

**NASSAU COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT
COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**



**CHARTER
AND
BYLAWS**

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PREAMBLE

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985. The Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987 underscored the area-wide threat of a major disaster in California. Further, it confirmed the need for training civilians to meet their immediate needs. With this in mind the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management decided to promote its own charter of an emergency response team, the Nassau County Community Emergency Response Team. Nassau County CERT works in unison with the Citizen Corps Council. The Citizen Corps Council brings together community leaders with the primary purpose of engaging all citizens in making America safer. The Citizen Corps Council also provides the community with a vehicle to prepare the public and promote volunteerism.

Nassau County CERT will follow the hierarchy of the Incident Command System (ICS) in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept in the United States. It is a management protocol originally designed for emergency management agencies and later federalized. ICS is based upon a flexible, scalable response organization providing a common framework within which people can work together effectively.
See appendix 08-01.

ARTICLE I

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Nassau County Community Response Team (CERT) is to promote community preparedness and to facilitate the training and preparation of the residents of Nassau County to respond to community emergency situations when normal emergency response systems are overwhelmed. Additionally to recruit, train, and facilitate a network of volunteers to respond to and mitigate the effects of natural and manmade disasters and establish and maintain a community communications system, including acquisition and maintenance of equipment and training of volunteers.

All Nassau County CERT members fall under the auspices of the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management here in referred to as OEM and are considered to be County employees for the purpose of receiving certain benefits when they are acting in the commission of their duties and within the scope of their employment or authorized volunteer duties as per the Nassau County Charter § 2105.

ARTICLE II

OFFICERS

Section 1: Director

The position of Director is appointed by the Commissioner of OEM. As such, the Director serves at the pleasure of the Commissioner of OEM. The Director or the Director's designee shall preside at all conventions, meetings of the Nassau County CERT. The Director is the chief executive officer of Nassau County CERT with full authority to direct its business and affairs.

The Director recognizes the need to incorporate and utilize volunteer help when available. To this end, the Director:

- Provides Basic CERT and additional training, including arranging for instructors and appropriate venues
- Provides additional training to supplement Basic CERT training and arranging training venue
- Organizes CERT Divisions
- Coordinate CERT communications
- Develops program goals
- Develops funding for the CERT Program
- Maintains a CERT budget
- Develops CERT partnerships (i.e., American Red Cross)
- Markets CERT Program and Community Preparedness (Speakers Bureau)
- Maintains CERT records (membership, training, funding, etc)

Section 2: General Staff

For the purposes of this document, the General Staff will consist of Section Chief for Operations, Planning, Logistics and Administration/Finance, of the Nassau County CERT Program (please refer to Appendix A). The General Staff will meet monthly to review the CERT Program and will have full voting rights at said meetings.

2.1 Section Chiefs of the CERT Organization are:

- **Operations Section Chief** is responsible for providing assistance to Division Leaders in the recruitment and maintaining of CERT membership
- **Logistics Section Chief** is responsible for maintaining an inventory of supplies needed to sustain the CERT Program
- **Planning Section Chief** is responsible for keeping the CERT Program current through a review of the Section Chiefs' progress within the CERT Program
- **Administrative Section Chief** is responsible for maintaining proper records for grant reporting, tracking CERT membership, and providing administrative assistance to the Director

2.2 Branch Staff of CERT

**Positions that report to the Section Chiefs on the CERT Organization Chart
(Please refer to appendix 08-01.)**

- **Speaker's Group Supervisor** is responsible for the training of CERT members for public speaking engagements regarding the CERT Program and to arrange and track said events
- **Communications Division Unit Leader** is responsible for developing and maintaining a CERT Communication Plan to be used at activations and training CERT membership is using said Plan.
- **Training Development Unit Leader** is responsible for reviewing and updating all CERT training programs
- **Exercise Development Unit Leader** is responsible for creating, reviewing and updating all CERT exercises
- **Supplies Coordinator** is responsible for ensuring that speaking engagement supplies and classroom training supplies are readily available
- **Administrative Coordinator** is responsible for providing administrative support to the CERT Program Director, Administrative/Finance Section Chief and data entry into the CERT database

2.3 Division Leaders and Deputy Division Leaders are responsible for:

- Maintaining up-to-date records of their Divisions
- Preparing a CERT Calling Tree to be used during an activation
- Arranging Division meetings to keep team members active and interested in the CERT Program
- Arranging recruiting opportunities for the CERT Program
- Attending a monthly General Staff meeting

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: General Membership

The membership of the Nassau County CERT shall consist of five (5) classes of membership: Active, Youth, Trainee, Inactive, and Honorary.

