



COMMUNICATION

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1 COMMUNICATION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This section provides teams with necessary information for contacting *FIRST* staff, Innovation First, and Autodesk. This section also contains help regarding the use of the *FIRST* logo, finding materials on the website, updating the Team Information Management System (TIMS), tips on reserving hotels, and other informational topics such as the Yearbook Page.

1.2 *FIRST* HEADQUARTERS- CONTACT INFORMATION

You can reach *FIRST* via mail, phone, and fax, or get information from our website at <http://www.usfirst.org/>. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., EST. Refer to the sections below for the appropriate help resource. *Be sure to provide your team number on all communications.*

Mailing Address:	Phone Numbers:	Fax Numbers:	
<i>FIRST</i> 200 Bedford Street Manchester, NH 03101	(603) 666-3906 or (800) 871-8326	Main Engineering Finance	(603) 666-3907 (603) 666-0043 (603) 647-5772

1.3 TEAM SUPPORT

The Operations, Team Support Group is ready answer program-related questions regarding registration and team record maintenance, the Kickoff, and the shipping and drayage process. We are ready to help your team. If you leave a voice mail, make it short but detailed and include your team number, name, email address, and phone number. A representative will research the question and return your call or answer via email.

Email Address: frcteams@usfirst.org

Phone: (603) 666-3906 or (800) 871-8326 – **Press 0 for Operations Team Support / Operator.**

1.3.1 Emails and Subject Lines

Our program requires that many requests must be in writing, so email may be your best communication tool and the best way to get a quick answer or solution to your problem. Emails save money, time, prevent phone tag, and provide information for a researched, more accurate answer. To facilitate a quick reply, include your team number and reference in the subject line.

1.3.2 Please Do Not Duplicate Efforts

We ask that you do not contact or copy multiple persons about the same problem. Being a small group, we must work efficiently and avoid having more than one person working on the same item. We can usually answer questions or requests within one working day.

1.4 INNOVATION FIRST, INC.

(Control System-Speed Controllers)

Contact Innovation First, Inc. for help with items such as: Operator Interface, Robot Controller, Radios, Speed Controllers, and Relay Modules. Remember to provide your *FIRST* team number in the subject line.

Tech Support Phone: (903) 453-0802

Tech Support Email Address: info@IFIRobotics.com

Website: WWW.IFIRobotics.com

1.5 THE *FIRST* STORE (PARTS)

After Kickoff, Innovation First Inc. (IFI) will host an on-line store on behalf of *FIRST* so teams can purchase listed Kit of Parts items. IFI will have the *FIRST* Store located on its website (www.ifirobotics.com). Only *FIRST* teams will be authorized to purchase these parts. *FIRST* will establish pricing for all parts, which will include handling charges but not shipping charges.

Phone:	(903) 453-0802
Email Address:	info@IFIRobotics.com
Website:	WWW.IFIRobotics.com

1.6 *FIRST* ROBOTICS COMPETITION WEBSITE

Visit *FIRST* Robotics Competition at its FRC “community” area where you can find answers to administrative concerns and link to other areas of support.

<http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/default.aspx?id=966>

- Check deadlines and dates for the Team Information Management System (TIMS), entries, grants, registration and payments, robot shipment, and awards submissions. <http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=454>
- Find the “Documents and Updates” area, with link areas on the new “Consent and Release Form,” the NEW Archive of Email blasts, Q & A System, “2007 Robot Shipping,” FRC Team Manual sections, events, and a list of the Regional Contact persons, etc. <http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=960>
- Fundraising support materials such as the photo gallery, video clips, and program information. http://www.usfirst.org/community/resourcecenter.aspx?id=952&menu_id=148

1.6.1 Getting Answers To Your Competition Questions

Manual and Updates: The *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC) Manual is available on the *FIRST* Web site at <http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=960>. *FIRST* will update this page twice a week. The updates will contain new information and clarifications about competing at *FIRST* Robotics Competition events.

Forum: *FIRST* also provides an on-line forum for questions and answers (Q & A). It is accessible at the above web site for each section of the Competition Manual, such as "The Game," "The Robot," etc. Anyone can view questions and replies on this system. Only those team contacts with a special team username and password can post questions to this system. This username and password have been sent to the team's Main Contact.

- **FRC Q&A Forum:** To make it easier for the FRC teams to post questions, we have redesigned the FRC Game Q & A forum so that teams may post directly to the moderators of the forum. Until a moderator accepts the questions, others cannot see them.

