

**POLICIES AND GUIDELINES
FOR VOLUNTEERS OF
WHITMAN HANSON
COMMUNITY ACCESS**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Section 1. OVERVIEW	3
1.1 Backdrop	
1.2 Whitman/Comcast License	
1.3 Hanson/Comcast License	
1.4 Whitman Hanson Community Access	
1.5 WHCA Agreements with Whitman & Hanson	
1.6 Mission	
Section 2. GENERAL	4
Section 3. TRAINING	5
Section 4. STUDIO AND EDITING FACILITIES	6
Section 5. PORTABLE EQUIPMENT	7
Section 6. REMOTE TRUCK	8
Section 7. CABLECAST	9
Section 8. CONTENT	11
Section 9. DISCLAIMERS	12

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Backdrop

Freedom of expression is one of our fundamental rights under our system of government in the United States as stated in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. One of these rights is free speech. The Boards of Selectmen in the Towns of Whitman and Hanson in the early 1980's felt that it was important for all residents to express themselves through their local community television stations. When Continental Cablevision was granted the right to sell cable television service in Whitman and Hanson, the residents were given local channels for this purpose.

From 1984 (Whitman) and 1985 (Hanson) up until late 2003, "local origination channels" were operated and staffed by Continental Cablevision and its successors, MediaOne, AT&T Broadband and Comcast, from a building located at 115 South Avenue in Whitman. In 2003 negotiations leading to the third term of the Whitman and Hanson licenses with Comcast, that company proposed to close the building at 115 South Avenue and move local programming to regional studios, but negotiations led to fundamental changes in local programming in the third-term licenses.

1.2 Whitman/Comcast License

On September 30, 2003, the Board of Selectmen of the town of Whitman signed a ten-year license with Comcast, under which the company agrees (1) to provide quarterly funding for the operation of a "public, educational and government access corporation" at the rate of between 3.5% and 4% of gross cable subscriber revenues; (2) to provide a one-time payment to "procure, maintain, renovate, improve and develop PEG Access equipment"; (3) to turn over to the town or its representative certain existing television production equipment; and (4) to turn over to the town the building at 115 South Avenue. The town of Whitman hired an Executive Director, and the Whitman PEG channels were operated as "Whitman Community Television" from September 2003 to February 2005

1.3 Hanson/Comcast License

On November 30, 2004, the Board of Selectmen of the town of Hanson signed a ten-year license with Comcast, under which the company agrees (1) to provide quarterly funding for the operation of a "public, educational and government access corporation" at the rate of between 3.5% and 4% of gross cable subscriber revenues; (2) to provide a one-time payment to "procure, maintain, renovate, improve and develop PEG Access equipment"; (3) to turn over to the town or its representative certain existing television production equipment; and (4) to turn over to the town a remote television production truck. Concurrent with these negotiations, the town of Hanson negotiated with the town of Whitman to form a partnership to manage local PEG programming for both towns.

1.4 Whitman Hanson Community Access

On February 17, 2005 a meeting was called by the Executive Director of WCTV, which included four Whitman citizens appointed by the Whitman Board of Selectmen and four Hanson citizens appointed by the Hanson Board of Selectmen, for the purpose of forming a PEG access corporation to be called "Whitman Hanson Community Access." Officers were elected, by-laws were adopted, and articles of incorporation were approved. These articles were submitted to the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the corporation was formed on February 28, 2005. A filing was made with the Internal Revenue Service and WHCA was granted 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status on March 31, 2006, retroactive to February 28, 2005.

1.5 WHCA Agreements with Whitman and Hanson

Whitman Hanson Community Access signed ten-year operating agreements with the Town of Whitman on March 22, 2005 and the Town of Hanson on March 29, 2005.

1.6 **Mission**

The mission of Whitman Hanson Community Access is to serve the diverse informational, educational and entertainment interests of the citizens of Whitman and Hanson through the provision of: training in television production techniques; facilities; and cablecast time.