Section 2: Membership Requirements

Nassau County CERT training is available to anyone interested in becoming better prepared to mitigate an emergency situation. However any person interested in membership must apply through the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management for CERT membership during the CERT Basic Training Course. Membership level will be granted based on requirements listed for each class.

Section 3: Active Members

Active members are eligible to serve on Nassau County CERT Committees. There are three (3) categories of active members; Full Duty, Limited Duty and Administrative-Only Duty. A description of each category is listed in the CERT Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) as put forth by the Policy and Procedure Committee.

To achieve and maintain Active status, members must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Reside within the described boundaries of Nassau County
- Complete the Nassau County Basic CERT training course
- Attend a minimum two (2) Division meetings per year and one (1) All County Meeting per year
- Attend one (1) scheduled or unscheduled activation/exercise every two (2) years (not associated with a scheduled meeting)
- Maintain qualifications of good standing as determined by the Director, including but not limited to, signing a Background Release Form
- If CERT trained in another jurisdiction additional training may be required, as determined on a case-by-case basis by the Training Committee

The Director has the right to waive any of the above requirements, for good cause, with a majority vote of the General Staff, on a case-by-case basis.

Section 4: Teen Members

Teen members must be under the direct supervision of their parent or designated guardian who is a Nassau County Active CERT member; at all drills, exercises or CERT activation, except when in an organized school-based Teen CERT Program. Teen members are not eligible to serve on any Committee, however all Youth members may sit in on any Committee and render their opinion. Teen members are described as members that are between the ages of thirteen (13) and eighteen (18) years of age. When a Teen member reaches the age of 18 years old, said member may apply to become an Active member only after achieving the requirements set forth in Article III Section Three (3) of these Bylaws. At the discretion of the Director, Teen members may be activated during a time of emergency.

To achieve and maintain Youth membership status, members must:

- Be between the ages of thirteen (13) and eighteen (18)
- Reside within the described boundaries of Nassau County
- Attend a minimum two (2) Division meetings per year and one (1) All County Meeting
- Attend one (1) scheduled or unscheduled drill/exercise (not associated with a scheduled meeting)
- Maintain qualifications of good standing as determined by the Director, including but not limited to signing a Background Release Form with parental approval
- Complete the Nassau County CERT training course, or complete additional Nassau County CERT training elements when trained in another jurisdiction

The Director has the right to waive any of the above requirements, for good cause, with a majority vote of the General Staff, on a case-by-case basis.

Section 5: Trainee Members

Trainee members are members who have begun but not completed the Basic CERT Training Program. Trainee members can not be called upon to serve during times of emergencies, activations, scheduled drills or exercises.

Trainee members may become Active members of Nassau County CERT only after meeting all of the requirements set forth in Article III Section Three (3) of these Bylaws. Trainee members must:

- Reside within the described boundaries of Nassau County
- Maintain qualifications of good standing as determined by the Director, including but not limited to signing a Background Release Form

The Director has the right to waive any of the above requirements, for good cause, with a majority vote of the General Staff, on a case-by-case basis.

Section 6: Inactive Members

Inactive members are those who have been trained but do not currently meet all the requirements for membership. Members may be designated as inactive by the Director, General Staff or the Disciplinary Review Board as set forth in Article VII Section Two (2) of these Bylaws. Inactive members do not have voting privileges and are not eligible for positions on any committee. At the discretion of the Director, Inactive members may be activated during a time of emergency.

Section 7: Honorary Members

Honorary membership will be a non-voting membership and may be offered by the Director to those individuals rendering outstanding services or contributions to Nassau County CERT. Honorary members are designated upon a majority vote of the General Staff.

ARTICLE IV

QUORUM

Section 1:

A quorum for the transaction of any business consists of fifty-one percent (51%) of the Nassau County CERT General Staff. Those members not attending the meeting shall not have voting privileges.

ARTICLE V

MEETINGS

Section 1:

Special Meetings of the membership may be called by the Director at any time or by written petition of fifty one percent (51%) of the General Staff.

Section 2:

Notice of any Special or Division meetings shall be given to active members electronically, verbally or in writing no less than five (5) days before the meeting.

Section 3:

Any meeting shall be conducted according to the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, as modified by the Director or his designee (please see Appendix B).

ARTICLE VI

COMMITTEES

Section 1: Standing Committees

In the Nassau County CERT there shall be Standing Committees whose function shall be to assist the members of the Nassau County CERT in areas of specific concern or specialty. Appointments to Standing Committees for each member shall be made by the Director. Each Standing Committee shall have a Standing Committee Chairperson who shall be appointed by the Director.

