

## Starting a New IFGS Chapter

### The IFGS Provisional Chapter Handbook

The goal of the Provisional Chapter System is to create a full IFGS chapter that is able to write, sanction, and run live action games of the highest quality under the IFGS system. Once you have determined that there is interest in your area to create a new chapter, you can take the first step towards becoming a provisional chapter by following this guide.

#### Overview

This guide walks you through the process of creating a new chapter, starting at the very beginning when you **become an IFGS member**. After you have gathered ten people together, you can apply to **become a provisional chapter**. Together, you **get ready for your first game**. As you prepare, you will **appoint a chapter safety officer, a chapter registry chair and a chapter treasurer**. When you are ready, you can **run "SPP" games**. After you see what is involved in running games that are supplied for you, you can **create a sanctioning committee** and begin working on games written by members of your provisional chapter. Once you have experienced IFGS games, you will want to **appoint a PR chair** to tell others of your games, **appoint a quartermaster** to manage your chapter's props and possibly **appoint a newsletter editor** to publish articles and events related to your chapter. As your chapter grows over time, you will need to **appoint an election chair** to manage the election of the chapter board from year to year. When you are experienced and ready, you can apply to **become a full IFGS chapter**.

A whole library of help is available to guide you every step of the way and much of the work of starting a brand-new chapter is guided by handbooks created by the IFGS society:

- Elections Handbook
- Game Designer's Manual
- Magic Item Blue Book
- Quick-Start Rules
- Registry Forms
- Registry Handbook
- Safety Handbook
- Society Sanctioning Handbook
- SSC Handbook
- Standard Chapter Constitution
- Treasury Handbook
- ...and of course, SPP Game Scripts ready for you to run

You do not need to read all of these guides at once. Throughout the process, there are references to which guides are appropriate to your chapter's stage of development. Look for them under "Resources" in the descriptions below.

As you embark on the process, keep in mind that even though there is work involved in starting a new chapter, we do this to have fun. Don't be afraid. Jump in!

- The IFGS Society General Promotions (SGP) Committee

Let's get started, shall we?

### **(1) Gather Ten Interested People (at least)**

At its heart, the IFGS is a social organization, and IFGS games are social activities. The very first step towards organizing a provisional IFGS chapter is to gather at least ten who share a common interest in Live Action Role Playing (no experience necessary), five of whom are over the age of 18 and willing to take on administrative responsibilities. *Getting an IFGS membership is covered under #2.*

Contact the Expansion subcommittee at [expansion@ifgs.org](mailto:expansion@ifgs.org) and let them know who you are, where you are, and that you are interested in starting an IFGS chapter. They will be able to tell you whether or not there is already a chapter in your area, and if not, they can give you approval to get started and guide you through the rest of the process of creating a chapter as outlined in this document.

### **(2) Become a Provisional Chapter**

Prerequisite: You must have at least ten people interested in starting an IFGS chapter, and approval from the Society Expansion subcommittee.

Hold an open meeting with the people who expressed an interest in starting the chapter with you and anyone else you can bring in. Those who wish to become board members will each need to start a regular IFGS membership if they do not already have one. To do so, pay a membership fee (\$10 as of this writing). This can be done in person at an IFGS event, or through the IFGS clerk by mail at IFGS, P.O. Box 36555, Cincinnati, OH 45236 or through PayPal (use [ifgs@aol.com](mailto:ifgs@aol.com)). The clerk can be reached via email at [clerk@ifgs.org](mailto:clerk@ifgs.org) if you have any questions.

Members who are not on the board may play up to two games before a membership is required.

#### **Regular Member Privileges**

Paid Regular IFGS members have the following privileges:

- 1) The ability to participate in all sanctioned IFGS events.
- 2) Society and Chapter voting rights for members 18 and over.
- 3) The right to hold Chapter and Society positions (for members 18 and over), elected and appointed.

