

# **OWS - Niagara Chapter Policies and Procedures**

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# Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures set out in this document guide the operation of the Niagara chapter of the OWS, specifically clarifying expectations in accordance with the By-laws of the Ontario Wine Society – Niagara Chapter (OWSNC) and setting out any additional practice requirements that fall outside of the scope of the By-Laws.

## Overview

The goal of the Niagara Chapter of the Ontario Wine Society (OWSNC) is to provide its members with engaging and varied ways to discover, appreciate and support local wines.

In order to meet this goal, the chapter has designated members and elected officers, each with specific responsibilities that will support and further the work of the chapter.

## Members

Members of the OWS are persons who have paid the annual membership fee. They are able to attend monthly wine events at the membership rate, are expected to support the work of the OWS in the community and assist with event planning where possible.

## Elected Officers

Elected Officers are members of Niagara chapter holding a position of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Director of Planning, or Director of Membership and Communication.

Refer to Ontario Wine Society By-Laws Issue 3.1 for further information regarding job descriptions for each elected officer, and the process for securing elected officers.

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee, comprised of the elected officers, meets on a regular basis, to attend to the required administrative tasks of the chapter as set out in the By-Laws, the Elected Officers' job descriptions, and this policy document.

## Events

Events are planned on a regular basis, in partnership with wineries or other local wine-related industries, for the purpose of providing information and education on issues related to the wine industry, developing relationships with local wine industry partners, and creating connections with other members of the public who share these interests.

## Planning Committee

The Director of Planning and interested members of the chapter meet regularly to plan events. The committee members may include Elected Officers, designated Event Planners, and other interested members.

The Director of Planning acts a liaison to the Executive Committee, reporting on work related to event planning.

## Membership

### Annual Fees

1. An annual membership fee is collected each membership year, for the period from April 1 to March 31.

The initial membership fee is \$40.00, and the annual renewal fee is \$30.00 per person.

Persons who are interested in joining with a significant other (ie. spouse, partner), may join at a combined rate of \$70 for initial membership and an annual combined renewal fee of \$50.

2. Reminders for renewal of membership are sent out once a month, for three months, beginning in April of each year.
3. The third and final renewal reminder will
  - a. confirm the deadline date for renewal,
  - b. clarify that failure to renew will result in cancellation of membership, and
  - c. confirm notice of events will continue to be sent to the member.
4. Once the third renewal notice has been sent, a current membership count is completed and presented at the next meeting of the Operating Committee.

5. A previous member of the Ontario Wine Society who has allowed their membership to lapse, or who is interested in transferring to the Niagara Chapter, from another OWS Chapter, may rejoin for the renewal fee.
6. If a new member registers after the August tasting event, their membership will extend for the rest of the current and following membership term.
7. Lifetime membership will be awarded to members who have served on the board for 5 or more years.

### **New Members**

1. The Treasurer will inform the Director of Membership and Communications when registration and payment from a new member is received.
2. The Director of Membership and Communications will then provide each new member with
  - a. a Welcome Letter from the President,
  - b. an Ontario Wine Society pin, and
  - c. an assortment of tasting vouchers.

### **Elected Officers**

1. The President provides newly elected officers with an Orientation Package, including
  - a. a note welcoming them to the Executive Committee
  - b. the OWSNC By Laws,
  - c. the OWSNC Policies and Procedures,
  - d. the Event Planning Guide, and
  - e. previous meeting minutes, relevant to current issues.

These documents will be provided in electronic format and it is expected that Elected Officers review these documents in order to become fully aware of the requirements of the OWS and their position specifically.

2. Elected Officers must attend a minimum of 3 tastings or events per year.
3. Elected Officers will take responsibility for planning an event in order to maintain their position on the Executive.

4. Elected Officers who resign or are not re-elected should spend time with the person who fills their role to make sure the new person understands the background and current issues of the OWS.

