

U.S. Masters Swimming

Handbook for Committee Chairs

(Last revised December 28, 2023)

Committee Chairs

Who selects the committee chair? The President

Where can the definition of each committee be found? [Article 507.1 of the USMS Rule Book](#)

What is the first responsibility of a committee chair? Establish a plan for the year; communicate it to the vice president of the division and committee members

What are other responsibilities of a committee chair?

- a. Communicate, delegate and inspire enthusiasm and creativity to achieve the committee goals
- b. Prepare and file reports as required in the Working Calendar (see quarterly *Streamlines*)

How are my USMS annual meeting expenses paid?

- a. Chairs of standing and ad hoc committees have an automatic vote in the House of Delegates. They do not have to be elected as a USMS annual meeting delegate by their LMSCs.
- b. The USMS annual meeting registration fee is paid by USMS as a Masters bill, and is billed to the master annual meeting budget.
- c. USMS annual meeting expenses (travel, double-occupancy room) for chairs of standing committees are paid for by USMS through the USMS annual meeting budget.

Who is my vice president?

a. The **Vice President of Administration** supervises Legislation, Records and Tabulation and Rules.

The **Vice President of Local Operations** supervises History and Archives, Recognition and Awards, and LMSC Development.

The **Vice President of Community Services** supervises Coaches and Diversity & Inclusion.

The **Vice President of Programs** supervises Championship, Officials and Long Distance.

b. Your vice president should be your first contact when you have a question.

c. Include your vice president in all committee correspondence.

Where can I find out who the other committee chairs are?

A complete list is in the [Organizational Structure section](#) of the USMS website

Committee Members

How are the committee members selected?

a. The president selects committee members from the request forms. Request forms can be submitted by any USMS member. The committee chair and division vice president are involved in the decisions.

b. Members from all zones are included whenever possible.

c. There are specific requirements for certain committees.

What are committee members' responsibilities?

- a. Regular attendance at meetings is a given. If a committee member cannot attend a scheduled meeting, they should contact the Chair.
- b. Committee members should respond to correspondence from the chair and other committee members. Please remember to "reply all" as appropriate to keep your committee informed.
- c. Committee members should accept responsibilities when the chair is delegating tasks.
- d. Committee members must have the **written** approval of the committee chair before incurring any expenses on behalf of the committee. Receipts for the expenses must be saved and submitted with a reimbursement form to the committee chair.

Can a committee member be replaced?

- a. Yes. Unfortunately, some members of a committee may be unresponsive for various reasons.
- b. The committee chair should try to determine the reason and whether the person wants to continue as a member of the committee.
- c. If you believe a committee member should be replaced, contact your Vice President and the President. Removal or replacement on a committee is at the final discretion of the President.

What is the status of committee members within the House of Delegates?

- a. All voting members of the Finance, Legislation, Long Distance, Rules Committees and Zone chairs are automatically members of the House of Delegates and have voting privileges. Members of these committees do *not* have to be elected by their LMSC to be a delegate.
- b. Members of other committees must represent their LMSC as a delegate or be an at-large delegate to vote in the House of Delegates.

Financial Responsibilities

Does each committee have a budget for the year?

- a. Each committee operates differently. Contact your Vice President.

- b. It is very important for all committee chairs to be aware of their budgets, including the actual breakdown of the line items that make up the budget and how much was allowed for each item. To request a copy of the current budget, [contact Volunteer Services](#).
- What do I do with my budget?
- a. You should track all expenses submitted for reimbursement in order to be aware of the remaining budget amounts.
 - b. Instruct your committee members that written approval from you is required before they can incur any expenses. A reimbursement request form (with receipts) must be sent to you for approval of all expenditures. You will sign the request form and send it to Reimbursements2@usmastersswimming.org for reimbursement. Forms and instructions can be found on the [Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines page](#).
- What is FOG?
- a. Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines of USMS.
 - b. A current copy of USMS' Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines are available on the [Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines page](#).
- How do I get reimbursed for my expenses?
- a. A copy of the reimbursement form can be found on the [Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines page](#) of the USMS web- site.
 - b. Complete the reimbursement form and attach receipts or documentation of the expenses. Put the committee account number on the form; it can be found with your committee name on the budget.
 - c. Email forms to Reimbursements2@usmastersswimming.org. Or mail them to Reimbursements, USMS, 1751 Mound Street, Suite 204, Sarasota, FL 34236.
 - d. Reimbursement forms for committee members must have the signature of the chair. The chair keeps track of amounts approved for the committee and forwards the signed reimbursement form to Reimbursements2@usmastersswimming.org.

Are there other expenses that are charged to a committee's budget?

- a. Yes. Requests to the [Volunteer Services](#) for stationery, envelopes, special reports, etc., are charged to the committee.

How do I prepare a budget for next year?

- a. Your Vice President will assist you in completing your budget. Request a copy of the budget submitted for the current year and save it for future reference. It is important to know how the budget amount was allocated and what has been spent in previous years. You will be asked to submit a budget in August.
- b. The forms for preparing your budget will be sent to you by the Controller. They must be reviewed and approved by your Vice President before they can be submitted to the Controller.
- c. Keep track of your committee's expenses each year. If the budget amount needs to be increased, you must be able to justify the increase. Try to be as realistic as possible.

Responsibilities, Duties and Deadlines

How can I keep track of things I need to do?

- a. [Use the Volunteer Working Calendar](#), which you will find in each issue of *STREAMLINES for Volunteers*. The Working Calendar lists important dates by month.
- b. Meetings will also be scheduled virtually through Zoom. Contact Volunteer Services or your Vice President for details.
- c. Refer to the minutes of your committee's previous meetings and the plan you submitted to your liaison periodically to be sure you are carrying out policies and tasks.