#### **Associate Memberships Also Available**

Associate memberships are less expensive and allow a member to participate as an NPC. Associate members may not hold a board position and may not play as a PC.

Elect a chapter board of five people. The board is the leadership of the chapter, and guides the chapter to succeed. Review and adopt the standard chapter constitution, which is provided for you by Society. Note that board elections are held annually. See the note on board composition and officers below for more details on how to do this.

Let everyone know about the new chapter! As a provisional chapter, you can use the IFGS name and chess piece logo in advertising your events. The quick-start rules are available on the IFGS web site ([www.ifgs.org](http://www.ifgs.org)) so that everyone can become familiar with the rules prior to the event.

The new chapter will be formally recognized by the Society Board at one of its regularly scheduled meetings. At that time, a liaison from the Expansion subcommittee should also be formally appointed. Insurance is also made available to the provisional chapter so that it can secure game sites that may otherwise be unavailable.

Once formed and approved by the Society Board, the chapter has the authority to actively recruit members and collect membership and game fees in the name of the IFGS. This includes activities at local fairs, gaming conventions, etc.

Having at least ten members is only the beginning. Once you begin promoting and running events, your core of ten will grow. Note that you must gather 30 members before becoming a full chapter.

#### Resources:

- Elections Handbook – This tells you how to run an IFGS election. Details on how to elect a board can be found here.
- Chess piece logo – use this in advertising to distinguish your chapter's event as an IFGS event.
- Quick-start rules – These rules are enough to get you started and keep you going without requiring each member to buy the rulebook.
- Standard Chapter Constitution
- IFGS site insurance policy – this is available upon request to help you get a game site.

#### **Creating a Board**

The Chapter Board of Directors is the leadership of the chapter. The board is empowered by the Society to act as the legal representatives of the Chapter. The members of the board have the authority to handle all day-to-day matters pertaining to the successful operation of the chapter. At all times, the Provisional Chapter Board and its individual members must conduct themselves in accordance with the Society Constitution, the Society By-Laws, and the policies established by the Society Board of Directors.

The Provisional Chapter Board will initially consist of five members. The Provisional Chapter Board may choose to increase or decrease its number to five or seven members at any time. However, these new board seats must be filled by a vote of the membership, not by the previous Directors. To fill these seats, the board may choose to hold a special election or wait until the next general election.

The chapter's founders will serve as the Board until the chapter holds its first formal election. Normally, Board members are elected to serve two-year terms. During the chapter's first election half the board members (round up if it is an even-numbered year, round down in an

odd-numbered year) will be appointed to two-year terms, the other half to one-year terms. The candidates will be ranked in order of number of votes received, with those receiving the most votes holding the two-year seats. If a Chapter's first election is a special election (not coincident with the Society General Election), then the terms will be less than the full two- and one-year terms in order to synchronize with the next Society General Election. In general, the IFGS election year follows the calendar year.

#### President and Vice President

Immediately following any election in which board members are elected, the Chapter Board must elect from its number a President and Vice President. The President will function as the Chairman of the Board during all meetings, and as the official voice of the chapter in communications.

In addition, the President of the Chapter will serve as the agent of the Society President in the signing of contracts for land, facilities, or services rented by the Chapter. In the absence or incapacity of the President, the Vice President will fulfill the functions of the President. The Chapter Board will assign any additional duties to the VP that it sees fit.

#### Secretary

The Chapter Secretary is responsible for keeping the minutes of every Board meeting. Board minutes should be published periodically in the Chapter Newsletter or on the IFGS message board. The Chapter Secretary is appointed by the Chapter Board.

### **(3) Get Ready for your First Game**

Prerequisites: You must have a formed provisional chapter (see #2 above.)

While you are putting the infrastructure together to be able to run your first and subsequent games, you can begin to gather the things you will need to participate in these games.

Make weapons. Since IFGS games are live-action, you will need to make safe, foam-padded weapons – swords, staves, polearms and even shields – that you will use for in-game combat. Your liaison has information on weapons construction, and there have been discussions on the IFGS forums on this topic as well.

