

**MID-EASTERN REGION EXECUTIVE HANDBOOK
SECTION 5 – POLICIES**

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Throughout this Section, the following abbreviations are used:

- BOD = Board of Directors of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc., a Maryland Corporation
- CAT = Convention Action Team
- ECC = Executive Convention Committee
- EHB = Executive Handbook of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc., a Maryland Corporation
- LCC = Local Convention Committee
- MER = Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc., a Maryland Corporation
- NMRA = National Model Railroad Association

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Periodically, the MER Board of Directors (BOD) approves a motion or proposal intended to establish ongoing policy and practice (as opposed to a one-time event). This chapter of the MER Executive Handbook collects and codifies those actions of the MER BOD to assure continuance of their decisions. **(Revised 02/28/14)**
2. The paragraphs are followed by a date in parenthesis which indicates the meeting date on which the policy was first adopted. Dates of the most recent revisions are indicated in bold type in parenthesis. **(Revised 02/28/14)**
3. Any action of the BOD of the MER which affects the action of future BOD's should be so worded as to become a policy statement and be added to the appropriate paragraph of this Section.
4. Policy statements which have become null and void by virtue of subsequent actions by the board or have become outdated are shown in the Appendix of the Section. **(Revised 02/28/14)**
5. This Section contains the policies that have been adopted by the Board of Directors over the years since the Re-Statement in 1985. The latest review and revision was done in February, 2014. **(Revised 02/28/14)**

II. MEMBERSHIP

1. The MER recognizes an Honorary Life Member category. The Business Manager maintains a permanent list of those individuals designated Honorary Life Members. (3/1/86) **(Revised 02/28/14)**

III. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. Presidents will be given an engraved gavel upon installation preferably at the January BOD meeting. Name badges for incoming newly elected officials and other officials, e.g. the Business Manager, should also be distributed at this same meeting. Past Presidents will be given an NMRA name badge at the closing ceremony of their administration. (3/1/86) The Business Manager or Contest Chairman will acquire these items for presentation at the Annual meeting. (11/9/97) **(Revised 02/28/14)**
2. Matters as to how the Region attained eleemosynary status shall be treated as proprietary. (3/1/86)
3. The MER will not make its membership list or parts thereof available to anyone other than the National Model Railroad except as provided by Article IX of this Policies section. (5/2-3/86)

4. The MER shall recognize officials, members, and others as appropriate for outstanding service to the MER as appropriate. (1/31/87) The Contest Chairman or designate of the President will procure these items (plaques and/or certificates) for persons selected by the President. (11/9/97) **(Revised 02/28/14)**

5. Meetings

A. The BOD shall meet at a designated time during the convention. (11/05/88) (3/29/96) **(Revised 02/28/14)**

B. Effective February 1, 2015, the policy of the Mid-Eastern Region shall be to hold all official meetings at a venue which has wheelchair accessibility when requested and if reasonably available, except that the annual meeting and convention hotel facilities shall be wheelchair accessible. (Revised 10/12/2017)

C. The mid-year_MER board of directors meeting shall be held at the calendar year's convention site in April, after April 15th on a date to be determined by the president. The preferred date shall be defined as the first Saturday after April 15th, excluding Easter or Passover weekends. The President shall invite the Local Convention Committee (LCC) chair(s), the Convention Registrar, and the Executive Convention Chair (ECC) to provide updates regarding the fall convention so that the board can help ensure the success of the convention. (06/11/2016)

IV. STANDING COMMITTEES

Current Standing Committees (as of 10/15/2017):

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| A. Achievement Program | B. Archives | C. Audit |
| D. Ballot | E. BSA Merit Badge Program | F. Budget |
| G. Clinics | H. Contests | I. Convention |
| J. Nominations | K. The Local Editor | M. Membership |

V. FINANCIAL

1. Financial audits shall be performed on the Region books at least every two years after the conclusion of the second fiscal year. (3/1/86) Audits will be carried out in accordance with the bylaws and a report shall be provided for review to the Board of Directors, all in accordance with the position description for the Audit Committee Chairperson. If a new Treasurer takes office before an audit is scheduled to occur, an audit shall be conducted upon the departure of the former Treasurer. (11/9/97) **(Revised 02/28/14)** An audit may be authorized at any time by a 2/3 majority vote of the Board of Directors.

