

Supplemental Dues...

What are they? How do they work?

What are supplemental dues?

Per the AIA National bylaws, section 3 31 reads as follows:

Every Architect member who is an owner or manager in an organization using architects to perform services for the public is jointly and severally liable for the supplemental dues. Hereinafter, such an organization shall be referred to as a firm.

Who must pay supplemental dues?

AIA San Diego members who are also owners or manager of a firm are responsible for paying supplemental dues on behalf of their employees who are not individual members of AIA San Diego. (A new Architect member is not liable for payment of supplemental dues until January 2 of the year following admission.)

How are supplemental dues reported and paid?

There is a section (actually two sections...) on the renewal invoice (for licensed architects) which addresses supplemental dues. Depending on the situation of the renewing architect (sole practitioner, firm manager, firm employee, etc.), the renewing architect may or may not be responsible for reporting and paying supplemental dues. Section B determines if supplemental dues are required and Section C is a calculation table to determine the actual dollar amount of the supplemental dues.

Which firm employees get reported for supplemental dues?

When completing the paperwork and calculating supplemental dues, the architect should include everyone on the firm payroll (except part-time employees and contract employees). AIA San Diego compares supplemental dues to a per capita "tax" on each firm employee. Presumably there is a benefit to each employee as a result of having paid this tax. What's the benefit? See the answers to the next question!

What are the benefits of supplemental dues (or what does a firm receive in exchange for paying supplemental dues)?

At AIA San Diego, a firm receives two distinct types of benefits or value as a result of supplemental dues payment. These benefits are summarized as follows:

- **Marketing Value:** An AIA San Diego firm is a business entity – that markets itself via AIA San Diego – and presumably if the firm gets business from such referral and marketing assistance, every employee at the firm (from the receptionist to the HR staff to the principal) benefits. It's the "a-rising-tide-

raising-all-ships” approach. So, the marketing value (and, hence, the rising tide) benefits (or raises) every employee (all ships).

- **Member Rates at AIA San Diego:** The “per capita” payment of supplemental dues entitles every employee of your firm to attend AIA San Diego programs at the member rate – even if that person is not an individual member of AIA San Diego! So, by virtue of the supplemental dues paid on behalf of that person, he or she may do things like:
 - o Attend all 12 Lunchtime Learning events at the member price (FREE!) instead of paying the \$15 non-member price (\$180 for the year!)
 - o Go to the Design Awards at the member price – usually about \$15 instead of the non-member rate somewhere around \$25-30.

Essentially, employees who are not individual members of AIA San Diego ...

- don't receive individual communications (newsletter, emails) sent directly to their attention
- aren't eligible to use any sort of AIA credential
- can't chair an AIA San Diego committee or serve on the AIA San Diego Board of Directors
- aren't eligible for member rates at other AIA events (like AIACC's Monterey Design Conference or the AIA National Convention)

How does getting benefits for supplemental dues work logistically?

Well, granted, this part is a bit challenging to understand. When a principal renews his or her membership and indicates that he/she is the responsible party for the supplemental dues, AIA San Diego links the entire firm to that individual's membership number. For non-AIASD member employees of the firm to be eligible to get the AIA San Diego member rate, that employee will have to provide the individual member's membership number. The AIA San Diego online registration system allows for multiple individuals to be registered at the member rate provided they use the designated membership number for the firm* is utilized in the registration process.

Recognizing that it may be undesirable for employees to have access to this individual number, AIA San Diego suggests the following:

- Designate one person at the firm to be designated as the AIA San Diego “Firm Ambassador.” The following is a sort of “job description” for this person: An AIA San Diego Firm Ambassador is an outgoing, organized, efficient, and trustworthy person who is capable of communicating upcoming AIA San Diego programs to the staff of XYZ Firm and managing responses. The Firm Ambassador will receive replies, requests, etc. from firm employees who want to attend AIA San Diego programs and the Firm Ambassador will manage registration for interested parties. In the event that the firm does not cover, reimburse, etc. (for events with a fee), some money handling may be required of this individual. Desired qualifications include: initiative taking, organized, efficient, trustworthy.”

- Once a Firm Ambassador is designate, he/she becomes responsible for registering employees of the firm for AIA San Diego events. That person would then input the correct membership number (as opposed to handing out the membership number to every employee of the firm.)
- In this way, the firm can track which employees are actually taking advantage of AIA San Diego programs, services, etc.

On your honor, get set, go! Or, “What if I don’t pay or report supplemental dues?”

Well, shame on you! First of all, it is a violation of the bylaws (AIA, AIACC, and AIA San Diego) and, once it is discovered, this violation will be first reported to the AIA San Diego Board of Directors who will be asked to take action (meaning the chapter board will request that AIA terminate membership immediately for the member in violation of the bylaws).

How would AIA San Diego determine that supplemental dues were being reported inaccurately?

There are several ways that AIA San Diego verifies or researches the accurate reporting of supplemental dues:

- Staff compares supplemental dues reporting from year to year and check for inconsistent information
- Staff compares supplemental dues reporting to the size of the firm as reported on the Firm Profile on the AIA San Diego website
- Staff calls the firm and inquires as to the number of staff employed by the firm
- Staff casually asks one of your staff
- Staff asks one of your former employees... or your competitor.

What if I disagree with the concept of supplemental dues?

Everyone is entitled to an opinion, so you may very well disagree with the concept of supplemental dues; however, the bylaws, as currently written, are black and white on this matter. Members either abide by the bylaws – or are asked to leave the organization. If you disagree and opt to leave the organization, by all means, before, during, and after your departure, speak up! After all AIA is a democratic, majority driven organization – and if you think that there’s something wrong with the dues structure, you would be remiss in tacitly accepting it. What are additional actions you can take? Write to or contact the following:

In regard to AIA San Diego supplemental dues issues, contact:

- your local Board of Directors, AIASD_Board@aiasandiego.org

In regard to National supplemental dues issues, contact:

- your local Board of Directors, AIASD_Board@aiasandiego.org
- your state Board of Directors (AIACC)

- your regional directors (these are elected individuals from the region of California who sit on the National Board of Directors – and represent your interests). For 2007, they are:
 - o Anne Laird-Blanton, AIA anne@ALBdesigns.com
 - o Clark Manus, FAIA clarkm@hellermanus.com
 - o David Brotman, FAIA sunset100@verizon.net
 - o Stephan Castellanos, FAIA stephancastellanos@mac.com
- your AIA National Membership Services Director, Carol Madden, at AIA National (cmadden@aia.org)

Why are supplemental dues important?

Supplemental dues are an important income source for AIA San Diego. The revenue generated by supplemental dues allows our Chapter to continue to provide our members with quality programs, events and staff services. If you are an AIA San Diego Member Firm, we encourage you and your entire staff to take advantage of all the privileges this membership provides. If you have any questions on how to do so, just give your local staff a call – they’ll be happy to talk specifics with you! As ever, your continued support of AIA San Diego is greatly appreciated.