

# **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**



## **UTAH STATE COUNCIL BLOOD DRIVE COORDINATION**

*Pope Benedict XVI has sent special greetings to blood donors everywhere. He said Christians should find inspiration for blood donation in Christ, who "redeemed us with his blood." He said that giving blood carries "a high moral and civic value." He paid homage to those people who give "the gift of life" by donating blood, and encouraged others to do the same.*



*In a Mass, Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragan, head of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers, also spoke about blood donation.*

*"Many give blood out of a sense of solidarity or compassion for the sick," he said. But for Christians, donating blood should have another special meaning. "Christ gave to his disciples a specific mandate: 'Heal the sick,'" he said. "Beyond solidarity and natural compassion, there is this mandate of Christ, whom we obey with our innermost nature by giving blood."*

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help Knights of Columbus councils organize, execute, and duplicate successful blood drives. This document effort is taken at the behest of the State Deputy, James Leccia, and was written by Andy Airriess, Utah State Council Community Director (2005-06) with the help of brother Knights who have held successful blood drives.

This document is a work in progress. As Knights councils around Utah hold blood drives, the lessons learned will be incorporated into this document. To ensure you have the most current version, please contact your Utah State Community Director.

Blood drives are an excellent way to extend the helping hands of the Knights beyond the boundaries of a parish in two ways. First, a blood drive encourages people and organizations outside a parish to participate in a parish activity. Second, the beneficiaries of blood donations are typically community members, not members of the parish. In addition, blood drives are a good way to publicize the Knights and their activities in a community which might not otherwise know about them.



Past State Deputy James Leccia (2004-2006)  
donating.

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## WHY CONDUCT A BLOOD DRIVE?

Donated blood is used to address immediate conditions such as accidents and surgeries. Products extracted from donated blood are used to help a variety of people to maintain their health and make it through day-to-day life. These groups include organ transplant recipients, those with blood clotting disorders, and cancer patients. A single blood donation can be separated into three portions, each of which can save a life.

## WHO CONDUCTS DRIVES?

### WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION

A blood drive is typically run by one person in a council, the coordinator, who works hand-in-hand with a blood collection organization. There may be assistants helping the coordinator.

### COORDINATOR

The coordinator is the liaison between the council and the blood collection organization. The coordinator:

- Schedules the drive, working with the Pastor, the Program Director, and others as necessary to select a date and location for the drive.
- Maintains the sign-up sheet for the drive.
- Arranges for facilities at the location, and coordinates the volunteers.

If you are not the blood drive coordinator for your council, but are in charge of finding a coordinator, try to find a volunteer. The best volunteer has:

- Prior experience coordinating a drive.
- Previously donated blood.
- Experience having their life saved through donation, or having a close relative or friend whose life has been saved because of a donation.

People with personal blood donation experience will be able to recruit donors more easily because prospective donors can more easily empathize with them.

The Coordinator should be available to the blood collection organization throughout the actual drive. Their knowledge of the parish, where facilities are located, who to ask specific questions, and the people donating is critical to a smoothly running drive.

## ASSISTANTS

Others who work on the drive, their number, and their responsibilities depend in great part on the experience of the coordinator, the size of the drive, and the ways donors are recruited. Assistant duties may include:

- Contacting potential donors
- Helping organize the drive
- Providing setup and teardown assistance on the day of the drive

## BLOOD COLLECTION ORGANIZATIONS (BCOs)

In Utah there are three primary organizations that provide statewide blood collection services. Each of these organizations is solid, professional, and provides great service.



## THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

The Red Cross is the nation's largest blood collection organization.

**Positives:** Being very well known, the Red Cross provides a great "brand" for a blood drive with its associated prestige. Donors may feel more comfortable donating at a Red Cross drive for this reason. The Red Cross also has a greater presence in areas away from the Wasatch Front.

**Negatives:** The Red Cross sometimes ships extra blood out of state. While this is not a bad thing, it can be a positive to be able to say in drive communication that the blood collected will stay in the local area. The Red Cross does not provide blood usage reports. Does not schedule Sunday drives.

