

Sterling-Lancaster Community Television, Inc.

Policies & Procedures

V 1.5

Approved: 1/28/2020

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Summary of Changes:

V 1.1: 4/17/13:

- 1. References to Channel 10 changed to Channel 99.**
- 2. Telephone numbers updated.**
- 3. References to Access Coordinator changed to Executive Director.**

V 1.2: 8/29/13:

- 1. Changed logo on front cover of manual**
- 2. Added/updated address, phone, email, web info.**
- 3. Made proposed changes as a result of 8/8/13 meeting:
Program Submission and Program Scheduling (4a)**
- 4. Renumbered Membership Information section and added item #2**
- 5. Added item #6 under Program Submission and Program Scheduling (5-13)**
- 6. Under Political Programming, remove second sentence and add new verbiage**

V. 1.3: 12/20/16

- 1. Changed logo on front cover of manual**
- 2. Added new address and updated phone numbers on cover of manual**

V. 1.5: 10/24/17

- 1. Changed approved date and version**
- 2. Updated Email addresses throughout document**
- 3. Updated Membership Fees and Benefits.**

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Policies & Procedures

The purpose of public access, or community cable television in Sterling and Lancaster, is to enhance the exchange of information among residents through the medium of cable television.

Sterling-Lancaster Community Television, Inc. (SLCT) was formed to provide Sterling and Lancaster residents, organizations, agencies, and institutions with free, non-commercial television production and related services on a first-come-first-served, non-discriminatory, non-monopolistic basis. These services include video production, equipment and facilities usage and training, professional assistance, and cablecasting of non-commercial, public and educational access programming. SLCT is administered by the volunteer SLCT Board of Directors and is an 501(c)3 organization.

SLCT administers 2 channels for the Towns that appear on Comcast channel 8 (public/educational) and channel 99 (Government).

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Individual Membership -- \$20 Voting privileges, subscription to future SLCT newsletter/program guide, open access to training, production equipment and facilities and channel time.
2. Organizational Membership -- \$50 includes 5 individuals (Educational institutions, local governments, health care, social services, arts, environmental, religious, and any other nonprofit organizations. Membership covers five people representing the organization; the five people receive the same benefits as individual members with the exception of voting privileges. Organizational members shall designate one person to vote on behalf of the Organization.
3. Student/Senior (62+) Membership - \$10 includes all privileges of an individual membership.
4. Family Membership - \$30 includes all immediate family members.
5. Memberships are for one (1) calendar year beginning in January.

Membership Information

Residents of Sterling and Lancaster, as well as organizations and institutions affiliated with the towns and those affiliated with such organizations are welcomed and encouraged to use these resources. In order to gain access to production resources and training a person must become a member by:

1. Showing proof of Sterling/Lancaster residency; working or attending any school in Sterling/Lancaster; affiliation with an organization serving Sterling/Lancaster. (All members must be directly affiliated

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with the Sterling/Lancaster branch/chapter in the case of regional, state or national organizations.)

2. Exceptions to the SLCT membership policy, based upon prior experience and demonstrated interest, may be granted by the Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the Executive Director. Non-resident members are considered non-voting members and may not hold office in the SLCT.
3. Complete a membership application.
4. Pay the current membership fee. The fee is waived for educational and governmental organizations when programming involves those organizations.
5. For Production Members – Attend an SLCT orientation and training program and sign the SLCT Producer's Agreement.

Orientation and training program must be completed and fees paid before members are allowed access to SLCT facilities and equipment.

Memberships run on a year to year basis. The annual membership for continuing members is due Jan 1 of the calendar year and must be paid by March 1 of that year to remain in good standing.

Electronic Bulletin Board

The bulletin board is a mechanism for the airing of public announcements or messages that are

1. Non-commercial and deemed to be informational to Sterling/Lancaster residents. These messages include
 - A. The announcement of events or services sponsored or conducted by governmental or educational organizations.
 - B. Non-profit community groups or organizations.
 - C. Organizations from neighboring communities may be placed on the bulletin board if programming and editing time permit.
2. All notices must be approved by SLCT or its designee.
3. SLCT reserves the right to edit any such message.
4. Personal ads will not be accepted.
5. Ads for political campaigns will not be accepted.
6. Announcements may not contain references to:
 - A. Lotteries or bingo games; or
 - B. Alcoholic beverages or cash or open bars.