Create a costume. You should find a costume appropriate to your character. Costumes run the gamut from something as simple as a tabard and belt to elaborate, custom-made costumes complete with matching accessories. How far you go is up to you. Many IFGS members make their own costuming from fabric.

Make bean bags. Some spells and abilities require bean bags. Bean bags are also used for thrown daggers during combat. They are simple to make, and must be between two and four inches square, filled with beans or bird seed. Gray bean bags represent throwing daggers. More details and types of bean bags can be found in the rulebook.

Hold fighter practices. Once you have your weapons and bean bags made, find a place to hold fighter practices. A level field with grass is preferred. Try to get together at least once a week to develop your fighting skills. Remember that the head and groin are not legal targets!

Hold class workshops. Another thing that will help everyone understand the rules of the game is to hold **class workshops** for novices, perhaps with the assistance of a “sister” chapter and/or the Expansion subcommittee. A five-minute address from experienced PCs as to their class “specialty,” a one-hour seminar on a chosen class, and half-hour sessions on magic, safety, melee practices and costuming; perhaps even a brief seminar on the rewards of NPCing; these things will help everyone get to know the rules better and focus on playing.

Practice. Play. Have fun!

**A Quick Note about Staffing Chapter Positions**

It is a good idea to find people *other than those serving on the board* to take on the various chapter positions. You don't want one person doing too many things. The work should be distributed as widely as possible so nobody is overwhelmed.

Board members other than the President are allowed to hold positions in Registry, Treasury, Quartermaster, Membership/PR, Safety, and SC. The President can also be a member of the SC.

**(4) Appoint a Chapter Safety Officer**

A primary concern in the IFGS is Safety. The Chapter Safety Officer (CSO) must work with the Society Safety Officer (SSO) to provide all IFGS participants with a safe and enjoyable gaming environment. The CSO is responsible for the training, and supervision of Game Safety Officers (GSO). Should an accident occur during a game, the GSO and CSO must prepare reports for the Chapter Board and the SSO.

All IFGS gaming events must have a GSO. Generally the GSO is prohibited from holding any other function in the game. At the start of the game the GSO is responsible for checking all weapons, and at the end of the game the GSO makes sure everyone is safely off the game course. During the game the GSO is responsible for making sure the game runs as safely as possible. The GSO has the last word on issues of safety during a game, and the GSO determines when an issue is a Safety issue.

The Provisional Chapter's CSO must report to the Society Safety Officer. The Society Safety Officer provides guidelines for the creation of props and weapons, and is responsible for the training of the Provisional Chapter's Safety Officer. Society recommends that the Provisional Chapter train three Game Safety Officers since a GSO is required at every game. The Chapter SO is appointed by the Chapter Board.

Resources:

- Safety Handbook

### **(5) Appoint a Chapter Registry Chair**

The Chapter Registry keeps the records of each character's experience, magic items, and treasure. Representatives of the local Registry are responsible for tracking this information for each participant and must conform to reporting practices defined by the Society Registry. The Society provides the chapters with standardized formats needed to track this information, and guidelines are detailed in the Registry Handbook. In addition, the Chapter Registry provides information to players, game designers, and the local Sanctioning Committee on request. The Chair of the Chapter Registry is appointed by the Chapter Board. Access to an internet-ready personal computer is required.

Resources:

- Registry Handbook – Without these, chapters cannot run games, and certainly cannot begin chapter record keeping on a solid foundation that will be consistent with the rest of the organization.

### **(6) Appoint a Chapter Treasurer**

The IFGS is a nonprofit corporation, and as such is required by law to file annual financial reports with the IRS. The local chapter operates under the Society's nonprofit status and therefore is responsible to the Society in all financial matters.

