



Handbook and Policy Manual

Our Mission: To be the premier performing arts organization for young people through education and opportunities to excel, while developing the values of respect, responsibility, and commitment.

Our Core Values: To promote our mission statement, we, as an organization are committed to the core values of integrity, open mindedness, excellence, and fun.

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Membership Information

An Overview of the Year

- The Spartans Drum & Bugle Corps' pre-season starts with the November Camp. In December, January, and February there will be one weekend long camp per month. There may also be an occasional Sunday only rehearsal.
- After school has ended, weeknight and weekend rehearsals begin.
- During the end of June, the Spartans host their annual Friends & Family Show. This marks the start of our competitive season. Each weekend during this part of the season, the Corps travels to regional competitions.
- Our tour typically begins during the middle of July and continues through championship week in mid-August. During that time, the Corps is on the road and competing in shows around the country. Our tour ends at the annual Drum Corps International World Championship in Indianapolis. During championship week, the Corps hosts an annual banquet. During this banquet, we recognize members of the corps for individual accomplishments during the season, volunteers are recognized for their hard work, and the Director's Award is given to the individual who best represents the values of the organization.

Membership

The following is a brief description of the guidelines for membership as well as those qualities we value as an organization.

- We accept applications for membership from young men and women from 14 up to 21 years of age. We prefer members to be at least 15 years of age as of June 1st. However, maturity and ability to handle the pace of the corps will be determined by the management and staff.
- Previous playing or marching experience is not required. However, a member must demonstrate the capacity to adequately learn both.
- Number of participants is limited. We may field a maximum of 154 members.
- Acceptance is not entirely based on auditions. Although musical skill may be a factor, we also consider the balance of sound across the corps when deciding the number of available positions.
- Musical skill is not the only selection criteria. We seek to provide this opportunity to young people of good character, who demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to excellence and teamwork.
- **Members must be able to meet medical, performance, and financial obligations, including medical screening and clearance from a qualified medical professional.**
- A member must be able to participate in rehearsals as outlined in the attendance portion of this handbook.
- A member must demonstrate the ability to effectively work as a member of a team.
- All members will be interviewed throughout the early season to determine personality, fitness, and financial ability to handle all responsibilities asked of each member of the corps.

Attendance

We know that balancing family obligations, work, school, a private life, and the expectations of drum corps membership can be difficult. It is because of that, we want prospective members to know that membership in the corps is a serious time commitment and one that must be made thoughtfully.

Our success is determined largely by our ability to function as a team. When one is a Spartan, the other members of the team depend on them to be present when expected. When one fails to meet this obligation, they take away from everyone else's effort.

A member may not have more than one unexcused absence from a scheduled rehearsal, camp, or from scheduled performances. An unexcused absence includes:

- When a member is not present without explanation directly from that member to a staff member or administrator.
- When a member fails to notify a staff member or administrator directly at least two hours prior to the start of any scheduled rehearsal.

- When a member fails to notify a staff member or administrator directly at least 24 hours prior to the start of any camp or scheduled performance.

A member who violates this policy may have their membership revoked. All money paid to the organization up to the date of dismissal shall not be reimbursed.

If a member is going to be absent, the member must email info@spartansdbc.org AND contact their lead instructor. Lead instructors will supply their members with their contact information.

Uniforms & Equipment

Members will be provided with a uniform and equipment. Once issued, members are responsible for the care of these items.

If any item issued to a member is damaged and it is determined by the President or designee that it is the result of negligence, the member shall be responsible for paying a fee, not to exceed the true value of the item, in order to replace or repair the damaged item.

Members are responsible for purchasing additional uniform items which includes certain types of clothing worn under the uniform. Members will be advised of the specifications for these items.

The organization will regularly have the uniforms cleaned and will pay for this expense. A member may choose to have their uniform cleaned more frequently, the cost of which shall be the member's responsibility.

Transportation

We strongly encourage members or their families share transportation responsibilities and car-pool to and from Spartan events. We recommend members make it a point to find others who may live nearby and volunteer to participate in car-pooling. This saves time, money, and gas and is a great way to get to know other corps members.