2. **GENERAL**

- 2.1 All users of WHCA facilities must sign the agreement form and by doing so acknowledge that they have read, accepted and agreed to abide by the rules and procedures of the WHCA, and acknowledge the privileges and responsibilities of being a WHCA volunteer user. All users are subject to the same rules and procedures.
- 2.2 All rules and procedures listed in this booklet are subject to change. The WHCA staff may waive a rule or procedure under appropriate circumstances, at their discretion.
- 2.3 All users must be members of Whitman Hanson Community Access and a nominal membership fee may be charged. When using WHCA facilities, users must carry their WHCA identification card.
- 2.4 Any and all usage of WHCA production facilities by volunteers must be for the purpose of producing programming to be cablecast on the access channels
- 2.5 Users who request studio, editing, portable or remote facility time should file a formal program proposal.
- 2.6 All users of WHCA facilities must obey the Supervisor at all times. All decisions made by a WHCA staff member are final. Any appeal of such a decision may be made to the Executive Director or the Board of Directors.
- 2.7 Abusive behavior toward staff or others will not be tolerated.
- 2.8 The WHCA supervisor is not available to be used as a crew member on a regular basis. The first priority of the WHCA supervisor is the supervision of the entire facility. The supervisor will make every effort to be available when needed, but may not always be available.
- 2.9 Failure to comply with any rule or procedure of the WHCA may result in one of the following:
1. A verbal warning
 2. A written notice of the failure to comply to be placed with the user's file for future consideration.
 3. Suspension of privileges, in whole or in part.
 4. Revocation of privileges.
- 2.10 If any requested usage of WHCA facilities might pose a health or safety risk to WHCA staff or others, the user must relate this information to the WHCA staff prior to the usage. If a WHCA staff person determines that a usage may pose a health or safety risk to any person, the staff person may take appropriate action to minimize such risk.
- 2.11 If a WHCA staff person determines that the weather presents risks to any person, the staff person may choose to close the facility or take other action.
- 2.12 Users are not to phone WHCA staff at home under any circumstances.

- 2.13 The user who requests the facility time is responsible for their crew and audience while in the WHCA building. They should arrive before their guests arrive at WHCA.
- 2.14 Users, crew, guests and audience are not to answer the telephone except on a LIVE call-in show.
- 2.15 Food and beverages are not permitted in the following production areas:
Studio, Control Room, Edit Room, or Remote Vehicle
- 2.16 Smoking, alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs may not be used in the WHCA building or remote vehicle. Persons under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs are not permitted to utilize WHCA facilities.
- 2.17 Producers may use the Public Access Channel Bulletin Board(s) for brief announcements related to their programs. Producers should fill out a Bulletin Board Message form and give it to the WHCA supervisor no less than 24 hours before the preferred start time.

3. TRAINING

- 3.1 Training in the skills of video production is available periodically to people who live in Whitman or Hanson who represent a non-profit group or organization or institution serving the interests of the community. The purpose of the training is to stimulate the production of programming for cablecast on Whitman and Hanson's Public, Educational or Government Access channels.
- 3.2 A new user with no background in video production must submit a properly and completely filled out Training Request form and attend an orientation session. Basic training will be offered in the use of either portable equipment, editing equipment or studio equipment, although since space is limited, there may be a waiting list for training. The user who completes one of the three basic training programs will be qualified only for use of that particular category of equipment.
- 3.3 A new user who has had training or experience in video production may request a Certification Examination, in which the user will be asked to answer questions about and display proficiency in the operation of one of the three basic categories of equipment. If successful, the user will be certified only for the use of that particular category of equipment.
- 3.4 A current user who desires additional training may either submit a properly and completely filled out Training Request form for basic or specialized training, or may make a special request for individualized training in a particular area of operation. Upon determination by a WHCA staff member that a current user does not demonstrate adequate proficiency in the operation of any category of equipment, the user may be required to undergo re-training.
- 3.5 New users who have undergone basic training or current users with experience in WHCA facilities are qualified to sign up for specialized advanced training in specific areas of video production as it becomes available.
- 3.6 Additional categories of advanced training may be offered periodically for persons who, in the judgment of the WHCA staff, demonstrate the capability to effectively use such training.
- 3.7 All users who produce or wish to produce a program must attend a Producer Orientation detailing the privileges and responsibilities of a program producer. Please see a WHCA staff person for information on scheduling an orientation session.