The Standing Committees are as follows:

- Planning
- Policy and Procedure
- Training
- Health and Welfare

Section 2: Responsibilities of the Standing Committees:

Planning Committee shall be responsible for:

- Keeping the CERT program current through a review of program activities
- Providing first review of all Policy and Procedure modifications before submission to General Staff for voting

Policy and Procedure Committee shall be responsible for:

- The creation of all Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG)
- The review of all Standard Operating Guidelines—annually or as needed—for proposed updates and changes
- The presentation of proposed changes and updates to the General Staff. The General Staff may also make recommendations for proposed changes to the Standard Operating Guidelines. All proposed changes require a two-thirds' (2/3) majority favorable vote of The General Staff present, before presentation to OEM. The Director, or any approved representative of OEM, reserves the authority to reject any part, or all, of the presented proposed changes to the Standard Operating Guidelines

Training Committee shall be responsible for:

- Reviewing all curricula, evaluations, after action reports and recommending necessary changes
- Creating additional training as required by Nassau County's Office of Emergency Management and/or the Citizens Corp Council
- Developing an annual county wide CERT Training exercise (drill) for the purpose of evaluating the training and preparedness of Nassau County's CERT members

Health and Welfare Committee shall be responsible for:

- Obtaining timely information about illnesses or death within the CERT membership or CERT member's immediate family
- Generating a get well card for any CERT member that has become ill or injured
- Producing condolence communications and/or gifts
- Generating notices to CERT Divisions for requests for honor guard at wake or memorial service
- Developing a policy regarding appropriate attire for wake or memorial service appearances

Section 3: Committee Reports

The Chairperson of each Standing Committee shall submit a report to the Director at each regular meeting. Such report shall be oral or in writing.

Section 4: Voting within Committees

Within any Committee, approval on issues set forth by a Committee shall be based on a simple majority. Voting can be but is not limited to a paper ballot or counting of hands.

ARTICLE VII

RULES OF CONDUCT

Section 1: Membership Rules of Conduct

As an organization formed to assist and train the general public, and to serve the State and the County, the members of this organization will so conduct themselves in a professional manner, and will not intentionally discredit this organization or the Nassau County OEM.

Any member intentionally discrediting this organization or the Nassau County OEM will become subject to an internal hearing by the Disciplinary Review Board on the charges made against them. Any criminal charges brought upon a member shall be handled in accordance with the laws of the State and/or County.

Any member found guilty of charges of misconduct may be expelled from this organization without any recourse. The organization or any of its members will not be held liable for any of the charges or actions that result from said charges.

Section 2: Disciplinary Review Board

The Disciplinary Review Board (DRB) shall consist of one (1) full-time Nassau County Employee of OEM and two (2) Active members of Nassau County CERT. All DRB members serve at the discretion of the Director and are appointed to the position of board member by the Director.

CERT volunteers appointed to serve on the DRB may not personally know the involved party so as to ensure objectivity in this matter.

The DRB is responsible for reviewing the charges brought against a CERT member and to dispense disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from this organization. Any meeting of the DRB will be conducted in a confidential and closed manner.

The CERT member against whom the charges are made shall have the right to speak before the DRB on her/his own behalf personally and/or by authorized representative.

When considering any disciplinary action, the DRB shall proceed in accordance with the policies and procedures of this organization.

Section 3: Charges brought before the DRB

The Director, an outside program contact (i.e., OEM, Fire Department, Police Department, etc.) or any CERT member can bring the following accusations to the Director:

- Members acting beyond the scope of their training, thereby causing legal liability
- Conviction of a felony
- Conduct unbecoming a member
- Any act of insubordination
- Violation of rules or guidelines governing the CERT Program

ARTICLE VIII

RESIGNATION AND REMOVAL

Section 1: Resignation

Any Nassau County CERT member may resign at any time by giving written notice to their Division Leader (DL) or Deputy Division Leader (DDL) who will forward said resignation to the Director. Such resignation shall take effect on the date of receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein, and unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. The DL or DDL shall perform an exit interview and forward the completed Exit Interview Form to the Director. During the exit process, all CERT equipment will be inventoried and returned.

Section 2: Removal

The Director may remove any Nassau County CERT member only after a Disciplinary Review Board renders such recommendation to the Director.

ARTICLE IX

VOTING

Section 1: Eligibility to Vote

- Only General Staff members have full voting rights
- Each General Staff member in good standing shall be entitled to one (1) vote

Section 2: Proxy and Absentee Ballot Voting

Voting by proxy, remotely or by absentee ballot is strictly prohibited.

Section 3: Voting Procedure

Unless otherwise specificity noted, all voting shall be by majority vote (51%) of the membership present.

