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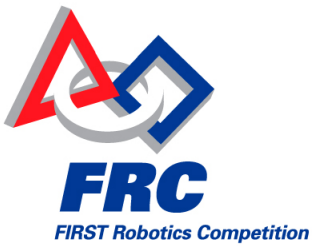
Communication



2 Communication

2.1 Overview

This section provides teams with necessary information for contacting *FIRST*® staff, key vendors and others, and how *FIRST*® will communicate important season information. 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.

2.2 FIRST Headquarters - Contact Information

You can reach *FIRST* via mail, email, phone, and fax, or get information from our website. 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 **.**

Be sure to prove your TEAM NUMBER on all communications!

Mailing Address	200 Bedford St, Manchester, NH 03101
Email Address	frcteams@usfirst.org
Phone Numbers	(603) 666-3906, "0" for team support (800) 871-8326, "0" for team support
Fax Numbers	(603) 666-3907 (Main) (603) 647-5772 (Finance)

2.3 Team Support

The Operations (Team Support) Group is eager to answer your FRC program and season related questions. Please call or email us with any questions you may have – we look forward to helping you!

2.3.1 Emails and Subject Lines

Please write to frcteams@usfirst.org with your questions.

To facilitate a quick reply, always include your **Team Number** in the **subject line**.

2.3.2 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 issue. We can usually answer questions or requests within one to two working days. Please do not hesitate to contact us by phone if your question requires immediate assistance.

2.4 Control System Support

Information on the 2012 Control System, including software and hardware, will be available after kickoff, please refer to the Kit of Parts section at the bottom of this page.

2.5 Software Contact Information

http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/competition-manual-and-related-documents.

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 2012 Kit of Parts modeled in Autodesk Inventor Professional 2012 (available after Kickoff); and to submit your questions and requests for technical support.

PTC Software

Please visit www.ptc.com/go/first for information on the free software that PTC donates to all FIRST teams (Creo-CAD, Mathcad-Engineering Calculations software and Windchill-Project and Document Management software). If you *cannot* find answers to your questions from the above website, please contact *FIRST*support@ptc.com with any questions.

2.6 FIRST Robotics Competition Website

Visit the *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC) area on www.usfirst.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 "Competition Manual and Related Documents" page", "Awards" page, the "Robot Control System" page, the " Robot Shipping" page, the "Season News and Email Blasts" page, , and other information at: http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/game-and-season-info
- You may also find more important information for teams on our "Resources" page at: http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/resources

2.6.1 Getting Answers to Your Competition Questions

- **Competition Manual -** is available at http://www.us*FIRST*.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=452. Sections relating to the game will be posted after Kickoff.
- **Team Updates -** will be posted at http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=450

After the Kickoff, *FIRST* will start posting Team Updates online. Team Updates provide rules updates, important information about parts and administrative reminders/deadlines. Please note that some updates will result in FIRST publishing revisions to manual sections.

NOTE: Please be sure to check these website locations often during the build season to ensure that you have the latest information.

2.6.2 FRC Q&A Forum

After Kickoff, *FIRST* provides an on-line forum for questions and answers (Q & A). For the 2012 season, FRC is migrating to a new Q&A system. More details will be published shortly. The new Q&A system can be found here: http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/qanda.

2.6.3 Email Blasts

Email blasts are important communications that *FIRST* sends to team contacts identified in TIMS. The email blasts remind teams of important deadlines, updates, and other timely FRC information.

FIRST archives the email blasts on the *FIRST* website at **“2012 News and Email Blasts** ” webpage at: http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/emailblastarchive.aspx.

FIRST will typically send out one email blast on the **Thursday** of each week throughout the FRC Season.

Rookie Email Blasts will be sent to rookie teams periodically on Tuesdays during registration and throughout the FRC season.

2.6.4 "Bill's" Blog

Is located at http://frcdirector.blogspot.com/ and should be read weekly for additional important updates from the Director of FRC, Bill Miller.

2.7 The TIMS - Supplying Information to FIRST

The TIMS is the online system used by the Main and Alternate Contacts of the team to:

1. Create a Team Profile,
2. Register for events,
3. Enter Kit and Kickoff Preferences,
4. Enter Judge's Information (for awards),
5. Accept students to the team, track their electronic Consent and Release Forms, print a Team Roster, and assign students to submit for key awards and track their progress.

The TIMS additionally provides options to allow teams to register themselves as a team willing to mentor others, or for

a team to identify itself as a team in need of mentoring.

2.8 Judges' Information

The Judges' Information Section is the best way to provide an overview of your team to the competition judges. Please take advantage of this opportunity and provide this important information in TIMS.

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 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, *Section 6 - The Awards*, for more information about the awards.

2.9 Event Specific Information

Event specific information such as agendas, site information, pre-order lunch forms etc. are posted under each event at: http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/regionalevents.aspx?id=430

Check back periodically as this page is updated in stages.

2.10 Regional Events and Championship Hotel Information

Steele Meetings, Inc. will once again be handling the hotel reservation system for Regional Events and Championship. Please click on the following link for more information and to make your reservations:
http://www.firstchampionshiphousing.com/Home.aspx

2.11 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 websites, incredible team logos on robots, T-shirts, hats, banners, fliers and giveaways. These branding activities are a great way to get students interested in art, communications, computer and language arts to join and work on the team.

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 a registered trademark, we have a few guidelines for you to follow when using the *FIRST* logo or the FRC logo. You can find the logos and information about how to legally use them at www.usfirst.org/brand.

2.11.1 Logo Use

Once the game is announced at the Kickoff, you will be able to download this year's game logo at http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/marketing-tools/frc (see link in FRC GAME section).