

# **MID-SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA 09**

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Service to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous shall be the primary purpose of General Service in the Communications Committee. In all our proceedings we shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Twelve Traditions, mindful of the ideals expressed in *The A.A. Service Manual* and the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*. The Right of Participation and the Right of Appeal and Dissent shall always be observed. In the absence of specific indications in these guidelines or of direct Assembly action, the latest edition of *The A.A. Service Manual* may be relied upon.

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## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

**A. PURPOSE:** The Mid-Southern California Area (M.S.C.A.) Communications Committee (ACC) is composed of four subcommittees for the purpose of facilitating communication within M.S.C.A, and the fellowship at large. The result is that these subcommittees have an interconnection and mutual resources, as well as a common voice.

**B. SCOPE:** All actions of the Area Communications Committee (ACC) are governed by the Twelve Traditions of AA, the Twelve Concepts for World Service, and the Guidelines of the Mid-Southern California Area. The guidelines of each Communications Committee Subcommittee are incorporated within, and are part of, this document.

**C. SUBCOMMITTEES:** Area Newsletter Subcommittee (ANSC)  
Electronic Media Subcommittee (EMSC)  
Area Translations Subcommittee (ATSC)  
Communication Equipment Subcommittee (CESC)

**D. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE/OFFICERS:** All members of each included subcommittee are automatically members of the Area Communications Committee.

1. **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON (Chairperson):** The term of office is two (2) years beginning January 1 of even numbered years. The Chairperson is elected bi-annually by a simple majority of the members of the Communications Committee and confirmed by the Area Assembly. The Chairperson only serves one full two-year term, but in addition, may complete the remainder of an unfilled two-year term. In case the office of Chairperson is unfilled or vacated during the term, the MSCA Chairperson will, after conferring with the subcommittee chairs for their recommendations, appoint someone to fill the position. This person may be bi-lingual, but must be proficient in the English language.

The Chairperson prepares an agenda and presides over committee meetings; reports to the area at Area Assemblies and Area Service Committee meetings; Coordinates committee activities, and uses all available resources to assure sub-committee responsibilities are fulfilled. The Chairperson has a vote on all matters brought before each sub-committee and is a voting member of the ASC and Area Assemblies.

2. **ALTERNATE CHAIR:** An Alternate Chairperson shall be appointed by the Chairperson and will assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson in his/her absence. The Alternate Chairperson will only have a vote at the ASC or Assembly in the absence of the Chairperson.

3. **SECRETARY:** The Secretary is elected by the committee by simple majority. The Secretary takes attendance at committee meetings, keeps a roster, takes and archives minutes of committee meetings as well as making them available as requested by the chair. In addition he/she takes and archives minutes of email or conference call meetings where a vote is taken and incorporates them in the written minutes of the committee archives.

### **E. RATIFICATION, AMENDMENT AND SUSPENSION:**

1. **RATIFICATION:** This document becomes effective upon acceptance by two thirds of the MSCA Assembly present and voting thereon.

2. AMENDMENT: This document, except as otherwise noted herein, may be amended as follows:

- a) All proposed amendments may be submitted to the Area Officers for review and recommendations,
- b) Not later than 4 months from its submission, the proposed amendment(s) will be submitted to the Assembly with or without any Area Officers recommendations,
- c) Prior to submission to the Assembly, the Chairperson shall provide opportunity for the G.S.R.s to become fully informed on the amendment(s) by making them available in writing, and
- d) Upon acceptance by two thirds of the Assembly present voting thereon, the proposed amendment(s) becomes part of this document.

3. SUSPENSION: Upon agreement by a three-fourths majority of the Area Assembly present voting thereof, this document or any part thereof may be suspended temporarily for necessity.

## II. ELECTRONIC MEDIA SUB-COMMITTEE GUIDELINES<sup>1</sup>

**A. PURPOSE:** The purpose of the Electronic Media Subcommittee (EMSC) is to use electronic media (e.g. MSCA website) to inform the members of the MSCA and others of the activities, history and structure of the Area. Members of the subcommittee shall

1. Elect and support the EMSC Chairperson and Web Coordinator.
2. Be an interim repository of the collective group conscience of the Area regarding the Internet, electronic media and multi-media.
3. Provide information, within the parameters of these guidelines for distribution to the AA fellowship through the Internet and/or Electronic Media.

### B. MEMBERSHIP

1. EMSC Chairperson.
2. Web Coordinator.
3. Any A.A. member choosing to be a member of the EMSC.

### C. MEETINGS

1. The Committee shall meet at all Area Service Committee Meetings and Area Assemblies except the Area Election Assembly and may meet at other times and places with timely notice.
2. A quorum shall be the number of voting members present.

