



**Policy Type:** Administrative

**Category:** Administrative Practices

**Policy Name:** Legislative File Writing Guidelines and Information

**Policy Owner:** County Executive

The Office of the County Executive has developed guidelines to help with the preparation of Board and Committee reports and establish a process for forwarding items from committees to the Board of Supervisors meetings.

### *Board and Committee Report Writing Guidelines*

The Office of the County Executive worked with agenda coordinators and the Clerk of the Board to develop Board and Committee Report Writing Guidelines to help departments with the preparation of legislative files. These guidelines provide template language for most recommended actions, including contract amendments; a short style guide on language usage; and a brief overview of each section of a legislative file.

### *Committee Report-Out Process*

For a quick overview of this process, see the [Committee Report Out Process Presentation](#) from the April 10, 2015, Agenda Coordinators' Meeting.

The Board of Supervisors on February 24 amended [section 33.3 of the Rules of the Board](#) to alter the way items heard in committee are forwarded to the full Board. Committee agenda items that recommend actions other than "receive report" will no longer be forwarded to the Board through the committee's standard report. *For agenda items that have actions other than solely "receive report," the department that placed the original item on the*



*committee agenda must create a new legislative file on the Board agenda following committee action.*

Additionally, MinuteTraQ templates for items to the Board now include a new section titled "Committee Recommendations" where the department should describe the committee's action. Departmental staff should coordinate with the committee chair to ensure that this section accurately captures the committee's requests and comments.

### Board of Supervisors Referral Process

The Board of Supervisors referral process is a mechanism for the Board to acquire more information from Administration on a topic or initiative to assist with its policy decisions-making responsibilities. This process has been effective for many years but has not been refreshed since 2004. This memo updates Administration's processes to provide greater clarity and improve workflows.

See the [Policy on Time Certain Reports Back to the Board After Referral Has Been Made - Board Policy 3.28](#), and the March 9, 2018 Memorandum on Board of Supervisors Referral Process for more information.

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of these guidelines, the following definitions apply:

- 1) **"Board Policy Committee"** means any of the following committees:
  - Children, Seniors and Families Committee (CSFC)
  - Finance and Government Operations Committee (FGOC)
  - Health and Hospital Committee (HHC)



- Housing, Land Use, Environment and Transportation (HLUET) Committee
- Public Safety and Justice Committee (PSJC)

The Legislative Committee has been suspended since February 2013 and is no longer in use.

- 2) **“Legislative File”** means any item created in MinuteTraq to be placed on the agenda of a Board or Committee meeting. These items are no longer called “transmittals.”
- 3) **“MinuteTraq”** means the County’s agenda coordination software program.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### *Board and Committee Report Writing Guidelines*

#### **1) Which legislative files do these guidelines apply to?**

These guidelines apply to all legislative files that will be submitted to either the Board of Supervisors or to any Board Policy Committee.

#### **2) Whom can I contact if I have any questions?**

Contact the Clerk of the Board’s Board Operations Division at [BoardOperations@cob.sccgov.org](mailto:BoardOperations@cob.sccgov.org) or (408) 299-5001; or contact the Policies and Procedures Team at [policies@ceo.sccgov.org](mailto:policies@ceo.sccgov.org).

#### *Committee Report-Out Process*



For a quick overview of this process, see the [Committee Report Out Process Presentation](#) from the April 10, 2015, Agenda Coordinators' Meeting.

### 1) **What is changing about how items go from a Board Policy Committee to the Board of Supervisors?**

Previously, items considered in committee were forwarded to the Board through the committee's report. This is no longer the case for items with recommended actions other than "receive report." The process has changed as follows:

- Under amended section 33.3 of the Rules of the Board of Supervisors, departments are now responsible for bringing their items from committee to the Board as separate legislative files if departments have items with recommended actions other than solely "receive report."
- In addition, there is a new section incorporated into legislative files entitled "Committee Recommendations," where departments must briefly report on the committee's action.
- If your committee item only has "receive report" as its recommended action, your item will still be forwarded to the Board through the committee report.

### 2) **Does this change the way legislative files are written?**

Yes. All MinuteTraQ templates will be updated to add a new section titled "Committee Recommendation." If applicable, departments must briefly describe in this section the action taken by the committee, as well as any concerns or questions that have been raised. Generally, only a few sentences would be required to provide this information.



**3) What steps must a department take following committee action on an item?**

For an item with recommended actions other than solely "receive report":

- 1) Following committee action on the item, the department creates a new legislative file in MinuteTraq targeting a future Board meeting within 45 days of the committee meeting, or as directed by the committee.
- 2) In the new legislative file, the department explains in the "Committee Recommendation" section the committee's action and what issues were raised by the committee. The department should coordinate with the committee chair to ensure that this description is accurate and complete.

Example: The Health and Hospital Committee recommended approval of this agreement, as amended, on February 19, 2015. The length of the term of the agreement has been amended from four years to three years.