2. It is the policy of the MER to require prior authorization for all capital expenditures. (1/31/87)

3. It shall be MER policy that any operating expenditures exceeding the budget shall require prior BOD approval. (1/31/87)
4. Within each overall category of the budget, officers/committee chairs may reallocate funds from one budget line to another without prior Board approval, so long as the overall category budget amount is not exceeded. (1/12/02)
5. Funds received by the Business Manager shall be deposited in the appropriate financial institution no later than 10 business days after receipt. (8/28/04) (**Revised 02/28/14**)
6. A simplified financial statement shall be supplied to the membership via publication in The Local and/or inclusion in the ballot mailing. (Revised 10/28/06)
7. It will be MER policy to maintain a reserve fund to provide service for life members, as long as they maintain their membership status. The reserve fund is to be reviewed by the BOD every two years and this information should be recorded in the Spring BOD meeting minutes. (11/12/99) (**Revised 10/12/17**)

VI. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1. The procedures and requirements for election nominations and ballots may be found in the Bylaws, Article VI. (11/9/97)
2. All members in good standing (paid up dues) based on the membership report supplied to the MER Business Manager from NMRA National as of 07/07 (**the 7th of July**) of every election year are eligible to vote.

If an individual is not a member or if membership has expired as indicated by that record supplied to the MER, and the MER officials have not been informed by NMRA National of a valid renewal of membership by 07/07 (**the 7th of July**), such individual will not receive a ballot nor be permitted to vote in that year's election. (**Adopted 10/12/2017**)

3. All nominations shall have the approval of the nominee. (11/9/97)

Nominees shall provide a statement of candidacy suitable for publication in The Local and on the Ballot not longer than 200 words and a personal photograph; in addition a statement of candidacy up to 500 words in length suitable for the Mid-Eastern Region web site may be submitted. Nominees will be validated by the Business Manager as to being Mid-Eastern Region members in good standing. All nominees that meet these criteria and the submission deadline with all of their required materials shall be placed on the ballot.

4. The nominating committee shall report to the Director overseeing this committee and regularly consult on progress to expedite transfer of candidate information for creation of the ballot. The final approved slate of candidates shall be submitted to the Editor of The

Local by June 1 to publish the nominations in the next immediate issue of the regional publication, The Local, on the MER website, and on the MER Mail Bag Yahoo group. (11/9/97) (Revised 02/28/14)

5. All nominations shall be closed at the end of May 30. (4/24/98) (**Revised 02/28/14**)
6. Ballots shall be mailed on or before August 1 of each year. All ballots must be postmarked on or before the Tuesday after Labor Day to be valid and the ballots must be received by Ballot Committee by the Saturday after Labor Day to be valid. (2/19/05) The Ballot Committee shall report the results of the election to the President, the Director overseeing this committee, and the Business Manager by the 2nd Saturday after Labor Day. (**Revised 01/24/15**)
7. The results of the election shall be held confidential until announced by the President. (11/9/97) The President shall communicate the results to all candidates by the 3rd Saturday after Labor Day upon certification of the results by the Ballot Committee.
8. Business Manager will notify the web master and the NMRA of election results by the 3rd Saturday after Labor Day. (**Added 01/24/2015**)
9. Election results will be posted on the MER-NMRA web site no later than October 10. (**Added 01/24/2015**)
10. In the case of a tie between candidates, the BOD will decide the election by vote, as appropriate, i.e., a candidate running for re-election shall recuse him or herself from this process. (5/31/03) (Revised 02/28/14) (**Renumbered 01/24/15**)

VII. INTERNET POLICY

Foreword: Recognizing the importance of the internet, the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc. resolves to provide a web site with current information on the organization and its activities.

