

## How to attempt phone contact with members in arrears

How to talk to members in arrears is a major concern of each local Knights of Columbus council. Here are some ideas that can help local councils create a better opportunity for the return of membership dues.

As a deputy grand knight and local council retention chairman from 2002-2004, I conducted phone contact attempts with non-paying members of my local Knights of Columbus council. I am aware that this is far from the most pleasant job in the Order.

I have encountered through personal experience, the frustration of trying to call large numbers of members in arrears. That full sheet of names was overwhelming and seemed to take hours and days to complete. I was emotionally drained afterwards, mostly because I just wanted to say the right words, but I just didn't know how to talk to people who I had never met before.

Today, it is a responsibility of my state office to contact the brother Knights of Columbus in jeopardy of being removed from their local council roster. These are men who have not paid membership dues for one reason or another. There are a variety of excuses that we've all heard before, but we have an obligation to treat these men with respect and dignity.

During our phone dialog, one of the questions that I present to the member who is delinquent in dues payment is, "Have you been contacted by your local council about the past due membership payment?" The common response to this question too many times is "No." This sheds light on an issue that I feel needs to be addressed.

Statistics that I gather indicate a member is less likely to be called by a council that processes large quantities of the **Request for Membership Removal and Procedures Form**. Here is an equation for you to consider: Shorter call lists + Frequent retention efforts = greater potential contact with non-paying members.

- It is for this reason that I'm asking you to please send a maximum of four contacts at any given time to your local council retention committee.
- If at all possible, the sponsor of the member who is delinquent in payment should make the initial contact with him whether it be face-to-face or phone call.
- Keep council records up-to-date by making retention a priority. Don't wait until a large number of non-payments need to be processed. This can be done anytime before the new billing period.
- Phone contact with each member in arrears should be attempted at least two different days; calling the member during two different times of day. A third contact attempt can be completed by leaving a request for a call back on their voicemail, but this is not considered a successful personal contact.
- A smaller amount of attempted phone contacts are better handled by the local retention committee than large quantities; the odds for contact with any one member will increase because of multiple attempts being made.
- In the long run, each member in arrears will have a better opportunity for representation and be more likely to return his dues payment when the local council conducts regular maintenance of the membership roster.