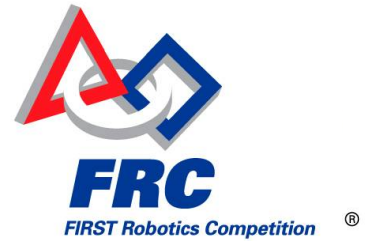


**Section**  
**1**



# COMMUNICATION

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# 1 COMMUNICATION

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

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

## 1.2 *FIRST* HEADQUARTERS- CONTACT INFORMATION

You can reach *FIRST* via mail, phone, and fax, or get information from our web site at [www.usfirst.org](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:	(603) 666-3907
		Finance:	(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. All 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](mailto: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 CONTROL SYSTEM SUPPORT

(Innovation First, Inc.)

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](mailto:info@IFIRobotics.com)  
**Web site:** [www.ifirobotics.com](http://www.ifirobotics.com)

## 1.5 THE *FIRST* STORE (PARTS)

After Kickoff, 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 web site ([www.ifirobotics.com](http://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. For information about contacting IFI, please refer to the above section.

## 1.6 *FIRST* ROBOTICS COMPETITION WEB SITE

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

- Check deadlines and dates for the Team Information Management System (TIMS), entries, grants, registration and payments, robot shipment, and awards submissions. [www.usfirst.org/frc\\_calendar](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_calendar)
- Find the “Documents and Updates” area, with link areas on the new “Consent and Release Form,” the Email Blast Archive, FRC Q&A Forum, the “2008 Robot Shipping” page, FRC Team Manual sections, events, and a list of the Regional Contact persons, etc. [www.usfirst.org/frc\\_documents](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_documents)
- Find fundraising support materials such as the photo gallery, video clips, and program information. [www.usfirst.org/frc\\_communication\\_resources](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_communication_resources)

### 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 [www.usfirst.org/frc\\_documents](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_documents). Those sections relating to the game will be posted after the Kickoff. *FIRST* will add to the Update page twice a week to provide teams with new information and clarifications about *FIRST* Robotics Competition events.

**Updates and additions to the manual, should they be necessary, will be posted in this area of the web site. Please be sure to check this area often during the build season to ensure that you have the latest information.**

**FRC Q&A Forum:** Shortly after Kickoff, *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. Teams may post directly to the moderators of the forum. Until a moderator accepts the questions, others cannot see them.

### 1.6.2 Team Web site Links

The web site 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 web site up-to-date with team history, projects, accomplishments, event participation, and awards for the web site award review and deadline.

### 1.6.3 Email Blasts

Email blasts are important communications *FIRST* sends to the Main and Alternate contacts for all FRC teams. All team email blasts are sent to the main and alternate team contacts identified in TIMS and are also archived on the web site beginning in September. This system will provide team members and mentors easy access to information *FIRST* provides to, and requests from, teams. 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. After the Kickoff, you will find the updates on the “Documents and Updates” page at [www.usfirst.org/frc\\_documents](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_documents)

### 1.6.5 Recruitment & Public Relations Materials

You can find information on the *FIRST* Web site to enhance your team’s recruitment efforts. Find PowerPoint presentations, video clips, and statements about the Impact of *FIRST*, our Vision, testimonials, and *FIRST* financial information at: [www.usfirst.org/frc\\_communication\\_resources](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_communication_resources)

## 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. For details about using the TIMS, please reference Section 2.3. Refer to the “Calendar of Important Deadlines” to check program deadlines [www.usfirst.org/frc\\_calendar](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_calendar). When teams use the system properly, the 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, UPS, or Purolator shipping account number
- 6) Team Judges’ Information Page

Additionally, the TIMS “Team Information” provides options for:

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

## 1.8 JUDGES’ INFORMATION (FORMERLY KNOWN AS “THE YEARBOOK PAGE”)

**The Judges’ Information page is crucial and a great opportunity to communicate your team’s strengths to the competition judges. Please take advantage of this opportunity and provide this important information.**

The Judges’ Information is a team overview page. It is your team’s opportunity to share valuable information and statistics with *FIRST* and the judges at the Regional and Championship events. 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. Enter the information via the TIMS under the “Pre-Event” information area.

