

LMSC Bylaws

USMS requires that each LMSC be governed by a set of bylaws that are consistent with the goals and objectives of USMS (article 502.2). Each LMSC must meet the following requirements:

1. Bylaws must provide for the periodic election of LMSC officers (article 502.4);
2. Bylaws must require the LMSC to hold an annual meeting that is open to all individual members of the LMSC (article 502.3);
3. Each LMSC must keep a current copy of its bylaws on file with the USMS National Office (article 502.5).

If you are not sure whether your LMSC has bylaws, or if you think that it has adopted some but you don't know where to get a copy, contact the National Office.

USMS has a procedure for resolving disputes among its members (see USMS Rules, Part 4: Participation, Conduct, Hearings, and Appeals). This procedure provides that disputes arising within an LMSC are to first be addressed in the LMSC under the LMSC's rules. This means that each LMSC should have bylaws that contain procedures for handling disputes within the LMSC. If your LMSC does not have grievance procedures in its bylaws, the bylaws should be amended to add them. USMS has prepared a model grievance procedure on which you may base your LMSC's grievance procedure and they can be found starting on page 3 of this section.

In addition to meeting the requirements of USMS, LMSC bylaws are a valuable tool in the management and operation of your LMSC. They serve as a guide to newly elected officers and provide a framework from year to year that permits your LMSC to conduct its business in a consistent manner.

Some of the sections that can be found in LMSC bylaws include:

- Goals and objectives
- Declaration of nonprofit status
- Statement of purpose
- Membership classifications
- Management structure, officer descriptions, and committees
- Election process
- Procedure for filling vacant offices between elections
- Selection of delegates to USMS House of Delegates
- Meeting requirements
- Grievance procedures
- Procedures to amend bylaws

In addition, if your LMSC wants to incorporate, applicable law will set forth certain requirements that you must follow. If you are seeking to incorporate your LMSC, you need to consult a lawyer or other expert in these matters concerning the required language in your bylaws and other necessary actions that you must take.

Financial Policies and Reporting Requirements

Besides complying with USMS rules and other applicable laws governing bylaws, LMSCs must establish financial policies that comply with the record-keeping and reporting requirements of USMS (article 502.7). Clear financial policies provide guidance to your treasurer and other financial officers and also protect the interests of your members.

These policies might include:

- Defining reimbursable expenses
- Establishing procedures for reimbursement of those expenses
- Establishing requirements for financial reports and the creation of an annual budget
- Adopting a fiscal year
- Setting up a fee structure for membership, newsletter subscriptions, one-event registration, and other relevant items.

USMS also requires each LMSC to satisfy two reporting requirements. Each year each LMSC must send to the National Office the minutes of its annual meeting and a copy of its annual financial report(s), within 4 months of the end of the LMSC's fiscal year.