



GUIDELINES FOR COMMON GROUND ALLIANCE COMMITTEES

Updated by Co-Chair Committee 2/11/2003
Approved by CGA Board of Directors 9/26/2003

Common Ground Alliance Overview

The nonprofit Common Ground Alliance (CGA) has been established to advance and promote underground damage prevention. The CGA is dedicated to shared responsibility in damage prevention and the promotion of the damage prevention Best Practices identified through the “Common Ground Study of One Call Systems and Damage Prevention Best Practices.” Building on the spirit of shared responsibility and cooperation resulting from the Common Ground Study and the subsequent Damage Prevention Path Forward Initiative, the CGA seeks to ensure public safety, environmental protection, and the integrity of services by identifying and promoting effective damage prevention practices.

The purpose of the CGA is to prevent damage to underground infrastructure by:

- fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the protection of underground facilities;
- supporting research;
- developing and conducting public awareness and education programs;
- identifying and disseminating the stakeholder best practices such as those embodied in the Common Ground Study; and
- serving as a clearinghouse for damage data collection, analysis and dissemination.

To effectively fulfill its purpose, the CGA seeks input and participation from the broadest possible representation of damage prevention stakeholders. The work of the CGA will be accomplished through standing and ad hoc committees having a defined purpose. All CGA committees are expected to function in a similar manner. To that end, these guidelines have been developed.

CGA Working Committees

Initially, the following five working committees were established to carry out the work of the Common Ground Alliance: Best Practices Committee; Research & Development Committee; Educational Programs Committee; Data Reporting & Evaluation Committee; and the Membership, Marketing & Communications Committee. In 2003, One Call Systems International (OCSI) elected to become a part of the Common Ground Alliance within the existing CGA committee structure. Following approval by the CGA Board of Directors, the One Call Systems International Affiliated Education Committee was formed. The committees make recommendations to and carry out the recommendations and directions of the CGA Board of Directors. The purpose and responsibilities for each committee are noted in the committee descriptions.

Best Practices Committee

To promote damage prevention, it is important that all stakeholders implement the damage prevention Best Practices currently identified in the Common Ground Study Report, as applicable to each stakeholder group. The Best Practices Committee will focus on efforts to identify those Best Practices that are appropriate for each stakeholder group, gauge current levels of implementation and use of those Best Practices, and encourage and promote increased implementation of the Best Practices. The Committee will also consider

adding to the Best Practices to incorporate new developments in damage prevention processes, procedures, practices, and technology.

Research & Development Committee

The Research & Development Committee's primary role is to promote damage prevention research and development and serve as a clearing house for gathering and disseminating information on new damage prevention technologies and practices. The Research and Development Committee will seek to identify new technologies and existing technologies that can be adapted to damage prevention. The Committee will encourage the sharing of nonproprietary information concerning these technologies.

Educational Programs Committee

The purpose of the Educational Programs Committee is to develop and communicate public stakeholder awareness and educational programs. These programs and products will focus on the best practices and the theme of damage prevention. The Committee will look at existing damage prevention education programs to identify opportunities where the CGA can have significant impact in furthering the reach and effectiveness of those programs. The Committee is also tasked with the development of new educational messages and items. In the case of both existing and new materials, the Committee will review packaging and determine the best method of dissemination to all users. As an important focus area, the Dig Safely group will function as a subcommittee of the Educational Programs Committee. [Further Amended 2/11/03]

Data Reporting & Evaluation Committee

The Data and Reporting Evaluation Committee will look at currently available damage data, the gaps where additional data reporting and evaluation is needed, and how such data for various underground infrastructure components can best be gathered and published. Reporting and evaluation of damage data is important to:

- ◆ Measure effectiveness of damage prevention programs;
- ◆ Develop programs and actions that can effectively address root causes of damages; [Amended 10/2002]
- ◆ Assess the risks and benefits of different damage prevention practices being implemented by various stakeholders; and
- ◆ Assess the need for and benefits of education and training programs.

The Committee will also be responsible for collecting data through surveys and other means initiated by all CGA working committees.

Marketing, Membership, & Communications Committee

The CGA Marketing, Membership, & Communications Committee (MM&C) will pursue opportunities where it can best promote the organization to increase sponsorship and membership. The Committee will review the CGA membership fee structure and recommend any necessary changes to the CGA Board, conduct the annual membership renewal drive, and develop a marketing membership strategy for each stakeholder group. The Committee will also review opportunities for obtaining outside funding such as grants to promote the development of the organization. The MM&C Committee is also responsible for the development, reproduction, and dissemination of CGA promotional materials.

One Call Systems International Affiliated Education Committee

The purpose of One-Call Systems International (OCSI) is to promote facility damage prevention and infrastructure protection through education, guidance and assistance to one call centers internationally.

