



ESTA Technical Standards Program Working Group Meeting Guide for Chairpersons

Preparation

Announcement

A working group meeting must be announced to all members at least two weeks before the meeting is held. Any working group meeting that is not properly announced is a task group meeting, not a working group meeting.

As a practical matter, you should have no problems with working group meeting announcements. The Technical Standards Council sets most dates for working group meetings months in advance. The ESTA's TSP management staff will distribute meeting information for all the working groups in accordance with the rule stated above.

Agenda

Send copies of a draft agenda to working group members before the meeting. If desired, the Technical Standards Manager can create and distribute the agenda for you. Items can be added to the agenda at the meeting, but voting on them might be a problem because of their late addition.

Several working group meeting activities are discussed below. These activities are required at any working group meeting. The working group meeting agenda must include the following items, to reflect the required working group meeting activities:

- 1 Opening remarks
- 2 Attendance and membership
 - 2.1 Introduction of those present
 - 2.2 Requirements for membership
 - 2.3 Processing of new membership requests
- 3 Approval of minutes from previous meeting(s)
- 4 Reading aloud of the call for patents
- 5 Reading aloud of the anti-trust statement
- 6 Approval of agenda (for this meeting)
- 7 to n Old business, New business, Other business, et cetera, as appropriate
- n+1 Schedule for future meetings
- n+2 Adjournment

As per Robert's Rules of Order, you may recess a working group meeting. This allows you to conduct working group business on two or more days of some other meeting or trade show. (Please note, recessing and adjourning a meeting are two very different things.) If you plan to recess a meeting, you should say so when the meeting is announced and on the meeting agenda. If possible, the agenda should indicate what topics will be covered on what meeting dates.

Conducting a working group meeting

Generally, a working group meeting is conducted under Robert's Rules of Order. There are some exceptions, particularly in the ways that some votes are conducted. A table for voting procedures is included at the end of this guide.

Meeting minutes

Written minutes constitute the official record of working group meetings and must be taken during each working group meeting. Someone other than a chairperson should record the minutes. It is very useful to have the required meeting topics pre-written in the minutes computer file before the meeting starts to save the secretary some typing during the meeting itself.

Do not use or rely upon audio or video recording devices to capture the meeting for subsequent transcription to written minutes. Audio and video recordings may not capture the business of the meeting accurately— important words may be inaudible, nodding heads may not be recorded and speakers may be unidentified; these deficiencies can lead to incomplete or inaccurate meeting minutes and subsequent record-keeping problems. Therefore, please have a written record of the meeting be created as the meeting progresses.

Required meeting topics

As noted in the agenda discussion above, there are several topics that you must include in any working group meeting. These topics represent things that you must say or actions that must be provided for every working group meeting. The following paragraphs discuss each required meeting agenda item.

Opening remarks

There are several things that you must say at the beginning of any working group meeting. Certainly, you should welcome those present. You should describe the meeting being held, in case somebody wandered into the wrong room. When describing the meeting, you should note that this is a working group of the ESTA Technical Standards Program. You should state the name and purpose of the working group. You may note that the working group has sub-committees, called task groups. You may note that the working group is the formal voting committee and that task groups are document drafting groups with no formal voting authority.

You should note if there is a quorum present, and if so, announce that the working group meeting can proceed. Quorum for working group meetings shall be one-third of the total voting body or three, whichever is the greater number. If a quorum is not present at a meeting, business may be conducted, but all decisions must be decided by letter ballot or be subject to confirmation at the next meeting at which there is a quorum.

If there are people participating on-line, review the “Tele-Conference Tips” at the end of this document, or —better yet—send the tips to them with the draft agenda ahead of time.

Introductions of those present

You should ask everybody at the meeting to introduce themselves.

The attendance sheet and keeping track of member attendance will be the responsibility of the TSP staff. You should note to the working group that an attendance list is being circulated on brightly colored paper. Members will find their names in a check-off table on the first pages of the attendance list. New attendees and visitors will need to complete a form at the end of the list.

Requirements for membership

You must state the requirements for working group membership at each meeting:

Membership is open to all who are affected by the work of the group. People and companies that would be in the _____ interest category are, at this time, particularly encouraged to apply for mem-

bership. There is an annual \$100 participation fee for all members. Voting members are required to attend meetings and to vote on letter ballots. Voting members and their alternates may not miss three consecutive meetings without a loss of voting status.

The blank line in the statement above is where you note any under-represented interest category or categories.

Processing of new membership requests

The names of persons requesting membership in the working group will be announced. A simple majority vote is required to accept new members. In the absence of any objections, you may conduct a single vote for all persons requesting membership.

If someone requests a change of voting status, this is the time for them to speak up and for the working group to consider it.

Approval of minutes from previous meeting(s)

Ask if there are any corrections to the draft minutes of the previous meeting. Besides listing all the actions of the meeting, the draft minutes include the consensus body (the list of those who can vote) and a membership table at the end. Ask people to check their voting status and contact information.

Conduct a simple majority vote to approve the minutes of any previous working group meeting after any possible corrections are offered. After the minutes are approved, they will be published and made available to the public within a reasonable time.

Read the call for patents

ESTA intends not to publish any standard containing protected intellectual property, unless that property can be licensed by anyone for free or for a reasonable fee. To that end, you must call for information about patents and copyrights that apply to any current activities of the working group. You should feel free to add introductory comments like, "This is a regular working group agenda item," or, "I am not a patent expert, but..." However, you **must say** at least the following:

ESTA intends not to publish any standard that contains protected intellectual property, unless that information can be licensed by anyone for a reasonable fee. ESTA uses a process of open patent and copyright disclosures to implement its intent. ESTA does not conduct patent or copyright searches and does not warrant that its standards contain no protected intellectual property.

