

2 COMMUNICATION

[This section includes all modifications through Team Update 10]

2.1 OVERVIEW

This section provides teams with necessary information for contacting FIRST staff, using the FIRST logo, and other information regarding such topics as the Yearbook Page.

A form for all of your team information can be found at <http://www.usfirst.org/2004comp/yourteaminfoform.pdf>

2.2 FIRST - CONTACT INFORMATION

You can reach FIRST via phone, fax, mail, and e-mail, or get information from our website. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00pm, EST. *Be sure to provide your team number.* Refer to the sections below for the appropriate help resource.

Phone Extensions: *Press the # key, then the extension number.*

Mailing Address: FIRST 200 Bedford Street Manchester, NH 03101	Team Support e-mail frcteams@usfirst.org	Phone: (800) 871-8326 or (603) 666-3906 Fax: (603) 666-3907
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2.3 GETTING ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

First will utilize an on-line Manual, starting in 2004, including a web-based question and answer system.

To submit a question to FIRST, you will have to log in with a password. Each team can obtain its password within its team record in the Team Information System (TIMS).

To ask a question, you will have to specify the section of the Manual for which you need clarification. Teams will be able to view questions and answers sorted by date or Manual section. (The Game, The Robot, etc.)

Access the question and answer system at <http://www.usfirst.org/robotics/2004/qa.htm>

1. Please ask one question at a time.
2. Questions are limited to 240 characters.

2.4 TEAM SUPPORT

The Operations, Team Support system is ready to help your team. Please use the information below to contact one of our staff members with regard to administrative concerns. Please bear in mind that our program requires many requests in writing, so e-mailing may be your best resource.

We ask that you do not copy multiple persons about the same problem as we are a small group and try very hard to avoid duplicating efforts. We try very hard to answer questions or requests within one working day.

2.4.1 E-mails and Subject Lines

This may be the best way to get a quick answer to your question. E-mails save money, time, and provide information for a researched, more accurate answer. Include your team number and short reference in the subject line, please. E-mail detailed questions or concerns to frcteams@usfirst.org.

2.4.2 Phone/Competition Questions

Call 603-666-3906 or 800-871-8326, Phone Option 1 on the phone menu, for help and answers to questions regarding administrative or team concerns. If you leave a voice mail, make it short and detailed and include your team number, name, e-mail address, and phone number. Team Support will research the question and return your call or send you an e-mailed answer.

2.5 TEAM INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TIMS)

The Team Information Management System (TIMS) is the on-line way to register and provide information as the season progresses. When teams use the system properly, the system provides FIRST with up-to-date:

- Team names
- Team Contact information for important, individual team messages and FIRST e-mail blasts
- Team Partner (Sponsor) information
- Event attendance information for each team (Kickoff, Events, Team Socials, and Forums)
- Team Yearbook Pages
- Team's FedEx or UPS shipping account number

This system also provides information to teams about:

- a. Teams willing to mentor other teams
- b. Teams wanting mentoring
- c. Team website links

2.5.1 Main Contact and TIMS

Your adult Main Contact is responsible for accessing TIMS, our registration and on-line information update system, keeping the information current and providing necessary information by the set deadlines. The Main Contact for your team has the password and logon ID to enter the system and make necessary additions and changes as they occur.

2.5.2 Team Contacts Provide Internal Information

Each team contact is responsible for informing the Main Contact of changes and additions to his/her record.

2.5.3 "Off Season" and Current Contact Information

If your phone numbers and addresses are incorrect, you will not receive information or materials. This is especially crucial during school vacations. Be sure to provide the Main Contact with a secondary address, home and cell phone numbers, and e-mail addresses so we can reach you during the event travel season, vacations, school weather closures, and/or the summer.

If any of the contacts leaves the team, either replace his/her information with new contact information, or delete the contact from the system.

2.5.4 Team Name for the Competition Scoreboard

Once you have established your team partners (sponsors), remember to adjust your twenty-one (21)-letter maximum "short team name." Whatever you put in this field will appear on the scoreboard at each event. Remember....sponsors like and expect the recognition.