It is every member's responsibility to make sure that they are where they need to be at the time designated.

Cancellations

Visit the corps' website (www.spartansdbc.org) to check for cancellations of performances, camps or rehearsals. Cancellation messages will also appear on the Spartan's Facebook page (**Spartans Drum & Bugle Corps – Non-Profit Organization.**)

Housing

Kind parents and volunteers often open their homes to members of the corps who travel great distances to be at rehearsals and camps. Members who have the opportunity to stay in a home are expected to behave as a good guest, follow the host-family's rules, and be helpful during their stay.

Corps members who are staying with a host family during the summer should negotiate good-faith compensation with the host family.

School

School should always be a member's first priority. Marching band performances, winter concert responsibilities, etc., are always respected by the drum corps. However, members must inform the organization of all conflicts and must be able to maintain their Spartans' responsibilities. When school is finished, Spartans must become a member's first priority.

Leadership

Each season, staff members select corps members to assume various leadership responsibilities in order to help us work efficiently. These corps members will be clearly identified by the staff and are veterans who understand what needs to happen, when it needs to happen and how it needs to happen. All members are responsible for being attentive and cooperative.

- The Drum Major (s) and Color Guard Captain (s) are corps members who have been selected for their leadership skill, commitment to the organization, and character. Not only will they lead members in preparing for competition, they also provide important information throughout the pre-season and season.
- Instructors are assigned to each section of the corps. Instructors are responsible for ensuring member education and preparing the Corps for competition or performance.
- The Corps Director is responsible for the seamless coordination of all the things it takes to make all of the hard work, preparation, and education come together. This person is also responsible for overseeing and coordinating the corps staff.
- The Operations Director oversees all of the operational and logistical components of keeping the corps on the road and getting it to where it needs to be.
- The President oversees the operation of the entire organization.

Volunteers

Each season, many members' parents, friends of the corps, and interested adults offer their skill and talent to make the year a success. They work with us to keep track of uniforms, prepare for our home show, assist with our fundraising efforts, supervise our buses and keep members fed.

These volunteers must be, like all other members of the Spartans organization, treated with respect and courtesy at all times. They sacrifice substantial portions of their free time to support our efforts without compensation and epitomize respect, responsibility and commitment.

We welcome people who are committed to the corps' values, who understand the principles we try to teach, and are willing to do whatever it takes to get a job done. Anyone who may be interested in supporting the organization by volunteering their time may contact Paul (PG) LaFlamme, Jr. at 603-883-0523 Ext. 224.

All volunteers complete an application and have a brief interview with the President or designee. Any volunteer who will be working in a capacity requiring sustained contact with members of the corps will be required

to authorize a criminal background check. Call or email Paul (PG) LaFlamme, Jr. to schedule an appointment for interview.

Member Health and Spartans Drum and Bugle Corps

Drum corps is a very physical and mental activity. There is no way a member can handle this level of activity if there is not a desire to be physically fit and mentally able to handle the pressures of performing in front of thousands of people.

A medical questionnaire and medical screening conducted by a qualified medical professional must be submitted to the Spartans in order for an individual to be considered for membership. **Membership may be denied or revoked due to non-medical clearance or failure to complete the medical screening process.** This process ensures that the Spartans are able to responsibly access the appropriate medical care for a member, if needed, and that participating in the drum corps activity will not further injure or damage a potential member's body or mental health. Potential members who have knee, ankle, back, asthma, sleep, heat concerns or any other physical/ mental health issues **MUST** make these issues known to us immediately. All members are responsible for managing their own prescription medications.

It is with the student's health in mind that we take such a careful look at each member's physical ability. Living on a bus, on a gym floor and practicing and performing for 12 hour days can be tough on the body. We need all of our members to live a healthy lifestyle and have the ability to keep up with the hectic pace of performing.

