

**TMS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S
POLICY GUIDE**

Accepted by TMS Board of Directors, May 2001

INTRODUCTION

The Masonry Society (TMS) has numerous committees to assist with furthering its mission to advance the knowledge of masonry. All committee activities are overseen by TMS's Board of Directors. The Executive Committee and Nominating Committee Report directly to the Board of Directors. All other TMS committees are divided into two groups: administrative and technical.

Administrative committees report to the Administrative Committee Team (ACT), which is responsible for oversight of the administrative committee activities. Technical committees report to the Technical Activities Committee (TAC), which directs, coordinates, and reviews the activities of the technical committee. TAC operates under the Technical Committee Operations Manual, which is available from the TMS Office, and which is posted on TMS Website at www.masonrysociety.org.

Committee policy is dictated by Section VII of the TMS Bylaws.

The purpose of this Manual is to provide information to Administrative and Technical Committee Chairs to assist them in the management of their committees. The manual does not supersede either the TMS Bylaws, or the Technical Committee Operations Manual

ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Establishing Committees and Missions

The ACT is authorized to recommend establishing administrative committees to the President and the Board of Directors. Likewise, TAC is authorized to recommend establishing technical committees to the President and the Board of Directors for approval. Actions of administrative committees are subject to review and approval by ACT while the actions of technical committees are subject to review and approval of TAC.

Both ACT and TAC are also responsible for assigning specific missions for committees under their jurisdiction. Changes in mission and scope may be proposed by any committee but must be referred to either ACT or TAC for approval.

Both administrative and technical committees may be established as joint committees with other organizations. Joint committees must meet all TMS requirements in the conduct of their activities.

Contact Member

TAC and ACT may designate one of their members to act as a liaison to a committee. The purpose is to keep TAC and ACT abreast of committee activities. Committee chairs should keep any designated contact member informed of committee activities and progress and should consider these contact members as a source of advice and information.

Membership

Administrative Committee Chairs are appointed by ACT. Technical Committee Chairs are appointed by TAC.

Committee members are appointed by Committee Chairs. Recommendations or approval of new members on a committee must be forwarded to TMS headquarters along with information on classification and membership status recommended (if required for the committee), that is, full voting member or corresponding member status.

Full voting membership on a TMS Administrative committee is restricted to TMS members. TMS membership, while encouraged, is not a requirement for voting status on a TMS Technical Committee.

The committee chair should work closely with TMS headquarters to maintain an up-to-date committee roster. The chair should identify inactive members, who may be dropped from membership in accordance with TMS Bylaws and policies.

Committee chairs are appointed for a three-year term, and may be re-appointed for a second term. Committee chairs are expected to identify committee members who would make suitable committee chairs.

Organizing the Committee

Considerable flexibility is given to the committee chair with respect to committee organization. For example, committee officers, such as Vice-Chair, Secretary and Membership Secretary may be appointed by the chair.

Task Groups may be established to address specific tasks identified by the committee.

Balance on some committees (especially those producing mandatory language standards) may be required.

Discharge of Committee

Committees that are inactive, ineffective, or have completed their mission may be discharged or reorganized by ACT or TAC, with the approval of the Board of Directors.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Frequency of Meetings

Committees meet when there is business to be transacted. Normally, committee meetings are held in conjunction with and prior to regular meetings of the TMS Board of Director meetings. However, other meetings of committees may be called for by the committee chair and held at any time suitable to the members of the committee.

Meeting Preparations

It is important to note that the responsibility for preparing for an effective committee meeting lies with the committee chair regardless of whether that chair will be in attendance

An important first step in preparing for a committee meeting is to contact committee members who have been given specific assignments and review their progress to date. If such members are unable to attend the meeting, the chair is responsible to ensure that any pertinent information will be reported at the committee meeting.

The chair should contact his oversight committee to see if ACT or TAC has agenda items for the committee. The chair should also contact the Executive Director to see if there are any items for the agenda from TMS headquarters.

Agendas

After the information is gathered, the meeting agenda is prepared. The use of an agenda ensures logical coverage of important business items, while minimizing side issues and nonproductive discussion. The agenda is an indispensable organizational tool for running a meeting.

The agenda should be prepared and circulated at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. This is very important because it enables the committee members to attend the meeting prepared to make decisions on

specific actions. In addition, an agenda may create a specific interest in attending the meeting. Wherever possible, agenda items should include the background of each subject to be discussed and the goal statement for that subject. To adequately prepare the committee members, it is important to include substantive and specific information.

