



## 2019 LifeRing Bylaws

*Adopted by the*

LifeRing Constitutional Congress on February 17, 2001, at Brooksville, Florida;

*as amended by the*

Second Annual Congress on March 17, 2002, at Berkeley, California;  
Third Annual Congress on March 2, 2003, at Brooksville, Florida;  
Fourth Annual Congress on March 28, 2004, at Berkeley, California;  
Sixth Annual Congress on March 28, 2006, at Berkeley, California;  
Tenth Annual Congress on June 6, 2010, at Denver, Colorado;  
Thirteenth Annual Congress on June 2, 2013, at Denver, Colorado;  
Fifteenth Annual Congress on May 31, 2015, at Salt Lake City, Utah;  
Sixteenth Annual Congress on June 5, 2016, at San Diego, California;  
Seventeenth Annual Congress on June 4, 2017, at San Francisco, California;  
Eighteen Annual Congress on June 3, 2018, at Denver, Colorado; and  
Nineteenth Annual Congress on June 2, 2019, at Santa Clara, California.

### PREAMBLE

We, the members of LifeRing, Inc., in order to establish a free-standing, democratic recovery support network based on sobriety, secularity, and self-help, adopt the following Bylaws:

### ARTICLE 1

#### Purposes

LifeRing, Inc. is chartered as a nonprofit corporation to serve recovering alcoholics and addicts, and persons involved in relationships with them, and the general public, by holding meetings and public forums and similar activities, and by publishing and disseminating educational materials relative to alcoholism, addiction and recovery therefrom, and by engaging in all other activities incidental or appropriate thereto, all based on the principles of sobriety, secularity and self-help. By “sobriety” LifeRing means complete abstinence from alcohol and illicit or non-medically indicated drugs.

### ARTICLE 2

#### Offices

The corporation may establish offices as may be lawful and appropriate.

### ARTICLE 3

#### Name

The meetings, public forums, and similar activities that are dedicated to the purposes listed under Article 2 above under the auspices of LifeRing, Inc. shall have the name “LifeRing

**LifeRing Secular Recovery™**

**Mailing Address | 25125 Santa Clara St # E-359 | Hayward, CA 94544**

**800-811-4142 | service@lifering.org | LifeRing.org**

**Federal Tax Identification Number 94-3267919**

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Secular Recovery” or “LifeRing.”

#### **ARTICLE 4 Membership**

The only requirement for attendance at LifeRing Secular Recovery meetings is a desire to abstain from the use of alcohol and illicit or non-medically indicated drugs. Each attendee at a LifeRing Secular Recovery meeting if such attendee so chooses shall be a member of LifeRing, Inc.

#### **ARTICLE 5 Meetings**

**5.1** The coming together of two or more persons for the purpose of sobriety, secularity, and self-help using the LifeRing name and principles constitutes a meeting of LifeRing Secular Recovery.

**5.2** A meeting may come together either face-to-face or via electronic communication, except as otherwise provided in Sections 6.1 and 10.7 below.

**5.3** Each LifeRing meeting shall be bound and abide by the LifeRing Meeting Charter contained in Article 12 of these Bylaws.

**5.4** Meetings of LifeRing Secular Recovery are self-supporting, and are autonomous and independent, as long as the meeting complies with LifeRing principles, and except insofar as their activity affects other LifeRing Secular Recovery meetings or the LifeRing organization as a whole.

#### **ARTICLE 6 Annual Congress; Delegates**

**6.1** LifeRing, Inc. shall hold a meeting on a regular annual basis at which delegates of the LifeRing Secular Recovery meetings shall assemble face-to-face (each annual group of delegates and annual meeting, an “Annual Congress,” and the Annual Congresses in the aggregate, the “Congress”). Delegates may participate in an Annual Congress via electronic communications, if electronic access to that Annual Congress is made available.

**6.2** The Congress is the supreme deliberative and legislative body of the LifeRing organization.

**6.3** One purpose of the Annual Congress shall be to determine the matters to be voted upon by Absentee Election (as defined in Article 9) after the Annual Congress, via an Absentee Ballot, and to vote upon those matters that require ratification in order to be placed on the Absentee Ballot.



