



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF MILITARY MEDICINE SECRETARIAT GENERAL

PRACTICAL GUIDE

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR DELEGATES

**Documents referred to: Statutes and regulations of the ICMM.
Edition: September, 2008**

*This practical guide is based on the Statutes and regulations of the ICMM.
It is not a regulatory document.*

1. Purpose of these guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to give ICMM delegates and their deputies an overview of how the ICMM works. Delegates will have a better understanding of how they can be involved in the ICMM, and how the organization can help them and the country, which nominated them.

The delegate of a Member State of the ICMM represents that country at the ICMM General and Regional Assemblies. He can also be active in fostering scientific discussions with other Member States.

This guide outlines how the ICMM is organized and describes its main activities. This information will help delegates to improve communication with the Secretariat General and other Member States.

Much of this information can be viewed in more detail on the ICMM website, and we will refer to this in the guidelines. We suggest you consult the website while reading this document: www.cimm-icmm.org

2. History of the ICMM

For more details, please look at the HISTORY page on the website.

The ICMM is an apolitical, neutral organization, founded in 1921. We currently have over 100 Member States from all 5 continents.

On the website, the page MEMBER STATES gives the list of these countries, the names of their delegates and links to their individual Armed Forces Medical Services websites.

Since 2000, we have increased our activities and created a new structure in order to meet the challenges we face today.

It is essential for us to maintain contact with all the Member States in the world, and to make sure they are involved in preparing the topics for discussion and decision-making at our General Assembly.

We are also trying to ensure that information relating to scientific aspects reaches all the staff of the Medical Services (in addition to information sent to Heads of Staff). There is an increasing need within regions to share scientific information at all levels, by means of training courses, regional congresses and holding international courses at regional venues. Another challenge is to meet the need for specialized training for medical personnel in specific regional situations, particularly in a context where personnel could be deployed anywhere in the world, in different types of operations. The ICMM can play a role in promoting practical and theoretical training and introduce personnel to the international organizations they may need to work with in the field.

3. Objectives of the ICMM

The main objective of the ICMM is to ensure that our medical services personnel have the means to work together, using similar practices, in operations involving international cooperation. This is a long-term goal, and the ICMM can work towards achieving this in a number of ways: by encouraging activities at which scientific and technical experience is shared, by developing contacts with the scientific community, by promoting regional events. This will enable us to pool our resources and work experience of military medicine, both in the theatre of operations and in a support role in the case of crisis situations.

Other ICMM objectives include:

- to maintain and strengthen relations between Medical Services of Member States
- to promote scientific military medical activities
- to provide where necessary best practices and standards which Member States can aim for
- to help to develop medical and military medical recommendations for humanitarian operations - these could range from Armed Forces humanitarian interventions to peacekeeping operations
- to facilitate relations between Armed Forces Medical Services of ICMM Member States and international organizations such as WHO (World Health Organisation), OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health), UNAIDS, or IMSC (International Military Sports Council).

The above objectives are of interest to all sectors of military medicine in the wider sense. (Please refer to the Practical Guides to Scientific Aspects of World and Regional Congress organization, available on the OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS web page.) i.e.:

screening personnel,
medicine within military units,
surgery in the theatre of operations,
emergency medicine,
disaster response,
public health,
dentistry,
pharmacy,
veterinary science,
administration and medical logistics,
training.

4. Activities

Forum

The main role of the ICMM is to promote the sharing of both scientific and technological information in all fields of military medicine.

This is achieved through international and regional congresses attended by member state delegations and observers. Multilateral discussions and international courses also serve this purpose.

In addition, the ICMM has a regularly updated website (as we have mentioned) and publishes an official quarterly review: the *International Review of the Armed Forces Medical Services*.

Training support

The main objectives of the ICMM in this field are:

- to encourage discussion of training methods used worldwide,
- to suggest program outlines (for optional use),
- to create a library of resources based on existing training courses,
- to organize international courses, if necessary.

Assessment of crisis situations

This is a subject, which is regularly addressed at our congresses. The ICMM would like to promote discussions of lessons learned and experience in the field, by organizing a symposium to assess the activity of medical services in the case of major natural or technological disasters.

Cooperation with international organizations

The ICMM has signed agreements with WHO, OIE and UNAIDS. These agreements provide for cooperation with medical services of our Member States in order to detect and respond to major epidemics posing a global threat to public health. WHO and OIE contact each government individually. We are also discussing draft agreements with other international organizations.

Study of the evolution of International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

It is clear that, with today's conflicts and military interventions, international humanitarian law needs to evolve.