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7. Meetings of non-profit, non-governmental groups may be announced; however announcements of internal organization meetings (ex.- a finance committee of XYZ Club) will not be carried.
8. The starting times and locations of religious services conducted by religious organizations within Sterling and Lancaster may be posted on a religious services page.
9. All messages should include the name of the event (ex. - a spring bazaar and luncheon) or service (ex.-flu shots), the name of the sponsoring organization, date, time, location, costs and contact person, phone number and website.
10. The design of the screen including the colors, character fonts, style and layout of the announcement will be decided by SLCT.
11. Announcements may be transmitted electronically for approval by SLCT to Access@slctv.us.. Written forms are available from the SLCT office, or the website www.slctv.us.
12. All requests must be received at least two weeks prior to the requested air start date. Acceptance is solely at the discretion of SLCT.
13. SLCT has the right to reject any message deemed not to be in conformance with these policies and procedures or the mission of SLCT.

Eligibility for Residents

1. Utilization of SLCT:
 - a. Producers/Users shall be any resident of the geographical area covered by the Sterling and Lancaster cable television franchise agreements who is at least 18 years of age; or any employee of the towns of Lancaster or Sterling, Nashoba or Wachusett Regional School District; or any owner or employee of a business within the geographical area covered by the Sterling or Lancaster cable television franchise agreements.

Producers/Users can reserve the facility and equipment to produce or edit videos for cablecasting. Residents, ages 12-17 years old, will need a parent or legal guardian to sponsor them.

- b. Acceptable proof of residency or employment are: a Massachusetts drivers license, Nashoba/Wachusett Regional School District identification card, town of Sterling or Lancaster utility bill, letter on company letterhead, or a business card.
2. Usage of SLCT Equipment:
 - a. The user shall be trained in the proper use and care of production equipment. SLCT staff or members of the SLCT Board of Directors shall determine what training is necessary and can revoke user privileges if necessary. The SLCT Board of Directors will be the final judge in matters of user-privileges.

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- b. The studio is available to users upon arrangement with SLCT staff. Users are responsible for the entire facility and any activity that occurs during a user's reservation time. There is a 72-hour reservation deadline for studio requests and subject to availability of SLCT staff. The SLCT staff will allocate times for use.
- c. Portable equipment is available to SLCT certified users on a first-come-first-served basis. A sign-out sheet for all equipment issued shall be filled out and signed by the SLCT staff and the user. There is a 24-hour reservation deadline for portable equipment requests. The SLCT staff will allocate times for use. Equipment is on loan for up to 72 hours (3 days). Late return of equipment may result in forfeit of future equipment checkout privileges.

Program Submission and Program Scheduling

- 1. Certified resident producers may submit programming. Non-resident producers need to be certified by obtaining a signature from a resident sponsor. All program submissions shall include a completed DVD/Tape Submission Form.
- 2. General Guidelines:
 - a. An advanced notice of ten business days shall be provided for a program to be cablecast. The Executive Director or designee can make exceptions to this, and the SLCT has final approval.
 - b. Total length of any program shall not exceed two hours without prior approval of the Executive Director..
- 3. Priorities:
 - a. Locally produced programs about Sterling and Lancaster have priority in cablecasting. These programs can be, but are not limited to Town Selectmen or other elected or Town-appointed board meetings (School, Park, Library, Zoning/Planning, DPW), school activities and events, Chamber of Commerce events and meetings, church events, civic organization events, or programs produced by students in the school systems.
 - b. Programs of local interest will have priority over other regional programs.
 - c. First-run programs will be given priority over previously cablecast programs. Frequency and time of cablecasting of programs is at the sole discretion of SLCT.
 - d. SLCT will make a good faith, concerted effort to produce and cablecast all Select Board meetings of governmental bodies within the Sterling/Lancaster communities (not necessarily sub-committee meetings). These recordings are not to be considered

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the official record of these meetings by SLCT. SLCT may assist in producing and cablecasting non-partisan-moderated, community-oriented events when resources are available.

4. Format:

- a. Standard DVD's are preferred for playback. In addition to DVD, SD Card, SSD, or current media platform which SLCT can reasonably playback and transfer its content is accepted.
- b. Submissions shall accompany a DVD/Tape Submission Form and be labeled with program title, producer name, and total running time of program. Running time should be displayed in hours, minutes, and seconds. Total running time must begin at the disclaimer and end after the closing credits.
- c. All programs shall have a title and a name identifying the person(s) who produced the program. Names of director(s), performer(s), production crew, or other participants may be added either before or after the program.

5. SLCT is not responsible for any damage to media supplied.

6. Programs, which require additional SLCT staff assistance and/or services, are accepted for a fee.

Underwriting Credits

Businesses are encouraged to underwrite programs of interest to citizens in the towns, but these programs must be informational in nature and not take the form of an infomercial for a product or service sold by the business. For example, a cooking show by a kitchen supplies store or a home improvement show by a hardware store would be allowed, but a show on how to use a specific branded product would not.

