

Guidelines for Resolving City Permit Concerns

1) City permit issues are rare today because Life Chain is widely known across America and Canada, where 1550 Chains were held in 2013. City officials respect both Life Chain's First Amendment rights and our participants' good behavior. Cities that seek payment for permits are usually small towns unfamiliar with Life Chain.

2) If a city requires a permit, the Coordinator should be diplomatic, informed, and sufficiently patient yet resolute. If the permit incurs no charge and the Coordinator prefers not to contest the city's request, Life Chain's national office does not pursue the matter. But Life Chain does oppose payment for permits because a) Americans should not be assessed for their First Amendment rights; and b) if we as citizens do not defend our rights, we risk losing them.

3) A *Legal Letter* posted at www.NationalLifeChain.org helps explain Life Chain's rights, and Coordinators are encouraged to share the letter with city officials. In the early years (beginning in 1987), city permit requests were not uncommon, yet Life Chain seldom used legal assistance because Coordinators were able to work through the process with local officials. Life Chain acknowledges the officials' responsibility, and we must confer nobly with them. As noted above, permit problems usually arise in small towns that are new to Life Chain.

4) Towns that require permits usually confuse Life Chain with a parade (which has exclusive use of a street and its intersections for a designated period of time, whereas Life Chain controls no territory). Accordingly, Life Chainers are not paraders; we are pedestrians who occupy a portion of the city sidewalk and permit all other pedestrians to share the same sidewalk with us. While standing, we value and follow the Life Chain Code of Conduct.

5) Our record, as law-abiding citizens, is exemplary. Since Life Chain's founding in 1987, the national office knows of no instance in which a Chainer has been cited for illegal activity. Over 21,500 Chains have been held in the U.S. and Canada, including all states in the U.S. and all provinces in Canada.

6) Life Chain should not be viewed as a "protest" activity. Life Chain is promoted as a "prayer chain" and an "extension of Sunday morning worship (see *Life Chain Manual*), which helps explain why *National Life Chain Sunday* is held on Sunday afternoon. Moreover, we say the first duty of Life Chain is to "minister" to the participants (the Chainers), who represent the local church in each city or town (see *Seven Reasons Why Christians Should Attend the Local Life Chain* and *Life Chain Principles*), in compliance with 2 Chronicles 7:14. Accordingly, we urge pastors to "prepare their people" for a time of prayer and solemn reflection. Prayer topics are printed on the back of the approved signs we hold, and pastors may add a supplemental list of topics.

7) A local attorney who supports Life Chain can be helpful, if needed, but it is best for the Coordinator to work directly with city officials. The process is usually an educational

experience whereby officials gain an understanding of Life Chain and its history. Use of a constitutional law firm should be used only if essential.

8) Coordinators are urged (through *Life Chain Manual* and other communications) to notify local police departments about the date, location, and time of their Life Chains. They do so as a courtesy and in recognition of the police departments' duties. Thereafter, Chainers should prove their good citizenship and prevent conflicts that burden local police.

9) When meeting with city officials, a Coordinator should consider using a laptop computer to access www.LifeChain.net and permit officials to observe the posted Chains in cities and towns of interest. At the same time, officials can view Life Chain's second website, www.NationalLifeChain.org.

10) It is most needful that permit issues be resolved before Life Chains are held. Fortunately, Chains have very rarely been delayed beyond the scheduled date, and a spirit of goodwill has usually prevailed among all conferees. That is what Life Chain seeks, in each instance.

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