REFERENCE MANUAL

ASHRAE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Last Revision (Joslyn Ratcliff): April 22, 2024

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Purpose - Communications Committee Reference Manual

Purpose
This reference manual describes the operation of the ASHRAE Communications Committee. It helps members understand the logistics of committee work and their role as a committee member.

The reference manual is intended to be…
- An informal guide to the operations, customs, and procedures of the committee.
- Documentation of tribal knowledge, or knowledge that is known to committee members but may not be documented.

This reference manual does not take the place of governing documents such as the Manual of Procedures (MOP) or Rules of the Board (ROB). See SECTION H – GOVERNANCE of this document for details. If any of the information in the Reference Manual is contradictory to the Communications Committee MOP, the MOP is the authoritative document.

This document should be reviewed and updated annually at the start of the chair's term. Any Communications Committee member can request or suggest changes to the Reference Manual. Because this document is an internal reference manual, no committee vote is required for changes and council approval is not required (unlike for the separate Manual of Procedures document). Previous versions of this document should be stored on the committee's Basecamp Project under Docs & Files > Operations and Governing Docs > Reference Manual.

SECTION A – RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

The Communications Committee is made up of one Chair, one Vice Chair and six additional committee members for a total of eight committee members. A consultant may be appointed according to the rules set forth in the Communications Committee MOP.

The Chair and Vice Chair are appointed by the Society President-elect to serve a one-year term.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

The Job Description for Committee Members can be found on ashrae.org and in the Committee's Basecamp project. It is anticipated the time commitment is about 5 to 10 hours per month.

Each member of the committee is responsible for:
- Serving a term usually of three years
    - Members are appointed by the Society President-elect
        - Members can be nominated using the online nomination form.
        - Normally these nominations are due in February for the next Society year and are announced in March-April before the start of the next Society year.
- Attending and actively participating in committee meetings. See SECTION E – MEETINGS AND FREQUENCY.
- Completing work to support the MBOs or tasks assigned in a timely manner.
- Completing work assigned as a result of an action item, referred motion or other means in a timely manner.

- Communicating with the staff liaison by responding to communications in a timely manner.

Responsibilities of Committee Chair

In addition to the responsibilities defined above, the Communications Committee Chair is responsible for:

- Driving completion of established MBOs for the Society year (see SECTION G – MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES)
- Responding to requests and/or referred Motions from Member Council
- Responding to requests sent by staff liaison on behalf of members / other committees / councils /staff and engaging other members from the committee as appropriate on such requests.
- Working with staff liaison to create the meeting agendas, note the staff liaison can create a draft agenda for edits, additions, deletions and changes. Staff liaison can also distribute agenda.
- Working with staff liaison to schedule and plan conference calls between the winter and annual meetings. (Normally these are scheduled after the annual meeting for the upcoming Society year.)
- Working with the Vice Chair to establish and maintain a succession plan of key committee roles and initiatives.
- Prepare Reports to Members Council
  - The Chair is required to submit a report of the Communications Committee meeting to Members Council prior to the Member's Council meeting. The staff liaison will prepare the report for the Chair's comments, edits and approval. It is the responsibility of the Chair to approve the report prior to the deadline needed for Members Council meeting. Normally the report will be submitted Sunday before the Tuesday Council meeting. Staff liaison will coordinate with Chair on a timeline for providing report for approval and final deadline for submitting to Members Council at each meeting.
- Attending the Members Council meetings (four per year)
  - Winter & Annual Conferences: held Tuesdays from 8:15 AM until 12 PM.
  - Fall/Spring meetings, which are scheduled in advance by the Members Council chair and can be held in-person or virtually. (Transportation reimbursement is not provided but normally the meetings are virtual and if not, there is almost always a virtual option.)
  - The Chair is a voting member of Members Council with voting privileges at these meetings.

Responsibilities of Committee Vice Chair

The Vice Chair, in addition to the responsibilities defined above for Committee members, is responsible for:

- Developing MBOs for the Society year which they become Chair of the committee.
- Supporting the Chair as needed, which may include, but is not limited to, responding to requests from Ad Hoc committees and other entities within the Society to provide information, respond to questions or determine who on the committee can respond to such requests.
- In general, the Vice Chair is appointed by the Chair to serve as the Committee's representative to the Members Council PAOE Subcommittee.
- Other responsibilities as determined by the Chair.

SECTION B - SUBCOMMITTEES

Standing or ad hoc subcommittees of Communications Committee are determined by the Chair based on the broad needs of the Society and work being done in the Committee. The Chair can also decide not to have any subcommittees or ad hocs. When / if subcommittees and ad hocs exist, they generally follow the practices outlined below.

