



Standards and Certification Training

Module A – Administrative

A6. Productive Meetings and Appropriate Ballot Comments

To ensure that you are making the most of your committee experience, this module will provide you with guidance on how to hold and participate in productive meetings and how to ensure that your ballot comments are in the best format to ensure that your comment is understood and can be addressed fully.

REVISIONS

01/18/18 Revised and restructure presentation based on the current ANSI Accredited Procedures as well as common practices

01/31/14 First Edition

MODULE A COURSE OUTLINE

- A1. Tools and Resources
- A2. Codes and Standards Products
- A3. Membership Maintenance
- A4. Honors and Awards
- A5. Publishing Codes and Standards
- A6. Productive Meetings and Appropriate Ballot Comments**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Understand the ASME policies and procedures that apply to member conduct in meetings
- Use the information presented to hold more productive meetings
- Understand common individual and group pitfalls in meetings
- Gain insight into how to make the most of your ASME meeting
- Ensure that your ballot comments are in a constructive format

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- Gain insight into how to make the most of your ASME meeting.
- Ensure that your ballot comments are in a constructive format.

I. PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Let's begin with having a productive meeting.

KEYS TO CONDUCTING A PRODUCTIVE MEETING

- Objectives
- Agenda
- Attendees
- Procedures
- Participation
- Action

To be productive, a meeting should have clearly defined objectives, an agenda with defined timing and active participation by committee members and attendees to meet the objectives while following the applicable procedures. Finally, action items need to be assigned and agreed to before the end of the meeting. The following slides will further describe the keys to conducting productive meetings.

ADVANCE PLANNING

- Why meet?
 - Exchange information
 - Drive action
 - Promote productivity
 - Foster understanding
- How and where to meet?
 - Face-to-face
 - Video conference
 - Teleconference
 - Web meeting

ASME standards and certification committees generally meet at least once a year to handle ongoing business. Meetings can also be called when there is a need to:

- Exchange information
- Drive action
- Promote productivity
- Foster understanding

Meetings can take place:

- Face-to-face
- Video conference
- Teleconference
- Web meetings or
- In a combination of any of the above.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Who should attend and why:

- Committee members
- ASME Staff (if applicable)
- Additional interested parties:
 - Stakeholder(s)
 - Groups affected by the development of the standard
 - Individuals with special knowledge/experience
 - Decision maker(s)
 - Regulatory agencies

Who should attend and why:

- Committee members
- ASME Staff (if applicable)
 - ASME Staff must attend all standards committee meetings.
- Additional interested parties
 - Since ASME committee meetings are open to the public, the committee should consider who else may want to attend so that invitations can be sent to those additional parties. Additional parties may include but are not limited to:
 - Stakeholder(s)
 - Individuals with special knowledge/experience
 - Decision maker(s)
 - Regulatory agencies

NOTE: In special cases, due to the confidential nature of the discussions, some conformity assessment and executive committee meetings may be closed to the public.

MEETING PREPARATION

- Announce meetings in advance
 - Meeting Notice/Save the date
 - Registration (if applicable)
 - Call for Agenda items
- Prepare and Distribute Agenda
 - Typically four weeks prior to meeting
- Plan and prepare advance materials
 - Pre-meeting reading and background material
 - Action items or assignments from previous meetings
- Prior to the meeting, ensure that all required meeting materials are available and equipment is in working order

- Announce meetings in advance to encourage maximum attendee participation.
 - Meeting notice/Save the date
 - Registration (if applicable)
 - Call for Agenda items
- An Agenda should be distributed in advance of the meeting. The Chair should have an idea of time-targets for each item, whether or not these are printed in the Agenda.
- Pre-assignments may also be identified, to ensure that attendees are adequately prepared for the meeting.
 - Advance materials should be planned, prepared and distributed such as:
 - Pre-meeting reading and additional background material
 - Action items or assignments from previous meetings
 - Visual aids
- Prior to the meeting, ensure that all required meeting materials have been made available and equipment is in working order.
 - If meeting remotely, perform a systems check of teleconference equipment.
 - If meeting in person, ensure that the room setup is correct, HVAC is set to a comfortable temperature and that the lighting, video, audio, projector, controls, flip charts, and marker boards are in place.

STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- CSP-10 Committee Meetings
 - selection of meeting location, requirements for meeting notices and locations and staff attendance
- CSP-34 Recording of Committee Meetings and Teleconferences by members or officers is prohibited
 - Only the secretary, who is a member of ASME's Staff, may be permitted to record a meeting under certain guidelines
- Procedures for ASME Codes and Standards Development Committees, Section 6.2, Meetings

ASME provides committees with meeting guidance within the Codes and Standards Policies and Procedures, specifically CSP-10 and CSP-34.

