

## “Passing the Torch” – The Transition Process

*Did you find yourself beginning your term of office with little guidance/advice from the previous year’s person? Do you want to help make the transition for your successors more successful? Read on!*

**A poor or non-existent leadership transition process can impede the potential for a group’s overall success.** This handout details the importance of a leader’s focus on the transition between old and new officers. It also highlights what you can do in your position to help prepare for the future of your organization.

**Why is transiting so important?** Effective transitioning allows organizations to sustain their strengths and decreases wasted time. After the pattern of effective transitioning for new officers is established, benefits will be quickly realized.

When thinking about transitioning, one of the most important factors to consider is creating and/or using a “Transition Notebook/Checklist”. This is an organized way of making sure that the person who comes into position after you has all of the information he or she needs to know. Also, a meeting between old and new leaders is highly recommended as a tool to help in transition.

**Why should I already be thinking about next year’s leadership?** Simply put, planning ahead will help you this year, while at the same time ensure that the person in your position next year will be well prepared. This will help your group to grow and thrive. Think about it ... by planning for next year, you are looking at the big picture for this year – how do the decisions you make today fit with your group’s overall goals? You will be less likely to get bogged down in details if you are constantly aware of the overall program, event, or goal that you are trying to achieve. A focus on transition will also allow you to actively seek out potential leaders for next year. You can involve them in the processes early so that they have a better understanding of how things work before they are even officially involved as incoming officers.

And, of course, you probably attained your position because you care about the group, now and for the future. Your decisions and actions today will shape the character of your group tomorrow. By focusing on transition, you are ensuring a positive legacy for the group’s future. An awareness of transition from the outset establishes a pattern of communication between the group’s past, present, and future accomplishments. **Don’t you wish the person who held your position last year did this for you? There is no reason why a group should have to re-invent the wheel each and every year!**