

# Rock Products Committee

## Effective Communication Strategies

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**Seek to Understand the Problem** – Ask probing questions to try to flesh out all aspects of the problem – no matter how angry or hostile the other parties seem to be. Do not become defensive; you are trying to understand the problem and the assumptions each of the other stakeholders have. This will give you a clearer picture of what the real issues are.

**Don't Make It Personal** – Take an objective, neutral point of view – do not become engaged in the battle. Take the role of negotiator or fact finder. The more people get wrapped up in the battle and in trying to win, the more likely they are to start feeling that the issue is a personal.

**Don't Seek to Blame** – Don't seek to blame – instead, seek solutions and understanding. What were the underlying assumptions? People generally act logically; your job is to find the logic behind their actions. It is always there and often has nothing to do with the stated problem. Pointing fingers makes everyone defensive, stopping communication.

**Agree on the Problem** – Work to gain agreement on what the problem is before you attempt to find solutions. If we do not agree on what the problem is, how can we ever agree on the solution?

### Communication Expectations

To effectively communicate project scope, issues, schedule, quality and foster trust between Caltrans and Industry the following communication expectations have been established for RPC members:

1. Hold quarterly RPC meetings to achieve operational and strategic objectives of the RPC. The RPC Co-Chairs will ensure effective meetings and communication by:
  - Developing and distributing a meeting agenda at least one week prior to a RPC meeting.
  - Reviewing progress on projects using RPC Management Status Report and Task Group reports at meetings
  - Within two weeks of a meeting, minutes and action items will be developed, distributed and posted on RPC webpage.
2. Hold the following monthly meetings to discuss progress, offer input on issues, and seek ways to improve the process and structure:
  - RPC Co-Chairs (Caltrans and Industry - 3 + 1). The RPC Co-Chairs meetings will:
    - Have an agenda
    - Focus on how Task Groups are operating and gather any issues or concerns

### Communication Expectations Continued

- Task Group Co-Chairs (Caltrans and Industry - 3 + 2). The Task Group Co-Chairs meetings will:
    - Have a set agenda
    - Have a standing agenda item for specification and test method development.
    - Focus on any specification or test method issues and discuss why any changes are being made.
    - Allow for informal information sharing so no one is caught by surprise.
    - Be documented by brief meeting minutes.
    - Discuss progress on projects.
  - Industry RPC Co-Chair (Industry - 1 + 8). The RPC Co-Chair meetings with Industry Task Group Co-chairs meetings will:
    - Focus on how Task Groups are operating and gather any issues or concerns that Industry Co-Chairs have.
    - Obtain information about any Sub Task Groups where progress or issue resolution is going well or not going well.
    - Gather input on ways to improve the process.
    - Allow for informal information sharing so no one is caught by surprise
3. Hold quarterly Task Group meetings to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of the Task Group. The Task Group Co-Chairs will ensure effective meetings and communication by:
- Developing and distributing a meeting agenda at least one week prior to a Task Group meeting.
  - Reviewing progress on projects, including reviewing work plan status reports, and determining if satisfactory progress is being accomplished and if not what actions need to be taken.
  - Reviewing Sub Task Group meeting minutes.
  - Addressing any issues or disputes that Sub Task Groups bring forward.
  - Within two weeks of a meeting, minutes and action items will be developed and distributed and posted on the Task Group webpage.
4. For Sub Task Groups, in order to accomplish effective communication, the Sub Task Group Co-Chairs must ensure the following:
- One week prior to meeting an agenda must be developed and distributed.
  - Project work plan status and schedule must be reviewed at Sub Task Group meetings and updated monthly.
  - Within one week of a completed meeting, minutes and action items will be developed and distributed.

Responsibility for these tasks can be rotated between Caltrans and Industry Sub Task Group Co-Chairs.