

Adopted by Bureau on 24 January 2013
Standards for ISKCON India Life Patron Program

Version 1.0 - Confidential Document for Internal ISKCON Use Only

1. What names are acceptable for the program?

Only "Life Patron" is acceptable. "Life Member" is not an accurate term. Those who enroll as Life Patrons are not members of the ISKCON society. The term "Life Member" should be removed from all forms, signboards, newsletters, etc., and from the devotees' vocabulary. Srila Prabhupada used the term "Life Member", but members of a society generally have some sort of voting right in that society, and Srila Prabhupada never intended Life Members to have voting rights. So use of the term is not legally appropriate and could lead to complications.

2. What was Srila Prabhupada's purpose in establishing the program?

Srila Prabhupada wanted the program to generate funds for constructing temples, for printing and distributing books, for maintaining temples, and for other work of the society, but he also wanted the program to make devotees. His idea was that they would receive books to read and be invited to the temple, and in this way the program would bring people closer to the society, which would encourage them in their devotional lives.

3. What is the process whereby individuals are enrolled as Life Patrons?

Individuals who wish to enroll as Life Patrons and who meet the requirements must approach an ISKCON centre that is authorized to enroll, complete the enrollment form and other paperwork requirements, and pay the designated amount in full. Payment may be waived in special circumstances when valuable service is performed for the society as spelled out below. Enrollment forms should be standardized across all centres, and it should include a section where they are asked to tick boxes for "where they can contribute to the work of ISKCON". BI/Scientific Preaching should be one of the options.

4. Which centers can enroll life patrons?

- a. Only full ISKCON centers (temples) that have at least one room of standard quality for life patron guests can formally enroll life patrons. Those centers that do not have at least one room of standard quality should create such facility within one year of these standards taking effect or else lose their privilege of enrolling life patrons. Additionally, the Zonal management and Divisional Council should ensure that a centre's facilities for hosting of life patron guests expands beyond this minimum requirement as collections continue. No centre should go on enrolling life patrons without developing commensurate facilities and programmes. The Bureau Branch Compliance Section should audit the centres in this regard and report any serious or persistent shortcomings to the appropriate zonal, divisional, or national authority.
- b. Preaching centers and extension centers can enroll life patrons under the parent centre. Financial arrangements with the parent centre are to be worked out at the local level. If they have no parent centre then the Divisional Councils can give special permission after ensuring that all administrative and other requirements will be met.
- c. Nama Hatta centres are not permitted to enroll life patrons. A Nama Hatta Regional Directorate may enroll life patrons under a full centre according to mutually agreed upon terms.

5. Who can be enrolled as a life patron?

Anyone at least 18 years of age can be enrolled. However, the underage child of an existing life patron can become a life patron upon payment of existing full fees. There are no restrictions on citizenship, country of residence, etc.

6. Who can be engaged in Life Patronship efforts?

Devotees who are following the vows of initiation for at least three years, who have good sadhana, and whose personal behavior is above suspicion, and who are well-trained in the matter, may be assigned to the service by the temple authorities. By 1st April 2015, only those holding a certification issued by the Life Patron Standards Committee can be so assigned.

7. How Life Patron funds are to be utilized?

- a. To pay for the cost of books supplied to the enrolled patron at BBT temple price.