### *Contact Information*

Phone:

Web Site: <http://www.redcross.org/br/lewisandclark>



## ARUP BLOOD SERVICES

**Positives:** Not as well known as the Red Cross, ARUP is becoming better known. They provide blood usage reports that give you a good idea about how the blood collected at your drive was actually used. This is very useful as a recruiting tool. ARUP also supplies blood to a number of hospitals that specialize in helping children. This is also a good recruiting tool. Schedules Sunday drives.

**Negatives:** Not as well known as the Red Cross.

### *Contact Information*

Phone: (801) 584-5272

Web Site: <http://www.utahblood.org/contact/contact.htm>



## MOUNTAIN STAR

**Positives:** Like ARUP, Mountain Star provides blood usage reports. They also provide blood for 11 hospitals around the state, so their blood tends to stay local.

**Negatives:** Mountain Star is the least well known of the three BCOs.

### *Contact Information*

Phone: 1-(801) 479-2389 or 1-(800) 237-9194

Web Site: <http://www.mountainstarhealth.com/>

## WHICH BCO SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Each BCO has strengths and weaknesses for a blood drive coordinator. Choosing the BCO that is right for you depends on a number of factors:

- Their availability
- The type of drive you want to run
- Restrictions the BCOs place on donors

### AVAILABILITY

Each BCO maintains different schedules and uses different facilities. If you are trying to schedule a blood drive with little lead time, your choice of BCO may be limited. The further ahead you can schedule your drive, the greater your choice of BCOs to use.

If you are located in an area of the state away from the Wasatch front, timing your drive is important. BCOs schedule their remote drives in groups, so they will try to have a number of drives in one area of the state during a particular time period. You will have to schedule your drive within the time period the BCO has scheduled for your area.

### TYPE OF DRIVE

The types of blood drives are discussed in greater detail later in this document. All three BCOs in Utah have fixed donation locations, mobile collection centers (bloodmobiles) and facilities to collect donations at your facility. Since the fixed locations are predominately in the urbanized areas of the Wasatch Front, they may not be useful for your blood drive.

### DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Each BCO provides slightly different requirements on blood donors. These restrictions include those set by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), who regulates blood donation. Some donor restrictions include:

- Medications taken
- Foreign travel
- Immunization

Using foreign travel for example, if you have a large number of military members in your parish, you should choose a blood collection organization with more lenient restrictions on the amount of time potential donors can spend in Europe to increase the number of donations you will receive. Fears of Mad Cow Disease in Western Europe has led the FDA to restrict the amount of time donors can spend there.

The FDA provides a range of time a potential donor can spend in Europe. Some blood collection organizations use the more stringent end of the range, while others use the more lenient end of the range. Other restrictions follow the same range of allowance.



Restrictions change continuously, so detailing them here would not be productive. No single BCO has the loosest restrictions in all areas. One might have the loosest in one area, but be more restrictive in others. Check with the BCO for the restrictions that are important to you when attracting donors in your area.

## WHEN TO SCHEDULE YOUR DRIVE

Selecting the right season, day of the week, and even time of day can be a very important part of planning your blood drive.

### SEASON AND DAY OF THE WEEK

Having your blood drive on a day when the most people are already at the facility is a good idea. Sundays work out very well because prospective donors are already at your church and donors value the convenience. Sunday drives typically result in 35% more donations than a Saturday or weekday drive. You may also consider having a drive during a holiday weekend. These holidays are times when fewer people are at church, but they are also times when BCOs have problems collecting blood and, because people are traveling, a higher number of accidents result in a great need for blood.

Holidays are also good for three other reasons:

- BCOs value holiday drives more than drives held at other times because long weekends are a difficult time for them to schedule drives.
- It is easy for donors to remember when your drive is scheduled. It is a lot easier for prospective donors to remember "July 4<sup>th</sup>" than "April 4<sup>th</sup>."
- Holidays provide good opportunities for timely donation pleas. Including references to veterans for a veteran's day drive, or giving thanks for a Thanksgiving drive can inspire people to donate.

### TIME OF DAY

BCOs typically schedule on-site blood drives in 5-6 hour blocks. This allows time for them to assemble all the materials before the drive and to put everything away afterwards, all in an 8-hour day for their employees. Depending on the day of your drive, you could have a weekday drive with hours between 4pm-9pm, a Saturday drive that would wrap around a 5pm Mass with hours from 3pm-8pm, or a Sunday drive that starts at 8:00am and ends at 2pm. The time you choose will depend on your specific situation.