Some examples of past subcommittees are:
- **Strategic Planning** – established the vision and direction for the committee, including future possible initiatives, potential members, subcommittee/ad hoc/liaison assignments, and oversight of governing documents. Normally this committee would include the Chair, Vice Chair, subcommittee chairs, and any Consultants.
- **Electronic Collaboration Tools** - evaluates and supports digital collaboration tools for the Society, such as Basecamp. Creates guidance and policies for these tools.
- **Social Media** – evaluates and supports social media platforms. Creates guidance and policies for these tools. Reviews Society social media management and metrics.
- **Websites** – responsible for websites needed in Society groups, including chapter, regional, technical committees, and Society website. Establishes guidance, templates, and policies.

SECTION C - LIAISONS

The Chair may appoint committee members to serve as liaisons to specific ASHRAE groups. Liaisons help promote the work of the committee and address concerns.

SECTION D - BASECAMP

The Committee uses a Basecamp Project to organize documents, collaborate, capture historical collaboration, and collaborate with one another. Committee members are expected to use Basecamp for committee work. All resources pertinent to this committee should be posted on the committee's Basecamp project.

All committee members are invited to join the Communications Committee Basecamp project while they are active members. If the committee member is already a member of another ASHRAE Basecamp project, it is important that they provide the staff liaison with the email address being used so that they can be properly invited, otherwise the email address on the roster will be used. Contact Joslyn Ratcliff, Communications Committee staff liaison, at jratcliff@ashrae.org for more information.

Incoming members and ASHRAE Regional Communications Chairs are also normally included on the committee's Basecamp project.

SECTION E – MEETINGS AND FREQUENCY

Per the rules of the Board, rule 2.105.001 Standing Bodies 10-01-27-01/11-06-26-21C, the Committee is authorized to meet in-person three times each year: once at each Society meeting (winter and annual), and one additional time, although the third meeting has not taken place in at least 10 years Virtual meetings are set by the Chair and customarily occur monthly or bi-monthly.

In-Person Meetings

In-person meetings are held during the Winter (normally late January or early February, depending on

the timing of the Winter Conference) and Annual (normally late June) Society Conferences in-person.

- Meetings are held on Saturday from 11 AM to 3 PM.

- Locations for future ASHRAE Winter and Annual Conferences can be found on ashrae.org.

Transportation costs to attend the meeting will be paid by the Society as outlined in the Transportation Policy. Tickets must be purchased following the ASHRAE travel reimbursement policy. Room and board or other costs are not reimbursed. Incoming members receive transportation reimbursement to attend the Annual meeting. See https://www.ashrae.org/conferences/conference-resources/travel for more information, including the policy. Please refer to the staff liaison with any questions.

Virtual Meetings

Virtual Meetings are held at a frequency determined by the chair.

- Meeting times and dates, along with joining information are posted to the committee's Basecamp project as well as sent via Outlook as calendar invitations to individuals on the roster and appropriate staff. In recent years the committee has had virtual meetings monthly or bi-monthly.
- The chair is to decide whether calls should be held on a reoccurring basis, such as the third Thursday of every month, or on an as needed basis.
- When scheduled on an as needed basis, it is important to maintain communication to help keep MBOs and action items moving forward.

Meeting Attendees

All Committee Members are expected to attend and actively participate in meetings. A quorum is required for a vote and as such, if a member cannot attend, they should advise the Chair and staff liaison and appoint a proxy if desired.

Regional Communications Chairs are also invited to attend all committee meetings and conference calls as welcome guests, but do not vote in the meetings Chapter Communications Chairs may also attend meetings from time-to-time.

The committee may consider inviting past chairs to participate one or more meetings annually to provide strategic and technical guidance to the committee. The committee staff liaison can help to contact the past chairs and arrange the meeting.

SECTION F – ANNUAL TASKS

Ongoing Committee Work

- Vice Chair (or another appointed member) sits on PAOE Committee, recommending changes to PAOE.
- Suggest annual review of all committee materials for relevancy.
- Address Society motions in a timely manner.
- Society Policy and Resource Review
  - The Committee's Manual of Operating Procedures should be reviewed every three years; it was last revised in April 2023.
  - The Committee should review their sections of the ROB every three years.

- 1.201.010 Web Site Policies Communications Committee
- 1.201.011 List Server Rules Communications Committee
- 1.201.029 Policy on Computer Algorithms and Programs
  - o Committee Job Description
- Committee Guidance Documents Review
  - o Question – do we want to link the Master Spreadsheet of Communications Committee Resources here?

