

GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGING SUBSTITUTES

I. When you are hired:

In negotiating an employment contract or a letter of agreement setting forth the respective responsibilities of the employing institution and the musician, you should ensure that provision be made for the hiring of substitutes when you are on vacation, on sick leave or on continuing education leave.

In some instances the employing institution will assume complete responsibility for engaging substitutes based on the recommendations of the incumbent musician. In other instances the musician, acting on behalf of the employing institution, will be responsible for engaging substitutes during periods of vacation, continuing education leave or planned sick leave, and the employer will be responsible for making arrangements for substitute service when the musician's absence is the result of accident or sudden illness.

In both cases it should be understood by all parties that the substitute is being hired by the church or synagogue and that the church or synagogue is responsible for paying the substitute in a timely fashion. It should also be understood that the substitute is subject to the same supervision and oversight by clergy, worship committee, etc., as the incumbent.

a) The employer should be responsible for paying a substitute, at rates consistent with AGO guidelines, for each service and rehearsal that falls within your periods of vacation or continuing education leave and for any service or rehearsal that you miss due to illness.

b) Some musicians may have contracts that entitle them to sabbatical leave after a designated period of service, or may need extended leave for other reasons, such as maternity leave or convalescence after major surgery. In such cases an interim musician would normally be hired, and a discussion of the handling of such a situation might be part of your contract negotiations.

II. Early in your tenure:

a) Develop a list of qualified substitutes based on your personal knowledge, your employer's expectations and recommendations from your local AGO chapter. Many chapters maintain lists of members who are available as substitutes. Some lists include the prospective substitutes' academic and/or AGO credentials, and a few chapters require that a member earn the AGO Service Playing Certificate in order to be listed as a substitute. A substitute should ideally have a level of competency equivalent to yours and some experience in your denomination. Otherwise the most qualified substitutes available should be considered. The list of prospective substitutes, with complete contact information, should be made available to the church or synagogue office.

b) Develop a document to be kept on file in the church or synagogue office to be provided to a substitute when a substitute is needed on short notice. This document should include complete and up-to-date details of the following: contact information for the church or synagogue, names of clergy and staff, regular business hours for the church or synagogue office, the schedule of services and rehearsals, organ specifications and controls, fees for substitute service, times available for practice, instructions for access to building and/or organ, and sample service format. It might also include, in case the substitute is needed to play for a funeral or memorial service, the church or synagogue's policy regarding the musician's fees for such occasions and a sample funeral or memorial service format.

III. At least two weeks before the substitute's period of engagement begins:

a) Provide to the church or synagogue office: the name of, and complete contact information for, the substitute who has been engaged; the dates and times of all rehearsals and services to be covered by the substitute; the total of fees to be paid to the substitute; and, if possible, a schedule of practice and on-site preparation times to be utilized by the substitute.

b) Provide to the designated substitute the following information:

- Address and telephone numbers for church or synagogue, names of clergy and staff, regular business hours for church or synagogue office
- Dates and times of all services and rehearsals to be covered
- Organ specifications, controls, idiosyncrasies and maintenance arrangements
- Times available for practice, instructions for access
- Detailed description of substitute's duties along with samples of service bulletins, hymn numbers, copies of choir anthems or solos and service music
- Explanation of any restrictions or norms affecting choice, placement and duration of instrumental selections
- The name of the person who will make payment to the substitute and an estimate of when the substitute might expect to receive payment

IV. Two weeks after the substitute's period of engagement has ended:

a) Check with the person responsible for paying the substitute's fees to ensure that payment is made in a timely fashion.

b) Contact the substitute to say thanks and find out whether any unexpected problems occurred during your absence.