



RASC NB

Centre Policy Manual

Rev. 1.1 (2019-01-19)

The RASC NB Centre Policy Manual is maintained by the Centre Secretary. It provides guidance to Centre Council and members so that business and activities may be performed in a consistent manner. Revisions affecting policy require acceptance through ordinary resolution of the Council, whereas cosmetic revisions require approval of the President. After a revision is approved the Secretary will update the document and revision number (and date of approval), have it posted to the Web site, and archive the previous revision.

Table of Contents

Centre Membership Fees.....	3
Rapid Purchase.....	4
Reimbursement for Outreach Travel Expenses	5
Reimbursement for NC Representative GA Travel Expenses	6
Privacy of Personal Information in Centre Membership Lists	7
Removal of Centre Membership.....	8
Centre Telescope and Equipment Use.....	9
Centre Committees and Positions	10
Reporting Outreach Events.....	11
Use and Maintenance of Centre Email Lists	13
Event Advertising.....	14

Centre Membership Fees

The RASC NB Centre accepts all membership types of the Society, as outlined in the Society Policy Manual. Membership fees are collected by the Society Office and the Centre portion is deposited to the Centre’s bank account. Centre membership fees are governed by Section 5.03 of Centre By-Law #1.

Centre membership fees are as follows:

Membership Type	Centre Fee (\$)
Regular	23
Youth	7.45
Life	23
Family (extra)	5 (Regular), 2.50 (Youth)
Affiliate	23

Rapid Purchase

Occasionally, it may be necessary or desirable to purchase something for the Centre or a Centre activity on short notice, before the next Council meeting or before a Council meeting can be arranged. Examples are, but not limited to, the purchase of equipment or material to take advantage of a sale or auction, or exceeding a committee budget.

- a) Items \leq \$100 require the approval of the President or First Vice President and the Treasurer or Alternate Treasurer.
- b) Items $>$ \$100 and \leq \$300 require the approval of at least five members of Council.
- c) Approval shall be obtained through emails to provide a document trail.
- d) The purchaser may obtain a cheque from the Treasurer or alternate prior to the purchase, or be reimbursed after making the purchase.
- e) Receipts of purchases shall be given to the Treasurer or alternate.
- f) Rapid purchase transactions shall be recorded in the next Treasurer's report.
- g) Purchases $>$ \$300 shall be approved at a meeting of the Council.
- h) There should be no attempt to circumvent the rapid purchase policy by requesting multiple purchases for separate items that compose parts of a whole item.

Reimbursement for Outreach Travel Expenses

- a) RASC NB members may be reimbursed, at their request, for gas expenses when travelling > 100 kilometres (return) within New Brunswick for the purpose of participating in a public outreach event related to astronomy.
- b) Travel reimbursement for outreach events outside the province shall require prior approval of Council.
- c) The reimbursement cost per kilometre of travel shall be 10% of the gas pump price per litre.
- d) The Council shall be notified of the request by email.
- e) The member making the request shall record the outreach event through the RASC website.
- f) Reimbursement will be made at the next Centre or Council meeting.
- g) This policy does not apply for star parties.
- h) This policy shall reimburse to a maximum of \$500 for the Centre in a business year.

Reimbursement for NC Representative GA Travel Expenses

This policy applies only to the member acting for the Centre in the role of National Council Representative (NCR) at the General Assembly (GA) following Policy G21 of the RASC Policy Manual. The member shall attend all scheduled NC meetings in their entirety. The Society will reimburse the NCR for 75% of travel and accommodation. The Centre will reimburse the eligible NCR as follows:

- a) the remaining 25% not covered by the Society for eligible travel
- b) public transportation fees between the host airport and the GA location
- c) 50% of the registration fee

Receipts and a copy of the form used to claim reimbursement from the Society shall be given to the Centre Treasurer to claim reimbursement.

Privacy of Personal Information in Centre Membership Lists

The Centre membership list contains addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and some birth dates, all of which may be considered personal information. Access to the membership list is via a user name and password to the Society's secure website.

