



EMERGENCY NURSES  
ASSOCIATION

# Secretary's Manual

Council and Chapter Leaders Handbook

## ENA Council and Chapter Secretary's Manual

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## Introduction

Congratulations and thank you for taking on this important leadership role with ENA.

As a secretary, you are responsible for maintaining records, sharing information with members, and helping ensure your organization runs well. As an officer, you are a valuable asset in helping to lead ENA and the thousands of emergency nurses it represents by working to advocate for patient safety and excellence in emergency nursing practice.

The content in this manual provides an overview of the secretary position and its responsibilities. If you hold the role of secretary/treasurer, it is important you review the complete Treasurer's Manual in addition to this document.

This manual can be found in the Council and Chapter Leader area on the ENA website. The ENA website also contains the latest information and news from the association. This manual will be updated regularly to reflect the most current ENA policies, procedures and strategic vision.

If you have questions or comments about this manual or any of the officer tools and resources, please direct them to:

ENA Component Relations  
[componentrelations@ena.org](mailto:componentrelations@ena.org)  
847.460.2627

## 1. Responsibilities

The secretary is the official record keeper of your organization. The secretary often acts as an information and reference point for other officers and members and maintains vital records. Secretaries should understand the important role they play in compliance, maintaining legal requirements and ensuring a well-informed membership.

The secretary should also be familiar with the bylaws, policies, procedures, and officer descriptions of the council or chapter, as well as the ENA Bylaws; ENA Policy and Procedures (State Councils Compliance and Operations); ENA Strategic Plan; ENA Public Policy Agenda; and ENA Governance policies.

If serving in the dual role of secretary/treasurer, you should also study the Treasurer's Manual to fully understand and be prepared before beginning your term as secretary/treasurer.

### MANAGEMENT

- Make sure notice of meetings are distributed and posted on time.
- Prepare the agendas for the president to use at meetings and keep track of items that were postponed or committees that have reports.
- Prepare meeting minutes and distribute to the board of directors.
- During meetings:
  - Take roll call for attendance and for votes as needed.
  - Acknowledge guests present.
  - Read motions prior to voting, if requested by the presiding officer.
  - Record each motion and its outcome for the minutes.
  - Create and manage an action list that includes actions to be taken, when, and by whom.
- Manage member correspondence.
- Adhere to ENA brand and style guidelines.
- Prepare reports on strategic plan status and project status to the board of directors.
- Maintain the organization's historical records.
- Transition organizational records from outgoing board members to incoming board members.
- Assist in the completion of your council's annual report, which is due annually on Jan. 31.
- Partner with officers to ensure necessary bylaws, policies and procedures are in place and are current.
- Help review and access member data..
- Access your Microsoft 365 account to use Outlook and Teams.
  - ENA provides Microsoft 365 and Outlook email accounts for each officer position – president, president-elect, secretary, treasurer and immediate past president to support effective communication with members, partners, vendors and the public. These email addresses are designed to transition from one person to the next as new leaders are elected, thereby preventing loss of data or information during leadership transitions. council officers are required to access and utilize their officer email accounts during their term in office. ENA will process the transition of account access annually.
- Perform all duties required of the secretary as outlined in council or chapter procedures, parliamentary procedures and common law.

**\*TIP**

*Many secretaries manage their council or chapter newsletter. Asking for volunteers to write articles or help with web content is a great opportunity to engage new members or non-officers in the work of your organization.*

## PLANNING

- Participate in the strategic planning process.
- Participate in the budget planning process.

## OUTCOMES

- Sustain and increase member communications.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records, and ensure transition of records to new leaders.
- Engage new members to the organization and encourage their active participation.
- Develop leaders; recruit first-time volunteers and officers to create a strong leadership pipeline for after your term is complete.

## Qualifications

Secretaries must meet and maintain the following qualifications:

- Have a current ENA membership
- Hold a current registered nurse licensure
- Be an active participant at the council or chapter level

## Term of Office

The secretary shall serve for a term of one calendar year, Jan. 1-Dec. 31, unless otherwise stated in council or chapter bylaws.

**\*TIP**

*Consider using a cloud-based file-sharing site, such as Dropbox, for the storage and transfer of files. Storing documents in your State Microsoft Teams account is also a recommended option.*

## 2. Agenda and Minutes Management

### Meeting and Agenda Management

An agenda set up a meeting for success. Agendas should arise from the decisions that need to be made. It is common practice to adopt the agenda at the beginning of each meeting. Agendas may be amended before adoption by a majority vote. Once the agenda is adopted, the agenda can be changed by a two-thirds vote or a majority of the entire membership.

ENA has developed an agenda template for your ENA council or chapter board meetings that includes all the key information needed in an agenda. The agenda template is located in the ENA Brand Center.

Meetings provide an opportunity to discuss and make decisions to bring the organization together to achieve its goals and mission. As secretary, you are responsible for ensuring the meeting dates for the year are posted on your website and membership is notified prior to each meeting – with the agenda posted to the website. Be sure to check your bylaws to ensure you are complying with the appropriate timeframe in which meeting notices and agendas must be posted.