Our members have direct experience as military medical personnel, and this could be used (in collaboration with specialized organizations) to shape this evolution.

Each year, a course on the Law of Armed Conflicts is held with the support of Switzerland. We are moving towards organizing these courses at a regional level (within the ICMM Regional Working Groups).

5. Statutes and management of the ICMM

The Statutes are available on the OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS page of the website. It will be easier to understand the structure of the ICMM by looking at the web page TEAM.

The following paragraphs describe in more detail the work of the team members and refer to important aspects of the Statutes.

The ICMM is a neutral intergovernmental organization, composed of Member States which are part of the UN, or have UN observer status, or are recognized by the WHO. Each Member State has submitted a request to join the ICMM (and subscribe to its Statutes) from its Ministry of Defense or Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This request is addressed to the Secretary General and is then submitted for approval by the General Assembly of Member States. The government then appoints its delegate, who is generally the Head of Armed Forces Medical Services. Requests for Membership documents are available from the ICMM secretariat by e-mail: info@cimm-icmm.org.

The official languages used in debates are English and French. Following Art 32.3 of the Statutes, specific protocols can be decided by the Secretary General and one or more Member States for the use of any other language on a temporary or permanent basis. Till now, a protocol for the use of Spanish has been signed.

We will now look at each of the key positions in the management team. If you would like to know the name of the person currently holding a position, this can be found on the web page TEAM. E-mail addresses are given on the CONTACTS page.

It is important to mention that none of the management team receives a salary. The Secretariat General is run on an entirely voluntary basis, with related expenses paid either by the ICMM or by the team member's own country.

The Chairman of the ICMM is from the country, which organized the last World Congress. He heads the *legislative branch* of the ICMM, directing the work of the General Assembly. His mandate (non-renewable) spans the period between two World Congresses, which is normally 2 years. There are two Deputy Chairmen: one is the retiring Chairman, the other is the future Chairman.

The Secretary General is elected by the General Assembly for a 4-year renewable mandate. In accordance with the Statutes, he must be a Belgian military doctor and, to guarantee neutrality, it is preferable that he be retired. He heads the *executive branch* of the ICMM and reports on his activities to the Chairman and to the General Assembly. He is supported by a secretariat of which the headquarters have always been in Belgium (Brussels), at the invitation of the Belgian government. This situation has enabled the ICMM to function in a stable environment without the relocation costs and staff turnover, which would inevitably be incurred if a Secretary General of a different nationality were elected. The Secretary General is assisted by the Deputy Secretary General, also elected by the General Assembly for a 4-year mandate.

The **“political and diplomatic”** aspect of the Secretary General's responsibilities includes communication, international relations, political and financial issues. To support this aspect of his assignment, he may appoint staff, if necessary, to the team of the Secretariat General.

The International Working Group (IWG), nominated by the General Assembly, assists him in policy development and proposes measures to be voted on during the General Assembly. The delegates who make up this group are the link between the Secretary General and the Member States during the period between two congresses.

The Secretary General is also in contact with the Directors of International Courses, who are generally Heads of Armed Forces Medical Services of Member States organizing an international course in their country.

The « **scientific and technical** » aspect of the ICMM's activities goes through the Scientific Council, which discusses all scientific matters. Its Chairman is elected by the General Assembly for a 4-year renewable mandate. He is assisted by Technical Commissions, which today include the following: dentistry, logistics, education, pharmacy and veterinary science. Each of these commissions is lead by a Chairman, who is elected by the General Assembly for a 4-year mandate (renewable once). The Chairman of the Scientific Council may also nominate specialists to assist him where necessary. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the ICMM Review. He is in contact with International Course Coordinators, who are in charge of the training/teaching methods and scientific content of international courses. He also prepares international and regional congresses, liaising with the Congress Secretaries of Scientific Committees (in order to choose scientific topics and select presentations).

In order to promote experience-sharing or to organize scientific events on a regional basis, certain Member States in a region may wish to form a Regional Working Group (RWG), under the Secretary General's responsibility. The RWG must be recognized at the General Assembly session following its inception. At the present time, the Maghreb, Pan African, Pan American and Pan Arab RWGs are active, and organize events such as congresses and courses during the period between World Congresses. The Chairmen of the RWGs also assist the Secretary General in the political and diplomatic aspect of his work.

During Regional Congresses (generally held during even-numbered years), delegates from Member States may hold a Regional Assembly meeting. This meeting is a means for the RWG to discuss questions relating to its organization and activities. However, the Regional Assembly does not have any legislative authority, unlike the ICMM General Assembly.

