Section

1

COMMUNICATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 COMMUNICATION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This section provides teams with necessary information for contacting *FIRST* ®staff and other key people during the season. This section also contains help regarding the use of the *FIRST* logo, finding materials on the *website*, the Team Information Management System (TIMS) and tips on reserving hotels.

1.2 *FIRST* HEADQUARTERS- CONTACT INFORMATION

You can reach *FIRST* via mail, email, phone, and fax, or get information from our *website* at www.us*FIRST*.org. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, EST. Refer to the sections below for the appropriate help resource**.**

<p align="center">***Be sure to provide your Team Number on all communications!***</p>

Mailing Address	200 Bedford St, Manchester, NH 03101
Email Address	frcteams@us*FIRST*.org
Phone Numbers	(603) 666-3906 (800) 871-8326
Fax Numbers	(603) 666-3907 (Main) (603) 647-5772 (Finance)

1.3 TEAM SUPPORT

The Operations (Team Support) Group is ready to answer program-related questions regarding registration, team record maintenance, the Kickoff, shipping and drayage, etc. All are ready and eager to help your team. You may contact them via email or telephone.

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

Please refer to the "Where To Get Help" section of the Control System website at:

<p align="center">http://www.us*FIRST*.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=14532</p>

National Instruments Hardware/Software

If you haven't received help via *FIRST* forums in a reasonable amount of time and you have questions about your cRIO, its modules, or LabVIEW, contact National Instruments. Remember to provide your *FIRST* Team Number in the subject line.

Tech Support Phone:		(866) 511-6285
***Website*:**		www.ni.com/*FIRST*

C/C++ Programming

For assistance with WindRiver C/C++ programming environment, please visit the *FIRST* Forums at http://forums.us*FIRST*.org/forumdisplay.php?f=23.

Java Programming

For assistance with Sun Microsystems Java programming environment, please visit the *FIRST* Forums at http://forums.us*FIRST*.org/forumdisplay.php?f=23

1.5 SOFTWARE CONTACT INFORMATION

Autodesk

Please go to www.autodesk.com/*FIRST* and join the Community to download Autodesk software products. Visit the Community often to check on new information and resources; to get your 2010 Kit of Parts modeled in Autodesk Inventor Professional 2010 at Kickoff; and to submit your questions and requests for technical support.

PTC Software

Please visit www.ptc.com/go/*FIRST*gettingstarted for information on the available software downloads and training. If you *cannot* find answers to your questions from the above *website*, please contact *FIRST*support@ptc.com with any questions.

1.6 *FIRST* ROBOTICS COMPETITION WEBSITE

Visit the *FIRST* Robotics Competition area on us*first*.org 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. http://www.us*FIRST*.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=454

- Find links to the new "Consent and Release Form", the "Email Blast Archive", "FRC Q&A Forum", the "2010 Robot Shipping" page, "FRC Team Manual" sections, events and a list of the "Regional Contacts" at:
http://www.us*FIRST*.org/roboticsprograms/frc/default.aspx?id=966

- Find fundraising support materials such as the photo gallery, video clips, and program information.   http://www.us*FIRST*.org/roboticsprograms/resourcecenter.aspx?id=952

1.6.1 Getting Answers To Your Competition Questions

Manual and Updates: The *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC) Manual is available on the *FIRST Website* at http://www.us*FIRST*.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=452.

Sections relating to the game will be posted at Kickoff. Updates to the Manual, event details, etc… will be published per the "Team Updates" section below.

> **Updates and additions to the manual, should they be necessary, will be posted in this area of the website. 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* provides an on-line forum for questions and answers (Q & A). It is accessible at http://forums.usfirst.org 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, and answers, the questions, others cannot see them.

1.6.2 Email Blasts

Email blasts are important communications that *FIRST* sends to the Main and Alternate contacts for all FRC teams identified in TIMS. An e-mail blast is a message sent to all FRC teams via e-mail. *FIRST* archives the email blasts on the *FIRST* website at http://www.us*FIRST*.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=6616.