Commercial advertising is prohibited from the access channels.

Acknowledgment of underwriting by businesses, organizations, or grantors providing monetary or other assistance to the making of a program may be included in the program credits. The acknowledgment should not exceed ten seconds and may include the underwriter's name, business name, address, phone, website/email address, and a brief value neutral statement describing the underwriter's contribution or product.

Political Programming

SLCT will make production and editing equipment available upon request and encourages political discussion of issues and candidates. **SLCT staff will not provide any direct technical support for any political programming.** SLCT may provide technical assistance/services for political programs for a fee. However, SLCT is not obligated to produce any political or advocacy program

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using SLCT staff or non-consumer equipment. A disclaimer must be inserted at the beginning and end of each political program stating: "The views expressed on this program are those of the producer(s), and do not reflect the views of SLCT, Inc., the Towns of Sterling/Lancaster, or the cable operator."

Political programming will cease prior to Election Day and will not resume until the polls have officially closed. It is the responsibility of the presenter/producer to alert staff of any political program content relevant to an upcoming election.

The Bulletin Board may not be used for political advocacy.

Ownership and Duplication

1. Producers submitting programs shall retain full responsibility for, rights to, and ownership of their program content, subject to the policy statements set forth below.
 - a. The Producer shall be responsible for securing any copyright, trademark rights or other intellectual property rights for all visual and audio elements of the program.
 - b. Programs produced using SLCT equipment and facilities, or with staff assistance, shall be for cablecast and premiere on SLCT.
 - c. Programs produced with SLCT equipment and facilities shall be for non-commercial purposes.
2. SLCT shall retain copies of master DVD's/tapes of programs produced with SLCT facilities and equipment for subsequent use/archival purposes.
3. SLCT may use any program submitted for cablecasting to promote the public access channels in Sterling/Lancaster and the concept of public access regionally and nationally, unless the producer prohibits such use in writing on the DVD/Tape Submission Form and DVD/tape label.
4. SLCT may release to a third party any copy of a program cablecast on any SLCT channel unless the producer prohibits such use in writing on the DVD/Tape Submission Form and DVD/tape label. SLCT shall, however, comply with any lawful request by a court or law enforcement authorities for a copy of a program.
5. Program Content

SLCT provides a community service by administering public access channels for programs submitted by individuals and non-profit organizations in the Sterling-Lancaster area and does not discriminate against any such users; however, producers are legally responsible for program content and shall follow the policies set forth below. SLCT does not assume responsibility for the content of any programs or information that is submitted for cablecast.

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1. In accordance with federal, state, and local law, a program shall not include the following material.
 - a. Gambling: Program submissions may not promote or conduct any lottery, raffle, contest, or game involving prizes awarded in whole or in part by lot or chance except for charitable fundraising.
 - b. Obscenity: Program submissions shall not contain material that is obscene. Federal law states that material is obscene if:
 - I. The average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest.
 - II. The work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law.
 - III. The work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
 - c. Solicitation: Program submissions shall not solicit funds or other property of value from viewers except for recognized charitable causes.
 - d. Advertising: Program submissions shall not promote the sale of products or services, including prices, or promote or endorse a trade or business, except for charitable fundraising.
 - e. Products or Services: Program submissions shall not discuss or show products or services made available by persons, corporations, or institutions which have a commercial interest in the subject of the program, unless such discussion or show of products or services is clearly incidental or accidental to the purpose of the program.
 - f. Commercial Identification: Program submissions shall not identify, promote or make reference to any product, service, trademark, or brand name in any manner which does not further the non-commercial message of the program or which would jeopardize the non-commercial mandate of SLCT. This includes, but is not limited to, the names of businesses as well as addresses and telephone numbers, e-mail, or web page addresses.
 - g. Misrepresentation: Program submissions shall not contain any material, which is intended to defraud the viewer, or designed to obtain money by false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises.
 - h. Illegalities: Program submissions shall not contain any material which constitutes libel, slander, defamation, invasion of privacy, or publicity rights, unfair competition, or

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violation of trademark or copyright, or which may otherwise violate any local, state, or federal law.

2. A producer shall obtain in writing and keep records of all necessary approvals, clearances, licenses, etc., for the use of any program material to be cablecast on SLCT. This includes, but is not limited to, approvals by broadcast stations, networks, sponsors, music licensing organizations, copyright owners, performers' representatives, and all persons featured in the program material and any other approvals that may be necessary to transmit the program via SLCT.