**6.4** Each public (as defined in Section 6.5 below) LifeRing Secular Recovery meeting may select one delegate to the Annual Congress. The term of service of each delegate shall be from the time of selection through the forthcoming Annual Congress for which that delegate was selected, and shall expire immediately after the Absentee Election related to and following that Annual Congress.

**6.5** A meeting is “public” for the purposes of these Bylaws if it convenes in a location accessible to the public and if its location, day, and time are posted in a manner likely to give public notice. The term “location” may also include Internet address.

**6.6** In order to be eligible to designate a delegate to represent a LifeRing meeting at an Annual Congress and/or vote on behalf of the LifeRing meeting, the meeting shall be registered with LifeRing by submitting a request by email at [service@lifering.org](mailto:service@lifering.org), or by mail at the mailing address listed on LifeRing’s website, or by other published methods of registration, at least forty-five (45) days prior to the Annual Congress. [Added 2002 and amended 2017.]

**6.7** Each member of a LifeRing Secular Recovery meeting may cast one vote for an Annual Congress delegate and, if a member attends more than one LifeRing meeting, that member may select the LifeRing meeting in which to cast that vote.

**6.7.1** Procedures for electing delegates to an Annual Congress shall be consistent with generally accepted principles of democracy and fairness, striving for simplicity and consensus. For LifeRing meetings held at in-patient facilities and at halfway houses and similar institutions with highly transient populations, or in the event any LifeRing meeting fails to elect a delegate, the convenor of that LifeRing meeting shall be recognized as the delegate. [Added 2002 and amended 2013]

**6.7.2** LifeRing, Inc. will publish the registration deadline for registering an Annual Congress delegate at least three months in advance of an Annual Congress. Each Annual Congress delegate’s name, contact information, and basis of eligibility for serving as a delegate shall be registered with LifeRing, either by email at [service@lifering.org](mailto:service@lifering.org), or by mail at the mailing address listed on LifeRing’s website, no later than the registration deadline. [Added 2013 and amended 2016.]

**6.8** In addition to delegates elected by LifeRing meetings, current members of the Board of Directors of LifeRing, Inc. (the “Board”), current LifeRing officers, and current LifeRing Regional Representatives (as defined below) shall be delegates to the Annual Congress. [Amended 2010.]

**6.9** Registered delegates shall be the only persons allowed to vote on the matters before the Annual Congress. Each registered delegate may cast one vote per matter at an Annual Congress, without regard to the number of unique qualifications held by that delegate. [Amended 2013.]



**6.10** A person designated by the Board of Directors of LifeRing, Inc. (the “Board”) shall determine the eligibility of each registered delegate, no later than one month in advance of each Annual Congress.

**6.11** Votes shall be tallied based on the method authorized by the Board pursuant to Section 9.5.

**6.12** The Congress may not abrogate or substantially amend the fundamental purposes for which LifeRing is chartered.

**6.13** The Congress shall have no power to amend the Articles of Incorporation of LifeRing, Inc. or any statement in these Bylaws that appears in the Articles of Incorporation.

**6.14** Robert’s Rules of Order shall apply to the procedures of the Congress to the extent they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws or with procedural rules the Congress may adopt.

## **ARTICLE 7**

### **Proposals for Bylaws Amendments and Board Actions [Added 2013.]**

**7.1** A delegate may submit proposals for Board actions (so long as such proposed Board actions would not violate the Bylaws or other organizational documents of LifeRing) and amendments to the Bylaws, provided that such proposals must be submitted in writing to LifeRing, either by email at [service@lifering.org](mailto:service@lifering.org), or by mail at the mailing address listed on LifeRing’s website, at least thirty days prior to the Annual Congress (the delegate who submits a proposal, an “Initiator”). The Board shall then establish a committee to work with each Initiator to review that Initiator’s proposal. In connection with such review, the committee may propose revised language for the proposal, which revised language, if any, must be provided to the Initiator by no later than 6:00 p.m. Pacific time on the seventh day prior to the first day of the Annual Congress for which the proposal was submitted. The Initiator shall have until 6:00 p.m. Eastern time on the day prior to the first day of the Annual Congress to validate any revised language proposed by the Board committee. If the Initiator does not validate the language proposed by the Board committee by that deadline, the proposal shall not be presented at that Annual Congress.

