

TAKING MINUTES OF MEETINGS Ebook

Taking Minutes of Meetings: An Essential Skill for Effective Communication and Record-Keeping

Taking minutes of meetings is a fundamental task in organizational management, serving as the official record of what transpired during a meeting. It involves capturing key discussions, decisions, action points, and the overall flow of the meeting to ensure clarity, accountability, and continuity. Well-prepared minutes are vital for informing absent members, providing documentation for future reference, and maintaining transparency within an organization. This skill requires attention to detail, active listening, and the ability to succinctly summarize complex discussions while maintaining neutrality and accuracy.

Understanding the Purpose of Meeting Minutes

Why Are Meeting Minutes Important?

Meeting minutes serve several critical functions:

- **Record of Decisions:** They document the resolutions made during the meeting, providing a reference point for future actions.
- **Accountability and Follow-Up:** Clear action points assigned to individuals or teams ensure responsibilities are tracked and completed.
- **Legal and Compliance Purposes:** In formal settings, minutes can serve as legal evidence of agreed-upon actions and compliance with regulations.
- **Archival and Historical Reference:** Minutes provide an organizational history that aids in understanding past decisions and trends.
- **Enhancing Transparency:** Publishing or sharing minutes fosters transparency and trust within the organization.

Who Should Take Minutes?

Typically, a designated person such as a secretary, administrative assistant, or meeting facilitator is responsible for taking minutes. The individual should possess good listening skills, be organized, and familiar with the meeting's agenda and participants. Sometimes, multiple people may share responsibilities, or a rotating role may be established within the team.

Preparation Before the Meeting

Understanding the Agenda and Objectives

Preparation begins before the meeting. Reviewing the agenda helps the minute-taker anticipate the discussion flow and identify key topics. Clarifying the meeting's objectives ensures that the minutes focus on relevant content.

Gathering Necessary Materials

Prior to the meeting, ensure you have:

- The agenda and any relevant background documents
- Templates or formats for note-taking
- List of attendees, including roles and absentees
- Logistics such as access to recording devices, if permitted

Setting Up for Effective Note-Taking

Decide on a note-taking method—whether handwritten, using a laptop, or a recording device (with permission). Organize your workspace for efficiency and ensure your tools are ready.

During the Meeting: Best Practices for Taking Minutes

Active Listening and Focus

Effective minute-taking requires full attention. Concentrate on capturing salient points rather than attempting to record everything verbatim. Pay attention to:

- Decisions made
- Action items assigned
- Key discussions and differing viewpoints
- Important deadlines and responsibilities

Using a Structured Format

Adopt a consistent template or format for clarity. Common sections include:

- Meeting details (date, time, location, attendees)
- Agenda items

- Discussions and decisions for each item
- Action points with assigned persons and deadlines
- Next meeting date and closure

Capturing Accurate and Concise Notes

Strive for brevity and precision. Use abbreviations judiciously, and focus on recording:

- **Decisions:** What was agreed upon?
- **Actions:** Who is responsible and by when?
- **Discussion Highlights:** Summarize key points without unnecessary detail

Handling Interruptions and Complex Discussions

If discussions become complex, attempt to:

- Summarize the main arguments or viewpoints
- Note if further discussion is needed or if a decision was made
- Record any unresolved issues for future follow-up

Using Recording Devices and Ethical Considerations

If recordings are permitted, they can supplement your notes. Always obtain consent before recording, and ensure confidentiality and data protection standards are maintained.

Post-Meeting: Crafting Effective Minutes

Transcribing and Organizing Notes

Soon after the meeting, review your notes while the discussion is fresh. Transcribe them into the formal minutes document, ensuring clarity and completeness.

Writing the Minutes

When preparing the final version:

- Use clear, professional language
- Maintain objectivity and neutrality

- Follow the predetermined format or template
- Include all essential elements: decisions, actions, responsible persons, deadlines
- Avoid personal opinions or biased comments

Review and Approval

Share the draft minutes with key participants for review. Incorporate feedback and confirm accuracy. Once finalized, distribute the minutes to all relevant stakeholders promptly.