## BLOOD DRIVE TYPES

There are three different types of blood drives. Each has its benefits and liabilities. These types of blood drives are discussed in greater detail on the following pages.

- Blood Collection Center
- Bloodmobile
- On-site Collection

## BLOOD COLLECTION CENTER

A blood drive held at a blood collection center is a good way to provide blood if no good facility exists at your parish. Other advantages include:

- Ease of donation, given the number of available beds
- Hours; you can schedule a drive over an entire day, or even a few days.
- A central location makes it easier for many people to travel there.
- The costs for the blood collection agency are low too, and this is always beneficial.

The negatives of using such a facility for a blood drive include:

- Travel time is long for parishioners some distance from a blood collection center
- The absence of parish unity and the camaraderie that occurs when members of the parish take part in an activity. People may see each other in passing, but it is not the same as being surrounded by those with whom they share their Sundays. A blood drive can be as much of a time of giving as it is social interaction; it is often an event that draws members of a parish closer.

## BLOODMOBILE

All three of the blood donation organizations noted previously have bloodmobiles.

Positives:

- They make a great “billboard” for your drive, often attracting drive-by donors.
- They are nice facilities designed with everything the BCO needs close at hand. This minimizes the work necessary to arrange, prepare, and clean up parish facilities.

Negatives:

- Typically contain only four beds, so if your parish or blood drive is large they may not be the best solution.
- Costly for the blood collection agencies to operate. Keeping costs down helps stretch the resources available to blood recipients.

- Popularity makes booking them for your drive more difficult, requiring more lead time than other types of blood drives.
- Often not available for parishes outside the Wasatch front.
- Not as conducive to building parish unity as an on-site drive.

## ON-SITE COLLECTION

When most people think of a blood drive, this is the type of drive they usually imagine. With this type of drive, the BCO brings all the supplies it needs to your facility.

Positives:

- Easiest to schedule.
- Helps build a sense of an “event”
- Most convenient for parishioners

Negatives:

- Due to setup and takedown, it creates the greatest amount of disruption at the parish and work for the coordinator and volunteers.

The majority of the planning and suggestions in this document are focused on on-site collections.

## THE BLOOD DONATION PROCESS

With all blood drives, the same basic process takes place. These are described in detail on the following pages:

1. The prospective donor presents themselves to a representative from the BCO.
2. The donor fills out a form with personal health history information.
3. The donor has an interview with a technician in a private area.
4. The donor proceeds to a waiting area prior to giving blood.
5. A technician takes the donor to a donation chair where they donate blood.
6. After the donation, the donor goes to a refreshment area where they can recuperate from the donation.

Keep in mind that if it is your first drive, or if it is the first time the BCO will be collecting at your facility, a BCO representative will likely want to meet with you at your facility to review the layout of the location and determine the best use of space for their needs.

## BCO REPRESENTATIVE TABLE

A table with enough room for a BCO representative should be set up near the primary entrance to the blood drive location. This is the place where prospective donors receive the forms they must fill out prior to donating. Often, an electrical outlet is required near this table as a printer is used to print the donor forms.



## DONOR PRESENTATION/FILLING OUT THE FORM

After prospective donors receive a form from a BCO representative, they sit down at a location where they will need space to fill out the form. Often, a 6-foot folding table with four to five chairs works well for this function, allowing donors to sit while they fill out their forms and read the BCO material. This table should be located near the BCO representative table. Tabletop screens provided by the BCO help donors retain privacy while filling out their forms. A booklet is typically available to help them with this process if necessary. The prospective donor presents the form to a BCO representative and then waits to be interviewed.



You will probably require a few additional chairs near the table for people to sit in while they wait to go into the interview areas. 4-5 should suffice, and you will probably only need that many during the very busy periods.

## INTERVIEW AREAS

Interview areas need to be private. The interviewer is required to ask the donor a number of personal questions, and the FDA requires that nobody be able to look inside the area as the donor takes a sticker off a form and puts it on a page in private. The area also needs to be set up so no one nearby can hear the responses the donor gives to the technician. These areas do not have to be large, just big enough for two people to sit comfortably, and with enough room for a small table (usually provided by the BCO) with the equipment the technician requires.