- CSP-10 on Committee Meetings offers guidance on selection of meeting location, requirements for meeting notices and locations and possibility of staff attendance.
- CSP-34 notes that recording of meetings and teleconferences is prohibited by any member of a committee, guests, or other attendees. Only the secretary, who is a member of ASME's Staff, may be permitted to record the meeting provided that their director approves it. These recordings are only to be used as a backup to write the minutes and may be used to record specific statements, agreements or voted actions in order to ensure correctness of actual wording of voted actions in the minutes. Recordings shall be erased after approval of the Minutes.

Finally, the Procedures for ASME Codes and Standards Development Committees, Section 6.2, Meetings adds to the CSP-10 policy with definition of a quorum and notes that on questions of parliamentary procedure not covered in these operating rules, "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be used.

RUNNING THE MEETING

Timing can be everything:

- Start the meeting on time
- Estimate time per agenda item but be flexible
- Use well-defined short breaks to divide long meetings

While the Chair of the committee has the responsibility of running the meeting, all participants can do their part to ensure that the meeting runs on time and is as productive as possible.

- The first step to ensuring proper time management is to convene the meeting on time,
- Secondly, specific time allotments for each topic may be assigned, and members should be encouraged to adhere to those limitations. It is important however to be flexible in order to address each topic sufficiently.
- For longer meetings, short breaks should be used to divide morning and afternoon sessions.

RUNNING THE MEETING

- Create a positive environment
 - “Your **attitude**, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude”
- Maintain an environment which is constructive, productive and fun
- Appropriate humor is good
 - Be aware of cultural differences
 - Use humor in good taste
- Society Policy Against Discrimination (Including Discriminatory Harassment) (P-15.9)

In addition to ensuring that meetings are run in an efficient manner, the Chair of the committee should take the lead in creating a positive meeting environment.

- The Zig Ziglar quote holds true “Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude”.

All members should be aware of the language they use, when speaking to others, as it will either project a positive, productive attitude or a negative, destructive attitude.

Everyone is responsible for helping to maintain an environment which is constructive, productive and fun.

- Appropriate humor can be good.
 - Be aware of cultural differences as ASME is an international organization.
 - Always use humor in good taste.

As a reminder, all members are expected to adhere to ASME Society Policy P-15.9 Against Discrimination (Including Discriminatory Harassment).

- Prohibited discriminatory conduct includes conduct by a member that constitutes harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, citizenship status, disability, covered veteran or military status, or any other characteristic protected by state or local equal employment opportunity laws.
- The policy states that “Harassment does not require an intent to offend. Thus, when unwelcome by the recipient, certain conduct meant as a joke, a prank, or even a compliment can lead or contribute to harassment.”

RUNNING THE MEETING

Participation is Key

- Encourage participation by all attendees
- Promote and stimulate discussion
- Focus on content not personalities
- Assist participants in expressing ideas
- Don't talk down to or argue with participants
- Keep discussion on track
 - Move unresolved items to a "Parking lot"
- Stay within allotted time
- Address any and all complaints

Although the responsibility for running the meeting ultimately resides with the Chair, all members should do their part to ensure that the meeting runs on time and is as productive as possible by:

- Encouraging participation by all attendees
- Promoting and stimulating discussion
- Focusing on content of comments and not the person's personality
- Assisting participants in expressing ideas
- Not talking down to or arguing with participants
- Helping to keep the discussion on track,
 - If the discussion has stalled, move items to a "Parking lot"
- Remembering to stay within the allotted time
- Addressing any and all complaints

COMMON SETBACKS: MEETING LEADERS

- Lack of objectives, agenda, or planning
- Loss of control or lack of a leader
- Exceed time limit
- Wrong participants in attendance
- Few dominate meeting

If you will be chairing a meeting, some common pitfalls to be mindful of, as a leader, include:

- Lack of objectives, agenda, or planning.
- Loss of control of the meeting or not showing up to the meetings.
- Exceeding the time limit and letting the meeting run too long or not achieving objectives due to lack of time.
- Not having the right participants at the meeting. The objectives of the meeting may not be achieved if the right people are not in attendance.
- Allowing a few people to dominate the meeting, which leads to a lack of participation by others.