### D. VOTING PROCEDURE

1. All committee business shall be passed by a simple majority vote.

### E. FUNDING

1. The sole financial support for the EMSC shall be the MSCA through the MSCA Communications Committee.
2. The EMSC shall not promote nor carry out any fund raising activity of any description.

### F. EMSC STRUCTURE/OFFICERS

1. OFFICERS - The EMSC Officers shall include:
  - a) EMSC Chairperson.

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<sup>1</sup> **BACKGROUND:** *The formation of the MSCA Electronic Media Sub-Committee ("EMSC") was approved at a prior MSCA Assembly, and the first Chairperson was elected by the Assembly in 2001. (Note: Apart from editing revisions and a few other exceptions, these Sub-Committee Guidelines were approved as previously written for the former newsletter committee). In January 2008, the Area Assembly approved the inclusion of the EMSC as a sub-committee under the Area Communications standing committee ("ACC"), which was created by Assembly action at the same Area Assembly.*

b) Web Coordinator

## 2. TERM OF OFFICE AND DETERMINATION

a) EMSC Chairperson: The term of office is two (2) years beginning January 1 of even numbered years. The EMSC Chairperson will be elected bi-annually by a simple majority vote of the Area Communications Committee (ACC).

b) Web Coordinator: The term of office is two (2) years beginning January 1 of even numbered years. The EMSC Web Coordinator is elected by the Area Assembly by a simple majority vote, and is eligible for re-election for a second two-year term.

## 3. VACANCIES

In the event of a vacancy, the ACC shall appoint a replacement except in the case of the Web Coordinator which shall be appointed by the Area Chair after consultation with the EMSC Chairperson for recommendations.

## 4. DUTIES OF SUB-COMMITTEE OFFICERS

a) EMSC Chairperson:

(1) Conducts all EMSC meetings, prepares and publishes meeting agenda when EMSC meets separately from the ACC, and in general performs the duties of the administrative officer of the EMSC.

(2) Brings any communications regarding the Web Page to the next EMSC meeting.

(3) Facilitates updating the MSCA Web Page.

(4) May communicate and conduct votes with EMSC members via email or conference calls. Note: The Area Communications Committee Chairperson should be included in communications and voting and paper copies of the voting results to be given to the committee secretary for inclusion in the Communications Committee records.

(5) Makes certain that ACC chairperson is included in communications and voting and paper copies of voting results are given to the ACC Secretary for inclusion in the ACC records.

(6) Is responsible for checking anonymity breaches in both electronic and future hard copy prints.

(7) Is responsible for the web forum topics and tally of vote returns of the email results.

b) Web Coordinator

(1) Is responsible for maintenance and updating of the MSCA Web Site. Because of the technical nature of this office, it is strongly suggested that all applicants to this position have technical proficiency in handling Web Site maintenance before taking on this responsibility.

(2) May only upload EMSC-approved information or material. If there is reason to believe that the information on the Web Site is not accurate or has some other problem, the Web Coordinator will remove the affected web pages or specific information and bring the matter up at the next EMSC meeting or email meeting for discussion and resolution.

(3) Is the point of contact for the email sent to emsc-coordinator2008@msca09aa.org, sending copies of all communications generated by the web site's email address to the ACC and EMSC Chairs through email or the next EMCS meeting – whichever is the most expedient solution.

(4) Is responsible for keeping past electronic records archived on the website as well as making hard copies (in CD or DVD or other currently useful format) of the current website, sent to Archives Committee once a year.

## **G. WEB SITE**

### **1. FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND OWNERSHIP**

- a) The MSCA website is to be financially supported solely by the MSCA.
- b) The MSCA is the owner of the website.
- c) The MSCA Treasurer is the financial contact with the Web Hosting Site.
- d) The Web Coordinator shall be the administrative and technical contact with the Web Hosting Site.
- e) Free Web Hosting Sites are available on the Internet, but often require mandatory advertising space or direct links to commercial sites as consideration for their use. To avoid confusion, all Web Hosting services being considered by the MSCA will be paid for without requiring any unsolicited advertising.
- f) When signing an agreement with an Internet Web Hosting service, care shall be taken against inadvertent association and promotion. The Internet Web Hosting service shall be required to neither publicize nor promote its relationship with the MSCA nor Alcoholics Anonymous.
- g) The Internet Web Hosting service shall be chosen by the Web Coordinator with the approval of the MSCA, by simple majority vote.
- h) A Domain Name separate from the Internet Web Hosting service shall be used to remove the problem of associating the MSCA with any commercial services.