Best Practices for Effective Minute-Taking

Tips for Success

- Prepare thoroughly before the meeting
- Use consistent formatting and templates
- Stay neutral and objective
- Focus on decisions and action items
- Keep minutes concise and to the point
- Distribute minutes promptly
- Archive minutes systematically for future reference

Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them

Some typical issues include:

- Missing key details ? Use recordings and prepare in advance
- Distractions during meetings ? Stay attentive and organized
- Time constraints ? Practice efficient note-taking techniques
- Inaccurate or biased notes ? Maintain neutrality and verify facts

Conclusion: Mastering the Art of Taking Minutes

Effective minute-taking is a crucial organizational skill that facilitates communication, accountability, and documentation. It requires preparation, active listening, clarity, and neutrality. By understanding the purpose of minutes, preparing adequately, employing best practices during meetings, and following up diligently, individuals can produce accurate and professional records that serve the organization well. As meetings continue to be a cornerstone of organizational decision-making, honing the ability to take comprehensive and clear minutes will significantly enhance your professional competence and contribute to organizational success.

Taking Minutes of Meetings is a fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in effective organizational communication and record-keeping. Accurate and comprehensive minutes serve as an official record of discussions, decisions, and action items, ensuring that everyone involved remains aligned and accountable. Whether you're a secretary, team leader, or participant, mastering the art of taking minutes can significantly enhance productivity and clarity within your organization.

Understanding the Importance of Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes are more than just notes; they are official documents that capture the essence of what transpired during a meeting. They serve several vital purposes:

- **Documentation of Decisions:** Minutes record the resolutions passed and actions agreed upon, providing a clear reference for future follow-up.
- **Accountability:** Clearly noting assigned tasks and deadlines ensures responsible parties are held accountable.
- **Legal Record:** In some contexts, minutes are legal documents that can be referenced in disputes or audits.
- **Communication Tool:** Distributing minutes keeps absent members informed and maintains transparency within the organization.
- **Historical Record:** Over time, minutes create a historical archive that can be valuable for tracking organizational progress.

Understanding these benefits underscores why meticulous minute-taking is an essential skill in any professional setting.

Preparing for Effective Minute-Taking

Preparation is key to capturing comprehensive and accurate minutes. Several steps can help streamline this process:

Before the Meeting

- **Review the Agenda:** Familiarize yourself with the agenda items to anticipate discussion points.
- **Gather Necessary Materials:** Bring a template, pen, laptop, or recording device if permitted.
- **Know the Attendees:** Be aware of participants' roles to correctly attribute comments.
- **Set Up the Environment:** Ensure a quiet space with good visibility of the agenda and participants.

Tools and Templates

- Using standardized templates can save time and maintain consistency.
- Templates typically include sections for date, time, location, attendees, agenda items, discussions, decisions, and action items.

Techniques for Effective Minute-Taking

Effective minute-taking blends active listening, concise writing, and organizational skills. Here are some techniques:

Active Listening

- Focus fully on the discussion, avoiding distractions.
- Pay attention to key points rather than trying to transcribe everything verbatim.

Note-Taking Strategies

- Use abbreviations and shorthand to speed up note-taking.
- Highlight or underline critical decisions and action items.
- Record the speaker's name when quoting or paraphrasing important points.

Capturing Key Elements

- Decisions Made: Resolutions, approvals, or rejections.
- Actions and Responsibilities: Who is responsible for what and deadlines.
- Discussion Highlights: Major viewpoints or concerns raised.
- Next Steps: Upcoming meetings, follow-ups, or pending issues.

Balancing Detail and Brevity

- Aim for clarity and completeness without unnecessary verbosity.
- Focus on outcomes rather than every word spoken.

Writing the Minutes

After gathering notes, the next step is crafting clear, professional minutes.

Drafting Tips

- Use clear headings aligned with agenda items.
- Write in the past tense and objective tone.
- Be precise in describing decisions and actions.
- Avoid subjective language or personal opinions.

Structure of Meeting Minutes

- Header: Date, time, location, list of attendees.
- Approval of Previous Minutes: Note if they were accepted or amended.
- Agenda Items: Summarize discussions, noting key points.
- Decisions and Resolutions: Clearly state what was agreed upon.
- Action Items: List tasks, responsible persons, and deadlines.
- Next Meeting: Date, time, location, and agenda if known.

