



Seven Basic Responsibilities of Non-profit Executive Committees

This paper considers seven Executive Committee responsibilities which, along with the individual Executive Committee member's responsibilities, provide a set of criteria by which the Commonwealth Safety Management Forum Executive Committee may periodically review their performance and ensure accountability. In our endeavour to continually improve our operations and service to the CSMF, the Executive Committee subscribes to the following principles.

1. Organisation's Mission and Purpose

The Executive Committee's fundamental responsibility is to satisfy itself that everyone connected directly or indirectly with the organisation understands its reasons for existing. This is in the form of a written mission statement. In addition to ensuring that the organisation has a current statement of what it represents, and does, the Executive Committee agrees to periodically review the statement's adequacy, accuracy, and viability.

The CSMF's mission statement is contained within Clause 2 of the CSMF Constitution and is listed on the CSMF website.

This mission statement serves as a guide for CSMF planning, Executive Committee and member decision-making, volunteer initiatives, and setting priorities among competing demands for scarce resources.

2. Effective Organisational Planning

Executive Committee members must be involved in the planning process and help to implement the CSMF's goals and objectives. They need to ask questions, develop answers and utilise available resources. Following a period of consultation the Executive Committee will formally approve the CSMF plan. The Executive Committee members should be free of vested interest and should consider issues for the organisation as a whole.

Working committees consisting of Executive Committee members and ordinary members of the organisation may occasionally be set up to address specific areas of the plan.

The planning process must consider:

- Statement of mission and purposes;
- Assumption about the future (likely internal and external circumstances);
- Current programs and services;
- New programs and services;
- Membership development and retention strategies;

- Executive Committee (size, method of selection, committee structure, other Constitutional provisions);
- Financial projections (income and expenditures);
- Fund raising strategies; and
- Public relations

3. Adequate Management of Resources

The performance of the Executive Committee and the CSMF is linked to the Executive Committee's membership; the level of resourcing on the Executive Committee will be a determinant of the CSMFs ability to deliver forums and conferences. Therefore the CSMF is afforded an opportunity annually to submit nominations to provide for sufficient levels of Executive Committee members to deliver its programs.

4. Effective Financial Management

The Executive Committee and the CSMF must ensure that accumulated assets and income is managed properly. The Executive Committee has the principal responsibility for fulfilling the organisation's mission and the legal/fiduciary accountability for its operations. The Executive Committee exercises this responsibility by developing and approving the annual budget.

The Executive Committee members should receive regular financial reports accounting for assets and liabilities prior to each general meeting.

The Executive Committee ensures that an annual audit by an independent certified public accountant or accounting firm is undertaken, the report is provided to the CSMF membership.

5. Determine and Monitor the Organisation's Programs and Services

The Executive Committee's primary role is to ensure that current and proposed programs and services are consistent with the organisation's mission and purposes. Given that there are limited resources the Executive Committee must decide among competing priorities.

The Executive Committee's monitoring and oversight role must seek to balance between the Executive Committee's responsibility to ensure quality, cost-effective programs and services, and the organisation's ability to initiate and conduct them.

6. Enhance the Organisation's Public Image

The Executive Committee serves as a link between the organisation and its members. Clearly outlined achievements, contributions to the public good, and explanations of how revenue sources are received and allocated, are part of the process.

The Executive Committee is made up of volunteer members who convey their commitment and dedication through advocacy and a willingness to get out in front of their organisation and deliver the CSMF programs. The Executive Committee does not receive remuneration.

The Executive Committee should ensure that it is appropriately self-disciplined. No Executive Committee member should represent himself/herself as speaking for the Executive Committee or organisation unless specifically authorised to do so.

7. Assess Performance

The Executive Committee should, every two years, formally reflect on how they are meeting their responsibilities and whether the CSMF is meeting its remit. This process should include a review of membership composition, structure and overall performance and determine how this can be strengthened.

8. Conclusion

The Executive Committee members aim to perform their roles with self-restraint, enthusiasm and commitment to support the enhancement of Work Health and Safety knowledge amongst the CSMF membership. Executive Committee responsibilities include, assuring compliance with laws and regulations, adhering to the highest ethical and moral standards of organisation behaviour, ensuring good governance, and encouraging successors.

Suggested Resources

Ingram, Richard T. Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Nonprofit boards

O'Connell, Brian. The Board Member's Book. New York, NY: The Foundation Center, 1985.

American Society of Association Executives. Fundamentals of Association Management: The Volunteer. Washington, D.C.: American Society of Association Executive, 1982.

Chapman, Terry, Lai, Mary and Steinbock, Elmer. Am I Covered for...? A Guide to Insurance for Non-Profit Organisations. San Jose, CA: Consortium for Human Services, 1984.

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