

**Southern California World Service (SCWS)
Al-Anon Electronic Groups
Frequently Asked Questions**

(Questions came from the SCWS Area Town Hall Meeting February 11, 2023)

Q-1: How will my group decide whether to join the Southern California World Service (SCWS) or the Global Electronic Area (GEA) now that the SCWS Area welcomes Electronic Groups to become a part of their service area?

The first decision your group needs to make is if you wish to remain an Electronic Group (EG) or want to return to meeting at a physical location. This decision is done during business meetings and by obtaining a group conscience (*2022-2025 Al-Anon / Alateen Service Manual*, pgs. 46-49).

If you decide to remain an EG, you will proceed to the following questions.

1. **Do many of your members live locally in Southern California or outside the SCWS Area? Where does your Group want to attract new members from and be listed?** Each group needs to hold a Business Meeting and take a Group Conscience to make this decision.
 - a. Some groups prefer virtual meetings in which many members live relatively close geographically so that they can meet with their sponsors or other Al-Anon fellows in person. Joining the SCWS Area makes sense for that group.
 - b. Some groups prefer virtual meetings which can attract members from around the world. For these groups, a broad reach of members from around the world enriches their meetings. Joining the GEA would make sense for that group.

2. **Where do you want your Group Representative (GR) to bring your group's voice and vote?**
 - a. Does your group feel connected to Southern California? Does your group want representation and their "voice" (and vote) to be heard on issues directly affecting the Southern California Area? If so, your GR would attend the biannual SCWS Assembly. (Currently, the Assembly is held virtually, and may be held in-person again in the future.)
 - b. Does your group want representation and their voice and vote on issues affecting EGs and Al-Anon as a whole? If so, your GR would attend the GEA virtual Assemblies; these EGs have no connection to a specific geographic location.

Q-2. Our Group has decided it wants to be part of SCWS. How do we decide whether to join a geographic District, the Area Electronic Overlay District (D-15), or the Spanish Overlay District (D-64)?

Questions to ask and discuss at a business meeting:

- a. Are the majority of your members residing in a particular geographic District and still feel a connection to that geographic District and/or an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) Office/Intergroup?
- b. Are many of your members located across Southern California?
- c. Will your GR be able to attend a face-to-face geographic District meeting?
- d. Are the majority of your members Spanish-speaking only?
- e. Where do you want your GR to bring your group's voice and vote? (Please see the Electronic Groups in Southern California flowchart in the Town Hall Presentation for a visual presentation of this information.)

Q-3. My meeting is a Temporary Electronic Meeting (TEM). We want to stay registered in the SCWS Area as an electronic group. What do we do?

1. If it is a group that was never registered meeting in person as a physical group, please complete a New Group Registration form: [New Al-Anon Group Registration Form - Southern California World Service](#). Your group will need to have made a decision about belonging to a geographic, overlay or Spanish district. If you are not sure but think there may already be a listing for the meeting, fill out this form: [Al-Anon Group Change Form - Southern California World Service](#).
2. If your group was registered as a physical meeting, and has been meeting as a TEM, you would let the Area Group Records Coordinator (AGRC) know the via the [Al-Anon Group Change Form - Southern California World Service](#) that you want to switch from being a **Physical** (Temporary Electronic) meeting to being an **Electronic** (California South) meeting. This is considered a **location change**. All of your Group information, including the WSO ID# and history stays the same.

Q-4. Our group is Hybrid. Do we need to do anything to stay in SCWS? How is my Hybrid meeting listed now?

Your group is currently listed as a physical group, associated with a physical location. Details of the electronic connection to the hybrid meeting are typically found in both the WSO website and your local AIS listings, along with other details of the meeting (i.e., babysitting, location of meeting in the building, etc.). Hybrid groups are registered as a physical group with an electronic component. Hybrid groups are here to stay, and no Al-Anon Group Record changes are needed, unless your group discontinues the electronic component.

Q-5. How do I know where my Electronic Group is registered? Where is it listed? How do I make changes?

Groups registered with the World Service Office (WSO) are recognized as an Al-Anon Family Group (AFG). All registered groups contain “AFG” in their group’s name. Only registered groups can be listed on an Al-Anon website.

1. **Is my Electronic Group (EG) registered with the Global Electronic Area (GEA)?**
 - a. EGs that were never connected with a physical meeting location were registered with the WSO, and are only “listed” and available to find on the Electronic Meeting section of the WSO website. All Electronic Groups in this category were placed in the GEA.
 - b. Groups registered in the GEA are not part of a geographic Area and will not be listed in a local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) directory as they are not part of that service structure.
 - c. Electronic Groups registered in the GEA can switch to a geographic Area if their group decides they wish their voice/vote to be in a geographic Area. *See question Q-8.*

2. **How do I know if my electronic group is in the GEA?**
 - a. If your electronic group completed a **new** registration with WSO as an **Electronic Group** (not tied to a physical location), it is in the Global Electronic Area.
 - b. If you aren’t sure, you can check for the listing at <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/electronic-meetings/> If your EG is not listed there, it is a **Temporary Electronic Meeting (TEM)**.