2.6 FIRST WEBSITE

Visit FIRST at its World Wide Website at <http://www.usfirst.org> to access periodic rules updates, check deadlines and dates, find event information, and find answers to administrative concerns.

2.6.1 Team Website Links

The website also provides links to home pages. FRC teams set these up. If you have a team-related web page, you can post it via our Team Information Management System (TIMS) as part of the registration/maintenance process.

Remember to keep your website up-to-date, especially if you would like consideration for the Website Award.

2.6.2 Team Updates

Team Updates provide rules updates and other important information about parts, administrative reminders, or deadlines. Check for Team Updates often, especially on *Tuesdays and Fridays*.

Teams often put someone in charge of printing Team Updates, passing them to relevant team subdivisions. To find them on the FIRST Robotics website, do the following:

- Click the "Documents and Updates" button on the left side of the page
- Choose "2004 Competition Documents"
- Choose "Team Updates"

Our schedule to publish Team Updates is:

- Tuesday by 5PM and Friday by 10AM. We work hard to meet these commitments. Unexpected circumstances may, on occasions, delay their publication.
- Additional updates may be released if required.

Occasionally revisions to this manual will be published. Each of these revisions will add "Rev A", "Rev B" etc. to the name of each manual section that has been updated. Two versions of these revisions will be made available:

- A "Marked-up" version – all changes will be in red and indicated by a change bar in the right margin; adds will be double-underlined, deletes will be struck through
- An "Incorporated" version – all changes will be incorporated without indications.

2.7 EVENT-SPECIFIC LOCATION/SHIPPING/DRAYAGE INFORMATION

We post specific information pertaining to Regional and Championship events on the website regarding site directions, team socials, and shipping and drayage. You will be able to download this information for the events you plan to attend. To find this information, do the following:

On the FIRST Robotics page, click on Regional Events or Championship, then click on "Site Info" when you find the relevant event.

Provide information to the proper subdivision(s) of your team:

- a. Print the document
- b. Distribute the document to relevant team members
- c. Place it in your FRC Manual behind your "Events" tab

2.8 CONTROL SYSTEM-SPEED CONTROLLERS: INNOVATION FIRST, INC.

Contact Innovation First, Inc. for help with items such as: Operator Interface, Robot Controller, Radios, Speed Controllers, and Relay Modules.

Phone: (903) 454-1978.

E-mail: To contact them via e-mail, visit the website: <http://www.innovationfirst.com>

2.9 ENGINEERING

Phone: 603-666-3906 or 800-871-8326, phone Option 2.

Contact Engineering for technical issues, playing field construction information, and game rules.

Please do *NOT* contact FIRST Robotics if you are having technical problems with the Innovation First components. See above for Innovation First contact information.

2.10 MENTORING & TEAM ORGANIZATION

Sign up to mentor or receive mentoring through our on-line Registration / Team Information Management System (TIMS). Use the event map on the website for mentoring information and connections.

2.11 PROVIDING CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP TO FIRST

Please contact Dia Stolnitz, Director of Development, for information. 800-871-8326, Ext. # 406 or dia@usfirst.org.

2.12 NEW - HOTEL INFORMATION - THE THS COMPANY

Please review instructions on the website, <http://www.usfirst.org>, before you attempt to reserve rooms for your team. Each FIRST team must designate one person as the Team Travel Coordinator to manage this process.

The THS Company will handle the FIRST recommended hotel reservations.

The THS Company
306 High Street
Hackettstown, NJ 07840
888 536 TEAM
<http://www.thsweb.com>

2.13 USING THE FIRST LOGO

We encourage teams to develop and promote team identity. It is a great way to help FIRST judges, announcers, and audiences recognize your team at the competitions, and it is also a way to help you create a "buzz" about your team in your community.

You have incredibly creative opportunities in terms of designing your own identity. Every year we see great examples of how teams "brand" their efforts with websites, incredible team logos on robots, t-shirts, hats, banners, fliers, and giveaways.

These branding activities are a wonderful way to include students from art, communications, computer, and language arts classes in your team effort. As you manage your own promotion, you may want to incorporate the FIRST logo in what you do. Because our mark is registered, both name and the geometric logo, we have a few guidelines for you to follow when using the FIRST logo:

Positive Promotion: Use our logo in a manner that is positive and promotes FIRST.