- a) The Centre President and Treasurer should be the only members who have access to the membership lists. Others shall be approved by the President.
- b) Following a change in either or both the President and Treasurer positions, the password should be changed to one that is mutually agreed upon.
- c) Requests for personal information from the membership list shall not be granted. Such requests may be granted to members if the information is readily available from common sources such as phone books or non-private email correspondence. Otherwise, the request should be forwarded to the member in question.
- d) The President may and should update the Centre email list Moderator with email addresses of the members. The policy in c) above shall apply to the email list Moderator.
- e) The policy in c) above shall apply to those who have retained membership lists acquired during a prior term as President or Treasurer, or through other means.

Removal of Centre Membership

- (1) Members are expected at all times to conduct themselves appropriately and with due regard to the best interests of the Society, the Centre, and their fellow members when participating in Centre activities or business. Failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the Centre.
- (2) The progression of disciplinary action shall be:
 - (a) a private verbal warning from the President, or where appropriate the 1st Vice-President
 - (b) a written or electronic warning from the President, or where appropriate the 1st Vice-President, if less than one year has passed since the verbal warning
 - (c) a decision to expel the member from the Centre through special resolution of the Council, if less than six months has passed since the written or electronic warning. The Council may determine alternative discipline if the motion to expel the member is defeated.
 - (d) Following a decision to expel the member from the Centre, the President, or where appropriate the 1st Vice-President, shall provide twenty day notice of expulsion to the member; and shall provide reasons for the proposed expulsion; and shall give the member the option to attend a disciplinary hearing with the Council within one month or to submit a written or electronic response to the notifying Officer of the Council within the twenty day period.
 - (e) If no response is received within the twenty day period, or if Council decides by special resolution following the disciplinary hearing or deliberation of the written or electronic response to uphold the member's expulsion, the President, or where appropriate the 1st Vice-President, shall notify the member of the expulsion from Centre membership.
 - (f) The President shall, within fifteen days of the expulsion, notify the Society's Executive Director of the change in the member's status and the circumstances of the expulsion.

Centre Telescope and Equipment Use

The RASC NB Centre telescopes (including the accessories designated for each); namely the Coronado PST, the 8" Dobsonian and any other telescope acquired by the Centre; and other designated equipment may be borrowed at no charge by any Centre member in good standing under the following terms:

- The normal borrowing period is approximately one or two months (e.g., between meetings), although alternative periods may be arranged through the Equipment Manager depending on demand and other circumstances.
- A member may borrow only one telescope at a time unless there is no demand for the other(s) for the period requested.
- A member may retain a telescope for more than one period upon request, provided no other member has requested the telescope by the end of the period (normally, end of the Centre meeting).
- Requests for a telescope or other equipment should be made to the Equipment Manager at least three days prior to a meeting to allow for arrangements to be made. Normally, the equipment will be transferred at a meeting. If a member is unable to attend the meeting to return or obtain a telescope, that member should make arrangements for another member to deliver or collect the telescope and inform the Equipment Manager of the arrangements.
- If the member is unfamiliar with the use and care of the telescope or equipment, that member has the responsibility to request training prior to accepting the telescope.
- The borrower and Equipment Manager or delegate will complete the Equipment Condition and Inventory Form when the equipment is borrowed and returned.
- The member assumes responsibility for the condition of the equipment while in possession, and may be held responsible for compensation for the loss of or damage to the equipment while it is in their possession, as decided by Centre Council.
- A member who does not abide by this policy may have borrowing privilege revoked, at the discretion of Centre Council.

A non-member of the NB RASC Centre may rent a Centre telescope at a nominal fee of \$10 per month under the following conditions:

- The telescope has not been requested by a Centre member for that period.
- A member who is familiar with the borrower shall act as a sponsor for the borrower, and shall assume responsibility for the telescope as per the terms for borrowing by a member.
- The fee shall be paid in advance to the Centre Treasurer directly or through the sponsor.

Centre Committees and Positions

It is recognized that Centre committee members and designated position holders are volunteers and are under no obligation to forfeit personal or professional time for Centre activities. If such members find that an increasing demand of personal or professional time prevents them from participating in designated Centre activities they are encouraged to inform the committee Chair or Centre President.

