

**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**  
**Council and Advisory Body Meeting Communication Protocol Topics**

**1. Pre-meeting**

- A. Publicizing - What is provided (press release, announcements, etc.)? How is it provided (email, snail mail, etc.)? Who are the recipients (e.g., distribution lists)?
- A press release with the meeting agenda is sent out to our snail mail and email lists about 3 weeks before the meeting. The email list includes our media contacts and stakeholders. People can subscribe on our website.
- B. Communication with Council/Committee members
- The ED sends out a draft agenda to Council members for review/comment ~6 weeks in advance. Council staff work directly with Committee chairs to develop agendas for Committee meetings.
- C. Document distribution
- Council Meetings – Briefing materials are posted on meeting pages ([www.mafmc.org/briefing](http://www.mafmc.org/briefing)) approx. 2 weeks in advance. Hard copy briefing books are mailed to members who choose to receive them (about half).
  - SSC Meetings – Briefing materials are posted on SSC meeting pages ([www.mafmc.org/ssc-meetings](http://www.mafmc.org/ssc-meetings)) as they become available. No hard copies are sent out.
  - AP and other meetings – Meeting information and materials are posted on pages linked to the Council calendar ([www.mafmc.org/council-events](http://www.mafmc.org/council-events)).
- D. Coordination with other local/federal agencies and NGOs

**2. During the Meeting**

- A. What technology/copy room/office is available and for whom?
- None. We will occasionally make copies of documents when necessary, but we generally require documents to be submitted in advance for printing at the Council office.
- B. Broadcasting (audio/video, webinar, etc.) including voting issues and other policy issues.
- Council meetings are broadcast via webinar using Adobe Connect. Participants can hear discussion and view whatever is projected on the screen (presentations, motions, documents, etc.). Participants are in “Listen Only” mode and can’t interact with the Council or provide comments. We do not provide a “phone in” option for Council meeting webinars, although there is an Adobe smartphone app that users can connect with. Council members must be present to vote.
  - SSC Meetings are not typically broadcast via webinar. Occasionally we will have a webinar or call-in option for members who can’t attend in person.
  - AP and other advisory body meetings – In-person meetings are not usually broadcast, but if the meeting is conducted via webinar the connection information

is posted on the meeting page. We have found that providing a webinar option for in-person meetings tends to reduce attendance and creates challenges with moderating discussion between participants.

- C. Public interaction during meeting - How is public allowed to comment (e.g., via teleconference)? Are there specific timeframe(s) for public comment?
- Written public comments can be submitted up until a deadline a couple days prior to briefing book mail out. Comments submitted after the briefing book deadline and before the beginning of the meeting are printed out for distribution at the meeting.
  - Public comments on specific actions (i.e. public hearings or scoping comments) have separate deadlines so that comments can be summarized in the briefing book.
  - We have opportunities for public testimony during each agenda item involving a vote. When time allows, the Council will allow public testimony on other agenda items during the meeting.
  - During the last day of each meeting there is an opportunity for comments on other issues not addressed by the Council during the meeting.
  - We generally don't accept public comments via webinar during Council meetings. This is due in part to the technical/logistical limitations of the webinar/speaker setup at meetings. Occasionally webinar participants will email staff with questions for presenters, which we try to relay when time allows.
  - SSC Meetings - Relevant written public comments are provided to SSC members prior to meetings. There are limited opportunities for public comment in person during SSC meetings.
- D. Distribution of materials during meeting and what is the medium (paper handouts, website uploads, etc.)?
- All materials and presentations are posted on the meeting page as soon as they are available.
  - We provide some hard copies of all briefing materials for the public.
  - Documents not included in the briefing book are handed out at the meeting. This often includes organizational reports not submitted by the briefing book deadline. Council staff tries to avoid using paper handouts whenever possible.
- E. How press is handled during meeting - Request for Interviews; Guidelines on cameras and microphones.
- We don't have formal guidelines. Most requests for interviews come to me (Mary), and I will direct to the appropriate staff member. We haven't had any issues with cameras and microphones.

### 3. Post meeting

- A. Getting meeting decisions out to the public (newsletters, website, social media, etc.)
- We usually write one press release about the most important issue or decision from the meeting. This goes out 1-2 days after a meeting. For topics we expect to

get a lot of press attention we'll try to get it done on the day of the decision. This is sent to our email list and posted on our website and Twitter.

- The week after the meeting we post a report summarizing the discussion and decisions from the meeting. This usually includes 1-2 paragraphs per major agenda item.
- A summary of motions is posted on the meeting page as soon as they are finalized (a few days after the meeting)

B. Press releases – who drafts, how distributed, when?

- I draft the initial press release and send it to the appropriate staff member(s) for review and revision. The final draft is then sent to the ED for review and approval.
- Press releases are posted in the news section of our website ([www.mafmc.org/news](http://www.mafmc.org/news), also visible on the home page) and are distributed via our email list and posted on social media.

C. Meeting materials – What is stored and where (e.g., documents, actions, minutes, audio/video); Public access; Searchable

- All meeting materials are publicly available on the web page for each meeting. Items posted include:
  - Summary documents – Agenda, Motions, Meeting Report
  - For each agenda item – Briefing Tab (the compilation of documents posted/distributed for that item in the briefing book prior to the meeting), Supplemental Documents (items distributed after briefing book mail out and during the meeting), Presentations (converted to PDF), and the Webinar Recording
- Copies of everything are stored on the server at the Council office.

4. Areas to improve

A. Areas your Council is looking for solutions: information distribution, broadcasting meetings, teleconferencing?

- We would like to refine our email distribution system so that we can do a better job of delivering the information that stakeholders want to receive without bombarding them with too many emails. This year I'll be working on segmenting email contacts based on interests and desired frequency of emails and trying to get a better understanding of the types of news/updates stakeholders want to receive.

B. Finish this sentence: I wish our Council had the ability to \_\_\_\_\_

- ...improve the organization of our internal file system and create more consistent record management protocols (i.e. file naming, versioning, folder management).