Committee Structure

CGA working committees are made up of committee members, two committee chairpersons, and two Board of Directors liaisons. [Amended 10/2002]

Committee Membership

Committee members must be recognized as members of the CGA, having paid the required membership fees and chosen the appropriate stakeholder affiliation. The CGA Board of Directors has determined that a “Primary” committee member will be selected to represent each stakeholder category for each committee. The stakeholder categories are consistent with the categories defined for the CGA Board of Directors. There are currently 14 categories filled on the CGA Board; thus, there will be 14 Primary committee members on each of the five CGA working committees. Committee membership may be modified to ensure balanced representation inclusive of the various stakeholder interests. Primary committee members representative of additional industry stakeholder categories may be added by action of the CGA Board.

It is recognized that a variety of experience and expertise will be needed to carry out the work of the committees. It is also recognized that many stakeholders will want to participate and will provide significant beneficial input to the committees. Therefore, additional stakeholder representatives may participate on the committees. However, all committee decisions requiring consensus will be made by the Primary committee members. (See section below titled “Decision Making Process”)

CGA committee members should:

- Represent damage prevention stakeholder groups/entities having defined missions and objectives related to or affected by underground facilities damage prevention;
- Have or develop lines of communication to be able to communicate efficiently and effectively with their constituent organizations and represented stakeholders;
- Have existing knowledge of the factors, factual data, history and other aspects related to the committee’s purpose, and their represented industry interests;
- Have the ability to work both individually and in a group environment;
- And have the ability and support necessary to participate in committee meetings and perform related committee work.

Committee Participation

CGA committee meetings will be open and visitors are welcome to attend. Visitors (non-members) will be asked to identify themselves and their affiliation at the beginning of the meeting. Visitors may be allowed, and indeed encouraged, to participate in committee discussions but must be acknowledged by the committee chairpersons conducting the meeting. Although CGA committee meetings are generally open to the public, the co-chairs have the right to restrict any portion of a meeting to CGA members only. Non-members will not be allowed to participate in any discussions deemed confidential by the co-chairs.

Committee Chairpersons

There should be two chairpersons for each committee. The chairpersons will serve as co-chairs with equal recognition and responsibility. The co-chairs will be responsible to help direct and coordinate the work of the committee and communicate information between the committee, the CGA membership, the CGA staff, and the CGA Board of Directors.

The chairpersons for each committee must be Primary committee members and should be elected through a process agreed on by consensus of the committee. Once elected, co-chairs are expected to serve a term of

two years; however, co-chairs may resign at any time during their term. To ensure continuity, committees should make every reasonable attempt to avoid having both co-chairs' two-year terms end during the same year.

Co-chair elections will be held at the end of each co-chair term or if either co-chair resigns during their term. Co-chairs have no limit on the number of consecutive terms they may serve.

Note: All committees should have the co-chair terms and election process determined by the end of 2003. At this time, the terms and process for each committee will be incorporated into the Committee Guidelines.

Board of Directors Liaisons

Two members of the CGA Board of Directors will be assigned as communication liaisons to each committee. The Directors will not have a vote in committee consensus matters. Their role will be to facilitate communications between the Board and the committee. They may also lend the Board's perspective on particular issues and facilitate the discussion of committee matters. However, it is noted that the CGA Board has the final say in all committee recommendations.

Constituent Interests

CGA committee members represent the knowledge, concerns, and interests of their stakeholder groups [Added 2/11/2002]. Committee members should work with their respective industries, trade associations, and constituents to facilitate effective and wide-scale communication to ensure input from all stakeholders. All Committee members should try aggressively and honestly to participate in all Committee activities and ensure effective communications to represent their constituents' interests. All members of the CGA committees are expected to participate in Committee meetings and discussions with an open mind and to try vigorously and honestly to achieve consensus on committee matters.

Decision-Making Process

All committee members should participate and provide input into decisions of the committee. However, if general agreement is not achieved on decisional matters, consensus decisions will be made with only the Primary members having a voice. This encourages communication among representatives of the same stakeholder category.

Selection and Responsibility of Primary Committee Members

Whenever possible, the Board of Directors will appoint co-primaries to represent his/her stakeholder group on each committee. Should a vote be required, the attending co-primary would cast the vote on behalf of that stakeholder group. In the event both are in attendance, then the co-primary with the highest level of seniority as co-primary of the Committee will cast the official vote unless otherwise stipulated by the Board member.

It is the responsibility of the co-primaries to ensure at least one of them be present at each Committee meeting. However, if both co-primaries are somehow unable to attend a committee meeting, then the senior co-primary will designate an individual from that stakeholder group to serve as their substitute on all consensus voting issues. It is the responsibility of the senior co-primary to ensure that the appointed substitute is well-educated on committee issues and prepared to fully represent stakeholder concerns. Furthermore, it is the senior co-primary's responsibility to notify a committee co-chair to communicate and verify their substitute selection.

In the event both co-primaries are unable to attend, and a substitute has not been selected or is also not in

attendance, then that stakeholder group will be noted as “Absent” in the meeting minutes and will forfeit their right to vote on any issues addressed at that particular meeting.

