

**New England Fishery Management Council – May 2018**

**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)?

1. COUNCIL AND SSC MEETINGS: We ...

- a. Send out snail mail meeting notices to the 1,364 people on our mailing list for Council meetings and 117 people on the SSC list;
- b. Post the agenda on our website and include hyperlinks to all the documents by subject matter; and
- c. Send out email announcements to roughly 1,000 people on our electronic distribution list to remind everyone about hotel information, webinar registration details, and once again give them links to the agenda and documents.

2. COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY PANEL MEETINGS: We ...

- a. Send out snail mail meeting notices to interested parties who requested to be on a particular mailing list; we have 707 people on the scallop list, 615 on the groundfish list, 152 on the Research Steering Committee list, and so on;
- b. Post the notice, agenda, and materials on our website with hyperlinks to all the documents by subject matter; and
- c. Send out updates through RSS feeds to everyone who signed up for a particular feed. We use MailChimp for the RSS service, and we have 1,305 total users: <https://www.nefmc.org/subscribe>.

B. Communication with Council/Committee members

- 1. COUNCIL MEMBERS: Each Friday, Council members are emailed a link to a ShareFile folder with all incoming and outgoing correspondence related to Council business. The week prior to a full Council meeting, each member receives a briefing binder via FedEx. We email the Council as a body for time-sensitive issues.

2. COMMITTEE MEMBERS: The lead committee staffer/plan coordinator is responsible for communicating with and getting materials to respective committee members and advisory panel members. We also post documents and announcements on the website.

#### C. Document distribution

1. We use ShareFile to distribute documents to committee members in advance of meetings. All documents are available on the website usually the day after committee members receive the FTP link. We also bring hard copies of all documents to the meeting for committee members.
2. We have printed copies of most documents available at meetings for audience members as well.
3. We have CDs and/or flash drives with meeting materials available at full Council meetings.

#### D. Coordination with other local/federal agencies and NGOs

1. The public affairs officer (PAO) takes the lead in coordinating communications with all presenters at full Council meetings and provides them with meeting updates, deadlines for submission of materials, and other logistics. The Council's executive assistant and office manager provides backup and takes over when the PAO is not available.
2. We work very closely with key contacts at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) to ensure that all pertinent issues are covered on our agendas. Most of this is done via email and through direct phone calls.
3. The PAO works closely with communications counterparts at the science center and GARFO on issues that impact all of us. We keep in touch regularly by email, phone, and text messaging.

#### 2. During the Meeting

##### A. What technology/copy room/office is available and for whom?

1. We utilize the hotel's copying services and business center during meetings and work within our own meeting room.

##### B. Broadcasting (audio/video, webinar, etc.) including voting issues and other policy issues.

###### 1. COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

- a. We do not regularly offer webinars for committee meetings, except for SSC meetings.

- b. We use a TS-770 Series Conference System for committee meetings:  
[http://www.toaelectronics.com/media/ts770-cu\\_cb1e.pdf](http://www.toaelectronics.com/media/ts770-cu_cb1e.pdf)

2. COUNCIL MEETINGS:

- a. We use GoToWebinar to broadcast our meetings. We run this on a dedicated laptop and use an Ethernet cable to access the internet. We do not rely on the hotel's Wi-Fi system for the broadcast.
- b. We have a new sound system for full Council meetings. It's a CCS 1000 D Digital Discussion System made by Bosch:  
[http://resource.boschsecurity.com/documents/CCS1000D\\_Operation\\_Manual\\_enUS\\_54043212947830795.pdf](http://resource.boschsecurity.com/documents/CCS1000D_Operation_Manual_enUS_54043212947830795.pdf)

C. Public interaction during meeting - How is public allowed to comment (e.g., via teleconference)? Are there specific timeframe(s) for public comment?

- 1. People are in "listen only" mode during webinars for full Council meetings. We don't take public comment via the webinar.
- 2. Webinars for SSC and PDT meetings often are interactive for remote members.
- 3. During full Council meetings, the public is allowed to comment whenever motions are made on a subject-by-subject basis. We limit public comment on each motion to three minutes per speaker.
- 4. We also have a general public comment period at some point during each meeting where members of the public can speak for three-to-five minutes on a matter that's *not* included on the agenda for that particular meeting.

D. Distribution of materials during meeting and what is the medium (paper handouts, website uploads, etc.)?

- 1. This is largely covered above. We *do* provide printed handouts of most meeting materials, although we don't print out very large files like EISs. In these cases, we often print the cover page and include a link so people know how to download the full document, and we do provide a few full-page "reference binders" on the audience table of amendments and frameworks at appropriate times.
- 2. Almost everything is available on our website, including many documents in draft form that are still evolving as "meeting materials." They eventually are replaced with final versions.

E. How press is handled during meeting - Request for Interviews; Guidelines on cameras and microphones.

1. All press inquiries go through me. During the meeting, I handle media phone calls and work one-on-one with reporters in the room.
2. With TV cameras, I instruct all cameramen to remain on the periphery of the room and ask them NOT to shine lights on any Council members or members of the public who are speaking at the microphone.
3. We do not allow reporters with hand-held cameras to shoot photos directly over the shoulders of Council members. I speak with them in advance and ask that they minimize their use of flashes, and I ask everyone to be as unobtrusive as possible.
4. Under no circumstances do we allow anyone inside the “U” of the Council members’ meeting table.
5. We rarely get microphone requests, but when we do, we try to accommodate them in locations that are appropriate to the request.

3. Post meeting

A. Getting meeting decisions out to the public (newsletters, website, social media, etc.)

1. We communicate Council meeting decisions largely through press releases and Council Update email messages. We do not do social media, and we no longer have a newsletter.

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

1. I draft all press releases. We often put out single-subject press releases from our meetings – one for skates, another for scallops, another for groundfish – which makes it easy to archive them on each respective committee page. I work closely with the technical staff to ensure the content is accurate, and the executive director and deputy director review releases before they’re sent out.
2. I distribute press releases via email to our master electronic distribution list. The email message is very short and includes a PDF attachment of the press release and a link to access it directly on our website.

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

1. All of our meeting materials are stored on the website. The hyperlinks to materials for every meeting remain active. To illustrate, here is the link to

our November 2016 Council meeting page with active hyperlinks:  
<https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/november-2016-council-meeting>

2. Audios for all full Council meetings are posted on the meeting page in the right column under “Related Information” (see link above). The audios typical are available one-to-four days following a meeting.
3. Audios of committee meetings are available upon request. We don’t post committee audios, but they are archived in our network and we make them available through a share file when asked.
4. All press releases are archived in our network and under the master “News” heading on our website, which is found on the upper toolbar:  
<https://www.nefmc.org/news>
5. Press releases also are archived on each relevant species/committee page. For example, groundfish press releases can be found on the Northeast multispecies page under “Related News”:  
<https://www.nefmc.org/management-plans/northeast-multispecies>

#### 4. Areas to improve

- A. Areas your Council is looking for solutions: information distribution, broadcasting meetings, teleconferencing?
  1. We’ve just been through a major external review of our Council operations, and we now are awaiting the final report and the review panel’s recommendations. We intend to act on the panel’s recommendations to the extent feasible.
- B. Finish this sentence: I wish our Council ... had the ability to reach stakeholders who don’t want to receive electronic announcements and are not web-savvy. We still have quite a few fishermen in that category. \_\_\_\_\_