

Academy of Certified Hazardous Materials Managers, Inc.

JOB DESCRIPTION

07-25-02



Category: **Committee**

Job Title: **National Committee**

Immediate Supervisor: **Board Liaison/President**

Subordinates: **None**

ACHMM NATIONAL COMMITTEE

1. Committees are accountable to the Academy President and Board of Directors.
2. The Committee carries out the tasks and purposes of the Committee charter, mission, and the mandate determined by the Academy President.
3. The Committee recommends tasks, goals, objectives, and policies to the Board of Directors.
4. The Committee reviews and acts upon the recommendations of Committee members and the Board of Directors.
5. The Committee performs other duties as mandated by the voting members of the Board of Directors or deemed essential to the affairs of the Academy by the President.
6. The Committee meets at least four times a year, including an annual Committee meeting during the annual national conference.
7. The Committee prepares written and oral reports for presentation to the Board of Directors.
8. The Committee carries out special assignments on request of the Academy President and/or the Board of Directors.
9. The Committee supports development of the Annual Operating Plan according to Academy policies and procedures to support achievement of Committee tasks, goals, and objectives.

Academy of Certified Hazardous Materials Managers, Inc.

JOB DESCRIPTION 07-25-02



Category: **Committee**

Job Title: **National Committee Chair**

Immediate Supervisor: **Board Liaison/President**

Subordinates: **None**

ACHMM NATIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIR

1. The Chair serves as spokesman for the Committee to the Academy President and Board of Directors Liaison. The Chair makes any requested oral and/or written Committee reports to the Academy President and the Board of Directors.
2. The Committee Chair establishes and carries out the Academy Committee objectives and goals of the charter of the Committee in accordance with the bylaws, long-range plan, and guidance from the President and Board of Directors.
3. The Committee Chair presides at all meetings of the Committee. The Chair has the right to vote on Committee business, but may reserve that right to vote.
4. The Committee Chair determines the time and place of meetings after consultation with the Board of Directors Liaison and members of the Committee.
5. The Committee Chair keeps the Academy President and Board of Directors informed on the condition and operations of the Committee. The Committee Chair communicates such matters and suggestions, which tend to promote the welfare and usefulness of the Committee.
6. The Committee Chair supports and defends the tasks, goals, objectives, policies, and programs adopted by the Academy Board of Directors.

7. The Committee Chair provides quarterly reports to the Academy and an annual Committee report to support the Academy annual business meeting.
8. The Committee Chair appoints committee members.
9. The Committee must have at least two members in addition to the Chair and shall have no more than ten. The Chair will appoint a Co-Chair and form sub-committees if deemed necessary to the effective management of the Committee.

Academy of Certified Hazardous Materials Managers, Inc.

JOB DESCRIPTION

07-25-02



Category: **Committee**

Job Title: **National Committee Member**

Immediate Supervisor: **Board Liaison/President**

Subordinates: **None**

ACHMM NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER

1. "In concert with other members of the Committee, the Committee Member reviews and recommends Academy tasks, goals, objectives, and policies. The Committee acts in utmost good faith for the benefit of the Academy and not for his/her own good.
2. The Committee Member attends meetings and participates in task, goal, objective, and policy-making decisions and committee assignments.
3. The Committee Member advises and assists the Committee Chair in carrying out the tasks and purposes of the Committee charter.
4. The Committee Member supports and defends all policies of the Academy as stated in the bylaws adopted by the Board and membership.
5. The Committee Member assists in the preparation of written and oral reports to be presented to the Board.
6. The Committee Member carries out special assignments on request of the Committee Chair, Co-Chair, President, or the Board.

By John E. Schlegel, CAE

The Committee Chair's Role

Excerpted from *Leadership*, published by the
American Society of Association Executives,
Washington, D.C., 1993.

The new association year is about to begin, and a most important activity is taking place: appointment of committee members and chair. “Just routine assignments,” some might say—a grave mistake.

If the board of directors is the brain of an association, committees form the central nervous system. When they operate well, committees accurately sense the environment, process information, and provide valuable guidance to the board so that it can make good decisions. When the committee system breaks down, however, the whole association suffers.

