

# Board Committees

Most boards set up committees when issues become too difficult or too numerous to be handled by the complete board.

Committees can be ad-hoc, temporary committees established for specific short-term projects or activities or more permanent standing committees for on-going major work.

The role of both sorts of board committees is to recommend policy for approval by the entire board, and/or in some cases, to take on a significant project.

Committee work is a great way to make the fullest possible use of board members' expertise, time and commitment. Committees can operate less formally than the full board, and can actively engage all board members in your organisation's work, no matter their length of time with the organisation.

Although the full board is responsible for the decisions they make, board members will be reliant on the judgement of the committees who make their recommendations. **Remember the board can object to committee recommendations, and the board can still reject the plan or ask the committee to revise it.**

Committee meetings have no set timing. Standing committees can meet only twice a year or meet monthly before the full board meeting. Ad hoc committees can meet even more regularly if timelines are short.

It is good practice to have at least two board members on each committee, preferably three, but it is important to remember not to overburden your voluntary board members. It is always better to have some enthusiastic volunteers, so try to limit board members to a maximum of two committees at one time. Remember to rotate board members on to various committees over time.

Other pressures and time commitments may mean that board members can sometimes only commit to a temporary, ad hoc committee.

Each committee should be chaired by a board member. These posts are generally allocated at Board meetings where the board chair can ask for volunteers.

Consider including non-board volunteers as members of the committee.

Committees are an excellent way of "auditioning" potential board members.

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