Rules governing the Scientific Council, the IWG, the RWGs, international and regional congresses and courses are published in the form of official Regulations of Internal Order (as decided by the General Assembly). There is also a set of Practical Guides edited by the Secretariat General. The finalized approved documents are available for download on the web page OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS. They contain useful information for any Member State wishing to organize an event.

6. The General Assembly

Decisions are taken at the ICMM General Assembly, where all the country delegates convene. It is held during the ICMM World Congress, every 2 years (odd-numbered years).

As the ICMM is a neutral, apolitical organization, the recommendations of the General Assembly are not binding, and respect the principle of sovereignty for each Member State. Only the legislative authority of a Member State can implement recommendations within its own Armed Forces. During the General Assembly, delegates may only express the official opinion of their governments.

Prior to the General Assembly, the Secretariat General works with the IWG to ensure that discussions are as brief and pertinent as possible. The agenda of the General Assembly (and any necessary documents regarding issues to be discussed) are sent to delegates in the months preceding the meeting.

During the Congress, each delegate is requested to report to the stand of the Secretariat General, which is usually near the registration desk. Delegates may be asked to provide any missing information (see paragraph 11). They are given a file with additional information, along with a yellow card, which serves as an entrance pass to the Assembly. A delegate may be accompanied by two people (max.): a deputy delegate and an interpreter, for whom entrance passes are also issued. At registration, delegates are each given a voting card (red), provided that their country's membership contributions have been paid in full.

All yellow passes are checked at the entrance to the Assembly hall. Delegations are to be seated at their designated tables.

The General Assembly holds two half-day sessions.

Reports on activities and future plans are given by: the Secretary General, the Chairman of the Scientific Council, the Chairmen of the Technical Commissions, Directors of International Courses, the secretary nominated to speak for the IWG and the Chairmen of RWGs. International organizations may be invited to talk about their collaboration with the ICMM.

Three officers are named by the General Assembly to sit on the Auditing commission. They are appointed to audit the accounts and check that the financial expert's report accurately reflects the state of the ICMM accounts. During the second session, this commission reports to the Assembly, and a vote of discharge is held.

The Secretary General presents the budget for the upcoming period for approval.

The General Assembly then votes on matters on the agenda and, after hearing candidates' presentations, elects new officials (according to vacancies: the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, Chairman of the Scientific Council, Chairmen of Technical Commissions). Only the Head of each national delegation has the right to vote, providing the country's contributions have been paid in full. Observers are not allowed to vote.

For decisions on proposals, voting is by show of hands (holding up the red cards) in response to the Chairman's questions: « Who votes in favor? », « Who votes against? » « Who abstains? ». For matters concerning individual people, voting is by secret ballot.

Members meet in continental groups to nominate those who will be part of the IWG till the next World Congress.

One example of agenda of the General Assembly is presented in the annex.

7. Budget and Membership Contributions

The budget primarily covers: the normal cost of running the secretariat, expenses incurred by members of the Secretariat General which are not covered by countries organizing an event (c.f. Regulations on webpage OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS), and the cost of mailing the Review. The budget is dependent on the payment of membership contributions. Each Member State pays a contribution which is calculated according to a scale (GDP, national debt, population) varying from 1000 to 7000 € per year.

Payment of membership contributions allows the country and its delegate to:

- vote at the General Assembly
- nominate candidates for key positions within the ICMM
- organize activities recognized by the ICMM
- send its Medical Service personnel to any scientific activities organized by the ICMM
- volunteer to be a member of the IWG,
- participate in one or several RWGs
- receive the Review.

If a number of countries do not pay their contributions, the budget suffers and the number of organized activities may need to be reduced.

The notice to pay contributions is sent to the delegate of each Member State (both directly and through diplomatic channels) during the first quarter. Delegates are, therefore, vital in ensuring that their country's contribution is paid on time.

8. The Review

Every quarter, the ICMM publishes its official journal, the *International Review of Armed Forces Medical Services*. This publication is one of the ways we can connect the different Medical Services of our members.

It contains articles by military medical scientists from Member States, which have been approved by the ICMM Scientific Council. It is a showcase of the expertise of the ICMM and of the countries, which submit articles.

Delegates are expected to encourage their staff to submit scientific or technical articles. Recommendations to authors are to be found in the Review, and on the web page REVIEW. You can also find archives of abstracts of all the published articles, along with a search option based on keywords, authors or countries.

