

Office of the Mayor
City & County of San Francisco



Gavin Newsom

October 30, 2006

Dear Commission Presidents:

On September 18, I sent a letter requesting that all City Boards and Commissions set baseline standards for Commissioner attendance at regular Commission meetings.

In response, several City departments have requested from my office a sample attendance policy that can be incorporated into their Commissions' policies and procedures. Based on these requests, we have asked the City Attorney's Office to draft a sample attendance policy, which is attached.

If your Board or Commission does not yet have an attendance policy, please calendar discussion of an attendance policy at your earliest convenience. I am asking that these attendance policies be in place by the end of this calendar year. If you have legal questions concerning the attached sample, please contact the deputy city attorney assigned to your department, board or commission.

Should have any questions about this letter or my request regarding attendance standards, please contact Miguel Bustos in the Mayor's Office at 554-6604.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership in our community.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom

*approve to
advisory
bodies
too!*

SAMPLE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

In August 2006, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 502-06, urging each City board, commission and advisory body ("Policy Body") to adopt an internal policy regarding members' attendance at meetings of the body and requesting each body to submit a copy of its policy to the Board of Supervisors by December 1, 2006. The Board of Supervisors resolution urges that such policy address "how and when members are to be excused from attending particular meetings" and "when the body is to report a member's excessive absenteeism to the appointing authority." On September 18, 2006 the Mayor issued a directive to Department Directors and Commission Secretaries urging them to incorporate specific baseline standards of commissioner attendance in their policies and procedures as appropriate. The appointing authority shall determine whether and how to take absences (whether notified or not) into account in making future decisions regarding member appointments or tenure.

Purpose

The following policy is designed to establish minimum attendance standards for appointed members of the **[INSERT NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE]** ("Policy Body"). In the event of any conflict between any provision of this policy and any provision of a City ordinance or other applicable law (collectively, "Laws") governing the Policy Body that establish more stringent attendance requirements for members of the Policy Body, the conflicting provision of such Laws shall govern.

[Please note: Policy Bodies may wish to include references/citations to any Laws governing attendance of its members. Policy Bodies considering the adoption of a new attendance policy are strongly encouraged to consult with the City Attorney's Office to determine whether there are Laws or other existing internal by-laws/rules of order adopted by the Policy Body governing its members' attendance. If this policy conflicts with any less stringent standards for attendance set forth in the Policy Body's internal by-laws/rules of order, such by-laws/rules should be amended to reflect this policy.]

Attendance Requirements

Except in the event of a notified absence (defined below), each member of the Policy Body is expected to attend each regular or special meeting of the Policy Body. The Policy Body secretary or clerk ("Secretary") shall maintain a record of members' attendance.

Notified Absences

A member's absence shall constitute a "notified absence" where the member, in advance of the meeting, informs the Secretary of the Policy Body or other person whom the Policy Body has designated that the member will be absent. An absence due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness or emergency shall also qualify as a notified absence where the member reports such absence to the Secretary of the Policy Body as soon as reasonably possible. The Secretary of the Policy Body shall record as non-notified all absences involving neither advance notice nor unforeseen circumstances.

Report to the Appointing Authority

The Secretary of the Policy Body shall report all instances of non-notified absences as well as any instance of three consecutive absences of a member from regular meetings in a fiscal year to the member's appointing authority.

Annual Attendance Report

At the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary of the Policy Body shall submit a written report to the appointing authorities of the Policy Body's membership detailing each Policy Body member's attendance at all meetings of the Policy Body for that fiscal year.

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September 18, 2006

Departmental Directors and Commission Secretaries:

In a continuing effort to increase governmental efficiency and performance, I want to ensure consistent attendance of appointed representatives to our City and County commissions. I believe that consistent commissioner attendance is necessary for each commission to function well and effectively advance departmental goals. Appointments to commissions have been made by my office in order to allow for diverse viewpoints to be represented, so each commissioner's participation is essential.

Along those lines, my office is interested in establishing baseline standards of commissioner attendance across all city commissions:

- All commissioner absences be 'excused absences,' in which a commission secretary or the appropriate departmental representative is notified in advance of the meeting about the absence.
- A working goal of 100% attendance for commissioners, which recognizes the critical importance of each commissioner's attendance at meetings. As a practical matter, I believe it is appropriate to ask that each commissioner have at least 90% attendance to their regular commission's meetings— recognizing that illnesses or family emergencies arise very occasionally.
- In order to monitor efforts toward this goal, I ask that commission secretaries submit an annual report to my office at the end of each fiscal year detailing commission attendance.
- Moreover, I ask commission secretaries contact my commissions liaison if a commissioner misses a meeting without contacting the department in advance, or when a commissioner has missed three meetings in a fiscal year, so that my office may contact that commissioner.

Please consider incorporating these standards into your commission's policies and procedures as appropriate.

Each individual commissioner's experiences and skills are highly valued, and consistent attendance allows for the full potential of each commission to be utilized. Meeting attendance is also one of the many factors my office uses to consider future appointments of individuals currently serving on commissions, so detailed attendance records will be helpful to our appointment process.

Should you have any questions about this letter, please contact Wade Crowfoot at 554-6640.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom".

Gavin Newsom