Unmodified: Use the FIRST logo without modification. This means that you will use our name and the circle, square, and triangle as you see it on our website or letterhead. You can use it in red, blue, and white, or in black and white.

Modification Permission: If you have an interest in modifying our logo, do that only when you receive our permission.

FIRST is happy to talk with you about modifications after you submit a written request letting us know why you want to modify the logo; how you plan to do it, and where you plan to apply it.

Send an e-mail request to Ken Freitas, kfreitas@usfirst.org, Marketing and Promotion.

Advertising Use Approval: All Teams and sponsors must obtain approval from FIRST prior to incorporating our logo in any advertising. E-mail requests to Ken Freitas for approval, by e-mail kfreitas@usfirst.org or by phone at 800-871-8326 #410.

2.14 JUDGES' YEARBOOK PAGE

The Yearbook Page is a team overview page. Complete the Yearbook Page via the TIMS before the deadline. We compile these pages in books for the Judges for each event.

The Team Yearbook page is your opportunity to share valuable information about your team with FIRST. The data collected helps FIRST track important statistics such as how much it cost your team to participate in the competition, the population of the team (e.g., male/female students, teachers, parents, non-technical professionals) and class breakdown. This information is helpful in FIRST's efforts to procure funding.

Judges also use the yearbook pages at the Regional and Championship events. They learn important details about your team such as the history, goals and strengths, and challenges your team has overcome. Judges take all of this into consideration when they make decisions about team awards! Please note that we may use the robot photos you submit for the Awards Ceremonies.

For rookies unfamiliar with the process, you enter this data via the Team Information Management System at <http://my.usfirst.org/> Simply log in as you did to register your team for events. Once in, you will see the "Edit Team Yearbook Information" button that will lead you to the pages. The pages will open today, **February 4th**, and will close on **February 26th, at 5:00 pm EST**.

Important Customer Service Note: Last year, many teams waited until the deadline date to start inputting their information. Unfortunately, some teams had last minute problems that could not be resolved by closing time. Since we are against a strict printing deadline, we urge you to start and complete these pages ahead of the deadline date. This way if you have any problems or questions, Team Support will have enough time to help you. We have over 900 teams this year, and we want to be sure that each of you gets the help you need.

****IMPORTANT**** Due to printing constraints there can be No Extensions. All yearbook pages must be completed on-line by 5:00 pm EST, February 26th.

2.14.1 NEW - Description of Potential Inclusions

To prepare for this project, you may want to gather information about your team, such as:

- Team's City, State, Country
- Team website address
- Number of years involved
- Names of the Student Leader and Main Contact
- Affiliation - Sponsor
- Team Budget for the year
- Number of female and male students, engineers and technicians, teachers, parents
- How many freshman, sophomores, juniors, seniors
- FIRST events you will attend
- Previous FIRST awards/year won

Another portion of the Yearbook Page could include short, written descriptions of:

- Team History
- Team Goals
- FIRST impact on the team/community
- Community Description
- Team Strengths
- Most significant challenge the team overcame
- Robot game and strategy
- Most competitive for which awards
- Funding sources
- Reasons for public awareness of your team

2.14.2 Purpose

The Yearbook Page submission is a tool that:

- Provides a common starting point for judging each team
- Helps provide judges with some insight into each team's workings, history, and robot

- Makes the judging more efficient
- Provides team data for FIRST and its archives

2.14.3 Requirements

Insert a single photo in the designated spot. The requested digital picture of the robot, or the team and robot, provides a visual recollection for the judges as well as a picture we can archive on disc to use for media coverage and the awards ceremony at the Competitions.

The Main Contact for each team will receive instructions and required format for filling out the form via the website. To ensure proper archiving, carefully follow the specific guidelines.

2.14.4 Submission Deadline

Midnight, Eastern Time, February 26, 2004.

2.15 HOW TO VOLUNTEER FOR FIRST

Each Competition event depends on an abundance of volunteers with a broad spectrum of talents to support operating needs and competition demands. If you have time, we can use your help. Please use our website for information about volunteering and on-line signup.