Critical to the success of every committee is an effective chair. The appointment of committee chairs can have far-reaching influence on association activities. Unfortunately, associations often don't recognize this until mistakes are made. The consequences of bad appointments range from work simply not getting done to political nightmares that disrupt the entire organization.

To understand the complex role of the committee chair, let us first look at the nature of committees and what makes them successful.

Committees: an effective work force

Purpose. Associations exist to represent involve and serve members. They provide educational programs, facilitate research, provide communication, identify experts in the field, carry on government relations work, and provide fraternity.

Effective associations create a system of committees to facilitate these activities in a manner that keeps the association linked to the attitudes and real world of members. In addition, committees serve as the school and proving ground for emerging leaders, who are critical to the association's future.

To be effective, committees must have a clear charge, be properly constituted, have competent staffing, and have an effective chair. As the key person on the committee, the chair must understand and appreciate these four elements of success.

A clear charge. The charge should state clearly what the committee is expected to accomplish and by when. It should also align with the association's strategic goals and objectives. The association's leaders chart its direction of travel, and like oarsmen on a boat, all the committees need be aligned so each pulls in the right direction.

Publishing committee charges, along with committee rosters, lets the members know what each committee does and who to contact to offer advice or comments.

***Keeping committee
members motivated,
involved, and
productive.***

Committee chairs

Appointments. The task to be completed by the committee should guide committee appointments. A member's expertise is certainly an important consideration. But equally important, appointments should take into consideration the diversity of the membership.

Committees are valuable because they generally achieve results that cannot be achieved as well by individuals working alone. Diversity of perspective and thinking on the committee, therefore, leads to creative results. Association committees are ideal places for people of diverse interests to consolidate and unify their thinking as they work together. This can lead to increased understanding and enhance communication and coordination of interests across the membership.

Yet, too often, appointments take the form of rewards or political patronage, with insufficient consideration given to the member's expertise or the committee's needs. Some associations involve the chair in the appointment of the other committee members. If this applies to your association, keep this diversity issue in mind when selecting members of your committee.

Qualities of an effective chair

Given how important the chair is to a committee's success, what qualities will you need to exhibit to be effective?

Communication skills. A successful chair serves as counselor, motivator, leader, and presiding officer. Thus, you must be comfortable communicating with members of the committee,

staff, and other groups within the outside the association.

Willingness to listen. The best groups are led by people who remain open-minded and encourage free expression of ideas, opinions, and recommendations. As chair, you'll need to understand group dynamics—recognize each committee member comes from a unique background and set of experiences and, consequently, will approach problems and develop solutions differently.

Participation. Your appointment as a committee chair might be in recognition of participation in the affairs of the association and the industry or profession. Having this status can help chairs sell the committee's work to the leaders and others in the association.

Because a committee's work takes place within the context of the association's overall goals, a good chair also thinks in terms of these goals. Knowledge of the subject the committee deals with is important—but this knowledge should not be narrowly focused.

Leadership. The abilities to command attention, inspire others, and control without dominating are essential. An effective chair understands power relationships within the committee and of groups within the association.

Administrative skills. Although the staff generally provides administrative support, you still need to be a self-starter when carrying out your responsibilities. For example, you need not know all the ins and outs of parliamentary procedures but should have a general understanding and know how to move discussions along in an orderly way.

Volunteer leaders and staff work closely throughout the year, so establish a cooperative working relationship by understanding and respecting the role of the association's staff. If political tensions develop, leading to confusion about the role of staff and the role of the chair, the committee will lose its effectiveness.

Responsibilities of the chair

Before saying yes to an appointment as committee chair, review the position requirements. Generally, you must be willing to accept the following responsibilities:

Attend meetings. Leadership cannot be exerted in absentia. Prepare to attend all—or nearly all—committee meetings.

Accept the committee charge. The committee is not the appropriate place to fight the establishment. If a member does not agree with the charge made to a committee, he or she should not use the chair position to impose personal beliefs.

The association depends on the committee to complete its assigned tasks, and other members of the committee have accepted appointments based upon an understanding of the committee charge. The chair owes it to the association and other members of the committee to work toward these established goals.

Plan the meetings. Staff generally assists with this responsibility, but you should help staff develop the agenda for each meeting. In addition, be willing to work with staff and members to develop efficient methods of complete the committee's work.