Here are a few questions prospective members should ask themselves as they think about joining the corps:

- Can I handle holding my horn, drum or guard equipment for 12 to 14 hours a day?
- Can I work well in the heat of the summer, which may exceed 100 degrees?
- Can my body handle 14 hour days? Am I strong enough mentally and physically to be an athlete at the top of their game?
- Can I be away from home?
- Can I handle the heat and the sun? Can I practice in the rain without any major issues?
- If asked to run for 2 miles or march a show for 11 minutes, can I make it?
- ***Most important question...***can I take the information given to me by the Spartans' staff and make myself strong enough to handle the demands placed upon me to be a part of this great organization?

Financial Obligation to the Corps

Every member is required to fulfill his/her financial obligation to the Corps. We cannot deny the fact that drum corps is an expensive adventure. Prospective members need to be financially prepared to handle this responsibility. Tuition and Fees for the current season are outlined in the Spartans Membership contract form. All prospective members are required to have a credit card on file with the Spartans. Payments are due on the 1st day of the month. The Member understands that if the monthly payment has not been received, the credit card on file with the Corps will be charged the fee outlined in the member contract on the 5th of that month. Members on a payment plan must also have a credit card on file.

Financial aid may be made available to prospective members experiencing financial difficulties and may be requested by completing the appropriate form. Financial aid applications will be screened and assessed based on demonstrated need and other factors. Members who do not make their payments as required may have their spot placed on “reserve” or may have their membership terminated. **All financial issues must be addressed at the time of application.** Membership fees are for instructional costs, facility rentals, upkeep of equipment, meals, uniforms, and transportation to/from performances; therefore, all membership fees paid to the corps after signing a contract for the season are **NON-REFUNDABLE**.

Are there other costs?

Additional costs above tuition and registration fees are listed below:

- Each member of the brass section should supply their own mouthpiece. Additional information will be supplied by the brass staff over the course of the winter season.
- Battery and Front Ensemble members will be required to buy their own sticks and/or mallets if it is determined the sticks and/or mallets are not cared for properly. This cost is roughly \$30 per pair.
- Members are required to pay a uniform fee to purchase the season’s uniform/costume.
- All corps members are required to supply their own undergarments to wear with the corps’ uniforms.

Housing Disclaimer and Release

Members are responsible for making their own arrangements for housing for the non-tour season. The Spartan Jr. Drum and Bugle Corps, Inc. does not provide housing, make arrangements for housing, investigate the quality of hosts or housing or otherwise accept any responsibility for housing. Over the years, families and friends of the organization have expressed interest in making housing available to members. The Spartan Jr. Drum and Bugle Corps, Inc. does not investigate, verify or evaluate housing options or opportunities. Members are encouraged to undertake their own investigations and perform whatever due diligence they desire or deem necessary to evaluate and select housing options. **Members shall defend and**

hold harmless, the Spartan Jr. Drum and Bugle Corps, Inc. from any claims or demands, of every kind and nature arising from or related to housing.

Code of Conduct

The following is the Code of Conduct for members of the Spartans. In order for a member to be accepted into the Spartans, they are required to read and sign in the appropriate space on the application that they agree with and will abide by this Code of Conduct. Infractions of the Code of Conduct may be grounds for immediate termination of membership.

Please note that members who are dismissed from the corps while away are responsible for the expense of returning home. Additionally, any member whose membership is terminated for violating the Code of Conduct will be ineligible for a refund of any monies paid to Spartans Jr. Drum and Bugle Corps, Inc.

While in uniform, know that . . .

- Our uniform defines who we are. When it is worn, members represent every minute of hard work of every individual associated with the organization since 1955.
- Any individual who wears our uniform identifies themselves as belonging to a legacy of achievement. By wearing our uniform, a member identifies themselves with that legacy and makes a commitment to give the best they have to give.
- A member takes their place in a long line of champions and proud competitors. Like all who have worn it before, members make a statement about their commitment to passionately represent the corps with honor.

Personal Appearance

- While in uniform, long hair shall be tied back and worn up. If headgear is to be worn, hair should be tucked inside.
- Jewelry shall not be worn while in uniform, except the corps necklace.
- The color guard may wear a conservative amount of facial make-up and uniform earrings while in costume only with approval of staff.