### **2. PUBLIC ACCESS**

- a) The MSCA Web Site shall be constructed in a way that it will be available for viewing by as many people as possible who have access to the Internet. To this end, web pages should be viewable on any browser (graphical or text based) and not depend on any particular operating system or bandwidth speed. The MSCA Web Site

shall be tested from as wide a range of systems and browsers as possible to assure that its information may be received by as many internet users as possible.

b) The MSCA, being culturally diverse, will provide access to the site's information in Spanish. In the future this may expand to whatever various languages those viewing the site may be expected to understand.

c) It is recommended that a mailing address (in addition to an email address) be included on each page where contact is offered for those unable to send questions or requests electronically.

### 3. WEB SITE CONTENT

a) The members of the EMSC, as trusted servants of the MSCA, will develop web content that contains information reported by members of the MSCA for public distribution through the "Internet" and "electronic media."

b) Correspondence regarding the MSCA Web Site content will be answered by members of the EMSC.

c) When copyright restrictions apply to material displayed on the MSCA Web Site, permission will be obtained by EMSC from the appropriate copyright holder prior to publishing copyrighted material on the website.

d) The principal of anonymity, as it applies to other public media such as press, radio, films and television, will be extended to the "World Wide Web," "Internet" and "electronic media." As such, full names, personal email addresses containing full names, and photographs of AA members shall be avoided. Note: Upon request by the author, telephone numbers and non-descriptive email addresses may be listed for the purpose of contact communication. Prior to listing, the author will be informed about the personal risks associated with the publishing of email addresses on the web.

e) General responsibility for content of the MSCA website shall be retained by the EMSC acting as a deliberative body. This assignment of responsibility is in keeping with the Right of Decision outlined in Concept 3, service responsibility matched by an equal service authority as outlined in Concept 10, and the guarantee that no members will ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over other members, as outlined in the Warranties of Concept 12. Regarding website content, the EMSC will be guided by the force of AA Tradition and the 12 Concepts of World Service. The MSCA Assembly shall retain final responsibility and ultimate authority for the content of the MSCA website.

f) **Online Discussion Forum:** The EMSC is authorized by the Area Assembly to host an Online Discussion Forum with the topics approved by the EMSC. All trusted servants, Standing Committees and sub-committees are encouraged to suggest topics for discussion. In the time frame leading up to the Annual General Service Conference, the EMSC will customarily post topics regarding items on the General Service Conference agenda. The forum will be governed by the guidelines outlined in that section of this document headed **3. Web Site Content**. All forum entries will be reviewed by the EMSC for compliance with the EMSC guidelines for content prior to posting to the forum. Additionally, the following points of decorum will be observed:

- (1) No names, phone numbers or personal email addresses will be posted on the Forum.
- (2) No entries which attack or criticize another person will be posted.
- (3) No entries mentioning outside issues in a controversial or provocative manner will be posted.
- (4) No entries containing profanity will be posted.
- (5) Entries found objectionable by 2/3 of the EMSC will not be posted.

The time frame for which a topic is open for posting will be determined by vote of the EMSC. All discussion topics and the postings will be archived and available in archives for viewing on the EMSC web site after a period of not less than one year.

#### 4. HYPERLINKS TO OUTSIDE

- a) The MSCA Web Site will provide hyperlinks to the Alcoholics Anonymous Web Site and the AA Grapevine Web Site. ([www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) and [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org))
- b) The MSCA Web Site will also provide hyperlinks to selected Web sites not covered in a) after pre-approval from ACC or the MSCA Assembly, for example:
  - Central Offices
  - Pacific Region AA Service Assembly (PRAASA)
- c) Hyperlinks to any non-AA group Web Sites such as Commercial, Religious, Institutional and Political Advocacy Web Sites are prohibited, as the MSCA's endorsement of such groups and organizations may be implied through such links.

### III. TRANSLATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

**A. RESPONSIBILITY:** The Area Translations Sub-Committee (ATSC) is responsible to the Area Assembly and the Area Communications Committee.

**B. PURPOSE/DUTIES:**

1. Translation: The ATSC is charged with the translation<sup>2</sup> of all documents received from:
  - a) A member of the Area Officers Committee,
  - b) The chair, or co-chair of any of the Area standing committees or sub-committees, or
  - c) The planning committee chair for the Pre-Conference Workshop, the MSCA Foro, or the Servathon.

