

Teleconference Participation Guidelines

To improve audio and visual conferencing, the bar association has significantly upgraded hardware, but that addresses only part of the issue. We request that meeting leaders and participants follow a few simple guidelines.

For Meeting Leader:

- 1. Take and Track roll**
 - a. **In Room:** In an orderly fashion, ask participants in the room to introduce themselves. It helps remote participants hear names and voices.
 - b. **For Remote Participants:** Ask remote participants to identify themselves *in groups, and not all at once*. For example, take roll alphabetically in groups (A-H, I-Q, R-Z), by a list of who is expected, or by who is a group member before observers.
 - c. **Track Roll:** Keep a list of those on the phone next to you for roll call votes. If you hear a beep, ask if someone joined.
- 2. Ask for Questions:** Expressly ask for questions from remote participants *before* proceeding to a vote or the next item.
- 3. Pause for Phone Vote:** When taking a vote, please wait 10-15 seconds for the first set of votes to come in from remote participants as there is a short delay.
- 4. Repeat Questions:** For the benefit of everyone, presenters should repeat questions before answering them.

For Participants in the Room

- 1. Use your Outside Voice:** Rule of thumb, if they cannot hear you at the end of the table, they cannot hear you on the phone.
- 2. No Side Conversations:** Participants in the room should not rustle papers at the table or have side conversations. If you need to have a side conversation, step into the hallway.

For Remote Participants

- 1. Click Web Cam:** If attending the meeting through the computer link, click on your web cam so that when you speak your computer will show you on the screen.
- 2. Mute your Microphone:**
 - a. **By Computer:** If participating by computer, use the microphone symbol to mute and unmute.
 - b. **By Phone:** If participating by phone, use *6 to mute and unmute your phone.
- 3. Use Handsets:** When reasonably possible, *presenters and speakers should use handsets* and not the microphone on a speakerphone. Sound quality matters! Speakerphones impede hearing and understanding.
- 4. Tell Us of Problems:** Remote participants should speak up if any part of the meeting is not being heard.



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**A Guide to Preparing Minutes:
What to Include – and What Not to Include**

RULE NUMBER 1: Minutes should include what was *done* in a meeting, not what was *said*!

Minutes are the official record of committee proceedings. They record committee actions with respect to items contained on the meeting agenda. Minutes are not transcripts; they should not contain statements such as "Ms. Jones said X" and "Mr. Smith said Y." In addition, minutes should not contain statements of opinion, such as "Mr. Johnson gave an excellent report on...."

A good practice in preparing minutes is to follow the meeting agenda. A typical meeting agenda is the following:

1. Approval of the minutes of the prior meeting. (Note: If minutes are corrected, the corrections are not detailed in the minutes of the meeting at which they are corrected; the minutes simply should state that the prior meeting's minutes were corrected.)
2. Treasurer's Report (if any).
3. Reports of committees/subcommittees.
4. New Business.
5. Adjournment.

What should be included in the minutes?

1. "New York State Bar Association" and name of the committee.
2. Date and place of the meeting. (Note: Robert's Rules recommends including the time, but I consider it to be optional.)
3. Members in attendance. (Robert's Rules requires only the presence of the presiding officer and secretary, but NYSBA's practice is to list all in attendance.)
4. Approval of the prior meeting's minutes.
5. Reports from committees/subcommittees and the disposition of the reports. Example:

Report and recommendations of Committee on Children and the Law. Betsy R. Ruslander, the committee's chair, reviewed an affirmative legislative proposal to amend Family Court Act §1051 to permit the Family Court to dismiss a neglect proceeding at any point in the proceeding on the grounds that the court's aid is not required. After discussion, a motion was adopted to approve the proposal. (Sample from June 2015 Executive Committee minutes.)

As indicated by the sample, the minutes should list the name of the committee making the report; the name and capacity of the person presenting the report; the subject matter of the report; and how the committee disposed of the report. If the report is not being presented for action and is strictly informational, the minutes can indicate that the presenter "made an informational report" on the subject. The disposition section can say, "The report was received with thanks."

6. New Business (if any).
7. Adjournment. (Again, Robert's Rules recommends adding the time of adjournment, but doing so has not generally been NYSBA practice.)
8. Signature of person preparing the minutes (or secretary, if the committee has one).

Some additional notes:

Voting: As indicated by the example above, unless a count of votes is ordered it is not necessary to indicate votes in favor and votes against a motion. If the presiding member orders a count, the count should be included in the minutes.

Moving motions: Generally it has not been NYSBA practice to name the members who make or second motions in the minutes.

Maintaining minutes: If a member of the committee is responsible for taking minutes, the staff liaison should ensure that he or she receives a copy of the minutes to maintain in the file. Our record retention policy requires that minutes be maintained indefinitely.
