

## APPENDIX E

# Sample Ground Rules

Here is a list of sample ground rules as described in Chapter 4. This is just a sampling. Select the ground rules that fit your team. Develop and reword ground rules together. This should be a collaborative exercise—at the start of the project—with everyone on the project team. This ensures the team’s buy-in, commitment, and understanding. During the life of the project, it may be necessary to add or modify some ground rules. However, strive to keep the list to a reasonable number and as static as possible, to avoid confusion. Post the ground rules in a location where everyone on the team has easy access and quick reference.

### General Communications Practices

- Ask questions to learn more and gain understanding.
- Support your opinions with facts.
- Be open and honest—no hidden agendas.
- Appreciate new ideas and different perspectives.
- Define acronyms to avoid confusion.
- Frequently check for understanding—summarize and/or paraphrase.
- Do more listening and less speaking.
- Respect one another.
- Share your knowledge—and encourage others to share theirs.
- QTIP: Quit Taking It Personally.

## Meetings

- Start and end meetings on time; respect those who have shown up on time.
- No backtracking for people who are late.
- Come prepared to all meetings.
- Have an agenda—publish and distribute it at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting time.
- Attend all meetings; if you are unable to attend, submit your individual status report to the project manager.
- Focus the discussion to the current topic.
- If the discussion is stalled, ask the facilitator to use the 5-minute rule (come to closure in five minutes so that the group can move on).
- Everyone is responsible for the success of the meeting.
- Be an active participant—everyone participates.
- Listen intentionally and take accurate notes.
- Avoid distractions; turn off (or silence) electronic devices.
- One conversation at a time—no side talking.
- Don't interrupt while another person is talking.
- Silence or absence means consensus.

## Status Reports

- Use the designated status report template.
- Submit status reports to the project manager by (certain date and time).
- Follow the guidelines set in the project communications management plan for submissions.
- All members of the project team are expected to read all status reports.
- If a report contains important information for stakeholders, that information should be called out separately, not just buried in the report.

## E-mail/Files

- Answer all team members' e-mails within (a specific number of hours).
- Answer stakeholder e-mails within the same day, if possible.
- Set specific rules around who should be copied on e-mails and when.
- Use clear, descriptive subject lines so recipients know what the e-mail is about and can easily locate it later.
- If your e-mail contains a request or assignment, provide a clear, specific deadline of when you need it.
- Keep e-mail threads on topic. If you need to discuss a new topic, start a new e-mail rather than a reply.
- Use proper file naming conventions and post files in the project information repository.

## Problem Solving

- Strive to solve problems among the team.
- If a problem needs to be escalated, all involved parties meet with the project manager (or sponsor).
- When a problem occurs, the team will discuss three to four alternatives, and prepare one recommendation for the project manager (or sponsor).