## **ARTICLE 8**

### **Board Nominations [Added 2013.]**

**8.1** LifeRing shall publish uniform guidelines outlining documentation required of all director nominees three months in advance of each Annual Congress.

**8.2** Delegates in absentia may submit nominations for Board directors in connection with an Annual Congress so long as such nominations are submitted in writing to LifeRing, either by email at [service@lifering.org](mailto:service@lifering.org), or by mail at the mailing address listed on LifeRing’s website, at least seven days prior to the Annual Congress.



**8.3** Absentee nominations shall be presented to each Annual Congress.



## **ARTICLE 9**

### **Elections [Added 2013.]**

**9.1** The following matters considered by an Annual Congress shall require that a vote occur remotely following that Annual Congress (such vote, an “Absentee Election”):

**9.1.1** Proposed Bylaws amendments ratified by the Annual Congress.

**9.1.2** Elections for positions on the Board.

**9.1.3** Proposed directives ratified by the Annual Congress.

For purposes of this Section 9.1, “ratification” of a proposal by an Annual Congress shall mean a simple majority vote in favor of that proposal by the Annual Congress.

**9.2** The matters set forth in Section 9.1 shall be placed on a ballot (an “Absentee Ballot”).

**9.3** The Absentee Ballot shall be publicly posted by LifeRing within ten days of the close of each Annual Congress, and the Absentee Election voting shall commence immediately and continue for fifteen days past the date of public posting. [Amended 2015]

**9.4** Each registered delegate may cast one vote per matter listed on the Absentee Ballot in the Absentee Election, without regard to the number of unique qualifications held by that delegate.

**9.5** Absentee Elections shall proceed according to ranked choice voting.

**9.5.1** The Board may authorize the method of ranked choice voting.

**9.5.2** The Board may authorize election by plurality.

**9.6** If a vacant Board seat was temporarily filled by the other Board members pursuant to Section 10.12, then such seat shall be filled by the nominee who was elected but received the lowest ranking votes in the Absentee Election under Section 9.5.

**9.7** Any proposed Bylaws amendment placed on the Absentee Ballot pursuant to Section 9.1 must receive a two-thirds supermajority vote in favor of such proposal in the Absentee Election in order to be adopted.

**9.8** The Absentee Ballot shall be prepared for approval by the Board, including all measures ratified by Congress, prior to being made available to delegates.

**9.9** The Board shall appoint a person to verify the validity of each vote cast in the Absentee Election and certify the results.



**9.10** LifeRing shall cause (i) the validity of each vote cast in the Absentee Election to be verified and (ii) the votes to be tallied and the results to be certified, and LifeRing shall publicly post the results of an Absentee Election within ten days of the close of voting.

## **ARTICLE 10**

### **Board of Directors**

**10.1** LifeRing, Inc. shall have a Board consisting of nine members. [Amended 2006.]

**10.2** Board members shall serve three-year terms.

**10.3** Three members of the Board shall be elected at each Annual Congress. [Amended 2006.]

**10.4** The Board shall have the following powers and duties:

**10.4.1** The Board shall control the budgets and audit the finances of the LifeRing operating entities (which entities shall be described in a LifeRing policy statement) in such a way as to implement the consensus of the Congress and to safeguard the financial integrity of the organization.

**10.4.2** In order to protect the good name of the LifeRing organization, the Board shall have the power to suspend or revoke any charter, to refuse to issue a charter, or refuse to recognize a meeting as a legitimate LifeRing meeting in cases where a group, or its convenor, persistently and substantially violates a fundamental principle of LifeRing, Inc. as to sobriety, secularity, or self-help, or persistently and substantially violates a policy statement currently published by LifeRing. Such actions may be appealed to the Annual Congress at the request of the meeting convenor involved. [Amended in 2015]

**10.4.3** The Board shall supervise, appoint, and remove the officers defined in Article 11 and the coordinators of the LifeRing operating entities (as described in a LifeRing policy statement).

