

# Ground Rules

**Definition:** A shared set of norms which guide the team's behavior.

<b>General Ground Rules</b>	<b>Team Meetings Ground Rules</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Refreshed</i></b></p> <p>We each have the responsibility to stay physically refreshed so our heads stay in the game.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Dialogue</i></b></p> <p>Be direct and caring; Everyone participates; Listen as an ally; Concede to wisdom, not position.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Stretch</i></b></p> <p>Learning takes many forms - respect other's learning styles.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Team Work</i></b></p> <p>None of us is as smart as all of us.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Consequences</i></b></p> <p>Teams must decide what actions to take if members do not follow ground rules.</p>	<p>Attendance/Quorum.</p> <p>Promptness (define on time).</p> <p>Advanced scheduling.</p> <p>Prepare an agenda in advance.</p> <p>Establish consistent meeting site.</p> <p>Set length of meetings to meet the team's needs.</p> <p>Complete actions/assignments on time.</p> <p>Record minutes.</p> <p>Evaluate meetings.</p> <p>Define team rules.</p>
<b>Team Discussion</b>	<b>Team Decisions</b>
<p>Everyone participates.</p> <p>Open flow of ideas.</p> <p>Non-judgmental.</p> <p>Stay issue focused.</p> <p>Find common ground.</p> <p>Use consensus, when possible.</p> <p>Interruption - 100 mile rule.</p> <p>Confidentiality.</p>	<p>Determine process for decision making, i.e., consensus.</p> <p>Ensure common understanding of the issue(s).</p> <p>Gather relevant facts/data.</p> <p>Analyze the data.</p> <p>Make decision based on facts/data.</p>

Source: Healthy Iowans 2010

## Guidelines for Productive Team Meetings\*

The initial team meetings are critical for setting the proper tone: there is serious work at hand, but everyone can have fun and contribute to the organization by working together. Ground rules need to be discussed and agreed upon at the outset. Some typical examples are attendance, promptness, equal opportunity to participate, interruptions, assignments, role assignments, decision-making methods, confidentiality, meeting evaluation method, chronic violations of ground rules.

The best way to have productive meetings is to follow guidelines from the start and at a time when team members expect to learn new ways of working together.

- **Use agendas.**

Each meeting must have an agenda, preferably one drafted at the previous meeting. It should be sent to participants in advance, if possible. (If an agenda has not been developed before a meeting, spend the first five or 10 minutes writing one on a flipchart.)

*The agendas should include the following information:*

Agenda topics (including, perhaps, a sentence or two that defines each item and why it is being discussed).

The presenters (usually the person who originated the item or the person most responsible or knowledgeable about it).

A time guideline (the estimated time in minutes needed to discuss each item).

The item type, and whether the item requires discussion or decision, or is just an announcement.

*Agendas usually list the following activities:*

Warm-ups: short activities used to free people's minds from the outside world and get them focused on the meeting.

A quick review of the agenda. Simply start each meeting by going over the agenda, adding or deleting items, and modifying time estimates.

Breaks for long meetings. If the meeting last more than two hours, schedule at least one short break.

Meeting evaluation. This is perhaps the most important item on the agenda.

Introduce these elements the first meeting and include them in all subsequent meetings. As team members become more comfortable with the group, they will feel less self-conscious about these activities.

- **Have a facilitator.**

Each meeting should have a facilitator who is responsible for keeping the meeting focused and moving. Ordinarily, this role is appropriate for the team leader, but your team may rotate the responsibility among the members. The facilitator's chief responsibilities are to keep the

Source: Healthy Iowans 2010

discussion focused on the topic and moving along; intervene if the discussion fragments into multiple conversations; tactfully prevent anyone from dominating or being overlooked; bring discussions to a close.

The facilitator should also notify the group when the time allotted for an agenda item has expired or is about to expire. The team then decides whether to continue discussion at the expense of other agenda items or postpone further discussion until another meeting.

- **Take minutes.**

Each meeting should also have a scribe who records key subjects and main points raised, decisions made (including who has agreed to do what and by when) and items that the group has agreed to raise again later in this meeting or at a future meeting. Team members can refer to the minutes to reconstruct discussion, remind themselves of decisions made or actions that need to be taken, or to see what happened at a meeting they missed. Rotate this duty among the team members.

- **Draft next agenda.**

At the end of the meeting, draft an agenda for the next meeting.

- **Evaluate the meeting.**

Always review and evaluate each meeting, even if other agenda items go overtime. The evaluation should include decisions on what will be done to improve the meeting next time and helpful feedback to the facilitator.

- **Adhere to the "100-mile rule."**

Once a meeting begins, everyone is expected to give it full attention. No one should be called from the meeting unless it is so important that the disruption would occur even if the meeting were 100 miles away from the workplace. The "100-mile rule" will need to be communicated--perhaps repeatedly--to those who keep taking phone messages or would interrupt the team's work for other reasons.

\*These guidelines have been excerpted from *The Team Handbook* by Peter R. Scholtes and *Running Effective Meetings* (Joiner Associates). Copies of a suggested form for streamlining meeting minutes, meeting evaluation, and meeting skills checklist are available from these publications.