- b. To offset the expenses of running the program, including the support of the Life Patron Department preachers, not to exceed 10% of the total amount received by the centers for Life Patronship enrollment fees after deducting the cost of the books as per (a) above.
 - c. 3% of balance remaining after deducting the book cost to the local centre's devotee care fund. [A percentage may also be required to be paid into a national emergency fund. Details of how both of these will work to be decided later.]
 - d. For the daily operating costs of the center, not to exceed 50% of the remaining balance after deducting the cost of the books as per (a) above, deducting a maximum of 10% for the expenses of running the program as per (b) above, and deducting the devotee care fund contribution as per (c) above. It is strongly recommended that this 50% of the remaining balance be used for promoting Srila Prabhupada's book distribution, such as by purchasing books from the BBT and in other ways.
 - e. All remaining funds must be utilized either for construction of temple and related facilities, or, if there are no current construction expenses, saved in a fixed deposit for such construction in the future.
8. How do we reciprocate with those who enroll as Life Patrons? It is to be noted that all of the gifts and facilities that we give to the newly enrolled Life Patrons have to be explained only as ways to help them in their spiritual progress. An explanatory document suitable for giving to prospective Life Patrons will need to be prepared that explains in this way.
- a. The center's President sends them a letter of thanks.
 - b. They receive a centrally-issued hologram card with photo, signature, date of enrollment, and patron number.
 - c. They are eligible for 80(g) exemption, as currently offered by the government.
 - d. We deliver gift items to their address after the cheque clears. The minimum list of gifts is as follows. More can be offered, but this is the minimum:
 - i. Five big books and five small books in local language, titles to be determined as per local availability.
 - ii. One CD/DVD/Flash Drive of Srila Prabhupada. (Other CD/DVD/Flash Drive may also be given, but not as a substitute.)
 - iii. One japa mala.
 - iv. One package of incense.
 - v. One laminated photo.
 - vi. If a set of Srimad Bhagavatam volumes is also offered, then that shall be in local language, or English if required. [The issue of whether the Bhagavatam set should be made mandatory and the lower rate eliminated is to be discussed later after taking feedback from the ICC.]
 - vii. Bhagavat Darshan subscription or regular temple newsletter issued at least four times per year.
 - e. They are welcome to stay for three days per year in every ISKCON centre upon payment of only room maintenance charges as described below, subject to room availability and only with confirmed advance reservation. This is for accommodation in a single room of the patron, spouse, minor children under 18 years of age, and dependent parents above 60 years of age only. If the card holder is not personally present, then availing of this facility is subject to the discretion of the hosting centre.
 - f. They are welcome to avail for three days per year, twice daily, free prasadam in every ISKCON center. This is for temple resident meals only, as per the normal service timings for such meals, and does not include restaurant meals or snacks sold on temple premises.
 - g. They are encouraged to attend the center's Sunday feast program where they can hear the spiritual discourses, associate with the devotees, and honor the prasadam meal served.
 - h. They are encouraged to attend, as intimated by printed invitations, two major festivals per year at the center where special free prasadam arrangements are made for them.
 - i. Invitations to any special programs organized in their area.
 - j. [Optional] Birthday and wedding anniversary greetings by post, with invitation to attend the temple for darshan on that day.
9. What are the administrative requirements of the centers?
- a. They must use standardized enrollment forms and receipts and make sure that they are properly filled by the enrolled patron.
 - b. They must maintain a permanent file of all original Life Patron enrollment forms.

- c. They must maintain up to date a permanent register book of patrons enrolled that includes full identification information on the patron as contained on the enrollment form. [Details to be included in the register to be specified by the committee in due course.]
- d. The full amount of the payment for the Life Patronship must be deposited in a bank account of the centre with enrollment details shown on the voucher form. If the Life Patronship has been awarded against donation of goods in kind or against services rendered then a description of the goods in kind and their value or a description of the substantial services rendered and their deemed value must be specifically noted in the permanent register book and signed by the enrolling devotee, the Temple President, and, in the case of smaller centres, a Zonal Secretary.
- e. All amounts received for Life Patronship must be accounted for as donations to the corpus of the trust, 50% to Book Fund Corpus and 50% to Building Fund Corpus on the center's audited balance sheet. No portion is to be shown as income.
- f. Computerized database of patrons is recommended, but it is not a substitute for a permanent register book, as computer records can be easily lost in the case of hardware failure.
- g. Centers may not issue cards to patrons, even temporary ones. In case of a lost card or a delay in receiving a card from the head office and there is an urgent need of the patron, centers may issue a letter certifying that the patron is registered with their center that may be used only until the ordered card is issued. The letter must contain the exact name, the enrollment number, the date of enrollment as would be shown on the card, the date that the letter was issued, and be signed by the patron and the authorized official. The patron should be advised to carry photo identification proof and show it when the letter is used.
- h. Standard fee for issuance of duplicate card in the event of lost card shall be Rs. 500.
- i. All Life Patronship records should be kept under strict security and should be accessible only to trusted persons.