Etiquette

- Respect each other and those around us.
- The use of abusive, profane, derogatory, or other inappropriate language/behavior is unacceptable.
- Be on time to all scheduled activities.
- During the pre-season and competitive season, members will learn our traditions of corps etiquette and how we display our respect to other corps.
- All members are expected to extend the highest respect for other organizations and corps members. This includes the use of social media such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Drum Corps Planet, etc.

- Any individual who has made the commitment to become part of this organization has many reasons to be proud. Pride is different from arrogance. Arrogance lends itself to disrespect. Additionally, it is blinding and will lead to under-valuing the potential of our competition. Failure to respect the hard work and achievements of others will ultimately lead to failure as a team and failure on the field of competition.

Members represent the Spartans organization, in uniform and out. While with the corps, please . . .

- Maintain a presentable appearance at all times. This includes but is not limited to all clothing worn during practice sessions and free time while with the corps.
- Do not smoke, behave immaturely, eat, or drink anything (except water) while in uniform.
- Remember, only items approved by the President or designee may bear the Spartans' logo/name.

Smoking

- Spartans abides by the applicable state laws of New Hampshire regarding allowing individuals to smoke.
- Members may not smoke at any indoor or outdoor rehearsal facility.
- At those times when smoking is allowed, it may only be done in designated areas. **NOTE:** Many of our rehearsal sites and overnight accommodations while on tour are at schools. It is unlawful to smoke anywhere on school property in most states.
- Members are not allowed to smoke on buses or other Spartan owned vehicles.

Drugs and Alcohol

- The illegal use of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited.
- Any member found to be in violation of this policy may have their membership terminated.
- Spartans Drum and Bugle Corps maintains a zero-tolerance policy in this matter. A member found to have in their possession an illegal substance may be reported to local law enforcement.
- If a minor is found to have violated this policy, their parent or legal guardian shall be informed by a representative of the corps. Note: this does not rule out any legal action that may be taken by local law enforcement.
- Members who are of legal drinking age may not consume alcoholic beverages while they are with the corps. This includes rehearsals, camps, performances, and travel.

Cleanliness

We are often the guests at schools or other public facilities. Corps members are expected to treat the property of others with respect. We have a tradition of leaving a host-facility in better condition than it was when we arrived.

Members must take care of their own belongings and must clean up after themselves.

Hygiene

We spend most of our season in tight quarters, maintaining good hygiene is an important component of remaining healthy while on the road. Members are expected to maintain good hygiene habits by regularly showering and laundering clothes when the opportunity is available.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones are permitted for emergency use only or at designated times as per the Spartans' Staff. Cell phones are never to be on the practice field or on a competition field. Cell phones will be confiscated from any individual, if in the opinion of the staff, they are being abused. Confiscated phones will be held for the member and made available during appropriate times to call home.

Dating

Sometimes, members develop close relationships and may start dating. Although we do not discourage this, we expect that any issues that arise in a relationship will not interfere with your performance. We believe that inter-corps dating is only appropriate within the same age group and we use applicable state laws to enforce this policy.

Corps staff members, administrators, and volunteers are forbidden to date members of the corps.

Bus Behavior

While travelling on corps buses, appropriate bus behavior is critical to ensuring the travelling safety of the corps and to ensure that concerns do not arise that will negatively impact other members or the corps. Sexual activity is not permitted. Members may not throw items, engage in horseplay, or drum on seats, walls or other parts of the bus. Anytime the bus is in motion, members should remain seated. No member is permitted to sit in the driver's seat. Any violation of these expectations will be responded to swiftly.

All members are responsible for keeping the area they are sitting in clean. Only light baggage, etc. may be placed on the storage racks above the seats.

Policy Appendix

Discrimination

- Spartans Drum and Bugle Corps accepts individuals into membership without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation.
- We strictly enforce a non-discriminatory policy. Any individual found to be in violation of this policy may be immediately excused from their responsibilities to the corps.
- Examples of prohibited harassment may include, but are not limited to, the following examples:
 - Threats, degrading comments or slurs
 - Written communication that could offend individuals in a particular group, such as references to racial or ethnic stereotypes or caricatures
 - Derogatory posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings, or gestures
 - Making or threatening retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment or for participation into an investigation of a harassment complaint.