COMMON MISTAKES: PARTICIPANT CONDUCT

- Tardiness and absenteeism
- Not paying attention
- Over or under participation (don't hog the floor)
- Lack of preparation (homework - prepare notes)
- Attacking leader/participants (professionalism - focus on information)

As a participant at meetings, you should be conscious of these common pitfalls and behaviors, and do your best to avoid them:

- **Tardiness and absenteeism**
 - Attend meetings to which you are asked. You were invited for a reason, and are sending a negative message to the leader if you don't show up.
- **Not being attentive** (for example; side conversations, sleeping, e-mail, phone calls).
 - Stay alert; involve yourself in the topic of discussion of the moment.
- **Over-participation**
 - Demanding too much attention. Listen and appreciate other people's points of view.
- **Under-participation**
 - particularly when expert knowledge is in group. Participants should contribute and be objective.
- **Lack of preparation for the meeting**
 - Participants should prepare and pick up some knowledge of the subject before the meeting. Know what the content of the meeting will be before it begins.
- **Attacking the leader or participants**
 - This can be seen as being uncooperative. Be businesslike and courteous when participating and focus your comments on the information itself, not on the person presenting the information.

COMMON MISTAKES: PARTICIPANT CONDUCT

- Side-tracking the discussion
- Conducting Side Conversations
- Overt and blatant negativism
- Fear of ridicule or embarrassment
- Unclear on future actions

- **Side-tracking the discussion**
 - Make sure your comments are relevant.
- **Conducting Side Conversations**
 - Be sure to respect your fellow members by being attentive to the discussion on the floor. Side conversations are distracting and often disrupt the meeting.
- **Overt and blatant negativism**
 - Be prepared to recognize and implement at least one good idea from the session. Anticipate applying skills and ideas learned at the session. Listen and appreciate the other person's point of view.
- **Fear of ridicule or embarrassment**
 - Being prepared for the meeting will allow you to contribute in a confident manner
- **Having an unclear understanding of future actions coming out of a meeting**
 - Work toward drawing conclusions from the meeting. Ask for clarification if future actions are unclear.

MEETING WRAP-UP

And in the end...

- Review objectives to see if they have been met
- Review assignments — who, what, when
- Discuss next meeting

Before the end of the meeting, the committee or Chair should:

- Review meeting objectives to see if they have been met. Those objectives that were not met should be identified and prioritized for the next meeting.
- Review assignments detailed during the meeting, identifying who is responsible, what needs to be accomplished, and by when.
- Discuss next meeting location and date.

POST MEETING EVALUATION

- As a result of this meeting, who is to do what, when?
Review the Minutes to ensure the actions are highlighted
- Gap analysis
 - What should we do to improve our meetings?
 - What should we not do?
 - What should we do differently?

After the meeting is complete, the Minutes should be reviewed to ensure that they have captured all actions from the meeting, including who is to do what and by when.

Following the meeting you may also want to perform a gap analysis. You can poll individual members or do your own evaluation of the following questions:

- What should we do to improve our meetings?
- What should we not do?
- What should we do differently?

II. APPROPRIATE BALLOT COMMENTS

Next, let's discuss appropriate ballot comments.

BALLOT COMMENTS

- Many of the behaviors identified in previous slides regarding participant conduct also apply to commenting on ballots. Comments should:
 - be businesslike, not discourteous or unprofessional
 - only address the items out for ballot
 - never be used as a tool to attack or belittle others
 - avoid blatant negativism
- Comments posted on C&S Connect can be viewed by all S&C Staff and may eventually be viewed by parties outside the committee (e.g. ANSI, Board Ballots, etc.)

Many of the behaviors identified in previous slides regarding participant conduct also apply to commenting on ballots. Comments should:

- be businesslike, not discourteous or unprofessional.
- only address the items out for ballot.
- never be used as a tool to attack or belittle others.
- avoid blatant negativism.

Care should be taken when making comments as all comments posted on C&S Connect can be viewed by S&C Staff, Committee Members, and may eventually be viewed by parties outside the committee (e.g. ANSI, Board ballots, etc.).