1. The President will appoint a webmaster to create and manage the official web site of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc. (10/05/00)
2. The web site will not contain copyrighted or trademarked material without the written consent of the owner. (10/05/00)
3. All content is to be related to the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) and its goals as a model railroad fraternal organization. Nothing offensive or obscene will be posted to the site. (10/05/00)
4. The MER site may contain hyperlinks to other model railroad related sites, but the MER will be in no way responsible for the content of those sites. (10/05/00)

5. The MER site will be copyrighted by the MER and all of the contents are the property of the region. The region reserves the right to move the site onto its own server in the future. (10/05/00)
6. The President will review the web site for compliance with our goals. He will direct the webmaster to remove/change any portion of the site that does not conform to our policy. (10/05/00)
7. The webmaster will update the link on the NMRA Region page to keep it current at all times. (10/05/00)

VIII. PRIVACY POLICY

1. The MER BOD must authorize distribution of MER personal information, either for an ongoing management purpose, or in response to a special request. Similarly, the appropriate Division Superintendent must approve such distributions of Division-level information. They will be guided by the following general principles. Personal information will not be distributed in the following cases:
 - A. To any individual or business for commercial purposes.
 - B. To any individual not in a leadership role within the NMRA, the MER, or an MER Division (exceptions must be specifically approved by the MER BOD [for Regional information] or the Division Superintendent [for information relating to that Division's membership]).
 - C. For any purpose other than NMRA, MER, or MER Division business.
 - D. The only members listed on the electronic version of the MER Roster will be the elected officers, the Past President, the Business Manager, the Auditor, the Convention Liaison, the Clinic Coordinator, the relevant NMRA Director, the Achievement Mgr., the Division Superintendents, the Ballot Committee Chair, the Nominations Committee Chair, the Webmaster, the Model Contest Chair, the General Contest Chair, the LOCAL Editor, the Publisher, the MER Photographer, the BSA Coordinator, the MER Merchandise Sales Agent and Distributor, the Budget Committee Chair, the Archivist, the Asst. Treasurer, and the Divisional Achievement Coordinators ; such information shall include only the individual's name, phone number, e-mail address, and address. (5/10) (Revised 02/28/14)
2. In advance, the MER BOD approves the regular distribution of membership data extracts by the Business Manager to Division officers for the purpose of maintaining their membership rosters (an ongoing management purpose). This information shall include NMRA membership data, MER membership data, and personal information including name, address, county of residence, phone number, birth date, and modeling scale(s).
3. In all approved cases of membership information distribution, a brief "MER Privacy Policy Statement" will be included to avoid unintentional secondary distribution to other individuals. For example, membership listings distributed to Division management shall not then be distributed in a manner not sanctioned by the MER Privacy Policy.

IX. GRANTS POLICY

1. Any active Division within the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA may apply for a matching funds grant of up to \$1000.00 by submitting prior to making any expenditure (see V.2) a proposed detailed description setting forth the use of such monies and an estimate of how the monies will be spent. **(Revised 02/28/14)**
2. All requested funds must be used for activities directly related to promoting model railroading and must relate to events, activities, and operations that occur within the MER. The application shall state how the use of such expenditure will meet this requirement.
3. All proposals should be made in a single page format with cost estimates attached, and forwarded to the Vice-President of the MER.
4. This request can only occur once every year from that same Division. (5/1/10)
(Revised 02/28/14)

X. ADVERTISING POLICY

1. The Mid-Eastern Region publishes a newsletter entitled The Local which is distributed to its members preferably via electronic format. The MER allows manufacturers that reside within the region to advertise to the members of the NMRA for a small fee. In turn, this gives both those who advertise and the NMRA members a “home” relationship. Advertisers from outside the MER will be charged an appropriate fee. **(Revised 02/28/14)**
2. The MER would also like to publish articles about the Region’s manufacturers and businesses. These articles could be about the history of the company or about their manufacturing processes. If companies are interested in having such an article or wish to place an advertisement, the MER Advertising Manager (the Director that oversees and is responsible for The Local) is the point of contact. **(Revised 02/28/14)**
3. The MER furthermore allows the Divisions of the MER to advertise Division events taking place within their areas via the Call Board section of The Local for no charge. Such ads are approximately the size of a business card. Manufacturers and regular business advertisers may not use this form of advertising.

Only the following advertisements from other Regions or non-MER Divisions will be published for free in The Local:

- A. Joint projects with MER or a Division within MER, but only if MER or the MER Division’s participation is listed in such advertisement.
- B. A written agreement for an arrangement for reciprocal free advertisements between MER or a MER Division and such other Region or non-MER Division.