Sexual Harassment

- Sexual harassment is defined as:
 - Any unwanted sexual advances
 - Requests for sexual favors
 - Visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or threatening environment
- The following is a partial list of conduct that may be considered sexual harassment:
 - Making or threatening retaliation after a negative response to sexual advances or for reporting or threatening to report sexual harassment.
 - Physical conduct such as unwanted touching, assault, impeding or blocking movement.
 - Written communications of a sexual nature distributed in hard copy or via a computer network, suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations.
 - Making or using derogatory comments, comments about another's body or dress, slurs or sexually explicit jokes.
 - Leering, making sexual gestures, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, calendars or posters.
 - Offering preferential treatment in exchange for sexual favors.
 - Unwanted sexual advances or propositions.

If you believe you are being harassed . . .

- 1) Inform the person who you believe to be harassing you to **stop!**
- 2) Immediately inform a staff member.
- 3) That staff member shall immediately inform the President or designee.
- 4) The President or designee shall conduct an investigation and take the appropriate course of action.
- 5) We shall take all steps possible to protect the confidentiality of those individuals involved.

- 6) Please note that when a complaint of this nature is filed and one of the parties involved is a minor, the Administration shall notify the minor's parents of the incident and, when appropriate, the findings of the investigation.
- 7) All members' confidentiality will be respected at all times.

Sexual Abuse

The Spartans prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse of any kind. Any Staff, volunteers, or members who violate State Law in regards to Sexual Assault and Abuse shall be terminated immediately and authorities shall be notified.

Hazing

Hazing is expressly prohibited under any and all circumstance by and between and among staff, volunteers, members or anyone within the Spartans. Hazing includes, but is not limited to:

- Any direct or indirect action or inaction that causes or poses a risk of harm to the mental or physical health of other people;
- Subjecting or encouraging any person to commit an act or omission for the purposes of causing shame, intimidation or disgrace; or
- Any physical assault of battery, or threat thereof.

Bullying

Bullying is expressly prohibited by all Staff, Volunteers, or Members. Bullying" means a single significant incident or a pattern of incidents involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another member which:

- Physically harms a pupil or damages the member's property; Causes emotional distress to a member; Interferes with a member's educational opportunities; Creates a hostile educational environment; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the Spartans.
- "Bullying" shall include actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on a member's actual or perceived personal characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs, or motivated by the members association with another person and based on the other person's characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs.
- "Cyberbullying" means conduct defined in paragraph I of this section undertaken through the use of electronic devices. "Electronic devices" include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones, computers, pagers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and websites.

Non-compete Clause

We consider a signed contract as acknowledgement of and agreement to a “non-compete clause”.

By signing the contract you agree to abide by the expectation that you shall not participate with any other competing Drum Corps International corps this season. Failure to meet the terms of this clause will result in the immediate termination of your membership with the Spartans and notification to the other corps of your violation. Per Drum Corps International policy, you will be unable to participate in any DCI activity for the remainder of the season if you should leave the organization under these or similar circumstances.

Under certain circumstances, a member may be eligible for a transfer to another corps, (for example, your family is moving and there is another corps in the area). Drum Corps International policy addresses the issue of member transfer by stating that members may not transfer between corps after March 1st of the upcoming year and may only do so with a Letter of Release by the President.

Criminal History Record Information Policy

As an organization, the Spartans are committed to protecting the participants in its organization, especially children under the age of eighteen. New Hampshire Law requires that the Spartans maintain and follow an appropriate policy regarding criminal background checks for any employee or volunteer who may be left alone with any child or children. This review is accomplished by access to the criminal records maintained by the State of New Hampshire for New Hampshire residents and by access to the criminal information of the home state of any non-resident individual. This policy is adopted to detail the policies and procedures to be followed by the Spartans in seeking maximum feasible compliance with the statute in order to protect our members and staff.