Suggested Calendar of Activities

- **April/May**
  - o New Member Onboard – current Vice Chair should reach out to incoming members and invite them to attend the in-person Society meeting.
- **June**
  - o Society Meeting –
    - Committee In-Person Meeting
    - Vice Chair presents MBOs for next year (see SECTION G – MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES), appoints subcommittee members (if applicable), appoints liaisons (if applicable), and determines virtual meeting schedule for year.
    - Vice Chair to recognize outgoing members and outgoing Chair.
    - Member's Council Meeting - Chair sits as a voting member of Member's Council and provides the Committee's report to Member's Council (information item). The Vice Chair is welcome to attend as a non-voting member. Both have a seat at the table.
- **July**
  - o Basecamp Project Maintenance **–** Staff liaison to update membership, removing those who have completed their term on the committee, and archive past year's activities.
  - o Reference Manual Update - Committee Chair to review Reference Manual (this document) and recommend updates to committee members.
- **August**
  - o Review policies, governance, manuals, and committee deliverables for updates.
- **September**
- **October**
  - o Review Committee Job Description
- **November**
  - o Member's Council Meeting - Chair sits as a non-voting member of Member's Council and, if requested, provides a brief report to Member's Council (information item). (This meeting is normally held in November, but can change depending on when the date is set by the Members Council Chair. Invitations will be sent out by Members Council staff prior to the meeting.)
- **December**
- **January**
  - o Society Meeting –
    - Committee In-Person Meeting
  - o Member's Council Meeting - Chair sits as a voting member of Member's Council and

provides the Committee's report to Member's Council (information item). The Vice Chair is welcome to attend as a non-voting member. Both have a seat at the table. Committee Succession Planning –

- Review Committee Membership - Make recommendations to BOD exO for Vice Chair and any Consultants. Encourage nominations from Society members.

- **February**
  - Committee Nominations Deadline
- **March**
  - Committee Appointments Announced –
    - Once staff liaison sees incoming members have accepted their appointments, sends information about Annual Conference travel, the committee in general, including a link to the MOP and Reference Manual and add the member to Basecamp. Staff liaison sends separate note to Chair with details about setting up their year as Chair.
  - Basecamp Project Maintenance **–** Staff liaison to create a folder for the next year's activities.
- **April**
  - Vice Chair to begin developing MBOs.
  - Member's Council Meeting - Chair sits as a non-voting member of Member's Council and, if requested, provides a brief report to Member's Council (information item). (This meeting is normally held in November, but can change depending on when the date is set by the Members Council Chair. Invitations will be sent out by Members Council staff prior to the meeting.)
- **May**
  - Basecamp Project Maintenance **–** Staff liaison to update membership, adding incoming members and populating the folder for upcoming year.

SECTION G – MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES

Management By Objectives (MBOs) are the defined committee goals for the society year. MBOs are defined by the Chair and typically presented to the Committee during the June in-person Committee Meeting. The objectives will be included in the committee's report to Members Council.

Best practices for MBOs include:

- They should be clearly written so that it is possible to determine if the objective has been met.
- Strive to limit the amount of MBOs to what can be reasonably accomplished during the Society year.
- If an MBO should take more than one Society year, it should be so noted and the vice chair consulted.
- Include a projected completion date, fiscal impact (if any), and assigned member or subcommittee.
- Consider items that can be accomplished or significantly advanced over the course of the Society year.
- Seek insight from Board and Council members, as well as other key stakeholders, to determine the needs of the Society.
- MBOs are intended to be goals. They can and should be aspirational in nature, rather than task-

- oriented.
- MBOs should align with the ASHRAE Strategic Plan and follow the format suggested by Members Council.
- Questions about setting MBOs can be directed to the staff liaison, who can provide links to a template and training materials.

Items that should be excluded from MBOs include:

- Action items are tasks that the committee is working on that are either small in scope or contribute to an MBO.
- Annual or ongoing work, or tracking of metrics.
- Work that is defined as a responsibility of the Communications Committee. For example, updating the MOP is an expectation of committee work, and not a goal.

MBOs from past Committee Chairs can be found on the Committee's Basecamp Project within Docs & Files, Operations & Governing Docs > Historical MBOs, or alternatively, in meeting minutes from the Committee or reports to Councils. If unable to find something you are looking for, contact the committee staff liaison.