The Chapter Treasurer is empowered to act as the representative of the Society in all financial matters pertaining to that Chapter. The IFGS Treasurer's Handbook details reporting regulations and includes standard forms for reports to the Society. The Chapter Treasurer is responsible for all moneys due the chapter, moneys in any chapter bank accounts, and payment of debts acquired by the chapter through its normal day-to-day activities. The Treasurer is responsible for collecting membership and game fees, and paying appropriate fees owed to the Society to the Society Treasurer on a quarterly basis. A computer with an accounting program or spreadsheet is highly advised. The Chapter Treasurer is appointed by the local Chapter Board.

Information is available from the Society Treasurer about getting registered in your chapter's home state as a not-for-profit entity doing business in that state.

Before you are able to advance to full chapter status, you will need to demonstrate fiscal responsibility to the Society Treasurer. This includes approved game budgets, detailed reports of game activity, chapter discretionary budget and spending, and a reconciliation of accounts. The Society Treasurer has more details on what is required, and must approve a chapter's accounts before they can advance to a full chapter.

Resources:

- Treasury Handbook - by far one of the most important things to do right from the start.

### **(7) Run “SPP” Games**

Prerequisites: You must have a board, weapons, costumes; #4, 5 and 6 must be complete.

Now that the chapter has the administrative positions appointed, it has the right to run major and minor games that have been pre-sanctioned by the Society Sanctioning Committee. It is expected that these will be relatively simple, low-level line-course games designed with the needs of novice producers and players in mind.

Running games generates interest in the chapter, and helps develop more resources (including active participants with a wide range of experience). At this early stage, the chapter needs to concentrate on game production issues, developing skills in managing all the jobs required to actually field a game. Even the best-written game can be a disaster if the production is poor.

Since good game design takes a considerable amount of time and resources, Society provides a set of games that are ready to be produced – we refer to these as Sanctioned Pending Production or SPP games. At this stage, the provisional chapter is limited to running games from this set. These games are typically written for low level characters and are designed to be easy to produce.

Try to find a different producer for each of your first three games. That will help to build expertise in the chapter, allow for different play styles, and share the workload so that one person doesn't get burned out by trying to take on too much.

By paying Society membership and event fees, you can use the insurance policy provided by the IFGS for any sanctioned event, which helps you secure sites to run games that may otherwise not be available to you.

Resources:

- SPP Game Scripts – at least three SPP games will be provided to your chapter to run
- Look to your Expansion subcommittee liaison to put your fledgling producers in touch with experienced producers. They can offer advice to guide you through your early productions and get you comfortable with all that is entailed in running games.
- Registry Forms – You should have been provided enough forms for three moderately sized games. Additional forms are available for purchase through the Society Clerk.

<b>A Note about Your Game World</b>
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At the start of your chapter, you are running SPP games. Later on, you will want to be able to write custom games for your chapter. These games may end up sharing a common setting. This is your chapter's game world. This world is a way to bring about a measure of continuity from game to game. If people are familiar with the areas of the game world, and how their character interacts with that game world, they feel a greater sense of ownership. Furthermore, those who are writing the games and causing in-game events to happen in that game world help to shape it for all participants. Consider strongly having a cohesive game world for your chapter.

### **(8) Create a Sanctioning Committee**

Only games that have been sanctioned by a responsible Sanctioning Committee (SC) may be advertised as IFGS games or receive points in the Chapter and Society registries, or gain the benefit of the Society insurance. The local SC operates under the policies devised and implemented by the Society Sanctioning Committee (SSC). The local SC is responsible for judging each game proposed to be run by the Chapter for conformance to the Rules, Blue Book standards for risk and reward, fairness, safety, consistency, playability, and cost. It takes time to develop a responsible SC.

While you are a provisional chapter, you will likely have a few members who are interested in designing games. The Sanctioning Committee must be established with at least three members, preferably growing to at least seven members before the chapter advances to a full chapter. The Sanctioning Committee is in training, and will sanction games from their chapter under the supervision of the Society Sanctioning Committee. Games run by the chapter will still be minor or mini games (e.g., tournaments, indoor games, PR and Convention games) or one-day (8 hours or less) line-course (single path, each encounter occurring in a predefined order) games.

