

AA CONFERENCE-APPROVED LITERATURE

The AA Guideline below is compiled from the experience of AA members in the various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the *Twelve Traditions* and the Australian and the US/Canada General Service Conferences.

WHAT DOES CONFERENCE APPROVED MEAN?

Often members are confused about the meaning of the term '*Conference-Approved*' as it applies to AA literature. Does it mean that other literature is not approved? Who approves AA literature and how? What about the display of other literature at AA meetings? Such questions often trouble newcomers to AA as well as some members who are not so new.

The term '*Conference Approved*' indicates that the material so designated has been approved by the General Service Conference (GSC) of the issuing country. Where material has been issued by AA World Services, approval has been given by the US/Canada GSC.

Conference-Approved material always deals with the recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous or with information about the Fellowship. It is important to understand that the term does not imply disapproval of any material about AA or alcoholism published outside AA.

Any country's GSC may either adapt AA World Service material to local needs (with permission, of course), or approve new pamphlets if they are found necessary.

In order to become Conference-Approved (US/Canadian or any other GSC), a piece of literature or audio/visual material goes through a lengthy and painstaking process. The draft, first submitted to the appropriate committee of the Conference, may have to be rewritten many times before winning approval. The final work then expresses overall AA thinking on a particular subject, not just one person's or one Group's or one Area's opinion. In this sense, AA Conference-Approved Literature is created collectively.

When you see this symbol and explanatory line on a piece of literature, you know that it has weathered the whole process successfully:



This is Australian AA
General Service
Conference-Approved
Literature



This is US/Canadian AA
General Service
Conference-Approved
Literature

AA Conference-Approved Literature is copyrighted and permission to reprint must be obtained from AA World Services Inc or other appropriate source, in writing. For example, where the Australian General Service Conference has approved a piece of literature written and produced in this country, it is necessary to obtain permission to reprint from the Australian General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Only in this way can we ensure the integrity of our literature and protect the AA program of recovery against dilution or distortion.

Some literature published by General Service Offices, such as 'service material', Guidelines and bulletins, does not go through the Conference-Approval process. The *Grapevine* (US/Canada) and "AA Around Australia" have received Conference-Approval in concept, but clearly it would be impractical to put every issue through such a complex procedure. *Grapevine* is published by a separate corporation, *AA Grapevine Inc*, which also holds the copyrights, so its approval must be sought before anything from the *Grapevine* is reprinted. Similarly for "AA Around Australia", which is published by the National Office of AA Australia.

AA Conference-Approved Literature may be purchased direct from the National Office where necessary; however, the usual source of supply is the various Central Service Offices (CSOs) throughout the country. Most AA Groups purchase and display Conference-Approved Literature, usually offering the pamphlets free of charge and selling the books and booklets. A 1972 Conference recommendation (reaffirmed in 1975) suggested that ". . . when a local AA facility (CSO, Area, Group, etc.) sells literature which has not been approved by Conference, it be clearly designated as such."

Following another Conference recommendation, most Groups separate AA and non-AA literature, often displaying them in different parts of the room. If AA literature were to be mixed with literature from other sources, the newcomer would be understandably confused about what is and what is not part of the AA programme.

The following recommendation was made by the 1977 General Service Conference: *"It is suggested that AA Groups be discouraged from selling literature not distributed by the GSO."* But let's be clear: the Conference cannot tell any AA member what he or she may or may not read, nor can it tell any AA Group what material it may or may not purchase, display and sell. The 1977 action is a recommendation only, but one that your Group might like to examine and discuss.

Your Group's literature display in general would make an interesting subject for a Group Conscience meeting. A good free-wheeling discussion might consider the following questions:

What does 'Conference-Approved' mean to us?

If we display and sell non-AA Literature along with AA Literature, will we confuse the newcomer?

If we display and sell large quantities of literature from other sources, such as treatment centres, will we appear to be affiliating with those organisations?

Should we study *Tradition Six* more carefully?

Does our supply of Conference-Approved Literature meet all the needs of our Groups?.....of our newcomers?

Are we familiar with the whole range of our own literature?

USE OF NAMES OF COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS OR SERVICES IN AA LITERATURE

Our Sixth Tradition cautions us against endorsing or lending the AA name to other organisations. This has sometimes been taken to mean AA materials should never use commercial names in any of its materials.

However, there are many situations when the use of a commercial name helps us in communicating useful information to members. Examples are the name of a hotel where a convention is being held, and certain computer applications, and electronic communication services and formats.

It is recommended that when the names of commercial products or services are used in AA materials that the following guidelines be observed:

1. We should use commercial names only when it is clearly helping us in our primary purpose of carrying the message to the suffering alcoholic.
2. We should avoid using commercial names in a way that would make a reasonable person presume AA was endorsing a product or implying an affiliation.
3. If there is a clear possibility that the use of a commercial name would be construed as an endorsement or affiliation, the name should be asterisked and the following note should be attached:

Mention of commercial names in AA materials is for information only and does not imply an endorsement of or recommendation of any product or an affiliation with any organisation.