SECTION H – GOVERNANCE

Governance of the Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is governed by the following documents:

- **ASHRAE Rules of the Board (ROB)** - The Rules of the Board governs the Society. [ASHRAE's Rules of the Board (ROB) 2.405](#) describes the scope, membership, qualifications of members, terms of service, and general committee operation.
- **Communications Committee Manual of Procedures (MOP)** - The [Communications Committee's Manual of Procedures (MOP)](#) is the formal document describing the committee and its official procedures. This document is a standalone document for the Communications Committee.
- **Communications Committee Reference Manual (this document)** – is an informal document describing institutional committee knowledge and historical information.

Governance Documents of Interest to the Committee

General Policy Documents of interest not owned by the Communications Committee
- [ASHRAE's Logo Policy](#)
- [ASHRAE Commercialism Policy](#)

Society Governance owned by the Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is responsible for the following sections of the ASHRAE Rules of the Board. The Committee should review these procedures on an annual basis.

1.201.10   Web Site Policies Communications Committee
1.201.11   List Server Rules Communications Committee
1.201.29   Policy on Computer Algorithms and Programs

Requesting Revisions to Society Governance

Proposed changes to Society-wide policies and procedures (e.g., Travel Reimbursement Policy, Election and Appointment Procedures) shall follow the same procedure as for changes to ROBs.

Revisions to Rules of the Board (ROBs)
Proposed changes to Rules of the Board (ROBs) may be submitted by committees, councils and Board members. Changes proposed by a committee shall be submitted through the body to which it reports; councils and Board members may submit proposed changes directly to the Board of Directors.

- **To propose a change to an existing ROB:** Present the current ROB with changes marked by <u>double underlining</u> to designate words proposed to be added and ~~strikethrough~~ to designate words proposed to be deleted. A proposed change, as a minimum, shall include the complete ROB number (e.g., 2.106.001.2), the proposed change(s) marked as indicated above, and the reason(s) for the change(s).

- **To propose a new ROB:** Present the wording for the new rule and include a statement indicating a recommended placement of the new rule within the ROB organization. Examples:
  - *It is recommended that this rule be placed in ROB Book II, Technology Council ROB.*
  - *It is recommended that this rule be placed in ROB Book I, section 300, Meetings of Members.*
- **To propose rescinding an existing ROB**: include in the recommendation the ROB book in which the rule is located, the rule number or other identification code, and the wording of the rule.
- Contact the staff liaison if you need the most current copy of the ROB to edit.

Revisions to Manual of Procedures (MOPs)

Revisions to the Manual of Procedures must be approved by Members Council (MC) or designated council subcommittee.

- Changes should be documented using the Track Changes function in Word and then submitted as a PDF.
- Changes can be submitted at any time during the year but will be reviewed during the winter and annual meetings.
- ASHRAE staff can be instrumental in helping convey the intent and reason for MOP changes. A good best practice is to request the Committee staff liaison to send the changes to the Member's Council staff liaison for review.

SECTION I - HISTORY

The Communications Committee has had a rich history in the society. Information regarding past committee leadership and work is captured in this section. As technology changes quickly and new tools and processes using technology can move from idea to common practice quickly, many of the deliverables developed by the Committee are no longer in use.

Committee Timeline and Chairs

Society Year	Chair	Historical Note
2024 – 2025	Daniel Bourque	Incoming Chair
2023 – 2024	Anuj Gupta	Current Year
2022 – 2023	Jessica Mangler	Surveyed Society committee and chapter leadership regarding use of volunteer time, increased adoption of Wix template and WordPress theme, revised MOP.
2021 – 2022	Karine Leblanc	Held 8 Office Hours, created committee infographic, began sending liaisons to other committees at annual and winter conferences, created Canva templates for chapter use, launched WordPress theme for chapter websites and training videos on how to use the theme, established Chapter Social Media and Chapter Webmaster (updated from homepage editor) positions.
2020 – 2021	Pam Duffy	Established Committee Office Hours, Published updated Virtual Meeting Guidance and hosted Office Hour training on the topic, selected vendor for WordPress template for chapter websites, provided virtual sign-in sheet to TAC, provided overview to PLC on how to use Google Docs/Sheets/etc. within Basecamp.
2019 – 2020	Gerardo Alfonso	Set up Basecamps for all ASHRAE Chapters, published Virtual Meeting Guidance, launched chapter website template in Wix.
Committee operated as Electronic Communications under PEC during the following years:		
2018 – 2019	Megan Tosh	Transition from Pub Ed Council to Member's Council. Changed from 10 members to 8 members. Changed committee name to Communications Committee (previously Electronic Communications Committee). Submitted motion to PEC functional subcommittee regarding electronic sign-in sheets, later piloted at the 2024 Winter Conference. New MOP approved.
2017 – 2018	Heather Schopplein	Sunset ASHRAExCHANGE June 2018, published email delivery guidance, YouTube guidance and policy guidance regarding mobile app creation.
2016 – 2017	Steven Faulkner	Defeated motion to translate membership process into Spanish, transition to Basecamp 3, hosted seminar in at Las Vegas winter conference regarding Basecamp.
2015 – 2016	Cindy Callaway	Completed TC website redesign and migration of TC websites to new platform.
2014 – 2015	Mike Pouchak	Revised ROB to state that groups, not individuals, can set up social presences and those should be tied to email aliases, webinar on Best Practices for Chapter websites, began redesign of TC websites, PowerPoint presentation on how to use various types of social media, began TC website redesign project.

