

# **Easthampton Community Access Television Rules and Procedures**

As part of the franchise agreement between Greater Media Cable and the Town of Easthampton, anyone who lives or works in this community will be provided with access to television production equipment, training, and time on the public/government access channel on a non-discriminatory, first-come/first-served basis. All uses of Easthampton Community Access Television ("ECAT") facilities and equipment shall be expressly for the purpose of producing non-commercial television programs to be cablecast on the ECAT channel.

Amended March 5, 2008

**Easthampton Community Access Television Rules & Procedures - i**  
**Revised March 5, 2008**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Eligibility.....	1
Use of Equipment and Facilities.....	1
Certification.....	2
Role of Staff.....	2
Training and Workshops.....	2
Opportunities for Practical Experience.....	3
Facilities Scheduling.....	3
Equipment Check-in Check-out.....	3
Studio Use.....	4
Editing and Post-production.....	4
Program Ownership.....	5
Program Content.....	5
Public Records.....	6
Videotape Formats.....	6
Channel Time Requests and Cablecasting Procedures.....	6
Acquired Programs.....	7
Community Bulletin Board.....	7
Program Promotion.....	8
Underwriting Policy.....	8
Fees.....	9
Videotape Use & Duplication.....	9
Technical Standards.....	10
Care of Equipment.....	10
Facilities must be left in a clean and neat condition.....	11
Violations of Policy.....	11
I. Minor Violations.....	11
II. Major Violations.....	11
Appeals.....	12
Grievance Procedures.....	12
Amendments.....	12

## Easthampton Community Access Television Rules & Procedures ii

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The primary goal of Easthampton Community Access Television ("ECAT") is to promote free expression of diverse ideas and facilitate first amendment rights of free speech on the designated access channel, by coordinating the use of the channel, producing production facilities, technical assistance, and training to any individual, group, or organization interested in producing non-commercial, educational, cultural, informational, or other community oriented television programs.

- To achieve this mission ECAT will:
- Train anyone who lives or works in Easthampton in the use of video technology
- Encourage a wide range of programming that expresses a diversity of perspectives
- Develop outreach programs to all segments of the community
- Maintain a strong presence in the community
- Assist community members and organizations in the creation of programs of local interest.
- Strive to encourage technically and aesthetically high quality programming
- Function as the conduit for first amendment expression on Easthampton's cable system.

For further information and workshop scheduling call: (413) 529-1425

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Like citizenship itself, community access demands certain standards of conduct and cooperation. These rules and procedures have been created 'With the hope of keeping restrictions to a minimum while protecting the rights of all access users and assuring fair allocation of access resources.

Please accept and abide by these guidelines in the spirit of cooperation to make Easthampton Community Access Television a true community resource. ECAT's rules are established by the Local Access Board and administered by the staff under the supervision of the Administrative Coordinator. If at any time an access producer believes that a rule should be changed, deleted or added, they should bring their suggestions to the Administrative Coordinator who 'Will present them to the Local Access Board for consideration.

### **Eligibility**

Access services and facilities provided and/or managed by Easthampton Community Access Television are available to:

- Easthampton residents or individuals who work in Easthampton, and;
- Organizations and institutions, or their designees, located in Easthampton.

Organizations and institutions not located in Easthampton but having constituents in Easthampton may use the ECAT facilities on a case-by-case basis.

Individuals under the age of eighteen (18) who wish to use the access services and/or facilities must have a signed parental consent form on file with ECAT.

### Use of Equipment and Facilities

- 1. All community producers will be given a copy of these rules and procedures. As one of the qualifications for certification, community producers must read this document and sign a statement that they understand these rules and procedures and will abide by them.
- 2. The sign-off sheet is the last page in this booklet. Each producer's signed statement will be kept on file in the ECAT office.
- 3. Production equipment and facilities are available at no charge to certified community producers for the purpose of:
  - 1 • Preparing programs for cablecast on the Easthampton access channel.
  - 2 • Producing programs that are non-profit and intended for non-commercial purposes.

## Easthampton Community Access Television Rules & Procedures - 2 -

- 4. All persons operating the equipment must have completed the appropriate training classes or obtained equivalent certification.
- 5. All community producers must fill out an ECAT Program Proposal Form and obtained written approval from the Administrative Coordinator before signing-out equipment or facilities.
- 6. Eligible users under the age of 18 who wish to borrow portable equipment must have on-file a parent/guardian responsibility form. The form must have been originally signed in person at ECAT by the parent/guardian and will be valid for one year only.