As the Chapter's Sanctioning Committee grows, SC members can play in some of the Chapter-written productions that they otherwise would not be able to since they are sanctioning them.

A Chapter SC is not required to run Sanctioned Pending Production games supplied by Society.

The chair and members of the Chapter SC are appointed by the Chapter Board.

Resources:

- Game Designer's Manual – includes hints on game design
- Society Sanctioning Handbook – Hints on game design
- SSC Handbook - Contains standards for writing and producing games in the IFGS system.
- Blue Book - Contains standard fantasy pricing for IFGS magic items.

### **(9) Learn about Society-Level IFGS**



Society operates above the chapter level and handles a great many details so that the chapters can focus more on running games. Society has an elected Board of Directors, just as the chapter does. It also has appointed committees, including Society General Promotions (of which Expansion is part), Registry, Treasurer, Clerk, Fantasy Rules Committee, Society Sanctioning Committee, and so on.

Hopefully, until now, you have been preoccupied with running games and keeping momentum going, so it's time to become more aware of the Big Picture.

**Society Board** – The society board is elected by all members of the IFGS to represent them on a national level. They create and ratify the policies of the IFGS.

**Society General Promotions Committee** – You have no doubt been interacting with members of this committee, since the Expansion subcommittee belongs to it. This committee also handles advertising and the creation of promotional materials usable by all chapters.

**Registry Committee** creates policy for the tracking and rules around in-game information, such as character experience points and CAP points.

**Fantasy Rules Committee** oversees the rules of the game, providing answers to questions if they arise, and are the final say in rules clarifications or modifications.

**Society Sanctioning Committee** provides sanctioning oversight as well as pricing guidelines for in-game items.

**Society Clerk** handles the administrative work of the IFGS, including filing of taxes.

In an effort to become familiar with Society committees, have your provisional board schedule a meeting with each committee's chair so that they can explain what their committee does. Contact information for committee chairs can be found in the Who's Who, available from the Society Clerk.

### **(10) Prosper and Grow**

You must have at least 30 members to become a full IFGS chapter, with at least 10 games run. This can take at least a few years. So print out the Provisional Chapter Checklist and keep it as a record of your progress. Share it with everyone to help build momentum and energy towards your goal. The checklist is appendix A.

### **(11) Appoint a PR Chair**

Prerequisite: Have a game or two already run

The PR committee promotes the name of the chapter and the chapter's activities wherever possible, including putting up flyers at game shops, moderating a chapter Facebook page, taking to other gaming groups, etc. There should be at least two people on this committee, though more people mean more potential coverage for getting the word out.

The development of additional members, the presentation of a positive public image, and the circulation of flyers are very important to the chapter's success. The Membership/PR/Flyers Committee works with other local committees and individuals in promoting the chapter and its events. Committee members should be available to assist Game Designers and their Sanctioning Committees in the preparation and distribution of promotional flyers. The Committee also arranges for the promotion of the chapter at local conventions, community fairs, and via the media. The chairperson of this committee is appointed by the Chapter Board.

### **(12) Appoint a Quartermaster**

Prerequisite: Have a game or two already run

The Quartermaster is responsible for maintaining the chapter's property. The Quartermaster will acquire suitable storage facilities for these properties, maintain an inventory of properties, organize construction parties, and otherwise perform general repairs. Initially the storage area may be some space in a member's garage or basement. Eventually the chapter may need to rent space in a public storage center. Any such contracts must be signed by the Chapter President in order for them to be binding on the Chapter. The Quartermaster must also work with the chapter Sanctioning Committee and Game Designers to provide for the effective utilization of the chapter's resources. Periodically the Quartermaster and Treasurer must prepare a report of the chapter's assets for the Society, which must report this information to the IRS. The Quartermaster is appointed by the Chapter Board. The Quartermaster committee should have at least 1 member.