Equipment Check-in Check-out

1. All equipment must be checked in and out by SLCT staff.
2. An Equipment Check-Out Form must be filled out accurately and signed by the user with date and daytime phone number.
3. Users must report any problems or breakage when returning the equipment. Please be as specific as possible about the nature and condition under which problems have occurred in order to facilitate repairs. It is suggested that users set up and test equipment before removing it from the SLCT facility.
4. Users are responsible for loss or damage due to negligence or abuse while the equipment is checked out to them.
5. Equipment should be reserved as early as possible, but no more than three weeks before it is to be used.
6. A user may reserve equipment only one weekend per month, unless the desired equipment has not been reserved for the weekend prior to 7:00 pm on the Thursday immediately before the weekend.

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:

All SLCT equipment is insured. SLCT access members are responsible for all equipment signed out to them. In the event of loss or damage, it is imperative that the following information be compiled. Failure to provide this information to SLCT may result in non-payment by the insurance company and the access member would pay replacement or repair of the equipment:

1. A police report must be filed in the town or city in which the theft occurred.
2. Equipment cannot have been left unattended.
3. Equipment cannot have been left in a hazardous situation.
4. There must be proof of unauthorized forcible entry into the vehicle or location where the equipment was stolen.
5. Equipment must not have been left in a vehicle overnight.

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If the insurance company honors the claim, the access member is still responsible for payment of the deductible.

Suspension of Privileges

1. Violation of any part of this document is grounds for suspension of privileges.
2. SLCT reserves the right to refuse the use of the facilities to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or not in full control of his or her behavior, or who engages in inappropriate conduct.
3. Certified producers shall be responsible for making sure that all crew, talent, and guests obey this policy. Certified producers shall be held responsible for rule violations by crew, talent, and guests. The certified producer shall be responsible for making sure the production crew used is qualified for the use of equipment and facilities.
4. Failure to abide by this policy shall result in suspension of privileges. Violations may result in permanent restriction of use of production equipment and/or facilities.
5. User Suspensions:
 - a. A short-term suspension can be imposed. This suspension will be for any length of time but no longer than the next scheduled SLCT Board of Directors meeting. The SLCT Board of Directors in conjunction with SLCT staff will review the reason for the suspension and decide if further action is required.
 - b. The SLCT Board of Directors in conjunction with SLCT staff may suspend any person for any length of time depending on the circumstances of the violation.
6. Programs may be suspended, for violations of Program Content discussed above. The SLCT Board of Directors in conjunction with SLCT staff, at its earliest convenience, will review the program in question and decide on a further course of action.

HARASSMENT POLICY

To insure a fair and professional atmosphere for everyone, SLCT has instituted a policy of harassment that all volunteers and guests must adhere to. All harassment complaints should be directed to the Executive Director immediately. SLCT and the Executive Director hold the right to immediately suspend all community access privileges to anyone committing a violation of the harassment policy.

No individual or group may verbally, physically or by any other means cause harm or harass any SLCT Board Members, its staff and/or volunteers. Any harassment or discrimination based on race, sex, age, physical disability, religious or political belief, or sexual orientation is strictly prohibited.

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INDEMNIFICATION

Any user of the SLCT facilities, equipment, and/or channel time shall indemnify and hold harmless SLCT, its officers and staff, and the Towns of Sterling and Lancaster against any and all liability claims arising out of the breach of the "Community Access Agreement".

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STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

I have read and am thoroughly familiar with SLCT Policies and Procedures and agree to abide by these rules.

I agree to pay repair or replacement costs and assume full responsibility for damage that occurs to the production facility, equipment, or program submission due to my negligence.

I agree to pay reasonable attorney fees and collection costs incurred by SLCT in collecting or attempting to collect any sums under this agreement.

I understand that my use of production equipment is to be only for the recording and production of a program to be cablecast on SLCT and cannot be used in any way for personal use, profit or commercial endeavor.

I agree to return equipment on time and understand that failure to do so may prohibit my use of the equipment in the future.

I agree to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Towns of Sterling and Lancaster, Comcast, and SLCT from any liability, loss, litigation claims, demands, damage, and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, caused by or arising out of any material supplied by the applicant in connection with utilization of SLCT's cablecasting and/or production equipment and/or channel time, including any disputes arising from unauthorized use of copyrighted material.

Signature of Applicant _____

Name (print) _____

Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Parental Consent (members under 18 years of age)

I hereby assume all liability for the activities of _____ at the SLCT facilities and or for his/her use of production equipment. In addition, I assume all liability for any programming he/she may cablecast over SLCT public access channel(s).

I understand that my written notice to SLCT shall only revoke this consent and representation made herein.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Name (print) _____

Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____

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