gifts for chapter officers, committee members, speakers, etc.
- Send the chapter’s outgoing president to the RIMS Conference as a gift from the Board.
- Recognize all volunteers at each chapter event.
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- Nominate a committed and talented volunteer for The Heart of RIMS Award. This award is given out each year at the RIMS Conference.
- Develop a Chapter Lifetime Achievement Award to celebrate long-term volunteer service.

Tips on how to recognize your chapter for its efforts:

- Each year RIMS recognizes chapters for their efforts in three different areas including Outstanding Programming, Outstanding Membership Development, Advancing the Risk Management Profession. In addition awards are given to chapters for Overall Chapter Excellence. In order to be eligible for these awards it is necessary for your chapter to complete an awards submission form and submit it to RIMS along with any necessary supporting documentation. Give your chapter the credit it deserves by nominating your group for the great work it has been doing. Information regarding RIMS Chapter Recognition Program (CRP) can be found online at www.rims.org/awards.

RESOURCES

RIMS WEBSITE:

As a RIMS Chapter Officer, you will wear many different hats throughout your tenure as a Board member. In addition to the duties covered in your position description you may also find yourself doing things that may include: Chapter spokesperson, Membership Development, Website development, etc. It is important to take some time to become familiar with RIMS overall mission from your new perspective as a Board member. Also, your chapter may have their own mission statement. Ask your chapter President if your group has a local mission statement and become familiar with it. In addition, take some time to look over the RIMS Website at www.rims.org. Pay particular attention to RIMS membership categories, your chapter's Website, and the chapters' section of the RIMS Website.

- **RIMS Chapter Templates**
Stationery and regularly used templates for your chapter are available electronically in the Chapters section of the RIMS Website. Some of the more commonly used Templates are listed below:
 - **Chapter Officer Roster Template**
Did you know that access to update your chapter's Website and certain sections of RIMS Website are directly attached to your Membership status and Board position? Please make sure to keep RIMS up to date on all changes to your Board's roster, so that your Board members do not have a lapse in their access to the tools available on RIMS Website. You can send all updates to chapterservices@rims.org.

- **Chapter Constitution & Bylaws Template**

Each year after the House of Delegates Meeting at the RIMS Conference, any changes to the Bylaws that were discussed at the meeting should be brought back to the chapter board and the appropriate changes should be made to your chapter's Constitution and Bylaws immediately. If no changes are made to the Bylaws, your chapter should still review them each year and update them as needed. Your chapter President or Former President should have the most up to date copy of the local bylaws. Be sure to send an updated copy to RIMS to maintain in your chapter's file. A model template of [Chapter Constitution & Bylaws](#) is available online.

- **RIMS E-mail Manager and E-mail Templates**

Need to send an e-mail or meeting notice to all of the members in your chapter? RIMS has developed two extremely useful tools to make this job easier. By using RIMS E-mail templates, you can develop an html or text e-mail that can be used now and saved and/or updated for later e-mails. You can send these e-mail templates or other e-mails to members and/or prospective members using RIMSmial at <http://webapps.rims.org/RIMSMail/>. By using RIMSmial to send out chapter notices, etc. you will be using the most up to date membership roster available through RIMS database.

- **Chapter Membership Reports**

Did you know that new members, expired members, expiring members, and all members and nonmembers reports are available for use on RIMS Website at: <https://www.rims.org/membership/chapterofficertools/MembershipManagement/Pages/NewMembersReports.aspx>? Your chapter membership committee should run these reports once a month in order to welcome new members and to contact expiring or expired members. These are key steps in your chapter's membership development efforts, and these reports have been made available to make this task much more manageable.

- **RIMS Calendar**

As a service to our members and chapters, RIMS has made an events calendar available on its Website. Chapter Officers can post upcoming events on this calendar, including regional conferences, general membership meetings, etc. After logging on to RIMS Website you can click on [Calendar of Events](#) and submit a public event to add upcoming chapter meetings and events for all visitors to see.

- **Other Online Resources**

In addition to the templates listed above, RIMS has made a number of resources for chapter officers available on line. These resources include [Insurance Summary](#), [Position Descriptions](#), [Chapter Website Guidelines](#), the [Chapter Officers' Community](#) in [Opis](#), etc. You should familiarize yourself with these resources and the other resources available online.

RIMS PERK PROGRAM

The Professional Exchange of Risk Knowledge or PERK program is a partnership between RIMS, its chapters, and its risk management industry partners that has been developed to provide quality programming, membership development opportunities, and relationships with key industry partners. The first initiative made available through the PERK program is an assortment of Industry Partner Sessions. These sessions have been developed in order to make ready-to-use quality programs available to RIMS Chapters for use in their programming schedule. To learn more about RIMS PERK Program you can visit www.rims.org/PERK.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS LIAISON PROGRAM

Each year RIMS Chapters are assigned liaisons from the [RIMS Board of Directors](#). These individuals are great resources for you and your Board. They may be available as speakers for one of your next events and are great advisors for the Board. For more information on your chapter's Liaison you can contact RIMS at chapterservices@rims.org.

Opis

Connect with your fellow RIMS membership, access valuable content and courses, and interact in RIMS learning groups by logging on to Opis, a new way for RIMS members to exchange information, collaborate, and strengthen skills. This smart technology recommends customized content and connections to you based on your skills, interests, and experience. Opis is available on your desktop, tablet, or mobile device. [Check out Opis today!](#)

CHAPTER OFFICERS OPIS COMMUNITY

All Chapter Officers are members of the [Chapter Officers Community](#). This Opis community is a forum for chapter officers to talk to each other virtually throughout the year. This is a great way to ask for speaker suggestions, meeting ideas, or to talk about issues that your chapter may be having. You will find that officers from other chapters often have the same questions that you have. This is the place to go to find answers directly from your peers. A daily digest of any messages posted on this community will be sent directly to your e-mail box. You will also see RIMS updates and information that all chapter officers should know about posted on this Opis community as well.

CHAPTER TIP E-MAILS

E-mails are sent out bi-monthly or as needed to give useful tips to chapter officers regarding their role on the chapter's board. E-mails include information on topics like Membership Development, planning, Chapter Recognition Program, etc.

CHAPTER ADMINISTRATOR

Hiring a staff member for your chapter can help with the administrative tasks that often take up so much volunteer time, provide a resource who knows how the Chapter "did things" in previous years, and allows chapter work to be performed consistently and professionally even through the transition of chapter officers.

Duties that could be delegated to administrative support include:

- Event Registrations
- Chapter newsletter
- Chapter mailings and e-mails
- Maintaining Chapter Mailing lists

There are a number of places that your chapter could look for an administrative assistant. These include:

- Contacting an administrative services firm (check the yellow pages or ask for a referral from other nonprofit organizations that people are connected with).
- Contacting local affiliates of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).
- Referring to ASAE's listing of association management firms.
- Hiring a part-time person who would like to earn some extra money.
- Hiring a Student Member to help with the services.

RIMS MEMBERSHIP & CHAPTER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

RIMS is available to help each chapter officer with his or her questions and serves as a great resource for whenever you have a chapter related issue. Call 212-655-6031 or e-mail chapterservices@rims.org.