## **Privacy**

1. The OWSNC works to ensure members' identities are protected.
2. The Director of Membership and Communications uses the "bcc" (blind copy) function when sending notices to members in order to protect email addresses from being displayed to all recipients.
3. As photographs taken at events may be posted to the website, members are provided with an opportunity to indicate they do not want their photos published.

Waivers are provided to members at the time of membership renewal and registration. Further, as part of the sign-in process at each event, a consent to the publishing of pictures is included.

4. Elected members will understand that their names will be posted on the OWS website.

## **EVENTS**

Specific information regarding the planning of events can be found in the Guide to Event planning. All members responsible for event planning are expected to review these practice requirements.

### **Administration of Events**

1. People must be of legal drinking age to attend event.
2. Events are scheduled on a monthly basis, with the goal of providing at least 10 events per year.
3. Events are planned by designated chapter members and hosted by a winery or other industry partner.
4. Ticket costs for events are set with the goal of ensuring costs are covered.

Members are provided with a discounted ticket price. A non-member, who is considering joining the OWSNC, will be offered one ticket at the discounted member price for their first event.

The OWSNC photographer will be provided with a 50% discount off the normal member fee for events, to a maximum of \$20.

The event planner will be provided with free admission to the event, to a limit of \$50; where there are two event planners involved, the discount will be 50% of the ticket price, to a maximum of \$25.

5. If an event yields a net profit, any net profit will become part of OWSNC funds, to be used as directed by vote of the Elected Officers.
6. Notices for events will be sent to all members by the Director of Membership and Communication.

Notices of events may also be sent to Industry Partners, or other industry contacts, and will be posted to the website.

7. Registration for events are confirmed once payment is received.
8. Speakers for events are usually associated with the hosting winery or other industry partner. These speakers are not expected to pay for the event.

Guest speakers who incur expenses to attend the event, may be reimbursed to a maximum of \$75, or provided a gift certificate. Where expenses exceed that amount, the decision regarding the amount of reimbursement will be made by the Executive Committee.

9. Reimbursement for ticket costs will be provided to members who cancel before the advertised late cancellation date.

Ticket costs will be not reimbursed to members who do not show for event.

Reimbursement will not be provided for cancellation after the late cancellation event, unless there is a waiting list for the event, or a replacement attendee is available, in which case the member who has cancelled will be refunded the cost of the ticket.

In some circumstances, where costs have been incurred, reimbursement may include the deduction of these costs from the ticket price.

## Event Safety

The OWSNC works to ensure safe practice for all members at events, and members and attendees are expected to manage their drinking in a responsible and safe manner.

1. Information about safe practice expectations at events are clearly outlined to all members in
  - a. the welcome letter to all members, and
  - b. event announcements, and
  - c. registration forms.
2. The event registration form and the attendance sheet each member signs at the event includes a waiver confirming they are 19 years of age or older and acknowledging responsibility for their own actions.
3. All alcohol is served to attendees. Wine is never left unattended for people to pour for themselves.

Tastings of 1 – 2 oz portions are provided, to a maximum of 12 oz per participant at each event.

4. Members of the Executive and any persons serving wine must be Smart Serve trained and certified in order to ensure responsible alcohol service.
5. Drives home will be arranged for any attendee who is deemed unsafe to drive.

## Meetings

Executive Committee meetings are held on a regular basis in accordance with the OWSNC Bylaws.

1. Executive Committee meetings are scheduled once a month. A monthly meeting may be waived at the discretion of the Executive Committee during months when there are no events planned and there are no substantive issues needing to be addressed.
2. The Secretary is responsible for notifying Executive Committee members of the monthly meeting date and confirm attendance of members.
3. Elected Officers must attend a minimum of seven Operating Committee meetings per year in order to maintain their position on the Executive Committee.

4. All Operating Committee members will share in the hosting of Operating Committee meetings.

Hosts of an OWSNC meeting will be reimbursed up to \$5.00 per attendee for food.

5. An Agenda and previous meeting minutes will be emailed to members of the Operating Committee at least one week before each monthly meeting.
6. The standard agenda of the meetings of the Operating Committee should include:
  - a. reports from the Treasurer, Director of Membership and Communications, and Director of Planning, and
  - b. an update on any info coming out of the Corporate office of the OWS.