1.6.2 Team Website Links

The website also provides links to FRC teams' home pages. If you have an FRC team-related web page, you can post it via our Team Information Management System (TIMS) as part of the registration / management process. Keep your website up-to-date with team history, projects, accomplishments, event participation, and awards for the website award review and its related deadline.

1.6.3 **NEW:** Archived Team Email Blasts

Email blasts are important communications *FIRST* sends to FRC teams. This year, all team email blasts are posted on the web site to provide team members and mentors easy access to information *FIRST* provides to, and requests from, teams since September. This feature is especially helpful for teams that register later in the season. We suggest that you have several team members in charge of updating and informing relevant persons on the team.

1.6.4 Team Updates

After the Kickoff, *Team Updates* provide rules updates, important information about parts, administrative reminders/deadlines. These documents are posted on the *FIRST* Web site. Our Team Updates schedule 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 necessary.
- Occasionally, *FIRST* will publish revisions to manual sections.

Teams often ask one person to read all *Team Updates* and make sure the right team members are informed about their contents. Find the updates on the *FRC* “community” page after the Kickoff at <http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/default.aspx?id=966>

1.6.5 Recruitment & Public Relations Materials

You can find information on the *FIRST* Web site to enhance your team’s recruitment efforts and find PowerPoint presentations, video clips, and statements about the Impact of *FIRST*, our Vision, testimonials, and *FIRST* financial information at:

http://www.usfirst.org/community/resourcecenter.aspx?id=952&menu_id=148

1.7 THE TIMS - SUPPLYING INFORMATION TO *FIRST*

(Team Information Management System)

The Team Information Management System (TIMS) is the on-line system to register your team and provide information to *FIRST* as the season progresses. Refer to the “Calendar of Important Deadlines” to check: <http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=454> informational deadlines.

When teams use the system properly, TIMS provides *FIRST* with necessary, up-to-date information including:

- 1) Team Names: Official, Nickname, and the 21 letter Short Name used on the scoreboards
- 2) Team Contact information for important, team messages, shipments, and *FIRST* email blasts
- 3) Team Partner (Sponsor) information
- 4) Event attendance information for each team
- 5) Team’s FedEx or UPS shipping account number. (Purolator for Canadian teams)
- 6) Team Yearbook Page area which provides Information for judges

Additionally, TIMS “Team Information” provides options for:

- Teams willing to mentor other teams
- Teams wanting mentoring
- Entering team website address/link

1.7.1 TIMS Access for Both Main and Alternate Contacts

At the teams’ requests, we have made it possible for each team to have two **adult** TIMS access persons. Both the adult Main and Alternate contacts can enter the system with his/her logon information and make additions and changes. They are responsible for accessing the TIMS, keeping the information current, and providing necessary information by the set deadlines. Keeping the information provided in the TIMS current and accurate is critical for participation in the FRC.

1.7.2 International Teams

If your team is an international team, please be sure to supply your country code and city code as part of all of your phone numbers in TIMS. This is especially critical during Kit of Parts and robot shipment times because it is sometimes necessary to speak with Shipping, Main, and/or Alternate Contacts.

1.7.3 "Off Season" and Current Contact Information

Each team contact listed in the TIMS is responsible for informing the Main or Alternate Contact of any changes or additions to the team's TIMS record, including phone numbers and addresses. This is especially crucial during team travel times and during school vacations.

Be sure to provide the Main Contact's information area with a secondary address, home and cell/mobile phone numbers, and email addresses so we can reach him/her. If any of the team contacts leaves the team, add the new information and delete the former contact from the TIMS.

1.7.4 Mentoring & Team Organization

If you wish to sign up to mentor or receive mentoring through the TIMS, make sure your Main or Alternate Contact edits his/her TIMS record and clicks "yes" to the question "Share this address?" (or the email, or the phone). Find this in the primary address area.

Under "Team Information," make sure you answer the questions regarding mentoring by clicking the appropriate box regarding the following:

- We are willing to mentor other FRC teams.
- We would like to be mentored by another FRC team.

1.7.5 Team Names –Official, Short, and Nickname Deadlines

Please read below for team name definitions, uses, and TIMS deadline. Enter the information in the TIMS "Team Information" area.

1.7.5.1 Your Official Team Name

The official team name includes sponsors and schools. We refer to them as Partners. This official name is generated automatically when you enter the Partner information in the TIMS, and appears in written materials such as the *FIRST* Program Books. *Update the Partners area of the TIMS whenever there is a change or addition.*

1.7.5.2 Other Team Names for Scoreboard and Play-by-Play

Our practice and match lists must be prepared before the competition season. For this reason, we ask that you enter your short name and nicknames in the TIMS by mid January.