Centre Committees are formed to manage the special-interest activities of the Centre for the Council. Each committee consists of a Chair and at least one other member plus the President. The Centre By-Law prescribes the selection of the committee Chair and members and also the meeting requirements. The need for committees is reassessed at the Annual Meeting every two years, following the election of Council members. Centre Council may form ad hoc committees as needed in the interim.

Every two years the committees should define their objectives, and set and prioritize reasonable goals for the short term (year) and longer. Committees should meet or communicate as often as necessary to assess progress toward achieving the goals. The Chair should distribute an agenda to committee members before a meeting and designate a member to record meeting minutes. If Centre money is required to achieve goals a budget must be approved by Council. The committee is expected to work within the budget.

Designated position holders may include, but not be limited to, a Centre Librarian, Equipment Manager, Newsletter Editor, website Manager, Social Media Coordinator, and Observing Program Coordinator. They should establish or maintain a program to operate their area of responsibility effectively and accountably. This includes keeping Centre members informed of the services they provide and seeking input for improvement. If Centre money is required, a budget must be approved by Council.

Committee Chairs and designated position holders are encouraged to keep Centre members informed of their activities and services through newsletter articles, website posting, the Centre email list, or other means. They are required to present reports to Centre Council when requested.

Reporting Outreach Events

Public outreach events should be reported through the Society website to have Centre activities recognized. Also, reporting the use of Star Finders, Cherche-Etoiles, Moon Gazers' Guides, Guides d'Observation Lunaire, and Getting Started in Astronomy pamphlets provides information that allows us to obtain more of these handouts for the cost of shipping only. If you have difficulty submitting a report you can send the required information to an Outreach Coordinator (e.g., a member of the Education and Outreach Committee), who will make the submission for you.

To report an outreach event, log in to the Society website: <http://www.rasc.ca/> under your Username and Password. If you have forgotten your username or password then visit <https://secure.rasc.ca> to reset your password. Next, click on the ***Outreach Event Reporting*** link near the bottom of the home page and complete the form as per the following guidelines. **Note:**

- ***Email:*** Verify your email address is correct. If it is no longer used, update your account.
- ***RASC Centre Affiliation:*** Select *New Brunswick Centre* from the menu.
- ***I report this event on behalf of:*** Select *my Centre as Outreach Coordinator* if you are reporting on behalf of another. Select *my Centre as an event organizer* if you were a contact for the event or helped with the event. Select (if you prefer) *myself - I organized this event on my own* if you initiated the event and performed it alone.
- ***Event Name:*** Invent one, if necessary, making reference to the group, activity or location.
- ***Event Location:*** Examples: school, park, city or combination.
- ***Start date:*** If several similar events are being combined, select the date of the first event and record the other dates or end date in the *Event details or comments* section.
- ***Main Activity Description:*** You can select only one of the listed options even though more than one type had been performed. For example, you might have given a presentation and did daytime or night observing at a school or for a youth group. In this case, select the proper school group or youth group. You could also enter the observing as a separate event, especially if extra people were involved as participants or volunteers. At a star party there could be a presentation as well as day and night observing. In such a case, enter them as separate events if the number of participants at each is known reasonably well.
- ***Number of hours in event:*** Record the total volunteer hours by RASC members, including time for preparation, travel and performing the event. Whereas attendance at a star party is for personal observing as well as outreach, do not include travel unless the event is a significant distance from the campground.

Recording Outreach Events (continued)

- **Number of days in event:** The default is 1. If, for example, you did night observing over three nights at a star party, enter 3.
- **Number of separate activities of the same type:** The default is 1. In the above example, night observing over three nights, enter 3. If you did more than one presentation at a school in one day, enter the number of presentations (recommended minimum length of 20 minutes).
- **Number of participants:** Participants are non-RASC members at the event. If it is not possible to get an exact count, make a reasonable estimate. At times you can estimate by knowing how many Star Finders were distributed. If multiple activities of the same type are being reported, enter the total number of participants from all the activities, even if some participated in more than one activity.
- **Number of youth participants:** Enter the number of participants under age 21 (best guess) who were included in the total above
- **Number of volunteers:** Enter the number of RASC members assisting with the event.
- **RASC Resources Distributed:** Record the total number of Star Finders, Cherches-Eoiles, Moon Gazers' Guides, Guides d'Observation Lunaire, and Getting Started in Astronomy pamphlets that were distributed. If the exact number of each is not known, make a reasonable estimate.
- **Name of co-sponsors:** Enter an organization that co-hosted the event and has financial interest through insurance or donations.
- **Event details or comments:** Give a brief description of the activities performed, the date range if over multiple days, circumstances that initiated the event, memorable occurrences and reactions from the participants.
- Review your entries and click on **Submit** at the bottom of the form when you are satisfied the form is complete and correct.

