

Poor Blind Candidate (PBC) Initiation Policy

INTRODUCTION

Application for membership in E Clampus Vitus® requires each Poor Blind Candidate (PBC) to be sponsored for initiation into this Ancient and Honorable Order by a member in good standing. It is the duty of every ECV® Sponsor to present worthy candidates; only those who can reflect well upon ECV and work toward improving this Order are qualified.

The initiation ritual of our Ancient and Honorable Order is the Hall of Comparative Ovations (HOCO) reading ceremony, and successful candidates are made members of ECV in good standing upon completion of their participation in the HOCO ceremony.

The HOCO ceremonial reading may vary by individual chapter but is based on the original ceremony passed down throughout the years. Each Chapter/Outpost has its own culture and some have developed pre-initiation rituals¹ and traditions that have evolved. Each Chapter/Outpost individually determines the scope and intensity of their pre-initiation ritual process by which PBCs are deemed worthy. **Each individual Chapter/Outpost is responsible for supervising and managing the safety of the PBCs at their individual functions.**

Any recognized Outpost of a Chapter must also adhere to these rules and any directives the sponsoring Chapter gives. The sponsoring Chapter must have a representative from the Chapter present at the function of the sponsored Outpost to ensure PBC safety and compliance with this policy.

Each Chapter/Outpost must utilize appropriately prepared PBC custodians (e.g., Vigilante, Hangman, White Coat, White Shirts, etc.). It is recommended that Chapter/Outpost Officers and PBC Custodians have read and are familiar with these policies prior to undertaking an initiation of new members. It is also recommended that Chapter/Outpost Officers and PBC Custodians carry a copy of these policies with them throughout pre-initiation and HOCO. It is also recommended that sponsors be aware of these policies and understand that they are responsible for the PBC until turned over to the PBC custodian. Furthermore, the PBC must fully grasp their role and be of sound mind during the entirety of the pre-initiation and HOCO initiation process and ritual.

Humorous humiliation of PBCs does not mean demoralizing or humiliating prospective candidates. All members of E Clampus Vitus were once PBCs. This process is not just about how we bring in new members, but is more importantly about whom we ask to become a member of E Clampus Vitus.

¹ Pre-initiation within this document refers to the time after the PBCs have been turned over to the Chapter from their sponsors. Any event from this point forward that takes place before HOCO is the pre-initiation.

The following requirements are intended to promote unity, fellowship, and the preservation of our culture and traditions among Chapters/Outpost of E Clampus Vitus. This policy applies to all members of E Clampus Vitus as it pertains to every PBC, from their arrival at the Clampsite to the completion of their initiation.

PRINCIPLES

ECV is an organization that prides itself on the use of harmless levity and theater for rituals and appreciation of history. Chapter/Outpost Officers and PBC Custodians must understand and embrace the following principles prior to undertaking the initiation ritual for new member applicants, namely registered PBCs.

1. **SAFETY** – PBCs must be kept safe from injury or other harmful or potentially harmful situations.
2. **CONTROL** – PBC Custodians must be in total control of the PBC group and never allow any kind of interference or harassment by any attending Clamper(s)®.
3. **PRIVACY** – The HOCO must be conducted away from the public and kept *private*.
4. **COMMON SENSE** – Assurances must be effective enough so there can be no doubt that inappropriate or dangerous activities are not conducted nor condoned during the pre-initiation or initiation process and ritual.
5. **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Each Chapter/Outpost Officer, PBC Custodian, Sponsor, and Grey Beard attending the function is responsible for the safety of all PBCs and must work within their Chapter/Outpost to ensure these policies are adhered to. A release of liability form must be signed by each PBC, and the willing participation of the PBC in all rituals/events must be expressed.
6. **ECV HISTORY** – Preserving the lore and tradition of this Ancient and Honorable Order during the pre-initiation and initiation ritual is vitally important. Along with harmless levity, each ECV member participating in the pre-initiation and initiation process and ritual should embrace and preserve the days of old and notions of the Order's three great revivifiers: Carl I. Wheat, Leon O. Whitsell, and George Ezra Dane.

PBC MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Poor Blind Candidates must:

- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Have a sponsor that is a current member in good standing of E Clampus Vitus.
- Be of good character.
- Have an interest in history.
- Have a good sense of humor.
- Be a willing participant in pre-initiation events and the initiation ritual.
- Plan on participating as an active member of E Clampus Vitus.