### **Certification**

- 1. Community producers must be certified by ECAT in the use of the equipment. This can be done by attending ECAT workshops and demonstration proficiency with each piece of equipment. Prior to certification, as a final project in the workshops, producers will complete a program for cablecast.
- 2. Experienced producers may be certified and able to by-pass classes by demonstrating proficiency with each piece of equipment.
- 3. Any person who has not used ECAT equipment for a 12 month period will have to be recertified by demonstrating their competency in the operation of the ECAT equipment.

### **Role of Staff**

- 1. The primary role of ECAT staff is to outreach to the community, train community producers, maintain equipment and facilities, schedule programming, and bring community volunteers together in an environment that will foster the best use of community access television on Easthampton's access channel.

### **Training and Workshops**

- 1. Any person who lives or works in Easthampton can take basic or advanced TV production workshops covering the use off field, studio, and post-production equipment. Workshops are offered on an ongoing basis under the direction of ECAT staff, or by an appointed person at the discretion of the Administrative Coordinator.
- 2. Class schedules for ECAT will be distributed through notices in the newspaper and on ECAT's Community Bulletin board on the ECAT channel.

### **Opportunities for Practical Experience**

- 1. New workshop graduates are encouraged to sign up for time to practice with particular equipment or facilities.
- 2. Community producers may crew on other producer's programs or produce their own. A list of productions that need crew will be posted at ECAT. There will be a list of "ideas looking for producers" -- community members or organizations with ideas for shows but no ability to produce them.

### **Facilities Scheduling**

- 1. Only designated staff may schedule equipment and studio time. Producers are not allowed to write in the ECAT scheduling book.
- 2. While equipment and facilities are available on a first-come/first-serve basis, the staff will use its discretion to ensure that no individual or group monopolizes equipment or facilities.
- 3. Cancellation of equipment and facility reservations must be made 24 hours in advance, except in cases of emergency.
- 4. If a producer does not show up within thirty minutes of the time of a reservation for equipment or facilities, the reserved equipment or facilities may be used by any waiting, certified individual.

### **Equipment Check-in Check-out**

- 1. All equipment must be checked in and out by ECAT 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 ECAT 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.

## Easthampton Community Access Television Rules & Procedures - 4 -

- 7. A user who is more than 30 minutes late picking up equipment will be considered a "no show" and the equipment may be released to another person.
- 8. Equipment must be returned on time.

### **Studio Use**

- 1. To use the studio and control room, the community producer must be certified for studio production.
- 2. Community producers must have an approved program proposal before scheduling studio time.
- 3. A minimum of three weeks notification for scheduling of the studio is necessary.
- 4. Live studio productions require the supervision of a staff member.
- 5. Producers are entitled to a maximum of four hours per session with a maximum of 8 hours per week. Scheduled studio time includes time needed for lighting, set up, taping, break-down and clean-up. Exceptions to the length of a session may be granted by the Administrative Coordinator.
- 6. Studio productions are to be scheduled during regular ECAT station operating hours unless special permission is granted by the Administrative Coordinator.
- 7. Community producers are responsible for the behavior and actions of their crew, guests, talent and others in attendance.

### **Editing and Post-production**

- 1. In order to schedule edit time, a community producer must be certified in Editing.
- 2. Requests for editing time should be made at least 24 hours in advance, but not more than three weeks in advance.
- 3. Cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance of scheduled time.
- 4. Producers may schedule up to two, four-hour sessions in a given week - subject to availability.
- 5. If user requires staff assistance during the edit session, this should also be scheduled when time is booked.
- 6. Producers are expected to finish their projects within a reasonable time period.

**Program Ownership**

- 1. Anyone who produces a program using Easthampton Community Access Television equipment and/or facilities holds copyright to their production.
- 2. Any program produced, whole or in part, with ECAT equipment must carry an acknowledgment in the credits - "[portions of] This program produced at Easthampton Community Access Television, Easthampton, Massachusetts."
- 3. Easthampton Community Access Television reserves the right to copy the master of any program produced, whole or in part, with ECAT equipment, for its archives, and to replay the program from time-to-time on ECAT's access channel.

