

Silent Concord Specification

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Contents

Foreword	4
Acknowledgements	4
1 Introduction	5
2 References	6
3 Definitions and Abbreviations.....	7
3.1 Definitions	7
3.2 Abbreviations	7
4 Overview	8
4.1 Roles	8
4.2 Structure.....	8
4.3 Example Silent Concord, 50 Minutes.....	8
4.4 Example Silent Concord, One-Half Day	8
4.5 Example Silent Concord, One Day.....	9
5 General Requirements	10
6 Coordinator Requirements.....	11
6.1 General.....	11
6.2 Structuring a Silent Concord.....	11
6.3 Running a Silent Concord.....	11
7 Participant Requirements.....	12
7.1 Preparing for Silent Concord	12
7.2 Engaging in Silent Concord	12
7.3 Policing a Silent Concord	12
Annex A: Change History	13

Foreword

This specification has been produced by the Silent Concord Foundation.

The contents of this specification may change following formal approval by the Silent Concord Foundation (SCF) Change Control Board (CCB). Should the SCF CCB modify the contents of this specification, it will be re-released with an increase in version number.

Acknowledgements

This format of this specification is an adaptation of a specification format developed by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (Sophia Antipolis, France).

1 Introduction

This specification defines the requirements by which a meeting qualifies as a Silent Concord. This specification is intended to:

- Promote uniformity among Silent Concords. Participants should know what to expect when attending a meeting advertised as a Silent Concord.
- Maximize the freedom of Silent Concord participants and coordinators by minimizing the number of rules.
- Provide a mechanism for the orderly evolution of Silent Concord.

Minimizing variability and maximizing freedom are contradictory goals. There is unlikely to be a single solution which satisfies all participants and coordinators. This specification will evolve in concert with the understanding of the best compromise between these contradictory goals.

Section 2 provides references. Section 3 provides definitions and abbreviations. Section 4 provides an overview of Silent Concord. Sections 5, 6, and 7 provide general, coordinator, and participant requirements. Appendix A provides a specification change history.

2 References

- [1] RFC 2119 Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels, Internet Engineering Task Force
- [2] SCF 101 Noisy Discord Specification, Silent Concord Foundation

3 Definitions and Abbreviations

3.1 Definitions

This document employs a subset of the key words defined in [1]. Key words are shown in **boldface type** within this specification to indicate that the associated rule is normative. Any other use of these key words is informative. The key words are:

- **Shall** : implementation of the item is an absolute requirement of the specification.
- **Shall Not** : implementation of the item is an absolute prohibition of the specification.
- **Should** : implementation of the item is recommended but not required. There may exist valid reasons in particular circumstances to leave the item unimplemented, but the full implications should be carefully considered before choosing this course.
- **Should Not** : implementation of the item is discouraged but not prohibited. There may exist valid reasons in particular circumstances to implement the item, but the full implications should be carefully considered before choosing this course.
- **May** : implementation of the item is optional - neither required, prohibited, recommended, nor discouraged.

3.2 Abbreviations

CCB	Change Control Board
SCF	Silent Concord Foundation

4 Overview

A Silent Concord consists of two or more people who unite to share silence and mutual presence.

4.1 Roles

There are two roles within a Silent Concord: coordinator and participant. The person with the coordinator role is responsible for obtaining a facility to host the Silent Concord, advertising/promoting the Silent Concord, and running the Silent Concord. A person with the participant role participates in the Silent Concord. The coordinator is usually also a participant.

4.2 Structure

The coordinator determines the duration and structure of a Silent Concord. Typical durations are one hour, one-half day, all day, and multiple-day. A Silent Concord is divided into one or more periods. There are four types of periods:

- Sitting: Participants sit in silence
- Walking: Participants walk in silence
- Meal: Participants eat in silence
- Break: Unstructured time; silence is preserved

The Silent Concord structure depends upon the duration. Some typical structures are:

- Duration one hour or less: sitting period only
- Duration between one hour and one-half day: alternating sitting, walking, and break periods.
- Duration one-half day or longer: alternating sitting, walking, break, and meal periods.

A meeting called Noisy Discord usually follows a Silent Concord. The specification of Noisy Discord is beyond the scope of this document. See [2] for additional information.

4.3 Example Silent Concord, 50 Minutes

Agenda:

- 6:45pm : Orientation / welcoming.
- 7:00 – 7:50pm : Sitting period.