Review and Finalize

- Proofread for clarity, accuracy, and grammatical correctness.
- Confirm that all critical points are captured.
- Seek approval from the meeting chair if necessary before distribution.

Distribution and Record-Keeping

Once finalized, minutes should be promptly distributed and stored securely.

Distribution Best Practices

- Send minutes to all attendees and relevant stakeholders.
- Use clear subject lines indicating the meeting date and purpose.
- Attach or embed the minutes within organizational record systems.

Record Management

- Store minutes systematically for easy retrieval.
- Maintain both digital and physical copies if necessary.
- Ensure confidentiality where required, especially with sensitive discussions.

Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them

While minute-taking is straightforward in principle, several challenges can arise:

- Missing Critical Points: Focus on active listening and preparation.
- Overloading with Details: Prioritize key decisions and action items.
- Distractions During Meeting: Minimize multitasking; rely on recordings if permitted.
- Inconsistent Formatting: Use templates and style guides.
- Delays in Distribution: Set deadlines for drafting and finalizing minutes.

Addressing these challenges enhances the quality and usefulness of your minutes.

Skills and Qualities of an Effective Minute Taker

Successful minute-taking requires a combination of skills and traits:

- Excellent Listening Skills: Focused and attentive.
- Concise Writing Ability: Summarizing complex discussions succinctly.
- Organizational Skills: Structuring notes logically.
- Attention to Detail: Accurate recording of decisions and responsibilities.
- Discretion: Handling sensitive information appropriately.
- Proficiency with Tools: Familiarity with word processors, templates, and recording devices.

Developing these qualities can turn a routine task into a valuable contribution to organizational efficiency.

Conclusion

Taking Minutes of Meetings is an indispensable aspect of professional communication, serving as a formal record that supports accountability, transparency, and organizational memory. Whether you're a seasoned secretary or a new team member, honing your minute-taking skills can greatly improve the effectiveness of your meetings and the clarity of your organization's documentation. With thorough preparation, active listening, clear writing, and disciplined distribution, you can ensure that your meeting records are accurate, comprehensive, and impactful. Investing in this skill not only enhances your professional reputation but also contributes significantly to your organization's

SUCCESS.

Question What are the key components to include when taking minutes of a meeting? Key components include the meeting date and time, attendees, agenda items discussed, decisions made, action items assigned, deadlines, and any important discussions or comments. How can I ensure my meeting minutes are accurate and comprehensive? Prepare an agenda beforehand, actively listen during the meeting, take clear and concise notes, verify any ambiguous points with participants, and review the minutes for accuracy before distribution. What are some best practices for formatting meeting minutes? Use a consistent template, organize minutes with headings and subheadings, highlight decisions and action items, use bullet points for clarity, and include timestamps or agenda references for easy navigation. How soon should meeting minutes be distributed after the meeting? Ideally, minutes should be distributed within 24 to 48 hours after the meeting to ensure discussions are fresh in participants' minds and to facilitate timely follow-up. What tools or software can help in taking and managing meeting minutes? Popular tools include Microsoft OneNote, Google Docs, Evernote, Notion, and specialized meeting management software like Minutes.io or Doodle, which streamline note-taking and collaboration. How can I effectively record action items during a meeting? Clearly note each action item with specific details, assign responsible individuals, set deadlines, and review these items at the end of the meeting to ensure accountability. What are common mistakes to avoid when taking meeting minutes? Avoid being too vague or too detailed, neglecting to record decisions, missing action items, failing to verify facts, and not distributing the minutes promptly. How can I ensure my meeting minutes are accessible and useful to all stakeholders? Store minutes in shared, organized digital locations, use clear and simple language, highlight key decisions and actions, and ensure proper permissions are set for access. What role does active listening play in effective minute-taking? Active listening helps capture accurate information, understand context, clarify ambiguities in real-time, and ensure that all relevant points are recorded accurately during the meeting.

Related keywords: meeting notes, record keeping, agenda, action items, discussion summary, attendee list, formal documentation, meeting outcomes, note-taking techniques, follow-up tasks

official minutes regular meeting board of education

Official minutes regular meeting board of education serve as a vital record of the discussions, decisions, and actions taken during the monthly or scheduled meetings of a school district's governing body. These minutes are essential for maintaining transparency, ensuring accountability, and providing a clear account of the board's deliberations for stakeholders, including parents, staff, and the community at large. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the significance of official minutes, the process of preparing and maintaining them, best practices, legal considerations, and

tips for ensuring their accuracy and accessibility.