Streamlines

STREAMLINES ... from the National Office is a series of publications sent throughout the year. The e-newsletters are compiled by Staff with the assistance of key volunteers. The newsletters include reminders of important due dates and other useful information.

What else is important to remember as I get started?

Develop an attitude of teamwork and commitment. This can be accomplished by:

- a. Communicating with your committee. This is extremely important. Include committee members in decisions.
- b. Delegating tasks to committee members.
- c. Inviting and fostering creativity. Let your committee members initiate ideas and take on projects.
- d. Using all available resources. Other committees may have additional expertise and experience to help you accomplish your goals.
- e. Giving full credit for a job well done! Recognition and thanks go a long way toward achieving commitment and realizing the potential of your committee members.

How do I get contact information for my committee?

[Contact Volunteer Services](#)

What reports are required throughout the year?

- a. Regular reports are required as designated by your Vice President.
- b. Meeting minutes should be submitted via email to either [Volunteer Services](#) or the [USMS Secretary](#) in a timely fashion. The meeting minutes template is available on the [National Committees page](#).
- c. A final report must be submitted before USMS annual meeting, for inclusion in the pre- USMS annual meeting packet. Submit your report to your Vice President at the appropriate time. You will be sent the Annual Report form at the appropriate time.

What should I do to prepare for USMS annual meeting?

- a. Prepare the following items and submit them to your vice president (for their

review and approval):

- The annual report of the work your committee has done.
 - The agenda for your USMS annual meeting meeting(s).
 - The budget requests for the next year. Be sure you have last year's budget request and a list of expenses for the current year. You must itemize your budget request.
- b. Determine which committee members will be attending the annual meeting and make sure they are aware of the work to be done.
 - c. Notify your liaison if your committee will not have the zone representation at USMS annual meeting that is required by the rule book (if applicable).

Is it important to have access to email?

Yes, it is very important! Communication is much easier and faster when the committee chair and all members of the committee are online. It is also easier and faster for others in leadership positions to communicate with you.

[Community](#) is the preferred way for committee file sharing, collaboration, and communication. Your committee's members will be able to access your committee's private threads.

What can I do to make the job of committee chair easier for me and for the person who will take my place?

- a. Keep notes (preferably in a readily-readable, editable electronic form) for your reference and for the committee chair who succeeds you.
- b. Retain committee minutes, schedules for ongoing projects, budget details, outline of duties, copies of all committee correspondence and other pertinent correspondence.
- c. Include your yearly plans that were submitted to your vice president.
- d. Use this notebook while you lead your committee and be prepared to pass it on to the chair who succeeds you.

What other information might I find valuable?

- a. [USMS Style Guide](#)
- b. Format for reports and USMS annual meeting minutes: See the **Resources for Committees** subsection of the current [Annual Meeting page](#) on the USMS website for instructions and templates.
- c. [Content Types for Committees and Process for Consideration](#)
- d. [Communication Plan](#)
- e. Current [USMS Policies and Governance sections](#) of the USMS website.

What should I do if I have a problem?

- a. Your Vice President should be your first point of contact.
- b. Contact Volunteer Services
- c. Contact the President.

APPENDIX B

USMS Electronic Media Communication Policy

The use of USMS online communication tools such as forums and social media sites is a privilege and a benefit that can enhance the member experience. Members of the Board of Directors need to be aware that they have special responsibilities when using these communication opportunities. Because of their position, they may be seen as representing the views of USMS as an organization. Improper communication behavior by Board members can damage the reputation of USMS or create liability. Therefore, USMS Board members should adhere to the following when communicating on social media, blogs, and on-line forums (collectively “Electronic Media”).

Transparency – Board members who use Electronic Media should clearly state whether they are speaking on behalf of themselves or the USMS organization. Generally, unless granted specific authorization, only the President and Executive Director should speak on behalf of USMS. When speaking on behalf of oneself on Electronic Media, Board members should state that any opinions they express are their own and not necessarily those of USMS. While some commenters on Electronic Media have the option of remaining anonymous publicly, USMS Board members should disclose who they are and should not use anonymous aliases.

Accuracy – USMS Board members should use reasonable efforts to ensure that their Electronic Communications are true and accurate. Clearly distinguish opinions from facts. Even if one is stating an opinion, a Board member should ensure that his or her statements are accurate. Ambiguity, exaggeration and hyperbole should be avoided, as they can lead to misinterpretation.

Confidentiality – Board members should not disclose confidential information on Electronic Media. See the USMS Confidentiality Policy. Information posted electronically can spread rapidly and broadly, with little ability to retrieve the information once revealed. This makes following the Confidentiality Policy especially important for Electronic Media.

Respect – When Board members communicate on Electronic Media, they should be considerate and respectful of others. Choose words carefully and keep in mind that readers may have different sensitivities. A good guideline is to imagine whether you would be comfortable communicating what you are saying electronically face-to-face with the recipients or the person who is the subject of your communication. Since the USMS Board speaks with one voice after decisions have been reached, Board members should not use Electronic Media to criticize Board decisions or Board members.

Legal – Board members should communicate within the bounds of the law. Unless one is acting as Legal Counsel, Board members should not state legal conclusions or opinions. Board members should also abide by copyright laws when using Electronic Media and should not broadly communicate the copyrighted work of others without authority or permission.

Those Board members who participate in Electronic Media should endeavor to use it as an opportunity to further the mission and values of USMS.

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