At this point in the meeting preparation, the chairperson should anticipate the procedures he or she will follow to resolve items that will be discussed at the meeting. If the chairperson is unsure about the policies and procedures that might be involved, the Technical Activities Committee (TAC) or Administrative Committee Team chairperson (ACT) should be consulted.

Other general information can be included as follows:

- Name of group
- Date, place, starting and ending time of meeting
- Call to order and call for proxy votes
- Approval of the previous meeting's minutes and corrections
- Review of Agenda
- Membership changes
- Special announcements
- TAC or ACT Chairperson report on headquarters activities of interest
- Reports from chairpersons of related groups
- Ballot reports
- Consideration of negative votes and comments on relevant committee ballot items
- Old business not disposed of at previous meetings
- New business – such as action on votes related to the previous meeting
- Announcement of the date and location of the next meeting
- Adjournment (include scheduled time)
- Attachments (any written reports to be considered at the meeting)

Directing a Meeting

In addition to distributing the agenda prior to the meeting, the chairperson should bring copies of the agenda to the meeting. If, for some reason, the chairperson cannot attend the meeting, the chairperson must find an appropriate replacement and brief that person on the prepared agenda.

Always start your meetings on time. This ensures that the times noted on the agenda will be observed. Attendees will come to realize that future meetings will start on time and they will be prompt in the future.

Your committee should appoint a secretary. Ensure that person is in attendance and is prepared to take the minutes of the meeting. In the absence of the secretary, appoint someone to take the minutes. A chairperson who takes his own minutes will not be able to excel in either function.

It is a good policy to use Robert's Rules of Order to govern the meeting. Questions on parliamentary procedure should be decided by the chairperson of the meeting. The chairperson should decide how formally he/she will run the meeting. Generally, when there are controversial issues to be discussed, a more formal meeting is appropriate. Consult the TAC chairperson or ACT chairperson or staff when questions arise concerning policies and procedures. Common sense and the spirit of fair play should provide guidance in most instances.

The role of the chairperson is to remain neutral, to recognize attendees who wish to speak, and to maintain order. The chairperson should not discuss the merits of a motion and, although the chairperson always has the right to vote, he/she usually does not except in the case of a tie vote.

Attendance

An attendance sheet for both members and visitors should be circulated at each meeting. Member attendance and visitor sheets should be kept for the minutes. It is proper to acknowledge the presence of late arrivals, indicating briefly which agenda item is being discussed, before asking these people to sign the attendance sheet.

Scheduling Committee Operations

Be familiar with the scheduling requirements for committee projects. Be familiar with the schedule for the agenda, minutes and deadlines. If these suggested schedules are not followed, serious inefficiencies may result.

Time Management

Since most committees have such a short time in which to meet, management of the meeting time is critical. It is the responsibility of the chairperson to ensure that repetitive or off-topic discussions are kept to a minimum. The agenda is the chairperson's key tool for ensuring progress. For example, if the time allotted for a specific item is almost up the chairperson can say, "Ladies and Gentlemen our time is just about up for this topic, we need to make a decision. Would anyone like to make a motion?" or "Ladies and Gentlemen, may we now proceed with the next agenda item?"

Another key to effective time management is delegation of authority. When a problem arises for which there is no immediate solution, the chairperson should appoint a committee member or task group to investigate and report back recommendations by mail or at the next meeting. This approach can save hours of fruitless discussion by the larger group

Meeting Minutes

Minutes should be distributed so that they can be reviewed before the next meeting. Ideally they should be submitted for distribution within 30 days after the meeting; the TAC or ACT Chairperson will provide a deadline date.

A copy of all committee minutes and official committee correspondence must be submitted to TMS Headquarters where the official records for the committee resides. A copy should also be sent to the chair or contact of the oversight committee (ACT or TAC). Unofficial correspondence such as those simply checking on the status of a committee project, queries of members to see if they will be attending upcoming meetings, and similar correspondence does not need to be forwarded to TMS Headquarters.

COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION

Committee Ballots

Committee ballots should be issued as soon as possible after the meeting and closed no less than one month before the next meeting. Closing date must be no earlier than 30 days after issue date. Copies of all official ballots and ballot summaries must be submitted to the TMS Headquarters where the official records for the Committee are kept. A copy should also be sent to the chair or contact of the oversight committee (ACT or TAC). Unofficial correspondence such as those simply checking on the status of a committee project, queries of members to see if they will be attending upcoming meetings, and similar correspondence does not need to be forwarded to TMS Headquarters.

