

Delegating Tasks and Carrying Out Decisions

An important part of decision-making involves determining how a decision will be carried out. This requires the delegation of responsibilities. A democratically run building will have all tenants involved at one time or another performing some task, no matter how small. It is a way for tenants to show their support and commitment.

Effective delegation is learning how to leave a meeting with most or all of the participants committed to completing some job before the next meeting. It is not enough that all of the tenants were present to vote on a decision— it is important that a number of people are included in carrying it out. This results in more participation, less work for the officers, and eventually leads to a better-run HDFC.

The following tips on effective delegation will help you involve more residents in following through on decisions:

1. Don't leave meetings without making sure that nearly everyone has at least some small task to perform before the next meeting.
2. Break down tasks into manageable parts.
3. Be very clear on exactly what each task involves.
4. Assign tasks to specific people and record in minutes.
5. Recommend resources that volunteers can use to complete their tasks (like the UHAB website, your UHAB monitor, or resources from the City and local organizations).
6. Set up a reporting system for the follow-up. Officers and chairpersons should check up to make sure those responsible for each task are completing it. Volunteers should be told who will be following up with them and how— for example, "Ms. Smith, the vice-president, will be calling you next week to make sure this is going OK."
7. Be positive regardless of the task that people perform. Don't expect more than people can give and don't be afraid of mistakes— they are a normal part of the process.
8. Praise people's work in public; give constructive feedback in private.
9. Progress and praise should be reported at the next meeting and recorded in the minutes.
10. Encourage people to become "experts" on one small area of management. For example, one person might dedicate him or herself to dealing with the insurance company each year, thus becoming the "insurance expert" in the building.