### Minutes Management

Minutes are the official record of an organization. They must be accurate because they are the legal record of the proceedings and actions of the organization. A meeting minutes template is available for your ENA council or chapter board meetings in the ENA Brand Center.

#### GUIDELINES

- Keep minutes at any meeting at which a vote will take place. At committee meetings, where there is no voting, you may choose to keep minutes for your records, but minutes are not required for legal purposes.
- List the meeting location, including if held virtually, along with the local time and date the meeting started.
- List the number of attendees – approximate if the group is large – and whether a quorum was present.
- Format your notes to follow the meeting's agenda. Adjust template bullet points for your particular needs based on the agenda.
- Record all motions and the outcome of votes.
- Be concise. Minutes do not need to be too descriptive. Only record specific motions and votes, and key business.
- Don't list the names of people who make and second motions.
- Don't detail the debate over an issue. In your formal notes, you just need the facts.
- Minutes should record what is done at meetings, not what is said.
- Don't list the vote count. The outcome is enough.
- Don't hesitate to ask for clarification during the meeting to get a fact accurate in your notes.
- Don't wait to draft the minutes. Do it the same day or the next day, while you still remember what occurred.
- Minutes should be provided to the President and/or Executive Board for review within a week of virtual meetings and within two weeks of an in-person meeting.

**\*TIP**

*Prior to starting your term as secretary, attend one or two board meetings and state or chapter meetings to observe the secretary in action. Take notes on what is expected of the secretary during the meeting. This will help as you transition into your role.*

### 3. Record Retention

#### What Records Should We Keep and How Long?

Councils and separately incorporated chapters are required to have a Record Retention/Destruction policy. The following outlines the traditional standards for retention.

#### Permanent Records

Councils and separately incorporated chapters will maintain certain records permanently. These include:

- Tax returns
- Annual reports
- Audit reports
- Bylaws
- Articles of Incorporation
- Meeting minutes (minutes and resolutions; board and committees with board authority)
- Property and equipment records
- Trademark registrations and copyrights
- Printer's proofs of all publications
- Legal documents
- Tax-exempt status filings and any other documents that pertain to the establishment and permanent operation of the Association

#### Records Retained for Seven Years

Councils and separately incorporated chapters will retain certain accounting records for seven years to meet statutory, tax, grant, and audit requirements. These include:

- Primary accounting records, such as bank statements, check registers, cancelled checks and supporting documentation
- Cash receipts records
- Brokerage and investment account statements
- Completed grant program documents and contracts
- Expired contracts
- Form 1099 records

In the age of electronic data, councils and separately incorporated chapters should require adequate backup and safeguarding of computerized data, and set standards and criteria for what constitutes "adequate" backup and protection of data. For example, duplicate copies of backed-up data might be made periodically, with each stored in an off-site location.

Additionally, councils and separately incorporated chapters should address methods of record destruction. When must documents be shredded? Can some be simply discarded? How is electronic erasure insured? There might also be some provision for destroying hard-copy records if there are electronic versions.

Records should never be destroyed if an organization has knowledge of a pending government investigation or litigation.

**\*TIP**

*Each council and separately incorporated chapter should maintain a "Destroyed Records Log" which records what data was destroyed, when and by what method. This may be maintained by the secretary.*



## 4. Tools and Resources

Many tools and resources are mentioned throughout the Secretary's Manual and are also included in the appendix. Specific items are outlined below that will be very helpful to you as you prepare for your term as secretary.

### COUNCIL-SPECIFIC MATERIALS

- Council or chapter bylaws
- Council or chapter strategic plan
- Council or chapter policies and procedures
- Officer job description (ensure all responsibilities are being met)
- Goals and objectives from the last year
- Status reports for ongoing projects
- Previous meeting minutes, officer reports, and annual reports
- Financial records/budget
- Determine future Council council or chapter meeting dates (ensure posted on website)

### ENA NATIONAL MATERIALS

- [Council and Chapter Activity Plan](#) that indicates month-to-month activities and critical dates
- [Council and Chapter](#) section on the ENA website
- [Council and Chapter Leaders CONNECT Community](#)
- **Leaders Learning Library found in the state/chapter portal:** includes officer and positional sessions with free CE available
- [ENA Brand Center](#)
  - Guidelines
  - Templates
    - Minutes Template and Instructions
    - Agenda Template and Instructions
  - Council and Chapter Logos
  - ENA Brand Guidelines

### KEY CONTACTS

- ENA Component Relations - [componentrelations@ena.org](mailto:componentrelations@ena.org) or 847.460.2627
- [Board Liaison](#)

### ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*

## 5. Appendix

The following materials are referenced throughout the document and serve as an appendix to the ENA Secretary's Manual.

1. [ENA Bylaws](#)
2. [ENA Policy and Procedures for ENA State Council Compliance and Operations](#)
3. [ENA Governance Policies](#)
4. [ENA Strategic Plan](#)