The technician:

- Takes the donor's pulse, blood pressure, and temperature.
- Reviews the donor's form and answers any questions the donor may have.
- Takes a pinprick blood sample for anemia testing.

The donor may be deferred at this step if the interview uncovers health or medication concerns.



If you do not have individual rooms available for the interview areas, the BCO can supply portable booths. If there is not enough room for widely separated interview booths, the BCO may set up a radio or tape player to play music in the area where the interview booths are set up. The music that plays will effectively mask whatever is said in a given interview booth and prevent anyone but the interviewer from hearing the donor's responses.

There should be a number of chairs available for those who have completed the interview but who cannot yet donate because the donation benches are in use. These chairs should be separated from the chairs near the interview area so the technicians have a better idea of who is waiting for which area.

With a bloodmobile, the entire drive can be self-contained, with the interview, waiting and donation area, and the recovery area all in the same vehicle. To speed things along for large drives, it is recommended that the bloodmobile be used for donations alone. Otherwise, the backup can cause some potential donors to leave.



## ACCOMMODATING NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If your parish located where a large number of non-English speakers live, you face an additional hurdle. During the donor presentation and interview phases, the donor must fill out a form and the interviewer must ask the prospective donor a series of personal questions. The prospective donor must be able to understand the questions and reply to the interviewer. If the prospective donor does not speak English, someone must be available to help the interviewer. This interpreter cannot be known to the prospective donor. The best solution is to ask the BCO for a translator prior to the drive. One may not always be available.

## DONATION AREA



The size of the donor area depends in great deal on the size of the drive and the facility you have available. The BCO will bring everything they need for this is relatively cool. A hot room makes donors uncomfortable and is not optimum for preserving collected blood.

## REFRESHMENT AREA

Typically, the refreshment area is near the donation chairs. After the parishioners are finished donating, the BCO likes them to sit for a few minutes and snack on some refreshments the BCO provides. Getting quality liquids such as juice, sports drinks, and water into donors helps them recover more quickly from donating. This area can consist of a table or two with chairs.



## SHARING A BLOOD DRIVE

If your council or parish is too small to host a drive by yourself, consider “sharing” a drive with another organization in your community such as the Elks, VFW, or Rotary Club. They might welcome a partner because they are also be too small to sustain a drive of their own.

A combined drive can have its coordination issues, such as how to divide up the donation times, where to hold the drive, and other matters. The important thing is that blood drives get held and people in need get the blood they require to live.

It is best if the location of the drive is convenient for both you and your drive partner. This usually means that you and your drive partner are close to each other.

Dividing the signup times is important. Keeping one set of signup sheets significantly reduces the risk of overbooking particular times. Suggested guidelines include:

- Giving particular blocks of the drive to one group while the partner takes the other times. For example, in an 8am to 2pm drive, one group takes 8-11 and the other 11-2. The actual division depends on the number of expected donations from each group. After several of weeks of signing up donors, you may be able to make some modifications to the division of times.
- Dividing equally the donation times on an hour-by-hour basis. If your BCO expects four donors per quarter hour, you and your partner could take two each.
- Finding an individual who is a member of both groups and can manage the reservations would be ideal.

## BLOOD DRIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Local councils and blood collection organizations have distinct responsibilities during a blood drive. These duties are slightly different, depending on the type of drive.

### BLOOD COLLECTION CENTER AND BLOODMOBILE

Task	BCO	Knights
Advertising		
Printing	✓	
Placing		✓
Scheduling facility	✓	✓
Scheduling donors		✓
Setting up	✓	
Refreshments	✓	
Cleanup	✓	

## ON-SITE COLLECTION

Task	BCO	Knights
Advertising		
Printing	✓	
Placing		✓
Scheduling facility	✓	✓
Scheduling donors		✓
Setting up	✓	✓
Refreshments	✓	
Cleanup	✓	✓

## ADVERTISING

Advertising for your drive includes the means of attracting donors, whether new or known. Advertising for your blood drive takes many forms:

- Speaking at Mass
- Ads in publications and on TV and radio
- Posters and handouts
- Displays
- Previous blood drive sign-up sheets.