Understanding the Importance of Official Minutes in a Board of Education Meeting

What Are Official Minutes?

Official minutes are the formal, written records of the proceedings of a board of education meeting. They document the topics discussed, decisions made, motions proposed, votes taken, and any other relevant actions or discussions. These minutes serve as the authoritative account of what transpired during the meeting.

Why Are Minutes Important?

- Legal Record: Minutes provide legal documentation of the board's actions, which can be crucial in case of disputes or audits.
- Transparency and Accountability: Publishing minutes ensures stakeholders are informed about decisions affecting the school district.
- Historical Record: Minutes serve as a historical archive that can be referenced for future planning and decision-making.
- Compliance: Many jurisdictions require official minutes as part of compliance with open meeting laws and public records statutes.
- Communication: Minutes help communicate the outcomes of meetings to staff, students, parents, and community members who could not attend.

Legal and Regulatory Framework Governing Minutes

Open Meeting Laws and Public Records Acts

Most states have laws mandating that meetings of public bodies, including school boards, be open to the public and that official records, including minutes, be made available. These laws specify:

- The requirement to keep accurate and complete minutes.
- The manner of public access.
- Retention periods for official records.

Consistency with School District Policies

School districts often have policies or bylaws that specify procedures for recording, approving, and

distributing minutes. It is essential to adhere to these internal policies to ensure compliance and consistency.

Preparing Effective Official Minutes

Key Elements of Accurate Minutes

- Meeting Details: Date, time, location, and type of meeting (regular, special, emergency).
- Attendance: Names of board members present, absent, or excused, and staff or guests in attendance.
- Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes: Record of approval or amendments.
- Reports and Presentations: Summaries of reports from committees, administrators, or external guests.
- Motions and Resolutions: Exact wording of motions proposed, seconded, and voted upon.
- Votes: Record of vote counts and outcomes for each motion.
- Discussions: Summaries of key discussions, debates, or public comments.
- Actions Taken: Details of decisions made, including policy changes, approvals, or directives.
- Adjournment: Time and date of adjournment.

Best Practices for Accurate Minute-Taking

- Prepare in Advance: Review agenda, previous minutes, and relevant documents before the meeting.
- Use a Template: Utilize a standardized template to ensure consistency.
- Be Concise and Clear: Focus on factual, objective summaries rather than personal opinions.
- Record Motions Precisely: Include exact wording where possible, especially for important resolutions.
- Note Vote Results: Clearly record how each member voted, especially on contentious issues.
- Review and Edit: Proofread minutes for accuracy and completeness immediately after the meeting.

Process of Approving and Distributing Minutes

Drafting and Circulating Draft Minutes

After the meeting, the secretary or designated minute-taker prepares a draft version of the minutes for review. This draft is typically circulated to board members for corrections or approval.

Approval of Minutes

During the subsequent board meeting, the draft minutes are presented for approval. Members may suggest amendments, which are then incorporated into the final version.

Finalizing and Archiving

Once approved, the minutes are signed (if required) and formally adopted. The final version is then filed in the official records management system, either physically or digitally, for future reference.

Dissemination to Stakeholders

Approved minutes are often made accessible to the public via the school district's website, posted in district offices, or distributed through email newsletters, ensuring transparency and community engagement.

Maintaining and Preserving Official Minutes

Record Retention Policies

School districts must adhere to state laws or policies regarding the retention period for official records, which can range from several years to permanently, depending on the document type.

Storage and Security

Minutes should be stored securely to prevent loss or tampering. Digital records should be backed up regularly, and physical copies should be stored in a protected environment.

Accessibility and Public Access

Ensuring that minutes are easily accessible to the public is crucial. Many districts publish minutes on their websites, or provide copies upon request, in compliance with open records laws.

Best Practices for Ensuring Quality and Compliance

- **Consistency:** Use standardized templates and procedures across meetings.
- **Training:** Train secretaries and minute-takers in effective note-taking and legal requirements.
- **Review and Oversight:** Have designated personnel review minutes for accuracy before approval.
- **Transparency:** Make minutes readily available and promote open communication.
- **Legal Compliance:** Stay updated on applicable laws and regulations related to public records and open meetings.

Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them

Incomplete or Inaccurate Minutes

- Solution: Use clear templates, prepare in advance, and review drafts thoroughly.

Delays in Approval

- Solution: Distribute draft minutes promptly after meetings to facilitate timely review.

Accessibility Issues

- Solution: Implement an organized digital archive and ensure public posting complies with legal requirements.

Legal Risks

- Solution: Stay informed about legal standards and consult legal counsel when necessary to ensure compliance.

Conclusion

Official minutes of regular meetings of the board of education are fundamental records that uphold transparency, accountability, and legal compliance within school districts. Accurate, comprehensive, and accessible minutes not only serve as a historical archive but also foster trust and effective governance. By implementing best practices in minute-taking, approval, and record maintenance, school districts can ensure that their official minutes fulfill their critical role in educational administration and community engagement.

For school districts aiming to enhance their documentation processes, prioritizing clarity, consistency, and compliance will lead to more effective governance and stronger stakeholder confidence.

Official Minutes of Regular Meeting Board of Education: A Comprehensive Guide

The official minutes of a regular meeting of the board of education serve as the formal record of discussions, decisions, and actions taken during a scheduled board gathering. These minutes are

critical for maintaining transparency, ensuring accountability, and providing a documented history of governance decisions that impact students, staff, and the wider community. As the backbone of effective governance, accurate and detailed minutes uphold the integrity of the educational leadership process.

In this article, we explore the significance of official minutes, the typical structure and content, the legal and ethical considerations involved, and best practices for drafting, approving, and distributing these vital documents.

Understanding the Role and Importance of Official Minutes

What Are Official Minutes?

Official minutes are the verbatim or summarized written record of proceedings from a board of education's regular meeting. They encapsulate the key points discussed, motions made, votes taken, and any resolutions adopted during the session. These minutes serve as the authoritative account that can be referenced in future deliberations, legal proceedings, or audits.

Why Are They Essential?

- Legal Documentation: Minutes provide evidence of compliance with statutory requirements, including notice provisions, quorum presence, and decision-making procedures.
- Transparency and Public Trust: Publishing minutes fosters transparency, allowing stakeholders—parents, teachers, taxpayers—to stay informed about governance activities.
- Accountability: Clear records hold board members accountable for their actions and decisions.
- Historical Record: Minutes document the evolution of policy, budget approval, personnel changes, and strategic initiatives over time.

The Structure and Content of Official Minutes

Typical Components of Board of Education Minutes

Effective minutes are clear, concise, and comprehensive. They typically include the following sections:

- Header Information
- Name of the school district or board

- Date, time, and location of the meeting
- Names of presiding officers and recording secretaries

- Call to Order and Roll Call

- Confirmation of quorum
- Attendance of board members and key staff
- Guests or public attendees (if any)

- Approval of Agenda

- Notation of any amendments or modifications
- Vote to approve or reject the agenda

- Approval of Previous Minutes

- Review and approval of minutes from prior meetings
- Corrections or amendments, if necessary

- Reports and Presentations

- Superintendent's report
- Financial reports, budget updates
- Committee reports
- Special presentations or recognitions

- Unfinished Business

- Ongoing issues from previous meetings
- Updates and discussions

- New Business

- New proposals, policies, or initiatives introduced
- Motions made and seconded
- Discussion summaries

- Action Items and Resolutions

- Motions voted upon
- Results of votes (passed/failed)
- Specific directives issued

- Public Comment

- Summary of public input, if applicable

- Adjournment

- Time of adjournment
- Next meeting date and location

- Signature Line

- Signatures of the secretary and chairperson
- Date of approval

Detailing the Content

While brevity is valued, minutes must be sufficiently detailed to reflect the substance of discussions without becoming transcripts. They should record:

- The essence of motions and whether they passed or failed
- The context of significant debates or concerns
- Any dissenting opinions or abstentions
- Specific actions to be taken, deadlines, or responsible persons

Legal and Ethical Considerations

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

Boards of education operate under specific statutory frameworks that dictate the minimum requirements for minutes. These may include:

- Open Meeting Laws: Ensuring transparency by recording public notice, quorum, and open discussions.
- Record Retention Laws: Maintaining minutes for a legally prescribed period.
- Confidentiality: Protecting sensitive information, such as personnel matters or student records, which should be excluded or redacted from publicly accessible minutes.