ARTICLE X

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1: Robert's Rules of Order

The Rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* as modified by the Director shall govern Nassau County CERT in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws and any special rules the Nassau County CERT may adopt (please see Appendix B).

ARTICLE XI

MEETING AGENDAS AND MINUTES

Section 1: Agenda

For every regular and special meeting of the Nassau County CERT, an agenda shall be prepared to facilitate the discussion of items of interest to the Nassau County CERT. The Chairperson or convening authority shall be responsible for the preparation of the agenda. While items may be added to the agenda during any meeting at the discretion of the Chairperson, members are encouraged to provide the convening authority with requests to place items on the agenda at least twenty-four (24) hours before the scheduled meeting. In the event of a special meeting and during, or in response to, any level of activation by OEM, the Director may waive the requirement of an agenda.

Section 2: Minutes

For every regular and special meeting of the Nassau County CERT minutes noting the items discussed, decisions made and votes taken shall be kept. The Chairperson or convening shall be responsible for ensuring that such minutes are recorded. Minutes of the meetings of the Nassau County CERT shall be prepared and distributed for each member no later than the subsequent scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE XII

POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Section 1: Policies and Procedures

The Nassau County CERT Policies and Procedures shall provide greater details and more restrictive requirements than these Bylaws and are intended to supplement these Bylaws. In addition to topics addressed in these Bylaws, the Policies and Procedures will address other topics of concern to Nassau County CERT. By reference herein, Nassau County CERT Policies and Procedures are considered an extension of the Bylaws and must therefore be approved by the Director when major revisions are made or new policies and procedures are developed.

ARTICLE XIII

AMENDMENTS

Section 1: Adoption of Bylaws

These Bylaws shall be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Nassau County CERT General Staff, at any scheduled meeting.

Section 2: Amendment of Bylaws

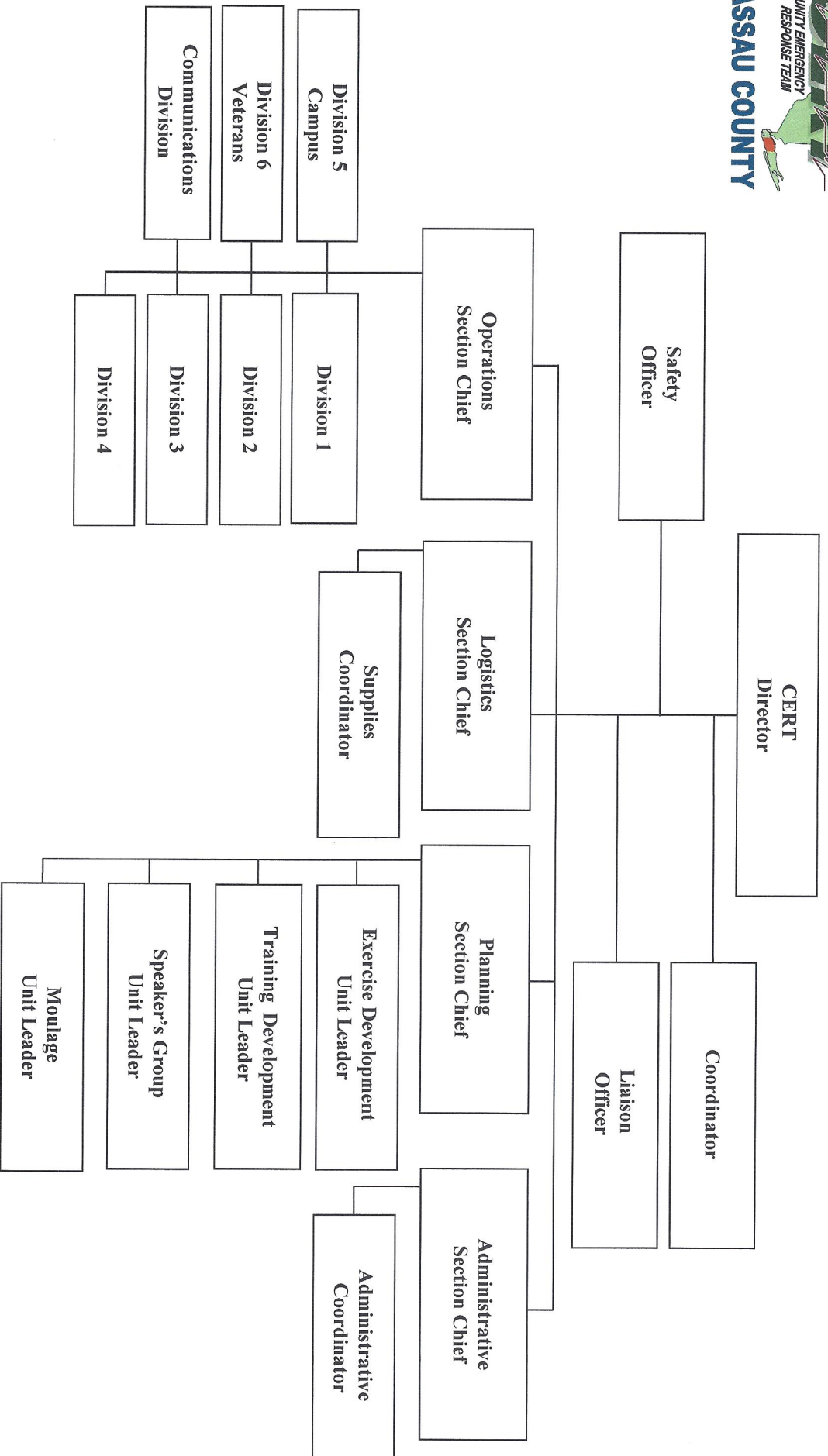
These Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and new Bylaws may be adopted by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Nassau County CERT General Staff, at any scheduled meeting or at any special meeting.