The President, after consulting with the Business Manager, shall be the person in MER that may authorize such advertisements and advertisement agreements. The President may delegate this decision to the Business Manager.

A paid advertisement by other Regions and non-Divisions shall be handled the same as any other paid advertisement. Such an advertisement shall clearly disclose that it is a paid advertisement.

4. All copy should be sent to the Editor of The Local who will in turn send a copy to the MER Advertising Manager who will determine what charges, if any, should be applied, and if necessary will have an invoice sent to the party for payment.

5. Current rates (May 2010) for paid advertising are as follows:

- Call Board ads (30-50 words, Divisions and Clubs only)..... Free
- Business Card size (6 issues) \$60.00
- Quarter Page ad (6 issues) \$125.00
- Half Page ad (6 issues) \$225.00
- Half Page ad (per issue, Divisions only)\$25.00

6. It will be the responsibility of the MER Business Manager to notify the MER Advertising Manager, Treasurer, and the Editor of The Local when payments for advertising have been received and the amount received. The Editor of The Local will be responsible to ensure that the ads placed in The Local conform to all specifications of the MER Advertising Policy. All advertisements must be expiration-dated to ensure that all revenues are received correctly by the Business Manager. An advertisement is considered expired if the expiration date on the copy has passed, and advertisements will not run in The Local beyond the expiration date. The Editor is responsible to ensure conformance. (5/10) **(Revised 02/28/14)**

XI. BUSINESS MANAGER RECORDS RETENTION POLICY

The Business Manager is authorized to destroy paper records associated with maintaining the MER membership database and check processing for subscriptions, products and other remittance activities after a one-year period as long as the resulting actions of the above processing activities are recorded in digital form and saved on multiple current medias in multiple geographic location preferably in the possession by the Vice-President, the Business Manager, and the Archivist indefinitely. (1/25/10) **(Revised 02/28/14)**

XII. ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

The Mid-Eastern Region, when advertising layout and prototype tours, will declare whether or not the facilities are handicap accessible and to what extent. **(Added 6/11/2016)**

**APPENDIX
POLICIES NULL AND VOID**

1. *The Region will reimburse officers for expenses to attend scheduled meetings in the amounts not to exceed: \$10/day -meals, \$50/day-lodging, tolls at cost, \$0.10/mile-actual mileage. This is intended to help defray the cost of extraordinary travel and living expenses. It is not the Region's intention to pay all expenses but rather to make serving as officer more attractive to more people. (3/1/86)*
2. *Plans library to continue. (11/15/86)*
3. *Authorize Member Relations Committee to expend up to \$2,200 for 2,000 membership manuals to be given free to new members and sold at cost to all other members. (2/02/91)*
4. *Accept Cal Reynold's proposal (for fund raising, presented at the Lynchburg BOD meeting) with the Development Committee to work out the details of the program (levels, fees, names, awards, etc.) and with the understanding that this action was not to preclude continued investigation of non-dues related sources of additional income. (12/04/93)*
5. *The actuarial table used by the National model Railroad Association shall be used by the MER for computation of Life member costs (1/13/01)*
6. *The BOD shall meet prior to the NMRA BOT meetings to discuss any motions before the NMRA BOT. (11/05/88)*
7. *The merit badge (BSA) program will be administered by division counselors and will coordinate their efforts with the AP Coordinator. (11/9/97).*
8. *Establish on the books of the Corporation a separate Development Program Account from receipts designated for same, to be separately tracked by the Treasurer. (2/02/91)*
9. *Resolved: the Board of Directors of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, shall establish a permanent Fund-Raising Program to increase the capability of the Mid-Eastern Region to respond to its members needs. (8/22/92)*
10. *The Board of Directors will review Division Charters at the spring meeting in each odd numbered year. (3/1/86) It is the responsibility of the Vice President to assemble, review and bring discrepancies to the attention of the Board of Directors. (11/9/97)*
11. *The Business Manager shall be provided a cash fund not to exceed \$200 for operating expenses. This fund shall be replenished by the Treasurer upon receipt of vouchers for appropriate expenditures to maintain its full balance. Upon resignation/termination of the Business Manager, the funds shall be returned to the Treasurer for reissuance to the new Business Manager. (10/4/02)*