REQUIREMENTS FOR BALLOT COMMENTS

The Procedures for ASME Codes and Standards Development Committees state that:

- Disapproved votes should include an alternative action that will resolve their disapproved vote
- Disapproved votes accompanied by comments unrelated to the proposal under consideration, or without comments, shall not be further considered, are not required to be submitted for recirculation and shall be reported as disapproved without comments votes
- Comments that are not related to the proposal under consideration shall be documented and considered in the same manner as submittal of a new proposal. The submitter of the comments shall be so notified

Comments on ballots should offer suggested wording or revisions to the proposal. The Procedures for ASME Codes and Standards Development Committees state that:

- Disapproved votes should include an alternative action that will resolve their disapproved vote. (Reference 7.2.3 (d))
- In a similar manner, disapproved votes accompanied by comments unrelated to the proposal under consideration, or without comments, shall not be further considered, are not required to be submitted for recirculation, and shall be reported as disapproved without comment votes. The member who submitted the vote is not required to be notified of their right to appeal. (Reference 7.2.3 (e))
- Finally, any comments that are not related to the proposal under consideration shall be documented and considered in the same manner as submittal of a new proposal. The submitter of the comments shall be so notified. (Reference 7.2.3 (e))

EXAMPLES OF BALLOT COMMENTS

- Examples of appropriate ballot comments are:
 - Section 4.2.1(a): Replace the word “varies” with “alternates”
 - Para. 9-2.9.6(g): Change “repairs shall” to “repaired slings shall”
 - Para. 17-2.1.4(e): Delete Paragraph. This is covered in 17-2.1.1(a)
- Examples of inappropriate ballot comments are:
 - Comments not germane to proposed revisions.
 - “I don’t like this proposal/paragraph/section.”
 - “The font used in this ballot is not appropriate.”

Ballot comments should be limited to the content of the proposed revisions. Effective comments are those that note the exact location the comment is based on, as well as alternative wording that will satisfy your comment. These types of comments are clear and allow the committee to decide whether they agree or disagree, and will assist them in moving forward. Ballot comments that do not give the committee alternative wording are more likely to be misinterpreted and consequently take up a considerable amount of committee time.

For example, generic statements do not help the committee to see the point the commenter is trying to make and a response may be developed that does not address the commenter’s true reason for disapproving or providing a comment. This may result in additional, unnecessary recirculation ballots.

Commenting on font, spacing, or other layout items should be avoided as they will be addressed by the ASME editorial staff.

BALLOT RESPONSES

- The Procedures for ASME Codes and Standards Development Committees state that all comments received on a ballot shall be addressed and attempts be made to resolve all disapproved votes
- Examples of appropriate responses to comments are:
 - “Committee agrees” and/or “comment accepted”, followed by proposed action
 - “Committee disagrees” and/or “comment not accepted”, followed by reason for disagreement with comment

ANSI Essential Requirements states that “all objectors shall be advised of the disposition of the objections and the reasons therefor”. To satisfy this requirement, our procedures state that the Project Team shall address all comments and shall attempt to resolve all disapproved votes. Therefore, appropriate responses to ALL comments received on a ballot must be provided.

Examples of appropriate responses to comments are:

- “Committee agrees” and/or “comment accepted”, followed by proposed action. Proposed action examples could be stating the revision or future action to be taken.
- “Committee disagrees” and/or “comment not accepted”, followed by the reason for disagreeing with the comment.

Examples of inappropriate responses are:

- “The committee found your comments non-persuasive.”, without a reason provided.
- “You are the only one with this concern.”
- “The committee did not agree with your comments.” without a reason provided.

Just as it helps the committee to receive comments in the correct format, appropriate responses to all comments received on a ballot will ultimately assist in the resolution of the ballot comments.

Care should be taken when preparing and posting responses to ballot comments. All Comments and responses posted on C&S Connect can be viewed by S&C Staff, Committee Members, and may eventually be viewed by parties outside the committee (e.g. ANSI, Board ballots, etc.).

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MODULE SUMMARY

- Hold meetings at least once per year or as required, as determined by the standards committee or the Chair on behalf of the standards committee
- Proper preparation for the meeting includes developing an agenda or outline which leads to the achievement of the meeting's objectives
- Leaders and members all play a role in a productive meeting
- Appropriate and constructive comments on ballots saves the committee time and will ensure that your comments are adequately considered by the committee

- Meeting should be held at least once per year or when required as determined by the standards committee or the Chair on behalf of the standards committee.
- Prepare for the meeting by developing an agenda or outline which leads to the achievement of the meeting's objectives.
- Leaders and members all play a role in a productive meeting
 - Be mindful of the pitfalls discussed in previous slides for both leaders and participants.
- Appropriate and constructive comments on ballots saves the committee time and ensure that your comments are adequately considered by the committee.

REFERENCES

- ASME C&S Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines
<http://cstools.asme.org/csconnect/CommitteePages.cfm?Committee=L01200000&Action=7609>
- ASME Society Policies
https://www.asme.org/about-asme/who-we-are/governance/asm-society-policies?cm_re=Governance--Left%20Navigation-ASME%20Society%20Policies