10. Can Life Patronship be transferred from one center to another?

- a. A Life Patron is a Life Patron of the whole ISKCON society and must not be considered as a patron of any particular ISKCON branch. Thus, there is no meaning of transfer of Patronship.
- b. However, if a Life Patron shifts from one city to another, or if a new full ISKCON center comes up nearby, he or she may want to register with the nearby center by completing a form there. [Form to be designed in due course.] This form will authorize the center to notify the other center where the life patron originally enrolled.
- c. No fees shall be charged for such registration. (Life Patrons are our assets, not liabilities.)
- d. The center where the patron enrolled will then remove the patron from its mailing list (but not the database of enrolled life patrons), and the new center will add the patron to its mailing list. The patron will be offered the same reciprocation (see 8 g, h, i, and j above) at the new center as are all the patrons previously enrolled at the new center.

11. What about surviving spouses?

A surviving spouse of an expired life patron is entitled to free enrollment upon completion of the enrollment process.

12. Can centers enroll Life Patrons on installment basis?

Installment enrollment is strongly discouraged. If installment enrollment is required then the donor must sign a supplementary form in which they state that they are aware that if they do not complete the installment within one year then the amount paid will be treated as their kind general-purpose donation. It is recommended to take postdated cheques for the full amount in advance, with a maximum clearing date of one year from the date of enrollment. No patronship card and no gifts are to be given until all payments have been received and credited in the center's bank account. It is better to be set up to accept credit card payments for the enrollment fees. We get our funds immediately, the patron gets his card and gifts, and the patron can then pay back the credit card company. When accepting credit card payments, some fee will be deducted by the bank. The center has to judge whether it is worth paying this fee in order to offer credit card facility to the patron.

13. Where can centers enroll Life Patrons?

Devotees engaged in enrolling Life Patrons should not travel outside of their designated geographic preaching area for this purpose. The Divisional Councils must be very diligent in this regard. They should promptly deal with any complaints of devotees moving outside of their designated areas. Any centers found violating this principle will forfeit all the funds collected in this way and may be subject to other disciplinary measures at the discretion of the Divisional Council. Repeated violations will be grounds for termination of Life Patronship enrollment privileges.

14. Is it appropriate for guest houses to apply maintenance charges to visiting Life Patrons?

A maximum of Rs. 200 may be charged per day to Life Patrons for a non-AC room, provided the guest house supplies a clean room with fan and attached bath, at least two beds, one clean towel and one clean bed sheet per bed, soap packet, filtered drinking water, and mosquito net or mosquito machine. A maximum of Rs. 750 may be charged per day to Life Patrons for a room with the above, plus AC, hot water, blanket, and cupboard or almirah. A centre may prefer to not charge and instead depend on donations from the guests.

Centres that maintain a very high standard of guest care may be awarded by the Committee with a special designation that will allow them to collect maintenance charges of Rs. 500 non-AC and Rs. 950 AC.

15. What about alternative fund-raising schemes?

- a. These are absolutely essential. Sometimes new centers may be heavily dependent on Life Patronship in the beginning, but there must be a consciousness of the need for alternative sources.
- b. Upcoming centers that are likely to be overly-dependent on Life Patronship in the long-term should not be promoted to full centers or allowed to enroll Life Patrons independently until the management matures sufficiently.
- c. Parent centers should be careful to guide extension centers and preaching centers under their charge to develop alternative fund-raising schemes.

16. Can centers pay commission or bonus on Life Patronship collections to their devotees?

It is encouraged that in general, devotees enrolling life patrons shall receive no performance related incentives. Local centre management retains discretion in this matter.

17. How to train the Life Patronship preachers?

Devakinandana Das will design a training course that will be mandatory for devotees who are to be engaged in this service.

18. Should there be a directory of Life Patrons produced?

This does not seem to be practical. The Life Patron Standards Committee can make available a national list of enrolled patrons that centres can refer to in the event that someone requests consideration as a Life Patron but says that he or she forgot to bring the card.

19. How to make sure that all centers are following these policies?

The Bureau Branch Compliance Section should regularly inspect the conduct of the program in all centers and report to the Life Patron Standards Committee.