

**GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS -  
FACILITATION AND PROCEDURE**

These notes are intended to clarify responsibilities and procedures to enable VWHC meetings to proceed with minimum friction and time loss, and maximum efficiency and accomplishment. The guidelines are drawn from notes provided by Berkeley WHC and from discussions and suggestions made by VWHC members at a meeting held April 22, 1977. The information is divided into 7 sections:

1. Role of Facilitator/Chairperson
2. Rounds - Personal and Work
3. Criticism and Self-criticism
4. Agenda
5. "Emotional Watchdog"
6. Post-meeting evaluation period
7. Breaks and Timing

1. Role of Facilitator/Chairperson

- be prepared by arriving early Wednesday before meeting
- prepare agenda ahead of time on computer printout and affix it to wall so all participants can follow progress
- give some thought to length of time required for each item and allot time (with allowances for flexibility when required)
- assume responsibility, but don't dominate the discussions
- summarize main points when needed
- be assertive and firm; members have a responsibility to respect the authority of the Chair
- keep track of members who indicate their wish to speak; take them in order. Reasonably short questions from people out of order are permitted when the questions relate to the previous speaker's comment
- ask for help when you want it; this includes suggestions and proposals
- insist that people avoid repetition and tangents; aim for clarity and conciseness
- learn to be a successful Chairperson by CHAIRING MEETINGS; other members will give guidance and support before and during the meeting. Feedback discussions afterwards will also help.

2. Rounds - Personal and Work

- Chairperson appoints someone to start and prevents interruptions
- give highlights only; keep repetition to a minimum
- length and content must be determined by length of agenda and consequent available time; Chairperson's responsibility to determine this
- responses should be in the form of support, and kept to a minimum

- emergency situations take precedence; i.e. when someone feels an important need to communicate with the group
- Chairperson has option of omitting rounds of the schedule is a heavy one

3. Criticism and Self-criticism

- Chairperson appoints someone to start
  - constructive suggestions should accompany criticism
  - differentiate between a minor criticism and a more timeconsuming matter which would be better dealt with on the Agenda
  - Chairperson keeps control, makes distinctions between constructive and non-constructive criticism, makes objective comments, shifts complex issues to the Agenda or to a separate meeting

4. Agenda

- Chairperson prepares Agenda in advance from subjects submitted by members
- when submitting subjects for discussion, members should give a few concise words outlining the topic and what is to be discussed
- members have a responsibility to read agenda ahead of time and be prepared
- Chairperson will allot time periods for discussions of each topic, but will be flexible depending on the circumstances

5. "Emotional Watchdog"

- this person (not the Chairperson) will take note of and assist the other members who may be upset, frustrated, ignored or left out of discussion. She has power to interrupt meeting to point out problems and give support when required
- this new role will be tested for 2 meetings and then evaluated

6. Post-meeting evaluation

- approximately 10 minutes after the official end of the meeting will be used to get feedback on how the meeting was run, feelings of accomplishment or lack of it, grievances and appreciation
- this new procedure will be tried for a few weeks and then evaluated

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7. Breaks and Timing

- members must try to be prompt and to be sufficiently prepared to move quickly through the business of the meeting
- based on the length and content of the Agenda, the Chairperson will establish a finish time, i.e. 4.30 pm. All members are then expected to stay until the meeting is closed
- start 10 am, morning break 11.30 am, lunch 1-2 pm, and afternoon break to be established by Chairperson depending on progress of morning meeting.

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