Note: For continuity and in order to avoid confusion, all requests for translation shall be presented to the Communications Chair who will assure that the Translation Committee receives the material.

2. Translation Software: Annually, the ATSC will work with the Communications Equipment Sub-Committee (CESC) in evaluating and, if necessary, budgeting for and acquiring appropriate language translation software.

3. Professional Translation Services: When no other avenue of timely translation is available, or the document being translated requires professional translation, the ATSC should consider retaining the services of professional translation services to ensure that all translations are completed in a timely manner. It is a prudent practice that three competitive cost estimates for the work being consigned be obtained prior to hiring the professional translation service. *This type of outside professional services should have a suitable amount entered as a budget item each fiscal year.*

**C. OFFICERS:** The ATSC shall have a Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson. The term of office is two (2) years beginning January 1 of even numbered years.. The officers shall be elected within the Area Communications Committee by a simple majority vote.

1. The Chairperson of this sub-committee is responsible for:
  - a) The prioritization of individual translation efforts.
  - b) Chairing the meetings of this sub-committee.
  - c) Keeping the Area Communications Committee, (ACC) Chair aware of the status of all translation projects.
2. The Alternate Chairperson is responsible for:
  - a) Serving as the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.
  - b) Developing the annual budget for this sub-committee and presenting it to the sub-committee in August of each year.
  - c) Serving as liaison to the CESC.

**D. MEETINGS:** The committee will meet at each Area Service Committee meeting and Area Assembly and other times as necessary.

**E. FUNDING:** The ATSC will prepare and submit a budget for this sub-committee to the Area Communications Committee Chair no later than September of each year.

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<sup>2</sup> Interpretation responsibilities, (audio/visual) lie outside the scope of this sub-Committee.

## IV. NEWSLETTER SUBCOMMITTEE GUIDELINES

**A. PURPOSE:** As part of the Mid-Southern California Area (MSCA) 09 Communications Committee, the Area Newsletter Sub-Committee (ANSC) shall consist of volunteer AA members, charged with the responsibility of producing and distributing The MSCA Newsletter (hereinafter called The Newsletter). All members of the ANSC are automatically members of the Area Communications Committee and will meet with this Committee at monthly Assemblies, ASC's or at other designated times. The Newsletter is published monthly (except in April & July). There is also no Newsletter published in October of odd-numbered years (2003, 2005... etc.), nor in November of even-numbered years (2004, 2006... etc.) and is supported solely through contributions sent to the Area. The Newsletter is published for the benefit of the Mid-Southern California Area AA membership and may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Local AA news and information about groups and committees
2. Reprinted material from AA literature
3. Sharing of experience in recovery, unity and service
4. Information pertaining to Area actions, finances and meetings
5. Information regarding AA service, events, and announcements (In keeping with A.A.'s Tradition of non-affiliation, no events exclusively planned as fund raising events will be listed in The Newsletter)

**B. SCOPE:** All actions by the Newsletter Sub-Committee and all content of The Newsletter publication will be governed by the Twelve Traditions of AA, the Twelve Concepts for World Service, the Guidelines of the Mid-Southern California Area and the Guidelines of the MSCA Communications Committee.

**C. TIMING CONSIDERATIONS:** Given the time-sensitive nature of the Newsletter, it is imperative that the Newsletter be delivered on time each month. It is the responsibility of the ANSC to ensure that the monthly Newsletter is delivered, ready for distribution, to the monthly meeting of the MSCA. In addition, the Newsletter will be posted as soon as possible on the Area Web site ([www.msca09aa.org](http://www.msca09aa.org)).

**D. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE/OFFICERS:** The ANSC, when possible, will be made up of the following voting members: Chairperson, Layout Editor and interested GSR's who have a working knowledge of current Newsletter issues/operations. There may be additional members of the committee, where a defined need is demonstrated. In order to ensure the highest level of effectiveness and communication for the committee, it is strongly suggested that committee members attend all meetings of the Communication Committee.

1. ANSC CHAIRPERSON: The term of office is two (2) years beginning January 1 of even numbered years. The Chairperson may serve no more than two consecutive years in this position and is a volunteer who is elected by the Communications Committee to serve concurrently with the MSCA 09 Panel Elected. The Chairperson is responsible for:
  - a) Composition, content, printing and distribution of the Newsletter.
  - b) Presentation of the annual budget request for the sub-committee to the Area Communications Committee Chair no later than September each year.
  - c) Reporting on Newsletter activities at the monthly Communications Committee meeting.
  - d) Ensuring that a current mailing list is kept containing recipients of the Newsletter and is also responsible for maintaining a list of the distribution counts and recipients of the Newsletter. This list shall include names and addresses of Area Officers and Standing Committee Chairs, Delegates and Trustee of the Pacific Region, GSO, AAWS, The Grapevine, and the Districts, H&I Committees, Central Offices and "Clubs"

which fall within the boundaries of MSCA 09.

e) Ensuring that the content of the Newsletter represents the purpose and scope of this committee set forth in this document.