- 3) The item will either be placed on the Regular Agenda or the Consent Calendar.

**4) When did these changes go into effect?**

On February 24, 2015, the Board approved the amendment of section 33.3 of the Rules of the Board of Supervisors, and the changes went into effect beginning with the March 2015 committee reports.

**5) Whom can I contact if I have additional questions?**

You may contact the Clerk of the Board's agenda division at either [boardoperations@cob.sccgov.org](mailto:boardoperations@cob.sccgov.org) or [bosagenda@cob.sccgov.org](mailto:bosagenda@cob.sccgov.org). If your



question is time-sensitive, contact either Rhonda Schroeder, COB division manager, at (408) 299-5067 or [rhonda.schroeder@cob.sccgov.org](mailto:rhonda.schroeder@cob.sccgov.org), or Curtis Boone, at (408) 299-5078 or [curtis.boone@cob.sccgov.org](mailto:curtis.boone@cob.sccgov.org).

You may also contact the Policies and Procedures Team at [policies@ceo.sccgov.org](mailto:policies@ceo.sccgov.org).

### Related Policies

- Late Additions and Insertions – Board Agenda Packets – Board Policy 3.16 - <https://saecommon.sccgov.org/countypolicy/Board-Policy-3.16-Late-Additions-Board-Agenda-Packets.pdf>
- Policy on Time Certain Reports Back to the Board After Referral Has Been Made – Board Policy 3.28 - <https://saecommon.sccgov.org/countypolicy/Board-Policy-3.28-Time-Certain-for-Reports-Back.pdf>
- Rules of the Board of Supervisors - [https://saecommon.sccgov.org/countypolicy/Rules%20of%20the%20Board Complete.pdf](https://saecommon.sccgov.org/countypolicy/Rules%20of%20the%20Board%20Complete.pdf)

### Related Forms and Information

- Anatomy of a Legislative File - [\[url\]/sites/policies/FormsrelatedtoPolicies/Anatomy-of-a-Legislative-File.pdf](#)
- Board and Committee Report Writing Guidelines - [\[url\]/sites/policies/FormsrelatedtoPolicies/Board-and-Committee-Report-Writing-Guidelines.pdf](#)



- Board Policy Committee Report-Out Process FAQs -  
[url]/sites/policies/FormsrelatedtoPolicies/Committee-Report-Out-Process-Fact-Sheet.pdf
- Clerk of the Board's MinuteTraq Central site -  
<http://eportal/projs/mtcentral/SitePages/Home.pdf>
- Committee Report Out Process Presentation, Agenda Coordinators' Meeting 4/10/15 (PowerPoint) -  
[url]/sites/policies/FormsrelatedtoPolicies/Committee-Report-Out-Process-Presentation-PPT-041015.pptx
- Committee Report Out Process Presentation, Agenda Coordinators' Meeting 4/10/15 (PDF) -  
[url]/sites/policies/FormsrelatedtoPolicies/Committee-Report-Out-Process-Presentation-PDF-041015.pdf
- March 9, 2018 Memorandum - Board of Supervisors Referral Process -  
[url]/sites/policies/FormsrelatedtoPolicies/Memo-BOS-Referral-Process-030918.pdf
- MinuteTraq Glossary for Recommended Actions -  
[url]  
/teams/policies/adminsupport/Shared%20Documents/Agenda/MinuteTraq-Glossary.pdf

*MinuteTraq User Manuals*

- Administrator/Manager Guide -  
<http://eportal/projs/mtcentral/Shared%20Documents/User%20Manuals/1%20-%20Admin-Mgr%20Manual.pdf>



- How to Create Legislative Files -  
<http://eportal/projs/mtcentral/Shared%20Documents/User%20Manuals/2%20-%20Creating%20Legislative%20Files.pdf>
- Working with the Agenda Wizard -  
<http://eportal/projs/mtcentral/Shared%20Documents/User%20Manuals/3%20-%20Agenda%20Wizard.pdf>
- Working with the Minutes Maker -  
<http://eportal/projs/mtcentral/Shared%20Documents/User%20Manuals/4%20-%20Minutes%20Maker.pdf>
- Legislative File Document Reference -  
<http://eportal/projs/mtcentral/Shared%20Documents/User%20Manuals/5%20-%20Meeting%20Document%20Reference%20.pdf>
- How to Create Legal Notices -  
<http://eportal/projs/mtcentral/Shared%20Documents/User%20Manuals/7%20-%20Creating%20Legal%20Notices.pdf>

## History

Date	Changes Made
11/13/2015	Updated Board and Committee Report Writing Guidelines Published. (Kyle Larson)
3/23/2015	Reference policy uploaded. (John Myers)
2/25/2015	Board and Committee Report Writing Guidelines released. Click here to see the Policies Corner blog post.
2/24/2015	Rule 33.3 amended. <a href="#">View legislative file.</a>