### **(13) Appoint a Newsletter Editor**

Prerequisite: Have a game or two already run

Regularly informing the membership of chapter activities is essential to the development of the chapter. The chapter board may appoint a Newsletter Editor to fill this need. The appointee should have access to a computer and have knowledge of (or be willing to learn) word processing and desktop publishing.

If you do not have a volunteer or do not wish to have a full newsletter, you can always send articles to be published on the Society web site (see the News section on [www.ifgs.org](http://www.ifgs.org)). Simply send them to [tech@ifgs.org](mailto:tech@ifgs.org).

#### **(14) Appoint an Election Chair**

As the end of the year nears, the Election Committee solicits people to appear on the chapter ballot, distributes ballots to members, counts ballots and reports the results of the election to the chapter to establish the board for the following year. This should be at least 1 member.

Some methods of achieving a controlled election are outlined in the publication "IFGS Election Procedures." Members of the election committee are appointed by the Chapter Board and may not be a candidate for any office. It is imperative that the Board take care to appoint individuals agreeable to all factions of the chapter, or have the Society conduct the election.

#### **(15) Write, Sanction, Run**

Prerequisite: Run at least three SPP games.

By now, your chapter has experienced a variety of games provided by Society and produced by several members of your chapter. In order to become a full, self-sufficient chapter, the provisional chapter must go through the process of taking a game from idea to production.

Seek out members who have an interest in writing games and encourage them to express their ideas in game script format. Take the script through the sanctioning process, where you examine the script for play balance, rules compliance, ratings and consistency. Then run the game and compare the paper version to what actually happens. As you gain experience with this, you will improve in the things you catch during the sanctioning process and your games will be more enjoyable for all.

#### **(16) Become a Full IFGS Chapter**

Prerequisite: Have at least 30 members, and at least ten games run, at least 6 of which are major games or line courses, at least three of which were written and sanctioned within the chapter, and at least one of those which is a major game written and sanctioned within the chapter.

In addition to meeting the prerequisites for becoming a full chapter, the provisional chapter should make an effort to promote the growth and stability of the IFGS. Therefore, in the process of applying to become a full chapter, the Provisional Chapter should provide one service that benefits the Society as a whole. This service should be approved by the Society Expansion subcommittee. Your liaison will be able to help you determine what Society's current needs are.

## Appendix A: Provisional Chapter Checklist

This checklist shows where you are on the path of becoming a full IFGS chapter. It should be made available at any time to all members.

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Date complete</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gather at least ten interested people	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact Expansion and tell them who and where you are	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Become a provisional chapter (request to Society Board)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold an open meeting	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Elect a chapter board of directors	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Appoint a board president	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Appoint a board vice president	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Appoint a board secretary	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get the word out – post flyers and advertisements where it makes sense to do so – local colleges, game and hobby stores and community centers, gaming conventions, fairs, etc.	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get an expansion liaison	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make weapons	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make costumes	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make bean bags	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold fighter practices	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold class workshops	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appoint a chapter safety officer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appoint a chapter registry chair	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appoint a chapter treasurer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Run games (at least 6 major games)	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> SPP? <input type="checkbox"/> Major?	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> SPP? <input type="checkbox"/> Major?	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> SPP? <input type="checkbox"/> Major?	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> SPP? <input type="checkbox"/> Major?	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> SPP? <input type="checkbox"/> Major?	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> SPP? <input type="checkbox"/> Major?	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> SPP? <input type="checkbox"/> Major?	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game written and sanctioned in the chapter: <input type="checkbox"/> Major?	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game written and sanctioned in the chapter: <input type="checkbox"/> Major?	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Major game written and sanctioned in the chapter:	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a sanctioning committee	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn about society level IFGS	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grow to 30 members	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appoint a PR chair	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appoint a quartermaster	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appoint a newsletter editor (optional)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appoint an elections chair	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Become a full IFGS chapter	_____