2013 – 2014	Spencer Morasch	Set up Basecamp, created Facebook page for the committee, established "Web policy violation report sheet", hosted seminar on Social media at Seattle Annual Conference
2012 – 2013	Angela M. Lewis	ASHRAExCHANGE launched June 2013
2011 – 2012	Heather Platt	Established ASHRAE Business Email Etiquette Policy at request of ExCom, Suggested changes to the ROB to include social media guidance
1995	…	Committee Established – See historical article on Basecamp under Docs & Files, Tools & Resources, History of this Committee

Past Committee Work, Deliverables, and Accomplishments

- Society Policies
    - Contact Data Availability Policy (this policy is now owned by Members Council)
- Websites
    - ASHRAE.org Website
        - Developed key principles for the ASHRAE website
        - Developed Roadmap for the ASHRAE website. (Archived at: ASHRAE ECC Google Site)
        - Created policy direction for grassroots and committee web pages.
    - ASHRAE Group Websites
        - Arranged for free Society hosting of ASHRAE group websites.
    - Technical Committee Websites
        - In 2015, launched TC Website template and launched 96 TC websites in new template.
        - Developed several supporting documents such as the TC Website Maintenance Training Webinar, Demo of new TC Website, and more.
    - Chapter Websites
        - Established Wix template and WordPress theme.
    - Supported MyASHRAE personalized URLs (PURLs).
- Collaboration Tools
    - Introduced Basecamp platform in 2014 and is still in use today. The Communications Committee supports the use of this collaboration platform across all ASHRAE groups.
    - Introduced use of Doodle meeting time poll application to ASHRAE.
- Google Groups
    - Developed Google Groups for ASHRAE, also known as the Google Groups whitepaper. As of July 2020, this document was deemed no longer relevant and has been sunset by the committee. (Archived at: ASHRAE ECC Google Site)
- ASHRAExchange
    - ASHRAE exchange was a online webforum to encourage the exchange of ideas between members. The platform was launched in 2013 and was sunset in 2017.
    - Provided recommendations on NETforum content and structure.
- Virtual Meetings
    - Proposed, tested, and got approved e-meetings for society committees and staff and set up webpages to support the effort.
    - Created Virtual Meeting Guidance and Best Practices for the Society

- Society Meetings
    - Lobbied for free internet access at ASHRAE Society Meetings.
    - Provided concept vision of the ASHRAE electronic meeting planner.
    - Development of paperless meeting software, which was a local area network (LAN) that would allow the use of a personal laptop to create a website that can be accessed by a local network of computers to exchange files during a Society meeting.
    - From 2013 to 2017, supported Technical Activities Council Electronic & Physical (E&P), later called Remote Participation Meetings (RPM). This meetings allowed some TC members to participate in TC Meetings from a remote location via electronic means.
- Social Media
    - Established Chapter Social Media position in the MCO.
    - Created YouTube policy for posting content.
    - Created Social Media Best Practices.
    - Hosted Seminar at ASHRAE Conference regarding use of social media.

- Email
    - Development of the **ASHRAE email alias system** to allow ASHRAE members and other to contact positions within ASHRAE using aliases to preserve communication and maximize effectiveness among members as positions roll over.
- Other Initiatives
    - **ASHRAE Virtual Chapter** - Proposed a working concept for the ASHRAE Virtual Chapter. Exists only in cyberspace. For members who want to belong to a chapter but are not able or willing to attend a local physical meeting.
    - **Regional Leadership -** Created the Regional Communications Chair position.

- o **Language Support** – Recognizing our international organization, the committee has continuously looked at ways to improve service to members that do not speak English. Explored automated language translation of ASHRAE publications. Development of Spanish video to renew ASHRAE membership.
- o **ASHRAE Wiki** - Developed and supported web-based ASHRAE wiki havingterm common definitions