3. **If my Electronic Group is considered a Temporary Electronic Meeting (TEM), where is it listed?**
 - a. TEMs are still tethered to their original physical group/physical location. They can be found in two places:
 - i. **By searching the physical meetings on the WSO website** <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/find-an-al-anon-meeting/> The member enters in an address/city/zip code, plus other search options (such as day, group type), **and/or**
 - ii. **On your local AIS website/directory.** For example: If your meeting was physically located in San Diego county, it would be still listed in the San Diego AIS Meeting Directory.

4. I cannot find my Electronic Group listed anywhere on the WSO website. Why is this?
- Some EGs split off from their original face-to-face meeting and never registered with WSO as a new, separate group. Others formed independently and were never associated with a physical meeting, and never registered. Since these EGs are not registered with the WSO, they aren't listed on al-anon.org.
 - These groups may (and should!) register as part of the GEA or SCWS--if they want to be listed on the WSO website.
 - Groups that are not registered will not be listed on any public Al-Anon website.
 - For the benefits of registering your group, please see *2022-2025 Al-Anon / Alateen Service Manual* (pg. 27).
5. Where are Electronic Groups listed if they decide to be registered as an EG in the Southern California World Service (SCWS) Area?

There will be three main listing locations:

- [The WSO website](#) - The WSO website has developed a process to list Geographic Electronic Groups, however it is not yet ready to be launched. The groups will be findable by a geographical search associated with a local City and Zip Code that has been chosen by the group conscience.
Special Note: SCWS is temporarily listing all Electronic Groups in our Area until the WSO can complete their process.
- Local Al-Anon Information Service offices maintain websites** which list information for Groups associated with their geographic locations (for example, Los Angeles AIS [here](#)). Via a Group Conscience, an SCWS Electronic Group selects a local City/Zip Code with which to associate the meeting. This will determine where and how they will be listed.
- [SCWS Website](#) for **Electronic Overlay District Groups**. EG's without ties to a Geographic District may decide to join the newly formed SCWS Area Electronic Overlay District (D-15). Since District-15 does not have any ties to a local AIS, these meetings would not be listed under an AIS. These meetings will continue to be listed on the SCWS site.
Please note: All SCWS Electronic Groups must select a local City/Zip Code with which to associate. WSO requires registered Electronic Groups to choose a City/Zip Code. This is how members will search for an Electronic Group on the WSO website.

6. **Physical Groups are listed in two locations. Will EGs have this same benefit?**
 - a. Yes. If the EG is registered as part of a geographic District, it will choose a City/Zip Code in that District and be listed in the local Al-Anon Information Service Directory **AND** the [The WSO website](#) (see **Special Note** 5a).

7. **Can a GEA meeting be listed in a local AIS directory?**
 - a. No. GEA Electronic meetings are not in our SCWS Area and are only listed on the [WSO Global Electronic Groups](#).

Q-6. Can my TEM remain a TEM indefinitely?

NO. The WSO is encouraging TEMS to hold business meetings & make a decision in 2023 to:

- Return to meeting in person.
- Become part of the SCWS Area. See question **Q-2**.
- Become part of the GEA. (See Area Group Record Coordinator (AGRC) for instructions.)
- If the group is not able to come to a consensus, they may decide to split into two separate groups.
- WSO will notify the AGRC's when there is a deadline for the TEM's to make a registration change for their groups. The SCWS Area will share this information with all groups as soon as we receive it.

Q-7. Questions about EGs & Districts

1. Does a Geographic District (such as D-57) need to vote to allow an Electronic Group to join its District?
 - a. **NO**. At the November 2022 Assembly, our Group Representatives voted to welcome Electronic Groups into our Area Service Structure. This became an Area policy and all Districts follow Area policies.

2. Does a Geographic District (such as D-8) have to conduct their District meetings virtually since they have Electronic Groups?
 - a. **No**. The District has the autonomy to decide if they want their District meeting to be held face-to-face, hybrid, or virtually.

 - b. The Electronic Group decides if they want to belong to a Geographic District, the Area Electronic Overlay District (D-15) or the Spanish Overlay District (D-64).
 - i. If an EG decides to be part of a Geographic District, their Group Representative should potentially be able to participate in District meetings that are held in person.
 - ii. If they choose to belong to D-15 (the Electronic Overlay District), the Electronic District will be holding their meetings virtually so the GR can easily attend.

Q-8. My group chose to register in the GEA, but now wants to associate with the SCWS. How do we do it? How about Vice Versa, switching from SCWS to GEA?

There is a method to request to transfer to a Geographic Area or transfer to the Global Electronic Area. The transfer includes getting approval from the GEA Delegate and Geographic Area Delegate. These forms may be found here:

[Electronic Group Area Transfer Request](#)

Q-9. Questions about Managing your Electronic Group

- 1. Our Group has chosen to be part of the SCWS Area. Does our Secretary or Treasurer need to reside in Southern California?**

No. The only requirement for an EG to be part of SCWS is that the Current Mailing Address (CMA) and GR reside in Southern California. The CMA can also be the GR. The decision as to where members reside and who can fill other service positions will be up to group autonomy.

- 2. How does our Group decide which members have a “voice and vote” during our Business meetings? We frequently have members attending only once or sporadically.**

A group conscience can define who is a regular member, convey the preferences about group conscience participation, and then rely upon a member to abstain or participate according to their own discretion. Please see the current *Service Manual* regarding Group Business/Voting at the meeting (pg. 48).

***Questions:** If your group continues to have questions, please contact groupandmemberconcerns@scws-al-anon.org.