**10.4.1** The Board shall have the authority to cause LifeRing, Inc. or its officers, or operating entity coordinators to take any of the actions required to be taken by LifeRing, Inc. under these Bylaws.

**10.4.2** The Board may, from time to time, appoint committees as may be permitted by law, which may be temporary or permanent committees. The committees appointed by the Board will consist of one or more members of the Board and will have such powers and perform such duties as may be prescribed by the resolution or resolutions of the Board creating such committees.

**10.4.3** The Board shall make an annual written report on its activities and its financial stewardship to each Annual Congress.



**10.4.4** The Board shall set the time and place of the next Annual Congress.

**10.4.5** The Board shall comply with all provisions of the laws applicable to nonprofit charitable corporations.

**10.4.6** The Board shall have the power to grant a charter, in the form provided in Article 12, to one not-for-profit organization in each geographical jurisdiction (the boundaries of which the Board shall determine), empowering that organization to issue and to suspend or revoke meeting charters within that geographical jurisdiction, on terms consistent with these Bylaws. [Added 2004]

**10.4.7** The Board shall have the power to appoint and remove regional representatives of LifeRing ("Regional Representatives"), who shall provide support to existing meetings and encouragement for the formation of new meetings within a region specified by the Board, including one or more on-line regions. The responsibilities of the Regional Representatives shall be specified by the Board. [Added 2010.]

**10.4.7.1** The Board shall conform, if practicable, the boundaries of the regions covered by particular Regional Representatives to the regional boundaries of any not-for-profit organizations established under Section 10.4.6. [Added 2010]

**10.4.7.2** A Regional Representative may appoint other persons within a smaller portion of the region represented by the Regional Representative to assist the Regional Representative (such other persons, "Area Representatives"). [Added 2010]

**10.5** A Board member shall be a person in recovery from a substance addiction, a member of LifeRing Secular Recovery, at least 21 years old, and shall have abstained from alcohol and illicit or non-medically indicated drugs continuously for at least two years prior to commencing service. The fact that a person serves as a LifeRing employee or officer shall not prevent such person from also serving as a Board member.

**10.6** A Board member who knowingly consumes alcohol or illicit or non-medically indicated drugs shall be deemed to have resigned effective immediately.

**10.7** The Board shall meet face-to-face each year at the conclusion of each Annual Congress, if feasible (each such meeting of the Board, an "Annual Board Meeting"). [Added 2003 and amended 2013]

## **10.8 Special Board Meetings.**

**10.8.1** In addition to the Annual Board Meetings, the Board may also meet at such other times and places as may be appropriate (each such other meeting, a "Special Board Meeting").





**10.8.2** Any mode of electronic communication which permits all directors to communicate in real time with all others shall be lawful for purposes of a Special Board Meeting under these Bylaws.

**10.8.3** Any director may convene a Special Board Meeting by giving written notice at least seven days in advance to all other Board members stating the time, place, and proposed business of the meeting. Any notice, consent, or waiver that must be given in writing under these Bylaws may be given via email.

**10.9** Five directors shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of the Board. [Added 2003 and amended 2013]

**10.10** The Board may take action without a meeting, or may meet on shortened notice, provided all directors consent to the action and/or waive notice in writing. These consents and/or waivers shall be made part of the minutes.

**10.11** If a Board member is absent from three or more board meetings in any twelve- month period, or persistently and substantially acts in a way that injures the good name of the organization, the remaining directors, upon giving at least thirty days written notice and opportunity to be heard, by their unanimous vote may remove that director from the Board. [Amended 2016]

**10.12** In case of a vacancy on the Board, either due to a Board member's resignation, removal or otherwise leaving the position, or due to a deficiency in the number of nominees for directors at an Annual Congress, the remaining Board members shall elect a replacement to serve until the next Annual Congress, at which time an election for the remainder of the term shall be held to fill any Board seat so filled, pursuant to Section 9.6.

**10.13** Board members may serve successive terms without limitation.

**10.14** No Board member or officer shall have the power to bind the corporation to any contract or to pledge its credit or incur any other liability or obligation without prior authorization by the Board.