A key ingredient in any advertisement for a drive is giving the audience a specific reason to give. This message can be a plea based on the specific need for a given drive, a statement like the one from the Holy Father at the beginning of this document

## SPEAKING AT MASS

If your pastor allows it, speaking at Mass is the most effective form of advertising you have available. While the presiding priest can present an effective message, particularly if a message is written for him, a clear, concise message from a person who is invested in the drive is typically more effective in motivating people to donate.

Select your speakers well. An effective speaker can make all the difference in convincing parishioners to donate.

It is critical that you have people stationed at the exits of the church after Mass with signup sheets ready to get committed donors to put their names on the line. It might also be helpful to have a Knight with the signup sheet attend additional church events such as dinners, bingo nights, and other occasions where numbers of parishioners and non-parishioners will attend.



It is best if the request for donations is tailored for the specific time of the drive. The message should be short and should include a specific request for people to sign up. Your BCO can be of great help in tailoring your message with specific information for the time and date of your drive. Below are two examples:

### MEMORIAL DAY REQUEST

The Knights of Columbus council for this parish is having a blood drive the Sunday of this coming Memorial Day weekend. This weekend was chosen for our blood drive because it is the weekend with the single highest blood usage of the year. What better way is there of honoring those who gave their lives for us than to give a little bit of ourselves to save the lives of others. We will have Knights outside the church after Mass and in the parish hall to sign up those interested. Confirming a time is important because the blood collection agency needs to know how many people are planning on donating to ensure they bring sufficient supplies, and to ensure donating doesn't take too much time for anyone. Walk-ins are welcome, but signing up makes things easier for everybody. Again, the blood drive is from 8am to 2pm on the Sunday of the Memorial Day weekend, May 27<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

### THANKSGIVING REQUEST

The Knights of Columbus council for this parish is having a blood drive the Sunday of this coming Thanksgiving weekend. This weekend was chosen for our blood drive because it is a four day weekend, and the blood given to babies in most cases cannot be more than five days old. Because donors are hard to come by during long weekends, blood supplies for babies get dangerously low during the Thanksgiving weekend. What better way is there of giving thanks for our own good health than by giving the gift of life to others. We will have Knights outside the church and in the parish hall after Mass to sign up those interested. Confirming a time is important because the blood collection agency needs to know how many people are planning on donating to ensure they bring sufficient supplies, and to ensure donating doesn't take too much time for anybody. Walk-ins are welcome, but signing up makes things easier for everybody. Again, the blood drive is from 8am to 2pm on the Sunday of the Thanksgiving weekend, November 27<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

Both these scripts include the key elements of a request; stating the day and the time more than once, giving a specific reason or need for the drive, asking people to sign up, telling them how and where to sign up.

## CONSIDERATIONS

Don't expect to speak at every Mass during weekend prior to the drive. One weekend three to four weeks prior to the drive, and perhaps one more time the week prior to the drive will allow you to not overstay your welcome. Having the presiding priest include the drive as part of the regular announcements the other weekends prior to the drive will suffice.

If the pastor does not allow you to speak at Mass, provide the presiding priest with a list of bullet points to include in the announcement. Make sure the bullet points include:

- The plea or reason for the drive
- Where and how people can sign up
- When the drive is to occur

## ADS

You won't get a lot of people to contact you from ads placed in publications. Even if nobody donates as a result of the ads, they are a good way of reaching out into the community and publicizing the work of your council.

The Intermountain Catholic allows ads for community events to be placed for free. Readers typically are not concerned if this is a Knights function, so use your words sparingly and simply place an ad that mentions the date and time of the drive, the name and address of the location where the drive will take place, contact information, and a short message about why potential donors should give.

Many local newspapers also provide free space for community events. The contents of the ads placed in these newspapers can be exactly the same as that placed in the Intermountain Catholic.

## POSTERS HANDOUTS

BCOs typically provide a number of posters and inserts to help you promote your drive. You help provide the information to add to these pre-printed items. It is important that you ask the BCO to print the information you want on the materials. While your parish hall might be in the basement of the church, you might not want to have your drive described as being "In the church basement" preferring "In the parish hall" instead.

Make sure the address of the church is listed on the materials. While your parishioners know where your church is, having the address of the church on the material will ensure others will also know where the drive is being held. Include a contact phone number in case people want more information about the drive.