4. STUDIO AND EDITING FACILITIES

- 4.1 Studio and editing time is available for use by qualified users who have completed training on such equipment or who have been certified as possessing sufficient skill to operate the equipment properly.
- 4.2 The qualified user must request Studio or Editing Facilities. The request will be considered and is subject to available time. If time is available, the request may be approved by WHCA staff. Requests can be made in person by filling out the appropriate form or by calling on the telephone. Requests can also be made by fax or e-mail.
- 4.3 The qualified user may request up to (1) one (3) three-hour studio session every other week. Requests for edit time can be made in (4) four hour blocks in the editing facilities. Additional studio or edit time may be approved subject to availability. Studio or edit sessions may be requested for the following days and times:

STUDIO and EDIT TIMES

Monday - Friday	9:00pm - 10:00pm
Saturday/Sunday	limited availability determined by WHCA Staff

- 4.4 The assigned studio and editing facility will be appropriate for the complexity and needs of the planned usage.
- 4.5 No studio or edit facility can be guaranteed on a regular basis. Studio production will receive highest priority in the studio. Editing is highest priority in the editing facilities. Dubbing in the studio or editing facilities is the lowest priority use.
- 4.6 If the qualified user needs to cancel the studio or edit session, contact should be made with the WHCA at the earliest possible moment, and the user must notify all crew members and guests.
- 4.7 If an emergency arises, the qualified user must phone the WHCA at the earliest opportunity. If the qualified user fails to arrive by (30) thirty minutes after the scheduled start time, the facility may be made available to another user.
- 4.8 Repeated cancellations or failures to arrive on time will in most cases result in suspension of studio or editing privileges.
- 4.9 The studio, control room, edit room and associated areas will be checked for neatness after the shoot or edit time. The qualified user who requests studio or edit time will be responsible for the condition of the facilities. All equipment must be returned to its normal location and condition at the end of the studio or edit session. **Power should NOT be switched off on any piece of equipment**
- 4.10 Users may supply props for studio shoots or may request reimbursement for documented prop purchase costs. Props owned by WHCA will be available to all users. Please be advised that prop storage space is very limited.
- 4.11 The qualified users, crew, guests and audience must have exited the building by 10:00pm
- 4.12 The qualified user who requests the studio time must provide a crew of qualified users sufficient for the production. WHCA staff will assist in determining adequate crew prior to the use.
- 4.13 The qualified user who requests studio time shall arrive at or shortly before the scheduled start time, and should arrive before crew and guests in order to admit them to the building. The

number of guests for a program should not exceed (6) six without permission from the WHCA staff.

- 4.14 Audience size should not exceed (10) ten without permission from WHCA staff.
- 4.15 The qualified user who requests studio time is responsible for all set-up and breakdown, and must be present for both. In the case of a LIVE cablecast, the qualified user must arrive at least (1) one hour early and the crew must arrive at least (30) thirty minutes early. All technical considerations for a LIVE cablecast must be in place and ready (15) fifteen minutes before air time. The qualified users should allow sufficient time for breakdown, usually no less than (30) thirty minutes.
- 4.16 The qualified user should keep the number of people in the editing facility to a minimum. WHCA staff will assist in determining this prior to the scheduled use.

5. PORTABLE EQUIPMENT

- 5.1 Portable equipment is available to be checked out on a first come/first served basis by a qualified user who has complete training on such equipment or who has been certified as possessing sufficient skills to operate the equipment properly.
- 5.2 The qualified user must submit a properly and completely filled out Portable Equipment Request form no less than (24) twenty-four hours before the planned pickup time. The form must be approved by an authorized staff member. (No equipment can be picked up unless the form is approved and scheduled by staff)
- 5.3 The qualified user may request (1) one portable kit. Additional equipment may be approved subject to availability.
- 5.4 Equipment may be picked up or returned after calling WHCA during regularly scheduled business hours and access hours. Holidays are not included.

Monday - Friday	9:00am - 9:00pm
Saturday/Sunday	Limited availability determined by WHCA Staff
- 5.5 Equipment will not be picked up or dropped off by staff.
- 5.6 Equipment must be returned on the day and time specified on the Portable Equipment Request Form. If an emergency arises, the qualified user must phone WHCA at the earliest opportunity to make specific alternate arrangements for prompt drop off.
- 5.7 Failure to return equipment on time or to make other arrangements may result in suspension of portable equipment privileges. All raw tapes are the property of WHCA and must be returned to and stored at WHCA.
- 5.8 The qualified user must report any equipment problems at the time the equipment is returned. If the qualified user fails to report problems or damages equipment due to misuse, portable equipment privileges may be suspended. (and/or charges may be assessed)
- 5.9 Portable equipment may be set up and operated only by the person (qualified user) who requests it or by another qualified user. The qualified user agrees to utilize the equipment in a safe manner.

5.10 The equipment is intended for use within the Towns of Whitman or Hanson. In no case may the equipment be used outside of Massachusetts without specific permission (due to insurance requirements).