**Program Content**

- 1. ECAT shall not exercise control over program content in any manner.
- 2. Neither ECAT nor the City of Easthampton shall pre-screen tapes for content.
- 3. Anyone who produces programming using ECAT's equipment or facilities is wholly responsible for all program content and legal considerations as described in the "Equipment Use Agreement" and the "Cablecast Request Form".
- 4. Producers and others presenting taped and/or live programming for cablecast on a public access channel must sign a "Cablecast Request Form" taking full responsibility for the content of the program.
- 5. The following are prohibited on access channel:
  - 1 • Material that is obscene, seditious, libelous, slanderous, invades personal privacy or is otherwise illegal according to Federal, State or local law.
  - 2 • Advertising material, of any length or type, designed to promote the sale of specific products or services.
  - 3 • Advertisement of or information concerning, any lottery.
  - 4 • Material or performances that require Copyright or Trademark authorization unless written authorization for the use of such material has been obtained.

**Public Records**

- 1. Easthampton Community Access Television will maintain a record of all persons and organizations granted time on the public access channel. The records shall be maintained in a public file and will be made available for inspection during normal business hours.
- 2. Easthampton Community Access Television will post a list of all persons 1 organizations submitting programs for cablecast on a regular basis in a public place to be designated by the Local Access Board.

**Videotape Formats**

- 1. ECAT currently supports the following production formats: VHS and SVHS videotape.
- 2. ECAT currently supports the following cablecasting formats: VHS, SVHS, 8mm and Hi-8 videotape.

**Channel Time Requests and Cablecasting Procedures**

- 1. Though SVHS and VHS tapes and live programming is preferred, ECAT can also cablecast tapes in 3/4"-SP and 3/4" formats.
- 2. Producers may request specific times for cablecasting on the "Cablecast Request Form". However, the time scheduling of the program is entirely at the discretion of ECAT staff.
- 3. Pre-taped programs will not be scheduled until the completed program has been submitted accompanied by a signed Cablecast Request form.
- 4. Programs produced at other facilities: Programs produced outside ECAT may be cablecast on the access channel if they meet the standards specified in this document, if they are submitted by a community member, and if they are not subject to copyright violations. Request for Cablecast and Statement of Compliance must be completed.
- 5. In order to facilitate scheduling Cablecast Request Forms with the completed program must be submitted at least seven (7) days in advance of the first desired air date unless special arrangements are made with the ECAT staff responsible for scheduling.
- 6. No producer or organization may program more than (1) hour or one (1) program, whichever is longer, of channel-time per week unless special arrangements are made with ECAT staff based on special need.
- 7. No individual producer or series is to be guaranteed a permanent time slot on the ECAT channel beyond a single run of a series. No series will be guaranteed to run in a particular day and/or time slot for more than an 9 weeks. After 9 weeks the series may be continued in that slot for another 9 weeks or moved to a different day and/or time.

Easthampton Community Access Television Rules & Procedures - 7 -

●8. Repeat Policy for Cablecasting:

- 1 a. Beyond the above time limit. programs, series or single, may be repeated once (1) in the week in a different time from the original showing.
- 2 b. Single programs may be shown and repeated a total maximum of six (6) times on the channel in anyone year period 'with no more than two (2) showings in any time block.
- 3 c. A series (up to 9 programs) may be shown and the full cycle repeated no more than a total of three (3) times on the channel with no more than one (1) cycle showing in any time block.

●The repeat policy will be applied at the discretion of the Administrative Coordinator based on equitable use of the channel.

●9. Programs containing "offensive" content will be scheduled for cablecast in time slots beginning no earlier than 10:30 PM. "Offensive" content is defined as programs containing nudity, profanity and/or graphic violence. Producers must state whether the program submitted contains "offensive" content on the Cablecast Request Form.

**Acquired Programs**

- 1. Acquired programming shall be any program where 60% or more of the program has been produced or acquired from outside the Town of Easthampton.
- 2. Easthampton residents or organizations may submit commercial-free programs acquired from other sources for cablecasting. The submitter must have obtained any necessary releases and must fill out and sign a "Cablecast Request Form" prior to scheduling of said program.
- 

**Community Bulletin Board**

- 1. All messages for the Electronic Community Bulletin Board must be non-commercial in nature and must be submitted on the proper ECAT form at least five (5) regular business days in advance of when the message is to first appear on the channel.
  - 1 2. Message requests must be clearly identified with a date when the message is to expire. Unless resubmitted no messages will be run on the system for more than 14 days.