Consensus Process

If a consensus decision is required (i.e., if general agreement among all committee members cannot be achieved), such decisions will be by consensus of the Primary committee members, not by majority-rule vote. Consensus decisions require that the attendant Primary committee members reach 100 percent agreement regarding the considered issue. Consensus decisions are to be made only during prescheduled committee meetings, to allow for broad representation and membership diversity which will ensure adequate debate of the issue.

Consensus means arriving at a common decision that all Primary committee members can accept. A consensus agreement is a decision made that may not be the first choice of all committee members, but for which all Primary members indicate they will accept and support. This may involve a great deal of discussion and may involve some compromise among committee members. This ensures that all aspects of input from the various interest groups and individual experiences are fully discussed and understood before a decision is made. A single Primary committee member’s veto means consensus has not been reached. Committee members are expected to achieve consensus. Thus, committee members should carefully inspect and consider their positions on non-consensus issues and attempt to achieve consensus.

The CGA Board has the final say in all committee recommendations. If a committee does reach an impasse and determines it simply cannot achieve consensus, the impasse issue will be referred to the CGA Board of Directors by the committee chairpersons. The CGA Board will provide additional review and input regarding the issue in an attempt to support a consensus decision by the committee. In some cases, the Board may simply make a decision on the issue, based on consideration of the committee’s efforts, processes and procedures [Amended 2/11/03]. Escalation of an impasse issue to the CGA Board should only be used as a last resort – committee members are expected to try vigorously and honestly to reach consensus. If consensus cannot be ultimately achieved, dissenting opinions on the issue will be documented by the committee and the issue will be forwarded to the CGA Board.

Committee Protocol

Each committee will research, discuss and evaluate information, and make recommendations to the Board in support of its roles and responsibilities. Status will be routinely reported to the CGA Board of Directors, in Board meetings. Reporting of committee activities will be the responsibility of the committee chairpersons, with the support of the CGA staff and Board of Directors liaisons for the committee.

Committee members should actively and aggressively seek input from their represented constituencies as needed. Any information provided to the CGA may be available to the public; thus, such information cannot be held as confidential. Submitted material will be widely shared among committee members and may be posted on the CGA Information System on the Internet. Proprietary information should be carefully considered before being provided. Members should not provide proprietary or business sensitive material if they are uncomfortable with its release and distribution. This should be stressed at the beginning of every meeting.

Information, materials, and recommendations generated by the CGA committees may be challenged by the CGA Board. Through continuous communication and interaction throughout the process, the Board should be aware of the work and results being achieved by the committees. Concerns and comments of the CGA Board to any committee will be conveyed to the respective committee for review, additional discussion, and resolution.

Additional Committees

From time to time, there may be a need for additional standing or ad hoc committees or subcommittees, as determined by the CGA Board of Directors. A committee may find that it has too many issues to address or that an issue is sufficiently broad as to require a separate, single focus committee or subcommittee to address a specific issue. In this case, the committee chair(s) should notify the CGA Board of Directors. It is the responsibility of the CGA Board to confirm the need for and form another, separate working committee or subcommittee and designate primary membership in that Committee.

Ad Hoc Subcommittees

Ad hoc subcommittees or working groups may be formed within a committee, as needed, to address specific issues. Ad hoc subcommittees may be formed by the agreement and action of the larger committee. All ad hoc subcommittees should be chaired by a member of the larger committee. Ad hoc subcommittees may also include participation by contributing, subject matter experts that are not recognized as members of the larger committee.

Committee Procedures

Meeting dates and locations will be determined and agreed upon prior to adjourning each committee meeting. All meeting dates will be announced on the CGA Information system.

Meeting Summaries

The CGA staff will facilitate committee meetings and will prepare summaries for all formal Committee meetings. Summaries for Committee ad hoc or task group meetings may be provided depending on the nature of the work being conducted. Committee members will have a fourteen-day period to review and comment on the summaries before they are made public. If there are no changes or amendments, these minutes will be made public and adopted at the next committee meeting. [Amended 2/11/03] Excerpts from final CGA Committee meeting summaries may be posted for information to the public. It is considered that sharing information with all stakeholders (i.e., the public) is an opportunity to continue to generate interest in and support for the CGA.

Caucuses

Any Committee member may request a caucus at any time. The length of these caucuses should be limited to a reasonable amount of time.

Suggested Guidelines for Discussions

For effective discussions, Committee members should recognize and follow these simple guidelines:

- ◆ Share all relevant information.
- ◆ Focus on safety and damage prevention, not individual interests. [Amended 2/11/03]
- ◆ Be specific, use examples.
- ◆ Aggressively research all information presented.
- ◆ Define ambiguous words or those that need a uniform meaning.
- ◆ Explain the reasons behind your statements, questions, or actions, as necessary.
- ◆ Discuss disagreements openly and in an orderly and civil manner.

- ◆ Make statements, then invite comments and questions.
- ◆ Keep the discussion focused.
- ◆ Do not take "cheap shots" or otherwise distract the group.
- ◆ Communicate aggressively with your represented constituency. Seek their input and ideas.
- ◆ Agree on specific time frames for discussing each issue.

Amendments to Committee Guidelines

These guidelines may be amended by action of the CGA Board of Directors.