6. REMOTE TRUCK

6.1 Due to its complexity, the Remote Truck is designated for staff-originated uses such as sports and other community events.

6.2 The Remote Truck may occasionally be made available for public access usage under certain limitations.

6.3 The qualified user must submit a properly and completely filled out Remote Facilitation Request Proposal no less than (30) thirty days before the requested use. The proposal will be reviewed for feasibility by the Executive Director.

6.4 Since the Remote Truck requires a certified driver/engineer/supervisor from the WHCA staff, it may be made available only during hours of staff availability. These hours will normally (although not always) be:

Monday - Friday	2:00pm - 11:00pm
Saturday - Sunday	Limited special arrangement

6.5 The qualified user who requests the Remote Truck must demonstrate in the TV Project Proposal an appropriate need for such a facility and a detailed plan for its use.

6.6 A certified driver/engineer/supervisor from the WHCA staff must be present at all times, but may not work a crew position on the production. Other WHCA staff are not available to work on such productions. The qualified user who requests the Remote Truck must provide a specific number of qualified users for the production subject to staff determination. If the minimum number of volunteers do not show up for the remote production it will be cancelled.

6.7 The qualified user who requests the Remote Truck is responsible for assisting in loading the Remote Truck. The user will be present at all times, during and after the remote shoot to be responsible for all aspects of the production. Tardiness or early departure is unacceptable and will result in cancellation of Remote Truck usage or loss of this privilege at a future date.

6.8 If the qualified user needs to cancel the Remote Truck usage, contact should be made with WHCA no less than 24 hours before the usage and the user must notify crew and all other concerned parties.

6.9 User agrees to allow travel time, (2) two hour setup, (1) one hour breakdown and travel time.

6.10 Setup and breakdown of equipment at the site of the Remote Truck production are the responsibility of the certified user and crew, under the supervision of the WHCA staff member.

6.11 All instructions from the WHCA staff member must be followed.

6.12 The user agrees to operate the equipment in a safe manner.

6.13 The Remote Truck may be used primarily for productions within the limits of the Towns of Whitman or Hanson. In no case may the remote truck be used outside of Massachusetts, however, the truck may be used with specific permission within the state of Massachusetts.

6.14 The user must obtain all permits and permissions in advance.

- 6.15 WHCA Staff shall make final determinations as to the suitability of weather conditions.
- 6.16 The Remote Truck will be available for use by a qualified user no more than (1) one time per calendar year.

7 CABLECAST

7.1 Cablecast time over WHCA channel(s) is available for use by qualified users who produce programs with WHCA facilities and by other Whitman or Hanson residents on a first-come, first-serve, non discriminatory basis in accordance with WHCA operating rules.

7.2 The user must submit a properly and completely filled out Cablecast Request Form no less than (2) two days before the requested cablecast time. The forms must be approved by an authorized staff member. At the discretion of the staff, and if the desired time slot is available, the (2) day submission rule may be waived to allow timely cablecasting of newsworthy events.

7.3 First-run programs have priority over reruns in scheduling. Reruns are at the discretion of the WHCA scheduler if time slots are available.

7.4 The user may run a new program according to the regularity of production during the following normal cablecast hours:

Sunday - Saturday	4:00pm - 12:00 Midnight
First Run:	WHCA will make every effort to run the program at a time requested by the user.
Second Run:	WHCA will make a reasonable effort to run the program at the time requested by the user.
Additional Runs are at the discretion of the WHCA scheduler.	

7.5 WHCA reserves the right to pre-empt programming. However, every effort will be made to minimize pre-emption. WHCA will attempt to notify the user in the event of pre-emption.

7.6 Requests by the user for a change in the program schedule should be submitted to the WHCA prior to the next 13 week scheduled rotation.

7.7 Users who request time to cablecast programs not produced at WHCA facilities will be required to list at least (4) four Whitman or Hanson residents from different households as sponsors and provide a sample program for technical evaluation. In the event of a time conflict, programs produced at WHCA facilities will receive scheduling priority. Shorter length programs will be considered first.

7.8 Programs will generally not be scheduled until a program is complete and all information pertaining to the program is supplied to staff for scheduling. WHCA reserves the right to schedule programming at times consistent with the intended audience.

7.9 WHCA will accept programs for cablecast only adhering to the following standards:

1. Continuous control track from the beginning to the end (in the case of tape)
2. Video not to exceed 100 ire
3. Audio not to exceed 0 vu
4. Tape formats currently used by WHCA. (examples: 3/4" Umatic, SVHS, Mini DV, DVCAM, DVD) Newer formats may be added with equipment changes.