### 1.8.1 Purpose

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

### 1.8.2 Information Submission and Deadline

**The submission deadline is February 19, 2008 11:59 p.m. EST.**

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

**Don't wait until the last minute:** 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 Extensions:** *FIRST* cannot grant time extensions to complete this information.

### 1.8.3 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::

- 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 the 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.

## 1.9 AUTODESK CONTACT INFORMATION

**Web site:** Autodesk has created a web site area devoted to *FIRST* teams, called FIRSTbase. Please go to [www.autodesk.com/firstbase](http://www.autodesk.com/firstbase) for information on the software downloads, training, the Autodesk design 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 [www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=6616](http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=6616)

**Email:** If you can't find answers to your questions from the above web site, please contact Autodesk via [first@mail.autodesk.com](mailto:first@mail.autodesk.com) or use the "Feedback form."

## 1.10 EVENT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The *FIRST* Robotics web site 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 2007-08 Consent and Release Form is the only acceptable version of the form for the 2008 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 information and instructions
- If you have specific questions not addressed above, please contact the Regional Director in your area.

## 1.11 REGIONAL EVENTS HOTEL SEARCH INFORMATION

*FIRST* will not be offering hotel reservation services for the *FIRST* Robotics Regional event season. Here are some recommendations for *FIRST* team mentors regarding placing team hotel reservations. Some great resources are:

- Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)), Kayak ([www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com))
- 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.atlanta.net), [www.visitdetroit.com](http://www.visitdetroit.com), [www.orlandoinfo.com](http://www.orlandoinfo.com)

**NOTE:** If you can't get a large enough block from a third party web site such as [www.Travelocity.com](http://www.Travelocity.com) or [www.Priceline.com](http://www.Priceline.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 Google, 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. Also, 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.

## 1.12 CHAMPIONSHIP HOTEL INFORMATION

*FIRST* is pleased to announce that Steele Meetings, Inc will be handling the hotel reservation system in Atlanta for the 2008 *FIRST* Championship. The information for 2008 will be in place by December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007. *FIRST* will send out an email blast so teams are able to make hotel reservations for the 2008 Championship. To contact Steele Meetings at any time, please email: [customerservice@steelemetings.com](mailto:customerservice@steelemetings.com)

## 1.13 *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 web sites, 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 or the FRC logo. You can find the logos on FRC Communications Resource Center [www.usfirst.org/frc\\_communication\\_resources](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_communication_resources)



### 1.13.1 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 logos in a manner that is positive and promotes *FIRST*.

**Unmodified:** Use the logos without modification. This means that you will use our name and the triangle, circle, and square as you see it on our web site 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 logos from our web site in JPEG (for electronic applications) or eps (for printed applications) format. Go to [www.usfirst.org/frc\\_communication\\_resources](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_communication_resources)

**Advertising Use Approval:** All teams and sponsors must obtain approval from *FIRST* prior to incorporating our logos in any advertising. Email approval requests to [marketing@usfirst.org](mailto:marketing@usfirst.org).

### 1.13.2 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 ([www.usfirst.org/frc\\_communication\\_resources](http://www.usfirst.org/frc_communication_resources)) portion of the web site under "Graphics."

## 1.14 PROVIDING CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

For those interested in providing Corporate Sponsorship to *FIRST*, please contact Julia Howell, Senior Director of Development, for information regarding the opportunity to provide sponsorship at (603) 666-3906 or (800) 871-8326, Extension 461. You can also contact her via email at [jhowell@usfirst.org](mailto:jhowell@usfirst.org).

## 1.15 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 appreciate and can surely use your help. Please visit the *FIRST* Web site page, and click on "Get Involved" on the gray menu bar. Choose "Volunteers," to find out more about volunteer opportunities. You can register your preferences for events and volunteer positions by clicking on [Go Directly to the Volunteer Information & Matching System \(VIMS\)](https://my.usfirst.org/vims/logon.lasso?page=logon) (<https://my.usfirst.org/vims/logon.lasso?page=logon>).