## **AWARDS**

### Niagara College Faculty Award

1. Candidates for this award are second year students in the Winery and Viticulture Technician program who
  - a. intend to continue in the program,
  - b. have achieved good academic grades,
  - c. are seen as providing a meaningful contribution to the program and class, and
  - d. have not been the recipient of another monetary award during the previous academic year.
2. The successful candidate is chosen by the Niagara College faculty.
3. The amount of the award is at the discretion of the Executive by vote and provided to the College before the end of the OWSNC fiscal year.

The award is administered by Niagara College and not provided directly to the student by the OWSNC.

### Exceptional Hospitality Award

This award is provided at the discretion of the Executive Committee to winery staff who support the OWS and are deemed to provide exceptional service to the chapter.

The award includes a framed plaque and a gift approved by the Executive Committee.

## Member Awards

Awards may be presented to members, at the discretion of the Executive, to recognize special contributions or commitment to the OWS.

The Presidential Award may be presented to a member on the Executive who consistently “goes the extra mile”. (Maximum award \$75)

The Attendance Award may be presented to a member who has attend the most events. (Maximum award \$25)

## Industry Partners

Wineries and other community services associated with the wine industry can become partners with the OWS through an Industry Partnership program.

1. Industry Partners pay an annual membership fee of \$100, which supports the OWS chapters across the province in continuing their work to plan events that promote the wine industry.

The OWS and individual chapter websites recognize industry partners and provide direct links to the partner industry’s website.

2. Industry Partners will be given every opportunity to host events.
3. Wineries and other associated businesses who do host an event and are not yet an industry partner will be provided with Industry Partner information and invited to join.

Members planning events with hosts who are not Industry Partners will

- a. introduce the Industry Partnership opportunity,
  - b. review the benefits of partnership, and
  - c. provide the host with the Industry Partnership brochure.
4. When a host or other business expresses a desire to become an Industry Partner, their interest is communicated to the Treasurer, who will immediately send a letter acknowledging and thanking the business for their interest in the opportunity and include an invoice for the annual fee.
  5. Industry Partner membership will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Executive to track how many Industry Partners are currently active and develop plans for connecting with and recruiting other possible local industries.

6. Tracking payment and renewal of Industry Partnerships is the responsibility of the Treasurer.

# APPENDIX

# EVENT REGISTRATION FORM

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## *Registration Form*

(Members \$\_; Non-members \$\_)

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ space(s) for the tasting event at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Enclosed is my cheque for \$ \_\_\_\_\_. (Please make the cheque out to “Ontario Wine Society – Niagara Chapter”).

Please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ to confirm receipt of this cheque.

*Please print:*

**Member's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone: (Day)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Evening)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you affiliated with a winery? If so, which one?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guest Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

WAIVER, RELEASE AND INDEMNITY – I, for myself, my heirs or assigns, and my guests for whom I accept complete responsibility, hereby release and forever discharge and indemnify the Ontario Wine Society (OWS), its executive, all members and their guests, from any and all damages, claims, and actions related to OWS activities, at Society functions or on Society grounds. I certify that I, and my guests, are 19 years of age or older.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail to The Ontario Wine Society – Niagara Chapter c/o S. Couch, 4850 Cherrywood Dr., Beamsville, Ontario, L0R 1B9**

## EVENT WAIVER

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**Event: -**

**WAIVER, RELEASE AND INDEMNITY - I, for myself, my heirs or assigns, and my guests for whom I accept complete responsibility, hereby release and forever discharge and indemnify the Ontario Wine Society (OWS), its executive, all members and their guests, from any and all damages, claims, and actions relating to OWS activities at Society functions. I certify that I, and my guests, are 19 years of age or older. The Niagara Chapter would like to take photos at this event and post some of them on the OWS website and perhaps use them in other promotional material. If you do not want your photo being used for these purposes, please put an "X" beside your name.**

**NAME**

**SIGNATURE**

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