7.10 All submitted programs must be labeled with the following information:

1. Name of program
2. Name of producer or user requesting cablecast
3. Time of program (start, stop, length)
4. Topic of program and guests
5. Episode number and date

7.11 All physical media are WHCA property. Any WHCA physical media that leaves the building must be signed out by the user.

7.12 WHCA cannot guarantee that show tapes and work tapes will not be re-used. Reasonable efforts will be made to preserve tapes of special importance. Users are encouraged to identify and label tapes of special importance to be saved.

7.13 DUBS

In all cases, the highest priority use for WHCA facilities is the production of programs. Dubbing is the lowest priority use.

- a. Producers may make one (1) personal dub of each program they produce, provided that: The producer supplies an approved new blank media or purchases a new blank from WHCA stock.
- b. Producers may make dubs of each program for other cable systems, provided that: The producer supplies an approved new blank media or purchases a new blank from WHCA stock. The producer will inform the WHCA office in writing as where the show will be seen in other towns and provide the name of a contact person for verification.
- c. Except as noted above, all other dubs must be paid at the normal rates.

8. CONTENT

8.1 WHCA does not exercise editorial control over the content of programming produced with WHCA facilities or cablecast over the Whitman or Hanson Access channels, except as required under Federal and State laws.

8.2 Programs produced with or cablecast over WHCA facilities should not contain the following:

- * obscene material
- * material which violates Federal or State laws
- * constitutionally unprotected use
- * lottery information

8.3 WHCA facilities may not be used for the promotion or advertisement of commercial business or concerns, except for clearly identified brief mention of in-kind services provided to assist the production of a program.

- A. The promotion of business, commercial or profit-making entities is not permissible.
- B. If a guest is presented on a program for a bonafide entertainment or informational purpose, it is permissible to give a phone number or address for the viewer to contact the guest for more information. It is NOT permissible to mention specific products, services, prices, packages, deals, promotions, slogans or hours of operation. (Example 1: If a band performs on a show, a phone number may be given for contact information. Example 2: If a doctor or a lawyer appears on a program to give legal or medical advice, a contact address may be given.)

C. A guest may utilize a video or audio copy of their appearance on a program for the purpose of making a demonstration tape, but they should obtain permission from WHCA as a courtesy. However, such copies of WHCA programs must not be sold or otherwise generate a profit. If a guest wishes to run the program on some other public access channel, cable or broadcast channel, they must obtain permission from Whitman Hanson Community Access as a courtesy.

D. If a commercial entity provides funding or production supplies for a program, it is permissible to mention that the program is underwritten by the commercial entity and give a phone number and/or address for further contact. Such mentions should be brief, and are most often given outside the body of the program (such as in the credits). This should only be done through WHCA management. Details of any arrangements made by a producer must be provided upon staff or board request.

E. A volunteer or producer must not receive any profit or other consideration from any commercial entity mentioned on a program. A volunteer or producer must not promote any business.

F. Volunteers/producers must use common sense and make a good faith effort to avoid commercialization in their programs.

G. WHCA staff and/or the WHCA Board of Directors shall make all final decisions relating to compliance with these rules.

8.4 Copyrighted material may not be used in any program produced with or cablecast over WHCA facilities without express written permission of the copyright holder. WHCA currently has blanket permission to permit performances of copyrighted compositions and sound recordings in the ASCAP and BMI reportings.

8.5 All other appropriate releases must be obtained as may be necessary for authorization of transmission of any copyrighted material over the designated access channel and an agreement to indemnify Whitman Hanson Community Access against any claims arising out of cablecast of the program material. Appropriate forms will be provided to the WHCA staff before cablecast of such program.

8.6 In the case of minors, such forms should be signed by a parent or legal guardian, or other responsible adult.

8.7 If Whitman Hanson Community Access and the user make a good faith determination that the subject material in a program may offend some viewers and/or may not be appropriate for children, WHCA may require that the following announcement be added to the beginning of the program:

“The following program may contain sensitive material. Viewer discretion is advised.”

8.8 **DISCLAIMERS**

All programs produced with the facilities of WHCA should contain the following disclaimer at the beginning of the program:

“This is a public access program produced and cablecast by arrangement with Whitman Hanson Community Access. The content of this program is the responsibility of the producer and does not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of Comcast or Whitman Hanson Community Access.