- 3. To have an announcement put on the Community Bulletin Board the completed form must be submitted to one of the following locations:

Mail or Hand deliver to:  
Community Bulletin Board  
Easthampton Community Access Television 200 Park Street  
Easthampton, MA 01027

### **Program Promotion**

- 1. All community producers are encouraged to promote their own programs. Effective promotional techniques may include: short news releases that ECAT can send with the cablecast schedule to area newspapers and radio stations; announcements on the ECAT Community Calendar; promotional spots for cablecasting during ECAT's programming; etc.
- 2. For special promotion of time-sensitive programs or other major projects, please speak with the Administrative Coordinator.

### **Underwriting Policy**

Underwriting is a method of acknowledging business or other agencies for support in the production and/or presentation of programming. This support can be, but is not limited to, money to pay for production costs, or set materials (chairs, tables, plants, backgrounds, carpeting). Underwriting is not to be used to pay for individuals producing programs.

- 1. Any producer who solicits underwriting support of any kind for a public access program must first provide the potential underwriter with a copy of the ECAT Underwriting Agreement. A signed copy of the ECAT Underwriting Agreement shall be delivered to the ECAT Administrative Coordinator prior to ECAT accepting the underwriting support.
- 2. Proposed use of ECAT equipment or facilities in grant applications must be approved by ECAT prior to submission to the funding agency. When grant funding is applied for, the production budget will include overhead of at least 20% for donation to ECAT.
- 3. Commercial advertising is prohibited on the ECAT channel. The only acknowledgment or credit allowed for underwriting support (in dollars, goods or services) of ECAT access programs is a listing of the underwriter's name or logo and their address and telephone number at the beginning and/or end of the program. The credit may use a photograph or logo with a still background or be presented over program video, with or without a voice-over to a maximum exposure of 10 seconds. The credit may include a value neutral service description or "tag line", however, moving (animated) logos and value judgment service descriptions (i.e. "providing the best service") are not permitted.

## Easthampton Community Access Television Rules & Procedures - 9 -

- 4. All Credits for underwriting shall include language similar to: "This program was made possible by a grant from. . ." or "Goods and services used in this program were contributed by . . ." or "Support for this program provided in part by . . ."
- 5. All direct underwriting donations are to be made directly to ECAT not to the individual producers.
- 6. ECAT credit must still be included. The Administrative Coordinator must be informed in advance about any underwriting credits and consulted about the proper format for credit.

### **Fees**

- 1. There is no charge for individuals and organizations to produce and distribute programs on the ECAT channel.
  - 1 2. ECAT may charge a minimal fee for training workshops, tape duplication, or videotapes. You may refer to the current fee schedule for prices. If you wish to take training workshops and cannot afford to do so ECAT has a scholarship program available.

### **Videotape Use & Duplication**

- 1. Only SVHS tape will be used with SVHS capable machines provided by ECAT. Exceptions will be made only in duplication and cablecasting applications. VHS tapes can be used on VHS equipment.
- 2. The access center will have videotape stock available for purchase. Please see the ECAT Fee Schedule for current prices.
- 3. Producers may use their own tape with ECAT equipment provided that the tape brand and quality is listed on the "Acceptable Tape Stock" list attached to the ECAT Fee Schedule.
- 4. Copies of programs are available for the cost of the tape plus a duplication fee. Please see the ECAT Fee Schedule for current tape duplication rates.

### **Retention and Use of Tapes**

- 1. The copy of the edit master tape may be kept in the ECAT library) for cablecasting purposes and the program(s) may be played from time to time by ECAT on the access channel. No duplicates will be made for distribution, nor will the tape be lent out to other cable access stations without the producer's permission.
- 2. Although programs produced at ECAT are to be for non-commercial use, if footage produced or edited with ECAT equipment is sold at a later date the producer is responsible for sharing 35% of the gross proceeds with ECAT to reimburse for the equipment and facilities used.

### Technical Standards

- 1. All tapes must have a continuous video and/or sync signal with proper audio and video signal levels.
- 2. All tapes produced at ECAT should adhere to the following format.