APPENDICES

- A Organizational Chart
- B Robert's Rules of Order



Nassau County CERT Organization Chart



Appendix A

Robert's Rules of Order - Summary Version

Robert's Rules of Order provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language. The conduct of ALL business is controlled by the general will of the whole membership - the right of the deliberate majority to decide. Complementary is the right of at least a strong minority to require the majority to be deliberate - to act according to its considered judgment AFTER a full and fair "working through" of the issues involved. Robert's Rules provides for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the assembly. Under no circumstances should "undue strictness" be allowed to intimidate members or limit full participation.

The fundamental right of deliberative assemblies requires all questions to be thoroughly discussed before taking action.

The assembly rules - they have the final say on everything.

Silence means consent!

- Obtain the floor (the right to speak) by being the first to stand when the person speaking has finished; state Mr. /Madam Chairman. Raising your hand means nothing, and standing while another has the floor is out of order! Must be recognized by the Chair before speaking!
- Debate cannot begin until the Chair has stated the motion or resolution and asked "are you ready for the question?" If no one rises, the chair calls for the vote!
- Before the motion is stated by the Chair (the question) members may suggest modification of the motion; the mover can modify as he pleases, or even withdraw the motion without consent of the seconder; if mover modifies, the seconder can withdraw the second.
- The "immediately pending question" is the last question stated by the Chair!
Motion/Resolution - Amendment - Motion to Postpone
- The member moving the "immediately pending question" is entitled to preference to the floor!
- No member can speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once!
- All remarks must be directed to the Chair. Remarks must be courteous in language and deportment - avoid all personalities, never allude to others by name or to motives!
- The agenda and all committee reports are merely recommendations! When presented to the assembly and the question is stated, debate begins and changes occur!

Appendix B

The Rules

- **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. - may interrupt only if necessary!
- **Parliamentary Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct motion - to accomplish a desired result, or raise a point of order
- **Point of Information:** Generally applies to information desired from the speaker: "I should like to ask the (speaker) a question."
- **Orders of the Day (Agenda):** A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires Suspending the Rules)
- **Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made
- **Main Motion:** Brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly
- **Divide the Question:** Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own)
- **Consider by Paragraph:** Adoption of paper is held until all paragraphs are debated and amended and entire paper is satisfactory; after all paragraphs are considered, the entire paper is then open to amendment, and paragraphs may be further amended. Any Preamble can not be considered until debate on the body of the paper has ceased.
- **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions
- **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor
- **Commit /Refer/Recommit to Committee:** State the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment).
- **Extend Debate:** Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or for a certain period of time
- **Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time
- **Postpone to a Certain Time:** State the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed
- **Object to Consideration:** Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated
- **Lay on the Table:** Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending
- **Take from the Table:** Resumes consideration of item previously "laid on the table" - state the motion to take from the table
- **Reconsider:** Can be made only by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view
- **Postpone Indefinitely:** Kills the question/resolution for this session - exception: the motion to reconsider can be made this session
- **Previous Question:** Closes debate if successful - may be moved to "**Close Debate**" if preferred
- **Informal Consideration:** Move that the assembly go into "**Committee of the Whole**" - informal debate as if in committee; this committee may limit number or length of speeches or close debate by other means by a 2/3 vote. All votes, however, are formal.
- **Appeal Decision of the Chair:** Appeal for the assembly to decide - must be made before other business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business
- **Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified

Appendix B