PRE-INITIATION/INITIATION PROCESS--Mandatory Activities

1. PBC Custodians must ask each PBC whether or not they have any allergies, physical ailments, or handicaps that would require pre-initiation and/or initiation activities to be tailored to their age and physical condition. These PBCs should be made to be easily identified to insure PBC custodians can attend to them appropriately.
2. PBCs must be sufficiently protected from the rain, cold, heat, or terrain that could adversely affect their safety and well-being.
3. PBC Custodians must ensure safety measures are in place to protect the eyes, face, genital region, and bodily orifices during activities or events hosted by the Chapter/Outpost.
4. PBCs must always be adequately hydrated.
5. PBCs placed among the public during plaque dedications and other functions must be clean, sober, and dressed appropriately so as to not be offensive. PBCs and their Custodians, Sponsors, and members must all be consciously aware and cognizant of their behavior, language, dress, and demeanor, and to ensure it reflects well upon ECV with the public. PBC presence in public settings must be socially appropriate.
6. PBCs must be given a verbal ECV history lesson consisting of the lore, mystery, and traditions of ECV as well as its history and Chapter/Outpost history. This information should be provided to all PBCs in a solemn and quiet situation. Each candidate must be able to hear and absorb what is being said. Typically, Chapters/Outposts assign this activity to their Historian. Providing written materials in the form of a PBC handbook is encouraged.
7. The HOCO initiation ceremony must be conducted in private, out of public view, and performed quietly and solemnly. Chapter/Outpost Officers, PBC Custodians, and others performing the HOCO must be sober and sufficiently practiced in their respective parts to present an understandable and memorable ceremony. The use of “good theater” is strongly encouraged.
8. Only members are permitted to view the HOCO. It is strongly encouraged that the ceremony is conducted in a private, secure location separated from the general membership in attendance to allow for an unmolested ceremony to be performed.
9. PBCs must be sober during the entire pre-initiation/initiation ritual so they can remember and appreciate ECV history and their initiation ceremony.

PRE-INITIATION/INITIATION PROCESS--Inappropriate Activities

1. PBCs must not be subjected to slurs of racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, or religious overtones. No PBC is to be singled out or given special treatment as a result of this requirement; everyone must be treated the same.
2. PBCs shall never be asked to drink or eat out of communal cups or dishware, or have communal objects placed in their mouths.

3. E Clampus Vitus prohibits pre-initiation activities or initiations that can endanger an individual's physical health and well-being or cause mental distress by intimidating or demeaning treatment. Such activities include, but are not limited to the following examples.

- Paddling in any form.
- Physical shocks; this includes but is not limited to physically abusive treatment potentially causing injury or bodily trauma through the application of excessive force or by requiring physically demanding activities where individual tolerances vary greatly.
- Morally degrading activities such as engaging in or simulating sexual acts or nudity
- Creating excessive fatigue or sleep deprivation, allowing heat buildup or cold conditions where initiates continually shiver or feel faint.
- Requiring initiates to wear public apparel which is conspicuous and not within community norms.
- Throwing/tossing substances or objects at individuals in a manner that can cause injury or be harmful.
- Placing upon PBCs any caustic or noxious substances, or mechanical, passive, or electrical devices of any kind or endangering their eyesight or hearing with these and other substances.
- Penetration, however slight, of any bodily orifice with any object or substance.
- Placing initiates in a confining or uncomfortable area/position.
- Shaving, tattooing, piercing, or branding.
- Forcing or coercing consumption or use of alcohol, drugs, fluids, solids, or substances of any type.
- Shining bright lights in faces or using laser pointers or another harmful lighting on initiates.

4. It is recommended that Clampers practicing or participating in the above-listed inappropriate activities be asked to leave the function immediately.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Where a pre-initiation/initiation process/ritual is being conducted, the above policies are to be observed by all attending ECV members. It is the responsibility of the chapter to approve and manage the pre- initiation/initiation activities and rituals conducted at their function in conjunction with and adherence to this policy. Members are to immediately ask the Chapter Humbug, the nearest available Chapter Officer, or PBC Custodian to have any improper actions halted. Responsibility for enforcement of these policies resides with the following ECV Officers attending functions where pre-initiation/initiation process/rituals are being conducted:

- Chapter/Outpost Officers (Noble Grand Humbug, Vice Noble Grand Humbug, PBC Custodians, etc., or Outpost equivalent)
- Chapter Greybeards
- Sponsors
- Proctors

The Board of Proctors shall apply adverse actions to Chapters/Outposts found to be in non-compliance with these policies.