While your church is an obvious place to put up your posters, surrounding churches, supermarkets, and other high-traffic areas are also good locations.

Handouts are perfect to distribute with the church bulletins the week before the drive. They act primarily as a reminder that people can put up on a bulletin board at home.

## DISPLAYS



Something as simple as having the BCO park their van near the street, and perhaps placing a sign near a convenient sidewalk can lead to some drive-by donations. Displays also help people who are unfamiliar with your location to find you. If your church has a sign out front, ask that the blood drive be promoted there as well.

## PARISH DIRECTORIES

If you have a parish directory, consider getting the pastor's approval to call parish members and individually ask them to donate. Depending on the size of the parish, this may take some time. Splitting the responsibilities among a few Knights can ease the workload on any one individual. It is important however that donation times get divided among fellow Knights or that different Knights call on different days for fear that reservation times get double-booked.

## NEIGHBORING PARISHES

Asking nearby parishes to put up posters for your drive is an easy thing to do. You might also consider attending the monthly meetings of neighboring councils and asking your brother Knights there to donate at your drive.

## RADIO AND TV

This is where parishes in the areas away from the Wasatch front have an advantage over those in the large metropolitan areas. Media outlets in smaller markets are more willing to air announcements for events such as blood drives.

Contact the radio and TV stations in your area and ask them to run public service announcements for your drive. Provide them with time, date, and location information. You might be more successful if you get the BCO to request the announcements. A radio or TV station will be more likely to agree to run an announcement from a well-known organization such as the Red Cross than an organization they may never have heard of.

## BLOOD DRIVE SIGNUP SHEETS

Previous sign-up sheets can be very helpful when recruiting donors. Make sure you retain copies of your signup sheets for use in future drives. After signing donors up for your drive, compare the names against previous signup sheets. Call those people who donated previously but did not sign up for the current drive. These people may have changed parishes or missed the sign-up, but would still be willing to donate.

## DRIVE PLANNING CALENDAR

This section gives you breakdown by time period of what should be accomplished in the months and weeks leading up to your blood drive.

### THREE MONTHS BEFORE

Arrange the date of your drive with the BCO, your pastor, and your Grand Knight. If this is your first drive at your parish or the first drive in a while, a suggested series of events is:

1. Ask the pastor for approval to have a blood drive at the parish. The location should be decided upon at this point as well. It is important to ensure the facilities you plan to use will not be busy. For example, if CCD classes use rooms you are expecting to use as interview rooms, you may have to make other plans.
2. Decide on a BCO.
3. Find out the dates the BCO has available and tentatively book the date with them.
4. Confirm the date and time of the drive with the pastor.
5. Officially book the date and time with the BCO.
6. Decide on the text for the advertising materials with the BCO. These materials typically include full-sized posters as well as leaflets that fit in the bulletin. The BCO may want to call the parish hall "The West Building." However, you know the best way to describe the location to parishioners. Get a couple of blank posters from them as well so you can customize them. For example, instead of printing "123 Ash Street" for the address, a poster you place at the church or supermarket across the street from your drive location will be more effective if you write "Across the street" on it.

Begin preparing for the drive by:

- Learning some of the blood donor qualifications if you don't already know them. When people ask you questions, and you can answer them, they will have confidence in you and will be more likely to donate. If you do not know the answers, provide them a contact phone number for the BCO.

- Setting up a schedule for advertising. This includes placing notices in the parish bulletin, ads in periodicals, and arranging with the pastor to mention the drive during announcements following Masses.

## ONE MONTH BEFORE

- Get advertising materials and other items such as sign up sheets from the BCO.
- Begin communications to parishioners/Councils/Community
  - Place ads in the Intermountain Catholic and in neighborhood newspapers that have free community event listings.
  - Talk with representatives from the K of C councils in your area. Ask them to announce your drive at their meetings, or go to their meetings yourself and invite members to give at your drive.
  - Go to neighboring churches and ask them to put up posters for your drive.
  - Put up posters in your church. It is best not to put up the posters too early. If you do, they just become “wallpaper” that people ignore.
  - At the Knights monthly meeting prior to the drive, bring the sign-up sheet and get your fellow Knights to sign up.
  - Arrange for advertising with the radio and TV stations in your area.