Detailed View:

- 6:45 – 7:00pm : Coordinator welcomes and situates the participants.
- 7:00pm : Coordinator strikes the bell once to open the sitting period.
- 7:00 – 7:50pm : Participants sit quietly.
- 7:00 – 7:50pm : Coordinator sits quietly but also monitors the time.
- 7:50pm : Coordinator strikes the bell once to close the sitting period.

4.4 Example Silent Concord, One-Half Day

Agenda:

- 8:45am : Orientation / welcoming.
- 9:00 – 9:50am : Sitting period.
- 10:00 – 10:50am: Walking period.
- 11:00 – 11:50pm: Sitting period.

Break periods occur between sitting and walking periods. The coordinator strikes a bell once to open and close each sitting and walking period.

4.5 Example Silent Concord, One Day

Agenda:

- 8:45am : Orientation / welcoming.
- 9:00 – 9:50am : Sitting period.
- 10:00 – 10:50am: Walking period.
- 11:00 – 11:50am: Sitting period.
- 12:00 – 12:50pm: Meal period.
- 1:00 – 1:50pm: Walking period.
- 2:00 – 2:50pm: Sitting period.
- 3:00 – 3:50pm: Walking period.
- 4:00 – 4:50pm: Sitting period.

Break periods occur between sitting, walking, and meal periods. The coordinator strikes a bell once to open and close each sitting, walking, and meal period.

5 General Requirements

10. A Silent Concord **shall** have a single person designated as the coordinator.
20. A Silent Concord **shall** have two or more persons designated as participants.

6 Coordinator Requirements

6.1 General

1000. The coordinator **should** also be a participant.

1010. The coordinator **may** delegate a task to a participant but **shall** retain ultimate responsibility for the completion of the delegated task.

6.2 Structuring a Silent Concord

1100. The coordinator **should** schedule a brief orientation session for inexperienced participants prior to a Silent Concord.

1110. The coordinator **shall not** arrange participant seating to imply that any participant is different than any other participant. In particular, when the coordinator is also a participant, the coordinator **shall not** face all other participants.

1120. The coordinator **shall not** place icons, objects of devotion, artwork, or any other potential distractions within the Silent Concord shared space.

1130. The coordinator **should** schedule alternating sitting and walking periods for Silent Concords of duration greater than one hour.

1140. The coordinator **should** schedule at least one meal period for Silent Concords of duration greater than one-half day.

1150. The coordinator **should** schedule short break periods between sitting, walking, and meal periods.

6.3 Running a Silent Concord

1300. The coordinator **shall** welcome and situate each participant prior to the Silent Concord.

1310. The coordinator **should** provide participants with an agenda for a Silent Concord consisting of more than one period.

1320. The coordinator **shall** strike a bell once to begin a period.

1330. The coordinator **shall** monitor the time as a period progresses.

1340. The coordinator **shall** strike a bell once to end a period.

1350. The coordinator **shall not** make an inspirational statement of any kind before, during, or after a period.

1360. The coordinator **shall not** play music of any kind during a period.

1370. The coordinator **shall not** provide any type of practice guidance to participants during a period.

1380. The coordinator **shall** remove a participant who persistently violates a Silent Concord rule despite repeated warnings.

7 Participant Requirements

7.1 Preparing for Silent Concord

2000. A participant **should** arrive a few minutes before a Silent Concord is scheduled to begin.

2010. A participant **should** bring whatever they require in order to be comfortable during a period.

2020. A participant who is physically ill **should not** attend a Silent Concord.

2030. A participant **shall** turn off all electronic communication devices (for example, beepers and cellular phones) or leave them at home.

2040. A participant **shall** disable a watch that beeps to signal the hour or leave the watch at home.

2050. A participant **shall not** wear clothing that could distract other participants.

2060. A participant **shall not** place icons, objects of devotion, artwork, or any other potential distractions within the Silent Concord shared space.

7.2 Engaging in Silent Concord

2100. A participant **shall** remain silent throughout a period.

2110. A participant **shall** minimize physical movement during a sitting period.

2120. A participant **shall** move slowly and deliberately during walking, meal, and break periods.

2130. A participant **shall not** engage in any activity during a period which could distract other participants.

7.3 Policing a Silent Concord

2200. A participant **should** tactfully notify another participant when they violate a Silent Concord rule.

2210. A participant **should** bring persistent violations of a Silent Concord rule by another participant to the attention of the coordinator.

2220. A participant **should** bring persistent violations of a Silent Concord rule by the coordinator to the attention of the Silent Concord Foundation.

Annex A: Change History

2007-09-28 Version 1.0 Initial Release