Exercise leadership. A good chair stimulates thinking and motivates all members of the committee to contribute.

Maintain records and relevant information. Depending too heavily on staff to handle all administrative affairs of the committee can project a level of indifference to others on the committee. At the least, keep track of agreements and be prepared to discuss their status.

Include all committee members in deliberations and decisions. Chairing a meeting is more than letting each person speak—it's using communication and listening skills to bridge gaps in the discussion and continually move members toward a conclusion and closure.

Evaluate and communicate committee efforts. As chair, you have the responsibility of keeping committee members and the association's leaders and membership abreast of the committee's progress and accomplishments. Whenever possible, committee's must work into the overall work of the association.

Chair's role as facilitator

Effective chairs facilitate rather than drive committees to complete their work. Use the following techniques to enhance your role as a facilitator.

1. Empower the members. You may be the committee chair, but the meetings belong to the committee as a whole. Be careful not to hold court during committee meetings, instead guide, mediate, probe, and stimulate, thus allowing *others* to trash out ideas.

2. Prevent one-sided discussions. You can keep discussions on track by continually restating the

issue under consideration or the goal being sought.

3. Monitor participation. Asking well-placed questions and seeking a point of information can draw silent members into the discussion. To make certain talkative members do not dominate, ask them to sum up their thoughts in 30 seconds so that other may speak. Or ask them to hold further comments until everyone else has had a chance to voice an opinion

4. Encourage a clash of ideas, not personalities. An emotional discussion of ideas is good, but an emotional reaction to a person is bad. When emotions run too high, return the floor to a neutral member or seek factual information from a member who is not involved in the exchange. If necessary, have the committee take a break.

5. Keep watch on verbal and nonverbal communication. Committee members who squirm in their chairs nervously tap their fingers, or suddenly become silent may be uncomfortable with the discussion. Use these clues to bring the person into the discussion, providing an opportunity to articulate the source of displeasure or discomfort. This approach often encourages others to join the discussion, thus allowing all members to feel a part of the deliberations.

6. Value everyone's opinions. By working up the pecking order of seniority during discussions, you can encourage less-senior members of the committee to participate. When an elder states person expresses a strong view early on, others often defer to that person's wisdom or experience. As a result, many potentially good ideas are never expressed.

7. Keep the group focused on the central question and moving toward a decision. Although consensus is required, obtaining unanimity of thought is no. Chairs frequently make the mistake of allowing a discussion to go on far too long, in an attempt to gain agreement y everyone.

Although all members' views should be heard and respected, there is nothing wrong with moving forward on a committee discussion made on a less-than-unanimous basis. The compromises necessary to elicit a unanimous vote often diminish the value of a good idea.

8. Be prepared to deal with disruptive members.

Occasionally, a committee will have members so keen on their own thinking that they disrupt discussions. These people may block the committee's deliberation by constantly seeking recognition, dominating, or even clowning.

When this occurs, confront the situation in a caring manner; point out the effects of the behavior and suggest less disruptive alternatives. It is important to label the behavior not the person. Handle these matters discreetly and privately, possibly during a break.

Confrontation is not a pleasant task, but the chair who does not deal with disruptive members is not being fair to the other members of the committee, who do not

want to see their contributions of time and energy squandered.

9. Close the meeting by summarizing achievements and progress made.

This allows members to leave the meeting with a sense of accomplishment and with the motivation to

continue their committee work.

10. Govern the meeting using the objectives and principles underlying parliamentary procedures. The procedures are intended to expedite business, maintain order ensure justice and equity, and accomplish the group's objectives. The principles of parliamentary procedure include courtesy and justice to all, rule of the majority, right of the minority, partially to none, protection of absentees, and

taking one item at a time.

A winning team

Coaches of winning sports teams generally attribute their success to recruiting talented players, making sure each player knows his or her job and understands the game plan, and conducting many practice sessions so that the players learn to work as a team.

The same could be said of successful association committees—and the committee chair is a key player in this

formula for success.



After 17 years as an association executive, John F. Schlegel, CAE, is now president of Schlegel & Associates and cofounder of Schlegel & Schuster, two management and training consulting firms in Chevy Chase, Maryland | 1993 John F. Schlegel, CAE.