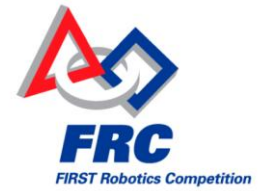


Section
2



COMMUNICATION

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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 provide 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

Our program requires that many requests be in writing, so oftentimes email is the best way to get a quick answer or solution to your problem. To facilitate a quick reply, always include your **Team Number** either in the body of the email or 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 2011 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/content.aspx?id=452>

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 2011 Kit of Parts modeled in Autodesk Inventor Professional 2011 at Kickoff; and to submit your questions and requests for technical support.

PTC Software

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

2.6 FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION WEBSITE

Visit the *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC) area on the [usfirst.org](http://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.usFIRST.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 “2011 Robot Shipping” page, “FRC Team Manual” sections, events and a list of the “Regional Contacts” at: <http://www.usFIRST.org/roboticsprograms/frc/default.aspx?id=966>
- Find fundraising support materials such as the photo gallery, video clips, and program information. <http://www.usFIRST.org/roboticsprograms/resourcecenter.aspx?id=952>

2.6.1 Getting Answers To Your Competition Questions

- **Competition Manual** - is available at: <http://www.usFIRST.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=452>. Sections relating to the game will be posted post 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 on line, **Tuesdays by 5:00 PM** and **Fridays by 5:00 PM**. Team Updates provide rules updates, important information about parts and administrative reminders/deadlines. Please note:

- Unexpected circumstances may, on occasion, delay this publication;
- Additional updates may be released, if necessary; and
- Occasionally, *FIRST* will publish 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). It is accessible at <http://forums.usfirst.org> for each section of the Competition Manual.

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

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 “**2010-2011News 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

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 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, Section 5 – The Awards, for more information.

2.9 EVENT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Event specific information such as agendas', site information, pre-order lunch forms etc. are posted 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 HOTEL SEARCH INFORMATION

FIRST will not be offering hotel reservation services for the regional events. We do recommend bearing in mind these safety considerations when making your reservations:

- 24 hour security;
- Secure parking;
- Interior entrance rooms - rooms that have exterior entrances are the ones that have inherent security risks.

2.11 CHAMPIONSHIP HOTEL INFORMATION

FIRST is pleased to announce that Steele Meetings, Inc. will once again be handling the hotel reservation system in St. Louis for the 2011 *FIRST* Championship. Please click on the following link to make your reservations: <http://www.firstchampionshiphousing.com/Regionals.aspx>.

2.12 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 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

2.12.1 Logo Use

Once the game is announced at the Kickoff, you will be able to download this year's game logo at <http://usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/resourcecenter.aspx?id=952>.