FIRST will send out one email blast on the Thursday of each week. It will highlight items that have been added to the "2009-2010 News and Email Blasts" webpage since the previous week's email blast. News that must be shared with all teams at the same time will be introduced to teams in the weekly email blast and then be posted to the news page where team members may refer to it again.

Team members are encouraged to visit the "2009-2010 News and Email Blasts" webpage regularly. Here, Teams can refer back to their contents. 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.

1.6.3 Team Updates

After the Kickoff, Team Updates provide rules updates, important information about parts and administrative reminders/deadlines. These documents are posted on the *FIRST Website*. Our Team Updates schedule is Tuesday by 5:00 PM and Friday by 5:00 PM.

- Unexpected circumstances may, on occasion, delay this publication;

- Additional updates may be released, if necessary; and

- 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 website. Go to the FRC Home page, click on "Game and Season Info" on the left hand side, then click "Team Updates"

You can find information on the *FIRST website* 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: http://www.us*FIRST*.org/roboticsprograms/resourcecenter.aspx?id=952

1.7 THE TIMS - SUPPLYING INFORMATION TO *FIRST*

(Team Information Management System)

The TIMS is the on-line system used 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 on the website at: http://www.us*FIRST*.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=454. When teams use the system properly, the TIMS provides *FIRST* with necessary, up-to-date information including:
      1) Team Names: Official, Nickname;

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 USPS shipping account number; and
6) Team Judges' Information Page.

Additionally, the TIMS "Team Information" provides options for:

- Teams willing to mentor other teams;

- Teams wanting mentoring; and

- Entering team *website* address/link.

1.8 JUDGES' INFORMATION

> **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 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 under the "Judges' Information" section in TIMS.

The purpose of the Judges' Information page is to provide:

- a common starting point for judging each team;

- insight for judges into team's workings, history, goals, strengths, and robot; and

- team data for *FIRST* and its archives.

Please refer to the team manual, <u>Section 5 – The Awards</u>, for more information.

1.9 EVENT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The *FIRST* Robotics *website* includes important information about specific events. We advise that you print and keep copies of the "Site Info," "Shipping / Drayage," and any information you receive regarding all shipping related (including the FedEx donated shipping) processes for 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 "Events", then "Regional Events", then clicking on the name of your event. You will then be taken to a page with additional information.. Provide the information to appropriate team members and mentors.

- The *2010 Consent and Release Form* is the only acceptable version of the form for the 2010 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; and

- Be sure to include your FedEx information and instructions.

1.10 REGIONAL EVENTS HOTEL SEARCH INFORMATION

FIRST will not be offering hotel reservation services for the regional event season. Here are some recommendations for *FIRST* team mentors regarding placing team hotel reservations.

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

1) Pick out 3 or 4 hotels within close proximity (typically, within 3-5 miles of the venue) of your regional event to obtain approximate pricing for the marketplace. You can find a complete list of venue addresses for the Regionals on the *FIRST Website*.

2) Use web based 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; and

- Hotels that will disclose if they have groups in house that are not consistent with or are in direct 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 percent of all hotels have it); and remember that

- 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. Rates that you may find available now may not stay the same as the event date approaches, 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 2010 *FIRST* Championship. The information for 2010 will be in place by December 3rd, 2009 at noon EST. *FIRST* will send out an email blast so teams are able to make hotel reservations for the 2010 *FIRST* Championship. To contact Steele Meetings at any time, please email: *FIRST@steelemeetings.com*.

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 *website*s, 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* word mark - 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 under "Graphics" at: http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/resourcecenter.aspx?id=650

1.12.1 Logo Use

Once the game is announced at the Kickoff, you will be able to download this year's game logo at the above link.

1.13 CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

For those interested in providing Corporate Sponsorship to *FIRST,* please contact the Development Department for information regarding the opportunity to provide sponsorship at (603) 666-3906 or (800) 871-8326, Extension 461.

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 Website* page, and click on "Community" above the photo. Scroll to Volunteer and then Volunteer Registration (VIMS.)   There you can register your preferences for events and volunteer positions.