Ethical Standards in Minute-Taking

- Accuracy: Ensuring that the minutes accurately reflect what transpired.
- Impartiality: Avoiding subjective language or personal opinions.
- Timeliness: Preparing and distributing minutes promptly after meetings.
- Confidentiality: Recognizing which information must remain private.

Best Practices for Drafting, Approving, and Distributing Minutes

Drafting the Minutes

- Active Listening and Note-Taking: Record key points during the meeting, focusing on motions, votes, and resolutions.
- Use Clear Language: Write in a professional, neutral tone, avoiding jargon or ambiguous phrases.
- Identify Speakers When Necessary: For public comments or significant debates, note the speaker's name or affiliation.

Reviewing and Approving

- Review Drafts Promptly: The secretary or designated recorder should review and clarify notes soon after the meeting.
- Board Approval: During the subsequent meeting, the minutes are typically presented for approval, with amendments if needed.
- Record of Amendments: Any changes should be documented and incorporated into the final version.

Distribution and Storage

- Accessibility: Publish approved minutes on the district's website or intranet.
- Secure Storage: Maintain physical or electronic copies in accordance with record retention policies.
- Archiving: Keep an organized archive for future reference, audits, or legal inquiries.

Challenges and Common Pitfalls

- Incomplete or Inaccurate Records: Can lead to disputes or legal vulnerabilities.
- Delays in Finalization: May hinder transparency and accountability.
- Overly Detailed Minutes: Can obscure key decisions; focus on significant discussions.
- Failure to Protect Confidential Information: Risks legal violations or breach of privacy.

The Future of Minute-Taking in Education Governance

Advancements in technology are transforming how minutes are drafted, approved, and disseminated:

- Digital Recording Devices: Ensure accuracy and completeness.
- Real-Time Transcription Software: Speed up documentation.
- Online Portals: Provide instant access for stakeholders.
- Secure Cloud Storage: Improve preservation and retrieval.

As transparency and accountability remain central to public education governance, boards are increasingly adopting digital solutions, coupled with clear policies, to streamline minute management while safeguarding sensitive information.

Conclusion

The official minutes of regular meetings of the board of education are more than mere

formalities?they are vital documents that uphold the principles of good governance, transparency, and accountability in educational institutions. Through meticulous drafting, adherence to legal standards, and timely dissemination, these minutes serve as the authoritative record of the district's decision-making processes. By understanding their structure, significance, and best practices, school boards can ensure their minutes are accurate, comprehensive, and accessible, fostering trust and integrity within their communities.

Question What are official minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Education?
Answer Official minutes are the formal, written record of the discussions, decisions, and actions taken during a regular Board of Education meeting, serving as an authoritative account of what transpired. How are the minutes of a regular Board of Education meeting prepared? Minutes are typically prepared by a designated secretary or clerk, who records key discussions, motions, votes, and resolutions during the meeting, often using a standardized template or format. What information is included in the official minutes of a Board of Education meeting? Official minutes usually include the date, time, and location of the meeting, list of attendees, agenda items discussed, motions made and seconded, voting outcomes, and any decisions or actions approved by the board. How soon after a regular meeting should the official minutes be approved and published? The minutes are generally drafted shortly after the meeting, then reviewed and approved at the next scheduled meeting, and subsequently published or made accessible to the public within a specified timeframe, often within a week or two. Are the official minutes of Board of Education meetings considered public records? Yes, official minutes are public records and are typically made available to the community upon request, in accordance with open records laws or policies governing transparency. Can the minutes of a regular Board of Education meeting be amended after approval? Yes, if errors or omissions are identified, the board can approve amendments or corrections to the official minutes in subsequent meetings to ensure accuracy. Why are official minutes important for the functioning of the Board of Education? Official minutes ensure transparency, accountability, and a clear record of decisions, which is essential for legal compliance, historical reference, and informing stakeholders about the board's actions and policies.

Related keywords: board meeting minutes, school board records, educational board documentation, regular session notes, governance meeting minutes, school district minutes, board of education agenda, official meeting transcript, public school minutes, school governance records

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