- 1) **Short Team Name:** Once you have established your team partners (sponsors), remember to adjust your twenty-one (21)-letter maximum "short team name" to include them. Whatever you put in this field will appear on the scoreboard at each event. Sponsors appreciate the extra recognition.
- 2) **Nickname:** Make sure to enter your team's nickname. The announcer uses team nicknames during the game when doing the play-by-play descriptions.

1.7.6 Judges' Yearbook Page

The Yearbook Page is a team overview page and is your team's opportunity to share valuable information with *FIRST* and with the judges at the Regional and Championship events. Enter the information via the TIMS under the "Pre-Event" information area.

The data you enter will help provide important statistics about *FIRST* teams. These data are very valuable for planning events and very helpful in our efforts to procure funding. *FIRST* may use the robot photos you submit in the Awards Ceremonies.

1.7.6.1 Purpose of Yearbook Page

- Provides a common starting point for judging each team

- Helps provide judges with insight into each team's workings, history, goals, strengths, and robot
- Makes judging more efficient
- Provides team data for *FIRST* and its archives

1.7.6.2 Yearbook Page Information and Deadline

The submission deadline is February 22, 2007, 11:59 EST.

Enter this data via the TIMS in the “Pre-Event Information” area.

Don’t wait until the last minute: If you wait until the deadline date to start entering information, you may have problems you can’t resolve by closing time. We face a strict printing deadline when preparing for events, and we urge you to start and complete these pages as early as you can. If you ask for help early, Team Support will have time to help, but our small staff cannot help if too many teams wait until the last days.

No Time Extensions: *FIRST* cannot grant time extensions to complete this information.

1.7.6.3 Required “Pre-Event” Information

To prepare for this project, you may want to gather information about your team. Put in your data in your TIMS record as you gather it. The following is an idea of the type of information you will need for this area:

- Number of years team has been involved
- Name of the Student Leader
- Team Budget for the year
- Robot or robot and team photo
- Number of female and male students, engineers and technicians, teachers, and parents on the team
- How many freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors
- Teacher/Mentor information
- Percent of your school's student population receiving free or reduced-price lunch

Essay Portion – Please answer briefly. This section requires short, written descriptions of the following:

- Team history
- Team goals
- *FIRST* impact on the team/community
- Community description
- Team strengths
- Most significant challenge the team overcame
- Robot game and strategy
- For which awards is the Team is most competitive this year?
- Funding sources

Why is the public aware of your team?

Photo: In the designated spot on the web page, insert a single digital photo of the robot, or the team and robot. Judges rely on these photos, and they also help *FIRST* with media coverage and awards ceremonies.

Format: The Main Contact for each team will receive the necessary instructions for filling out the form via the TIMS. To ensure proper archiving, carefully follow the directions.

1.8 Autodesk CONTACT INFORMATION

Website: Autodesk has created a website area devoted to *FIRST* teams, called FIRSTbase. Please go to www.autodesk.com/firstbase for information on the software downloads, training, the Autodesk competition, Autodesk kit of parts, technical support, their sponsorship, *FIRST* alumni, resources, frequently asked questions, the pressroom and feedback. You can find the initial email on the archive page <http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=3520>**Email:** If you can't find answers to your questions from the above website, please contact Autodesk via first@mail.autodesk.com

1.9 EVENT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The *FIRST* Robotics website includes important information about specific events. We advise that you add copies of the "Site Info" and "Shipping / Drayage" and any information you receive regarding the FedEx donated shipping process to your FRC Manual information regarding the events you will attend.

You will be able to download the below information for the events, and you can find this information on the *FIRST* Robotics page by clicking on Regional Events or Championship. Choose your event and click on "Site Info" or other links for pertinent information, such as pre-order lunch forms.

Provide the information to appropriate team members and mentors.

- The **NEW** 2006-07 Consent and Release Form - only acceptable version of the form for the 2007 Kickoff and events. Bring completed copies in case the originals are lost or the person carrying them is delayed. These are due at registration of your initial competition event.
- Site Maps
- Shipping and drayage information and labels
- Copies of pre-ordered lunch forms
- Team social events
- Be sure to include your FedEx airbills, directions for airbill printing, and logon information

1.10 **NEW:** REGIONAL EVENTS HOTEL SEARCH INFORMATION

For the 2007 season, *FIRST* will not be offering hotel reservation services for the *FIRST* Robotics Regional event season. We are working hard on having the service reinstated next year. In the meantime, we would like to provide *FIRST* team mentors with some recommendations for placing team hotel reservations. Some great resources are:

- Google/Kayak
- The Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) in the city in which you are competing. Hotels that are members of their local CVBs tend to be more reputable properties.