## THREE WEEKS BEFORE

- Start signing up donors after Masses beginning this week and continuing every weekend before the drive.
  - Note:** Ensure that donors print their name clearly on the sign-up sheet; it will help you read their names when you make the reminder calls later.
- If you have a parish directory, and have the approval of the pastor, begin calling parishioners to solicit donations. Make sure you double-check the list of those who have already signed up so you don't call people who have already signed up. If you have a large parish, you might want some help with this step.

## ONE WEEK BEFORE

- Include the advertising handouts in the bulletin the Sunday before the drive.
- Call the BCO and let them know how many people have signed up for the drive. This helps them prepare for the drive by knowing how many donors to expect. This number is very important for the BCO. It lets them know the resources they will need for the drive—everything from the personnel they will need to the amount of refreshments to supply. Getting people through your drive in a rapid

fashion is important. If people have to wait too long to donate they may be less willing to sign up for your next drive.

- Make your final appeal to the congregation. If the pastor allows you to speak, include the results of the blood usage report from the BCO to personalize the drive, giving parishioners an idea of how their blood might be utilized.

## DURING THE WEEK BEFORE

Call the people who have signed up and remind them of their commitment. This call should come as close as possible to the date of the drive, but don't wait too long, in case you can't reach them on your first attempt. During the call, remind them:

- of their donation time.
- they need to drink juice, sports drinks, or water a few hours before their donation. The more they hydrate themselves, the faster and easier their donation will go. Coffee and soft drinks are not appropriate, they are diuretics and actually reduce the body's hydration. If their donations go easily donors are more likely to come back for your next blood drive.
- they need to eat a meal a couple of hours before their donation time. This will make the donation go easier.
- to ask any of their friends or coworkers to come to the drive as well.

## THE DAY OF THE DRIVE

This is the big day! Staying busy and having a lot of social interaction will make the drive go faster and will help your next drives succeed too.

- Get to the drive location early. You will want to make sure everything is ready for the BCO when they arrive. Typically, they will want to arrive one hour before the first donation time. You can use the time to move tables and chairs into place.
- If you are the blood drive coordinator and can donate blood, try to donate early in the drive. It helps donors to know you are willing to do what you are asking them to do. Wear a short sleeve shirt so it does not look too obvious that you are displaying your commitment. Either that, or conspicuously wear the sticker or pin the BCO gives you after donating.
- Monitor the situation in the different areas, adding chairs to waiting areas as necessary, talking with donors who are waiting for their interviews, thanking them for donating.
- After donors have completed their pints, personally thank them in the refreshment area. Also thank those who tried to donate, but could not. They might be able to donate during your next drive.

## THE WEEK AFTER THE DRIVE

- If your BCO can provide one, get a blood usage report and either speak at Mass or put an announcement in the bulletin giving some examples of how blood collected that week was used. This helps personalize the donations people make by giving them an idea how their blood was used.
- Call donors from your signup sheet and thank them for donating.
- Contact your Knights State Community Director and boast about the success of your drive.

## WRAPPING THINGS UP

Know that you are doing something great, something that can save the lives of members of your community. Keep the momentum going. Reflect back on what went well during the drive, what could be done better next time, what worked to recruit donors, and what efforts can be scaled back.

To keep this guide the best it can be for every council in the state conducting blood drives, contact your State Community Director and talk about what worked in your drive to it can be included in future editions of the manual.

## SUBSEQUENT DRIVES

The blood drives you run after your first will go more smoothly, the result of your experience with your first. Consider hosting at least two drives a year. In future years, try to hold the blood drives about the same times of the year. The drives will soon become part of the habits of the parish. Some things are important to remember:

- Hold onto the sign-up sheets. They make great recruiting tools.
- With each drive there will be fewer “deferrals;” people who are turned down by the BCO because of health or travel restrictions. This results in a greater percentage of people who sign up actually donating.
- It is not uncommon for there to be a slowly diminishing number of donations per drive. If this happens, modify your recruitment tactics.
- When parishioners call the Blood Drive Coordinator “The Count” or “Dracula” you will know they have gotten comfortable with the drives and they have become part of your parish activity cycle.