**10.15** Board members shall serve in their roles as such without compensation. No Board member shall receive reimbursement from a third party for expenses incurred in connection with service to LifeRing, Inc. or its entities; however, a Board member may receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with service to LifeRing, Inc. or its entities from LifeRing, Inc. if approved by a majority of the rest of the Board. For the avoidance of doubt, this Section 10.15 shall not prohibit a LifeRing employee from receiving compensation for his or her services as an employee, or reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with such employment services, regardless of whether such LifeRing employee also serves as a director.



**10.16** The Board, at the first meeting after the conclusion of the Absentee Election, shall elect a Chair or Co-Chairs of the Board (the “Chair”) for the following year. The Chair shall serve at the pleasure of the Board as a whole. Actions to elect or remove the Chair shall require an absolute majority of the Board (five votes). The Chair shall be empowered to represent the Board to outside entities and shall take on other responsibilities as the Board shall assign. [Amended 2015]

## **ARTICLE 11**

### **Officers**

**11.1** LifeRing, Inc. shall have the officers required by law, namely an Executive Director, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. In addition, the Board may appoint one or more Coordinators to serve under the direction of the Executive Director. Said Coordinators shall have such responsibilities as the Board may delegate. [Amended 2010.]

**11.1.1** The Executive Director shall serve as the organization’s chief executive officer, shall comply with the duties required by the law for such an officer, and shall have such other responsibilities as the Board may delegate. [Amended 2010.]

**11.1.2** The Treasurer shall comply with the duties required by the law, shall keep the books and render financial reports, and shall have such other responsibilities as the Board may delegate. [Amended 2010.]

**11.1.3** The Secretary shall comply with the duties required by the law, shall keep minutes of Board meetings, and shall have such other responsibilities as the Board may delegate.

**11.2** The officers shall be appointed by and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.

**11.3** An officer shall be a person in recovery from a substance addiction, a member of LifeRing Secular Recovery, at least 21 years old, and shall have abstained from alcohol and illicit or non-medically indicated drugs continuously for at least two years prior to commencing service. The fact that a person serves as a LifeRing employee or Board member shall not prevent such person from also serving as an officer.

**11.4** An officer who knowingly consumes alcohol or illicit or non-medically indicated drugs shall be deemed to have resigned effective immediately.

**11.5** Officers shall serve in their roles as such without compensation. For the avoidance of doubt, this Section 11.5 shall not prohibit a LifeRing employee from receiving compensation for his or her services as an employee, or reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with such employment services, regardless of whether such LifeRing employee also serves as an officer.



## ARTICLE 12 LifeRing Meeting Charter

Pursuant to Board approval and oversight, the following charter shall govern each meeting of LifeRing Secular Recovery:

LifeRing, Inc. hereby grants the \_\_\_\_\_ (location or Internet address) meeting this charter to display the LifeRing logo and to use the name, “LifeRing Secular Recovery” and any short forms thereof, to promote sobriety, secularity and self-help. This charter is valid so long as the Meeting remains actively dedicated to these goals. For the duration of this charter, LifeRing Secular Recovery Service Center promises to list the Meeting on the LifeRing meeting list, to notify the Meeting of any publications or events that may affect it, to include the Meeting in the democratic internal decision-making process of LifeRing, Inc. pursuant to the LifeRing Bylaws, and to serve the Meeting’s needs to the best of its ability. In turn, the Meeting promises to keep the LSR Service Center informed of the current name, address, phone number, and if applicable, email address of at least one contact person for the Meeting, to notify the Center promptly of any change in its meeting time, place, Internet address if applicable, or description, and to support LifeRing, Inc. financially to the extent the Meeting sees fit. LifeRing, Inc., owner of the LifeRing logo and of the service mark “LifeRing Secular Recovery,” is chartered as a nonprofit corporation to serve recovering alcoholics and addicts, and the general public, by organizing meetings dedicated to sobriety, secularity and self-help, and by providing educational information toward that end. By “sobriety” LifeRing means complete abstinence from alcohol and illicit or non-medically indicated drugs.

[Signatures on behalf of LifeRing, Inc. and of Meeting]

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