Schedules and Agendas

Mailing time for schedules and agendas is controlled by hotel reservation requirements. Typically, reservation requests must be received by the hotel three to four weeks before the start of the meeting. Schedules should be mailed well in advance of the meeting to allow attendees to make travel plans, at the very least, six weeks before the hotel reservation date. Ideally the agenda should be mailed to the members with the schedule. They may be mailed separately. Agendas may be mailed directly to the committee members or to the society office for distribution. If they are mailed directly, also mail one copy to the TMS office, and the chair or contact of the oversight committee (ACT or TAC).

Annual Reports

Technical committee chairs are required to submit an annual report to TAC. The annual report should describe progress on committee work, committee plans, other helpful information for TAC, and suggested successors for the technical committee chair. A sample form is provided in the Technical Committee Operations Manual.

Administrative committee chairs are required to submit an annual report. The annual report should describe progress on committee work, committee plans, other helpful information for ACT, and suggested successors for the administrative committee chair. A sample form is provided in the Appendix A.

Future Meetings

The chairperson must ensure that dates and locations for future committee meetings are announced. It is important that actual dates for seminars and workshops be included in this announcement. Future sites and dates will be announced regularly by TMS. In the event a committee does not elect to meet during a regular TMS meeting, the chairperson or his designee is advised to contact the TAC or ACT chairperson or contact. After the site and date are chosen, usually by the Executive Committee, the staff will prepare an estimate of the meeting requirements and provide a detailed schedule by the necessary deadlines.

SUBCOMMITTEES AND TASK GROUPS

Mission or Purpose

Subcommittees or task groups are small working groups responsible for a specific assignment (that is development of a draft project or program or implementation of study) within a given time period. Subcommittee or task group chairpersons may be appointed by the committee chairperson.

Organization

Once consensus has been obtained from the committee to establish a subcommittee or task group, the subcommittee or task group chairperson asks for volunteers from the committee to serve on the subcommittee or task group, or the committee chairperson appoints members. The assistance of other experts in the field may be solicited. Experience has shown that fairly small subcommittees or task groups work best. Four to six members are a good manageable size. A balance of interests is recommended and may be required for some technical committees accordingly to the Technical Committee Operating Manual. Subcommittees or task groups should have a clear mission statement as well as a realistic schedule of target dates leading to completion of the mission. Each subcommittee or task group typically meets twice a year, in conjunction with the regular TMS meetings. Subcommittee or task group members are encouraged to meet between regular committee meetings or utilize other means such as teleconferencing and facsimile to accomplish their work. Subcommittee or task group members need not be members of TMS and no formal roster for subcommittee or task groups is maintained at TMS. Upon completion of the mission, the subcommittee or task group is disbanded.

Chairpersons

If a subcommittee or task group is appointed, usually the committee chairperson appoints the chairperson. This is an important decision because a subcommittee's or task group's success often relates directly to the administrative leadership of its chairperson. Therefore, chairpersons should possess good leadership ability and managerial skills. They do not have to be the foremost technical expert; the members will contribute to the technical excellence of any committee products.

Subcommittees must have a chairperson and may have a vice-chairperson and a secretary. The time commitment required of these subcommittee officers is not trivial. Do not accept such a post unless you are willing and able to put in the number of hours required. The committee chairperson may provide an estimate of the time commitment.

Guidance and Advice

The chair or contact for your overseeing committee (ACT or TAC) are excellent sources of information and should be contacted for guidance on running your committee when needed. In addition, past chairs of your committee, and chairs of other committees can be helpful when you have questions or concerns. TMS staff can assist the chair in matters of processing committee correspondence, ballots, and other work. TMS works most effectively as a team – if you ever have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask. Your success as chair is a reflection on both you and TMS, and we want to help you succeed. Thank you for your service as chair!

APPENDIX A: ANNUAL REPORT FOR TMS COMMITTEES

2xxx ANNUAL REPORT OF TMS COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

COMMITTEE:

CHAIR:

DATE:

1. COMMITTEE WORK (What did the Committee produce in the past calendar year?)

2. COMMITTEE PLANS (What does the Committee plan to produce in the next calendar year?)

3. OTHER COMMENTS

4. SUGGESTED SUCCESSORS FOR COMMITTEE CHAIR

Suggested Candidates	Administrative Skills	Time and Support	Technical Knowledge	Meeting Skills	Personal Attributes	Total
Maximum Rating	5	4	4	4	3	20