



Leadership Principles for National, Region, and Division Leaders

National Model Railroad Association, Inc. depends for its success upon the continuing contributions of time from members, virtually all of whom are volunteers. Fair, timely, and respectful treatment of every member is the hallmark of success for every leader and contributes greatly to member satisfaction and retention. Therefore, NMRA expects all members in a National, Region, or Division office or leadership position to conduct themselves according to the principles described below. These expectations apply to all National, Region, and Division directors, officers, and committee and department chairs, collectively termed “Leaders” below.

While NMRA’s national leadership has prepared these principles and will abide by them, they also reflect the reasonable expectations of every NMRA member. Reporting, complaint, and disciplinary procedures are intentionally omitted from this document. The purpose of these principles is to build and develop better Leaders, not to create a framework for disciplining or removing a Leader.

1. **Courteous and respectful treatment of every member.** NMRA accepts membership applications from the public. Consequently, some members will be negative, critical, difficult, or disruptive. Nevertheless, regardless of the place, forum, or communications medium—in-person, in a virtual meeting, or by email—a Leader will refrain from responding (verbally or in writing) in anger, shouting, bullying, misusing “cc” or “bcc” facilities to humiliate others, or name-calling. Every Leader will control their emotions, control anger, and negative impulses. Every Leader will take the time to get emotions in check and respond when they can do so courteously and civilly.
2. **Positive and friendly demeanor.** Consistent with the prior principle, in all communications and NMRA events, a Leader will strive to project a positive and friendly personality that welcomes others. A Leader who is unable, based on personal circumstances, to adhere to this principle must consider not attending an event or engaging in relevant communications.
3. **Timely communications and actions.** A Leader will respond in a timely manner to communications concerning NMRA business. “Timely” does not always mean “today,” and personal circumstances can cause reasonable delays. In general, a Leader will review and respond (if necessary) to NMRA-related e-mail messages at least once every two weeks and will return NMRA-related phone calls within one week. A Leader will act on any agreed action item, responsibility, or obligation within the agreed-upon timeframe or, if none, within a reasonable timeframe or notify each affected member of the reason for a delay. Recurring delays of months to years are inconsistent with effective leadership.
4. **Responsiveness to requests of NMRA national leaders, department chairs, and employees.** NMRA’s success depends in part on the ability of national leaders, department chairs, and employees to obtain information from Regions and Divisions. Every Leader accepts their position with the obligation to support and collaborate with the national

organization. Consistent with the first principle above, a Leader will respond in a timely manner to requests of NMRA national leaders, department chairs, and employees, including requests for reports, data, and answers to questions.

5. **Attitude and focus on service.** A Leader will serve in their leadership position understanding that their primary duty is service to other members. When faced with a challenge, a Leader will resolve the issue by considering what path leads to the best service for members. Service connotes action; rather than merely “being in the room,” a Leader actively engages in the business of NMRA and each meeting or event.
6. **Avoidance of neglect.** An effective Leader follows through on every commitment. A Leader will not accept a role, responsibility, or obligation with the knowledge or intent that the Leader cannot fulfill or complete the role, responsibility, or obligation. A Leader will promptly notify another Leader as soon as the Leader knows that the Leader cannot fulfill or complete a role, responsibility, or obligation.
7. **Disagree, then support.** A Leader is free to reasonably and respectfully disagree, at an appropriate time, place, and manner, with the recommendations, opinions, or decisions of another Leader. However, after a decision has occurred in accordance with proper governance processes of the National, Region, or Division organization, a Leader will fully support the decision in exercising their office regardless of any past disagreement or contrary opinion. Persistent public criticism of settled or decided issues is inconsistent with this principle.
8. **Honesty, fair dealing, and self-interest.** Integrity is a key characteristic of a Leader. A Leader will be honest in all aspects of their leadership and treat every member fairly. A Leader will refrain from any act or negligence that could create the perception of dishonesty, unjust enrichment, or elevating a personal interest above the general good of the organization.
9. **Coaching other leaders.** NMRA expects Leaders to coach other Leaders respectfully to adhere to these principles. This means that when another Leader departs from these principles, a Leader will suggest a course of action consistent with these principles without disparaging or criticizing the other Leader.

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