In keeping with the open disclosures policy, I ask if anyone present wishes to notify this working group of the existence of a patent, patent application, copyright, or other intellectual property that might protect material in a standard being developed by this working group. You need not be the holder of the patent or copyright to notify this working group of its existence.

Any information provided by this process must be recorded in the meeting minutes. You will need to work with the TSP management staff to resolve any patent issues that arise in the working group's efforts.

Read the anti-trust statement

You must note that ESTA, the Technical Standards Council, and this working group will unequivocally reject any action that unlawfully restrains trade. You **must say** (or very closely paraphrase) the following:

ESTA and its members take seriously their obligation to comply with all applicable antitrust laws. Therefore, during this meeting and during all ESTA events, all discussions will be limited to those subjects that are permitted by the antitrust laws. All members should refrain from any discussion or mention of competitively sensitive subjects such as the current or future prices charged for any member product or services, current or future marketing plans or strategies, and current or future costs, including employee salaries. There also must be no agreement on the suppliers or customers that members will do business with or the markets in which members will conduct business.

Violations of the antitrust laws can have serious consequences. If you have any questions or concerns about anything that is discussed at a ESTA meeting, please bring your concern to ESTA management. An easy to read pamphlet describing the antitrust laws is available from the ESTA staff.

Approval of agenda (for this meeting)

Finally, you can review the remainder of the meeting agenda and make changes requested by those present. Then, you should take a simple majority vote to approve the agenda.

Schedule for future meetings

You must review the dates and locations of future working group meetings. This should be the last matter discussed by the working group. Generally, the dates of working group meetings are set by the Technical Standards Council. However, there is nothing to prevent the working group from using a different meeting schedule for itself or its task groups. You may want to solicit preferences for exact meeting times (e.g. Friday evening vs. Saturday afternoon).

Voting

Most actions to be voted at a working group meeting require a simple majority to pass and can be conducted with a simple voice vote. However, some actions require a more substantial majority or more complex voting procedures. You may choose a more complex voting procedure than a simpler procedure that is sufficient according to the current edition of the *Policies and Procedures for the Development and Approval of ESTA's Technical Standards*. For example, you may choose a roll-call vote when you think it will better record the will of the working group when the *P&P* says that a show of hands is sufficient.

In some cases, a super-majority approval is required for a question to pass. A super-majority is attained when more than 50% of the working group voting membership and two-thirds of those actually voting, excluding abstentions, vote in the affirmative.

You conduct the roll-call vote by reading the names of the voting organizations or members, one by one. A person representing that organization should respond by stating the organization's vote, which may be yes, no, or abstain. The votes by organization and the results of the vote are recorded in the minutes.

Remember that observer members and visitors may join in discussions, but they cannot make motions or vote.

The following table lists several key types of questions and the minimum voting requirements for them. If there is any conflict in the requirements stated here and those in the ANSI-approved *Policies and Procedures*, follow the *Policies and Procedures* document.

Working group action	Voting method	Approval requirement
Accepting a new project proposal (clause)	Show of hands Roll call Letter ballot	Supermajority
Starting first public review	Voice vote Show of hands Letter ballot Roll call	Simplemajority
Accept responses to letter ballot or public review comments and reasons	Show of hands Letter ballot Roll call	Supermajority

Working group action	Voting method	Approval requirement
Starting second and subsequent public reviews	Voice vote Show of hands Roll call Letter ballot	Simplemajority
Final standards document adoption	Letter ballot	Supermajority
Withdrawal of a standards document	Letter ballot Roll call	Supermajority
Reaffirmation of a standards document	Letter ballot	Supermajority
Approving new working group members	Roll call Show-of-hands Voice vote	Simplemajority
Reaffirming the membership of a working group member who has changed status in some way	Roll call Show-of-hands Voice vote	Simplemajority
Cancellation of a previously approved project or task	Roll call Letter ballot	Supermajority
Approval of a response to a request for interpretation	Letter ballot Show-of-hands Voice vote	Simplemajority
Approval of minutes	Show-of-hands Voice vote	Simplemajority

Tele-Conference Tips

Before the Call

1. Pick an environment without distractions or noise (e.g., animals, children, staff, or street noise in the immediate vicinity)
2. Each participant should call-in or log-in separately to help make it clear who is participating by tele-conference.

Equipment

1. Landlines are usually best if using a phone. Cell phones often offer poor sound quality.
2. Avoid use of the speakerphone function unless multiple parties for the call are present in a single location.
3. A MUTE feature is recommended for phones and headsets. Use it when you are not speaking.
4. Call waiting should be disabled and ringers on additional lines should be silenced.
5. Avoid using HOLD. Music will play and make it impossible for the other participants to continue the meeting.
6. A webcam is useful for helping people see who is talking, but it is not essential.

During the Meeting

1. Only invited participants should be present on the tele-conference. Visitors may attend if they wish, but they use bandwidth needed for working group members.

2. Follow the agenda items, limit tangential discussion and jokes.
3. Dial the assigned teleconference number or log-in at the scheduled time.
4. When you sign in on WebEx, use your first and last name, not one name only.
5. Participants should state their names to identify themselves to the entire group when speaking.
6. If joining a call after it has begun, wait to be welcomed before joining the discussion.
7. If you are using a webcam and are sending video, remember that you and everything behind you will be seen. Dress and act appropriately.