Committee Inventory: In all odd-numbered years, the ANSC Chairperson will facilitate a Committee inventory in order to share ideas for improvement. The ACC Secretary will produce a type-written summary of the inventory session and distribute copies of this summary to any interested parties. It is suggested that the Committee Inventory follow guidelines laid out in "The A.A. Group" pamphlet.

2. LAYOUT EDITOR: This is a volunteer position, appointed by the Newsletter Chair. The Layout Editor is responsible for providing the layout draft and proofreading the first draft of the Newsletter and/or assisting the Newsletter Chair in composing the Newsletter prior to publishing. Access to a computer and internet/email communication and layout experience essential for this position.

**E. DISTRIBUTION:** Each August, the ANSC Chairperson will request the DCMC of each district for the number of copies of the Newsletter needed each month for the following year (in order to plan for the budget request). If no information is received from the District, the Chair of the ANSC will use his/her own judgment about setting the number of copies to be printed. The newsletter will be distributed as follows:

1. As soon as possible to the Area Web Site ([www.MSCA09aa.org](http://www.MSCA09aa.org)).
2. MSCA Districts (bring printed copies to Assemblies/ASCs).
3. Clubs/Offices/H&I Committees (bring printed copies to Assemblies/ASCs).
4. Those who have elected to receive newsletter via snail mail (Past Delegates only).
5. Extra allotment of printed copies for miscount/extras at Assemblies/ASCs.

Note: the Distribution count can change month by month due to increased/decreased allotments requested. Each time a new Recipient/Group is added to the Newsletter Distribution list (e.g., when people rotate service positions, new Clubs, Committees or Districts created), the ANSC Chair should ask them whether they would rather download The Newsletter themselves for internal distribution or whether they would prefer to pick them up at Area Assemblies/ASCs (some Districts meet before the monthly Area Meeting so they print and distribute the newsletter themselves).

**F. ANNUAL BUDGET:** By September of each year, the Newsletter Committee is responsible for helping the Communications Committee Chairperson produce a budget for the following year.

## V. COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

**A. RESPONSIBILITY:** The Communications Equipment Sub-Committee(CESC) is responsible to the Area Assembly and the Area Communications Committee (ACC).

**B. PURPOSE/DUTIES:** As part of the ACC, the CESC, always in cooperation with the Finance Committee, is charged with the following:

1. Maintaining an inventory of the following equipment owned by MSCA:
  - a) audio/visual equipment,
  - b) translation equipment,
  - c) software,
  - d) computers and printers, and
2. When requested by the ACC, the CESC is responsible for researching, evaluating and preparing a written recommendation (including cost estimates) for any electronic equipment, computer software or repairs to electronic equipment. In most instances, it is strongly suggested that at least three sources, along with the corresponding cost estimates, be provided as part of the evaluation.
3. Will take responsibility for the lawful disposal of any broken equipment or obsolete software having to do with communication equipment as described above.
4. On an annual basis, in the third quarter, prepare a report of all electronic equipment that would be a candidate for replacement, with costs and prioritization for the purchases. This report would be presented to the ACC Chair no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. The preparation of this report is a year-long activity. The CESC should work closely with all MSCA standing committees and sub-committees, the Area Officers committee and especially with the Area Finance Committee for the purpose of ensuring that a comprehensive, accurate and prudent report is prepared.

**C. OFFICERS:** The sub-committee shall have a Chair and Alternate Chair. The term of office is two (2) years beginning January 1 of even numbered years. The officers shall be elected biannually prior to even-numbered years within the Area Communications Committee by a simple majority vote.

**D. MEMBERSHIP:** This sub-committee should have a workable contingent of members. The Area Audio Equipment Operator is a voting member of this sub-committee. It is desirable that this sub-committee recruits and retain a list of names and contact information of A.A. members competent in the research and evaluation of electronic equipment of all kinds necessary to meet the electronic equipment needs of MSCA.

**E. MEETINGS:** The CESC will meet at each Area Service Committee meeting and Area Assembly and other times as necessary.

**F. FUNDING:** The CESC will prepare and submit a budget for this sub-committee to the Area Communications Committee Chairperson no later than August of each year.