Examples: www.atlanta.net, <http://www.visitdetroit.com/>, <http://www.orlandoinfo.com/>

NOTE: If you can't get a large enough block from a third party website such as Travelocity or Price.com, contact the hotel directly during normal business hours to speak with a reservations representative who is better suited to make larger blocks.

We suggest that you use the following tips to help with your hotel search.

- 1) Pick out three or four hotels in the same proximity of your Regional city to confirm approximate pricing for the marketplace within 3-5 miles to the venue. You can find a complete list of venue addresses for the Regionals on the *FIRST* Web site.
- 2) Use Mapquest, Yahoo, or other online driving direction services to confirm the distance to the venue.
- 3) Once you make your choices, contact the hotels reservation personnel and ask your questions directly. The following are examples of what features you will want your hotel to have:
 - 24 hour security
 - Free parking, or at least secure parking if it is in a city environment
 - Interior entrance rooms - rooms that have exterior entrances are the ones that have inherent security risks, plus the fact that any team member can wander off at any time.
 - Hotels that have been renovated within the past 4 years
 - Hotels that will disclose if they have groups in house that are not consistent with or are in indirect opposition to *FIRST* values or any other groups that tend to stay up late and can affect your sleep.

Other items to consider are:

- Will your room block be together on the same floor/area
 - Is there a complimentary breakfast
 - Is there free Internet access (about 50% of all hotels have it)
 - Cheapest should not be the only qualifier. If the quality or location is poor, it can lead to an overall bad Regional experience. Without the proper sleep, you will wish that you had paid a little more for a better quality hotel.
- 4) Call and make your reservations as soon as possible. What rates you may find available now are not usually the same close to the event date when the hotel is close to its capacity.

1.11 CHAMPIONSHIP HOTEL INFORMATION

FIRST is pleased to announce that Steele Meetings, Inc will be handling the hotel reservation system in Atlanta for the 2007 *FIRST* Championship. Click on the link [hotel reservation](#). To contact Steele Meetings at any time, write to Linda Steele at steelemeetings@earthlink.net.

1.12 *FIRST* LOGOS

You have numerous creative opportunities for designing your own team 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.

As you manage your own promotion, you may want to incorporate the *FIRST* logo in what you do. Because our mark - the combination of the composite graphic element plus the *FIRST* wordmark - is registered, we have a few guidelines for you to follow when using the *FIRST* logo.

You can find the *FIRST* Logo on FRC Communications Resource Center <http://www.usfirst.org/community/resourcecenter.aspx?id=650>

1.12.1 Logo Use

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 community "buzz" about your team. Here are some guidelines:

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 triangle, circle and square as you see it on our website or letterhead. You can use it in red, blue, and white, or in black and white. Refer to the *FIRST* logo standards for additional details including placement, size, and color specifications and incorrect logo usage.

Logo and Standards: You can download the *FIRST* logo from our website in JPEG (for electronic applications) or eps (for printed applications) format. Go to <http://www.usfirst.org/> and click on FRC Communications Resource Center in the Quicklinks menu. Select the “Graphics” Section.

Advertising Use Approval: All teams and sponsors must obtain approval from *FIRST* prior to incorporating our logo in any advertising. Email approval requests to Marian Murphy, murphy@usfirst.org or phone 800-871-8326, ext. 409.

1.12.2 Finding This Year’s Competition Logo

Once the game is announced at the Kickoff, you will soon be able to download this year’s game logo from the *FIRST* Robotics Competition Communications Resource Center portion of the website under “Graphics.” <http://www.usfirst.org/community/resourcecenter.aspx?id=650>

1.13 PROVIDING CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

For those interested in providing Corporate Sponsorship to *FIRST*, please contact Dia Stolnitz, Director of Annual Giving, for information regarding the opportunity to provide sponsorship at (603) 666-3906 or (800) 871-8326, Extension 406. You can also contact him via email at dstolnitz@usfirst.org.

1.14 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 appreciate and can surely use your help. Please visit the *FIRST* Web site page, “For Volunteers,” to find out more about volunteer opportunities. You can register your preferences for events and volunteer positions via the *FIRST* Volunteer Information and Matching System (VIMS), an on-line registration system.