#### Start of Tape or Program:

- 1 a. 30 seconds of color bars. If possible the color bars are to be accompanied by a tone signal recorded at 100% audio level.
- 2 b. 30 seconds of black with audio silence.
- 3 c. (Optional) Program slate with title, producer and exact program length
- 4 d. Ten second countdown (from 10 to 3), including two seconds of black before program begins.

#### End of Program:

- a. ECAT acknowledgment as specified in the Program Ownership section of this document.
  - b. Minimum of 30 seconds of black after the ending of the program.
- 3. Finished tapes must be labeled on the cassette/box spine as follows:
- Name of program-Name of producer
  - Production/completion date
  - Exact length of program, not including bars, black, slate, countdown or ending black.
- 1 4. Completed programs should be submitted to the Administrative Coordinator *for* cataloging and scheduling.
  - 2 5. It is recommended that all programs not produced at ECAT have at least 15 seconds of black at the beginning and end of the program.
  - 3 6. ECAT reserves the right to refuse to cablecast programs which do not adhere to these specifications.

### Care of Equipment

- 1. Individuals using ECAT equipment or facilities will not tamper with, attempt to repair, or change any wiring or components.
- 2. Users of ECAT equipment or facilities should report any defects, damage or problems to staff.
- 3. Any damage caused by unauthorized tampering or maintenance will be charged to the user.
  - No *food*, drink, or smoking is allowed near any equipment at any time except as needed when used as a prop for a production.
- 4. Portable video equipment should not be kept in a car overnight or for long periods of time.

**Facilities must be left in a clean and neat condition**

- 1. Any props, tapes, scripts, or other materials should be removed at the end of a session.
- 2. The Studio floor should be swept after use.
- 3. All cables should be coiled appropriately and equipment should be put away properly.

**Violations of Policy**

In order that these polices are effective and allow operations to run smoothly, a penalty system has been instituted. The Administrative Coordinator or designee is authorized to issue warnings and suspensions.

**I. Minor Violations**

These include but are not limited to:

- a. Failure to cancel a reservation for equipment or facilities.
- b. Late pick-up or return of equipment without notification and approval.
- c. Failure to clean up after using the facilities.
- d. Eating or drinking in restricted areas.
- e. Smoking in the ECAT facilities.
- f. Mishandling of equipment.
- g. Verbal abuse of staff or other members

Minor violations will result in the following series of actions. Warnings for minor violations will be in effect *for* one year from date of issue.

- a. First violation: Written warning
- b. Second violation: Second written warning
- c. Third violation: 30-day suspension of privileges
- d. Fourth violation: 90-day suspension of privileges

**II. Major Violations**

A major violation will result in an immediate 90-day suspension of privileges. Violator may also be held responsible *for* repair or replacement charges.

Major violations include but are not limited to:

- a. Intentional commercial *or* profit-making use of ECAT equipment or facilities.
- b. Misrepresentation to others of user's affiliation with ECAT.

## Easthampton Community Access Television Rules & Procedures - 12 -

- c. Abuse of equipment, including attempted repair, facility reconfiguration, rewiring and improper transport.
- d. Taking or reserving equipment without staff permission.
- e. Falsifying forms.
- f. Physical or persistent verbal abuse of staff or other users.
- g. Operating ECAT equipment under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- h. Any subsequent major violation will result in the permanent loss of ECAT equipment and facilities privileges.

### **Appeals**

Appeals of staff decisions can be made to the Local Access Board.

- 1. Community producers are encouraged to resolve difficulties on the staff level.
- 2. Any community producer or member wishing to appeal an action of the staff may request a hearing before the Administrative Coordinator or the ECAT Local Access Board.

### **Grievance Procedures**

A grievance is defined to mean a complaint by a producer, member or group based on a dispute involving the meaning, interpretation or application of ECAT policies and procedures. The grievance must first be presented in writing to ECAT's Administrative Coordinator within three working days of the occurrence of the event upon which the grievance is based. The Coordinator will meet with parties within seven working days in an effort to settle the grievance. In the event that the grievance is not disposed of at this time or in the event that no decision has been rendered, the grievance shall be referred in writing to the ECAT Local Access Board for a decision at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Meeting times are posted on the bulletin board in Town Hall and on the ECAT Community Calendar.

### **Amendments**

The ECAT Local Access Board reserves the right to amend these policies from time-to-time.