After the form has been submitted, check your email. You should receive immediately a confirmation email from RASC via RASC under the subject *Form submission from: Outreach Event Reporting*. Please forward the email to the designated Outreach Coordinator for the Centre. If you did not receive a confirmation email, return to the form page. Ensure your Username is showing in the green box near the top of the form, and click on **View your previous submissions**. If the latest submission is there, copy and paste the results into an email to the Outreach Coordinator. If the submission is not there, try re-submitting the form.

Use and Maintenance of Centre Email Lists

The Centre has three email lists: *nb-announce* and *NB-exec* under the Society email server, and *rascnb* under the Yahoo! Groups.

The *nb-announce* list is for keeping membership informed of Centre activities and business, and only Centre members are included. It is moderated by a member approved by Council. The President or Treasurer is responsible for informing the Moderator of changes to membership so that the list is current. Posting privilege is restricted to the Moderator, President, Secretary, the Newsletter Editor, and anyone approved by the Moderator and President based on need. Messages posted by others are held for approval by the Moderator or President, who determine whether the message is related to Centre business. Replies to posted messages are directed to the Moderator; therefore, any posts requesting a reply should direct members to reply to your personal email address. The *nb-announce* list should not be used for general astronomy correspondence such as equipment sales or observing planning – use the Yahoo email list for such correspondence.

The *NB-exec* list is for Centre Council business and includes Council members, the National Council Representative, Committee Chairs, and designated position holders. All members on the list have posting privilege. It is moderated by a member approved by Council. Users are encouraged to restrict correspondence to Council business.

The Yahoo *rascnb* list is for general astronomy correspondence and is not restricted to Centre members. You must join Yahoo! Groups to participate and be approved for inclusion by a moderator for the group.

Event Advertising

We advertise events to inform Centre members, to inform the public of outreach events, and to ensure public events are covered by the Society's liability insurance. The Society provides liability insurance to cover members and the general public at events described as "normal RASC activities" sponsored by the Society or by a Centre of the Society. This includes publicly advertised events.

The following locations are listed on the Society's Certificate of Insurance for coverage of events:

Meetings: Rockwood Park Interpretation Centre, UNB Forestry-Earth Sciences Building, Moncton High School

Special Events (Star Party): Mount Carleton, Kouchibouguac, Fundy and Mactaquac parks

Public Outreach: Irving Nature Park, Rockwood Park.

The means of advertising Centre events are through the *nb-announce* email list, which includes all members who have not opted out of receiving these emails, and the Centre website, Facebook and Twitter accounts. Those events intended for Centre members and guests only should be advertised only through the email account and possibly the website. For example, Centre business meetings should not be advertised through social media.

Advertising for Centre events may be supplemented through other means such as the local astronomy club's and host venue's websites and social media. Where the event is covered under RASC liability insurance, the local astronomy club should not be listed as, or inferred to be, a host.

A distinction is made for a Facebook Event, which is a term exclusive to Facebook. Co-hosting a Facebook Event allows the advertisement to reach a larger population and allows the administrators of the co-hosting pages to provide timely updates. The description of the event will include that the event is hosted by RASC NB and perhaps the hosting venue (for example, a park).

If possible, events should be posted on the website and social media at least one month in advance, with social media and *nb-announce* email updates at least one week prior to the event.

Event cancellations should be announced as soon as possible and at least two hours prior to the event, through the previously-advertised media, including *nb-announce*, website and social media, so that all members are informed.