Each issue of the Review has « Add-in folder » - a middle-page supplement giving information about ICMM news, upcoming events, and reports on organized activities. This information can also be found on the website, with links to specific event websites to register.

9. The Website

The website is an increasingly important way to communicate with our Members.

Other than the information already mentioned in this guide, you have probably noticed that the language option on the home page leads you to a page with news on upcoming or recent events.

The pages CALENDAR, COURSES and CONGRESS give more details on these activities.

CALENDAR is a page showing a schedule of activities for this year and next year.

CONGRESS is divided into 3 parts – one describing upcoming congresses with links to official congress websites and information on how to register - another showing reports on past congresses – the third giving scientific abstracts of a selection of past presentations.

COURSES leads to 2 other pages – one presenting upcoming courses with a link to the course website and information on how to register – the other allows you to read reports on past courses.

The page ACTIVITIES is also worth a visit. It opens a PowerPoint presentation of the ICMM, with slides showing some, although not all, of ICMM activities.

Finally, the page LINKS gives a list of links to important international organizations.

10. How delegates can get involved

When a country becomes a member of the ICMM, there is an implied moral obligation to be as active as possible.

Involvement in the ICMM can be measured by the way countries actively participate in activities, or successfully host ICMM events.

If, as a delegate, you want to get the most from your involvement with the ICMM, here are some ideas about what you can do:

- send your staff to take part in ICMM training courses
- bring a delegation with you to any Congress or RWG you decide to attend
- bring a significant delegation with you to the World Congress
- encourage staff to submit scientific articles for publication in the Review
- during the period between World Congresses, stay in contact with delegates you may know in the IWG, and give them your views about what should be discussed at the next Congress
- volunteer to be a member of the IWG, and if accepted, volunteer to be the group spokesperson at the next General Assembly
- volunteer to work in one of the key positions in the ICMM, or submit the name of one of your staff, if they are interested
- decide to organize a recognized ICMM course or congress
- stand for election as Chairman of a RWG, to head the Regional Assembly and thus take on the organization of the group's Regional Congress in your country
- stand for election as Chairman of the ICMM, to head the General Assembly of all delegates and undertake the organization of the most important ICMM event: the World Congress.

11. Important information to be given to the ICMM secretariat general

Ideally, when a new delegate is appointed to represent his country, he should contact the Secretary General by e-mail info@cimm-icmm.org to notify him of the changes. A letter may also be sent through diplomatic channels, in addition to the e-mail.

He should send his CV in one of the official languages, along with a photo. The website can then be updated and the CV published in the “Add-in folder” of the Review.

Two e-mail addresses should be given to the Secretary General: the delegate’s own address, and the address of the Officer in charge of relations with the ICMM. To avoid problems contacting Member States, it is advisable to keep the same e-mail address for relations with the ICMM, whoever the delegate may be. These e-mail addresses will be used if the ICMM needs to contact the delegate directly, and also to send ICMM news (which in turn could be forwarded to any other staff in the Medical Service who may be interested).

The address of the delegate’s Medical Service website should also be given, so that a link can be set up from the ICMM website.

Delegates should also confirm the number of copies of the Review they wish to receive, and the address they should be sent to (from which the copies can be distributed internally).

Any information concerning these points can be sent by e-mail at any time to the ICMM address: info@cimm-icmm.org.

Annex: one example of agenda of a General Assembly

FIRST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Welcome speech and opening of the General Assembly by the Chairman of the ICMM
1) Verification of legal requirements of the General Assembly
2) Nomination of new Member States: presentation of candidatures
3) Activities report by the Secretary General
4) Activities report of the Scientific Council
5) Report of the Chairman of the International Working Group
6) Voting by the General Assembly concerning proposals requested in the points 3, 4, and 5
7) Appointment of the three members of the Auditing Commission
8) Elections for the ending mandates of the team of the Secretariat General and the Scientific Council: presentation of the candidatures and vote

SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Opening of the second session by the Chairman of the ICMM
1) Activities report by the Regional Working Groups (RWG)
2) Possible proposal of creation of one or several new RWG
3) Presentation of the place of the next World Congress (two years later) by the next host country
4) Presentation of the candidatures of Member States for the next World Congresses (4 or 6 years later)
5) Presentation of the proposed budget for the next year
6) Vote on the financial balance and the budget
7) Vote on the admission of new members
8) Reports of the representatives of international organizations ICMM has cooperation agreements with
9) Appointment of the new members of the IWG by the delegates who meet by continental zone
10) Presentation of the next Regional Congresses (1 or 3 years later)
11) Conclusion, thanks and closing of the General Assembly