The Spartans staff and volunteers are comprised of individuals from various states, but primarily from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Each staff member or volunteer shall have an annual background check from their home state prior to any overnight travel with the organization to be completed before February 1st of each year. New Hampshire Law provides that if the individual has been the subject of a background check by another entity within twelve months that the Spartans may rely on that report in fulfilling the requirements of the statute. It is anticipated that many volunteers and staff members have been subject to a background check in connection with their employment as educators or in connection with other volunteer activities. If a background check is not available from connection with another entity, arrangements need to be made with the President of the Spartans to obtain one.

In the event that the staff member or volunteer cannot provide a record satisfying the requirements of New Hampshire Law, each individual will be required to provide consent to

the Spartans to seek such information from the record keeping agency of the applicable state. Each individual is expected to cooperate with the Spartans in seeking maximum compliance in order to protect our members. The failure to provide an acceptable record or to cooperate in obtaining such records will be grounds for suspension or dismissal.

The Spartans acknowledge that not all individuals taking part in events are subject to background checks. In some circumstances individuals do not have the potential to be left alone with a child or children. The Spartans reserve the right to determine on a case by case basis whether an individual is subject to the requirement of a criminal record inquiry. Any Staff or volunteer working from time to time but not participating in overnight travel shall read, understand and sign the "Spartan Volunteer Assurance Form." Examples of this kind of activity include, and is not limited to: teaching, food preparation, sewing, parade support, fundraising, first aid support, driving, prop building, equipment management.

Where Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) checks are part of a general background check for employment or volunteer work, the following practices and procedures will be generally followed:

I. CHRI checks will only be conducted as authorized by the applicable statutes and regulations. All individuals will be notified that a CHRI check will be conducted and asked to execute an authorization of behalf of the Spartans. If requested, the individual will be provided with a copy of this CHRI policy. Those individuals residing outside of New Hampshire and Massachusetts are required to either provide a compliant current report from their home state or to cooperate with the Spartans in obtaining one.

II. The Spartans will designate an individual to obtain authorizations and request a CHRI review. This person shall be required to keep the results of the CHRI review confidential. As used in this paragraph, the term "confidential" shall mean avoiding disclosure of the results of any review to any person except those individuals in the Spartans who must have access to the information to operate the organization. This would include, but not be limited to, the Board of Directors, Corps Director, Corps President and other officers of the Spartans.

In connection with the receipt of this information, the Spartans will endeavor to keep this information secure. In general, any authorization or other record containing the personal information of an individual shall be securely destroyed as soon as it is reasonably practical. As used herein, personal information shall include the name of an individual in combination with that person's social security number and/or driver's license number.

II. An informed review of a criminal record requires adequate training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to review CHRI in the decision-making process will review the applicable statute and consult with such individuals as necessary in order to make an informed decision.

III. Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an individual. Rather, determinations of suitability based on CHRI checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.

IV. If a criminal record is received from the applicable agency, the authorized individual will closely compare the record provided by the agency with the information on the CHRI request form and any other identifying information provided by the individual to ensure the record relates to the individual.

V. If the Spartans is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of the CHRI check, the individual will be notified immediately. The individual shall be provided with a copy of the criminal record and the organization's CHRI policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that make the individual unsuitable for the position and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the CHRI record.

VI. If the CHRI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the individual, the Spartans will make a determination based on a comparison of the CHRI record and documents provided by the individual. The Spartans may contact the applicable agency to request a detailed search of their records.

VII. If the Spartans reasonably believes the record belongs to the individual and is accurate based on the information as provided in section IV on this policy, then the determination of suitability for the position or license will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but not be limited to the following:

- (a) Relevance of the crime to the position;
- (b) The nature of the work to be performed;
- (c) Time since the conviction;
- (d) Age of the candidate at the time of the offense;
- (e) Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
- (f) The number of offenses;
- (g) Whether the individual has pending charges;

- (h) Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof;
- (i) Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the Spartans.
- (j) Whether the offense included causing or threatening direct physical injury to any individual.
- (k) Whether the offense included causing or threatening harm of any nature to a child or children.

VIII. The Spartans will notify the individual of the decision and the basis of the decision in a timely manner.