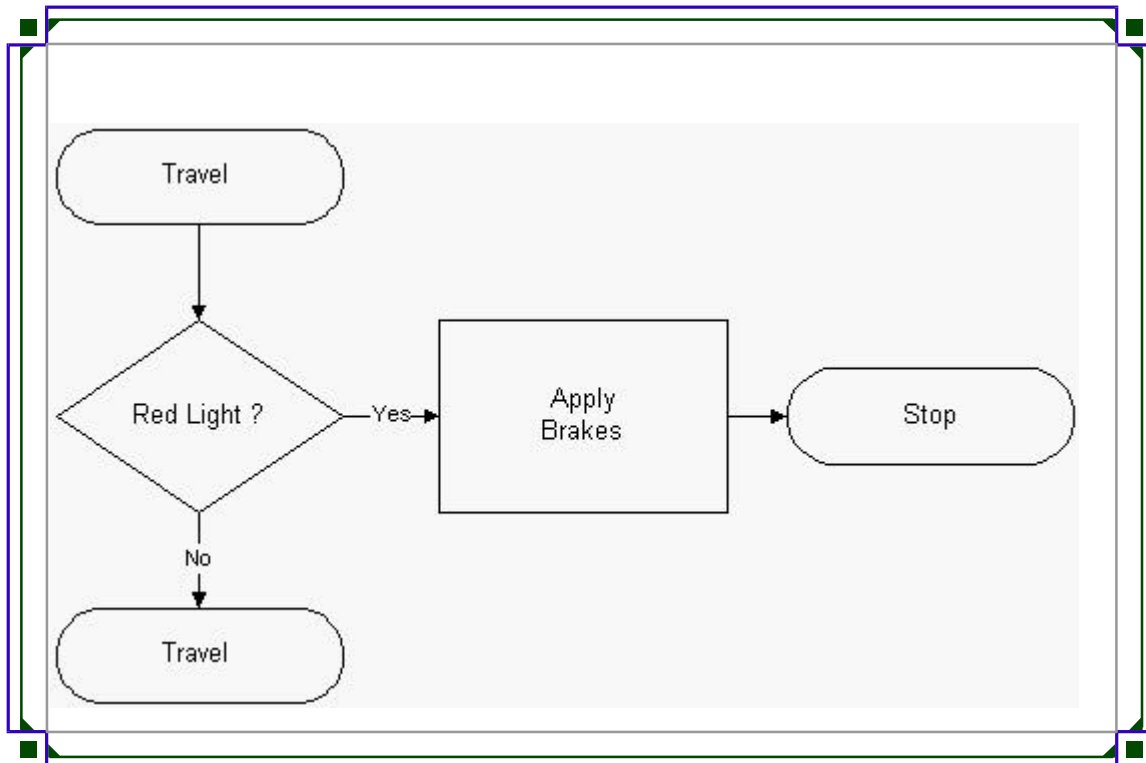


## FLOW CHART



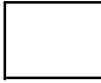
### Purpose

A **flow chart** is a pictorial representation showing all the inputs, activities, decision points, and outputs of a given process. It is an excellent tool in examining how various steps in a process are related to each other. It can map existing processes to determine possible steps that can be eliminated, steps that delay the overall process, and identify where process improvements can be effective. It can also be used to map a proposed process to help ensure that all steps are included and that the steps interact with each other in an effective manner.

## BASIC SYMBOLS OF FLOW CHARTS



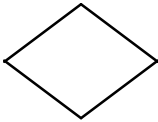
The *Activity Symbol* is a rectangle which represents an activity or something that happens to the process. Within the rectangle is a brief description of that activity.



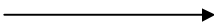
The *Annotation/Comments Symbol* is connected to a process step to provide additional information on a process. Although not directly part of the process, it is used to add understanding or further detail to a process step.



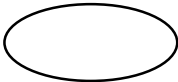
The *Connector Symbol* is a circle used to indicate a continuation of the flow diagram on another sheet. A letter or number is placed in the circle indicating where the process resumes on another page. There will be a connector circle at the end of each page of sub-process and another at the beginning of the next page or continuation of the process.



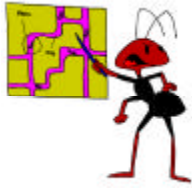
The *Decision Symbol* is a diamond which designates a decision point from which a process branches into two or more different paths. The path taken depends on the answer to the question appearing in the diamond. Each path is labeled with the answer to the question.



The *Flow Line* is a line with an arrowhead at one end that represents a process path which connects process elements such as activity symbols or decision symbols. The arrowhead on the flow line indicates the direction of flow in the process.



The *Terminal Symbol* is an oval which identifies the beginning or end of a process. Within the label is a short description of the product or activity that triggers the beginning of a process or the final step in a process. This symbol is sometimes labeled merely as “START” or “END”.



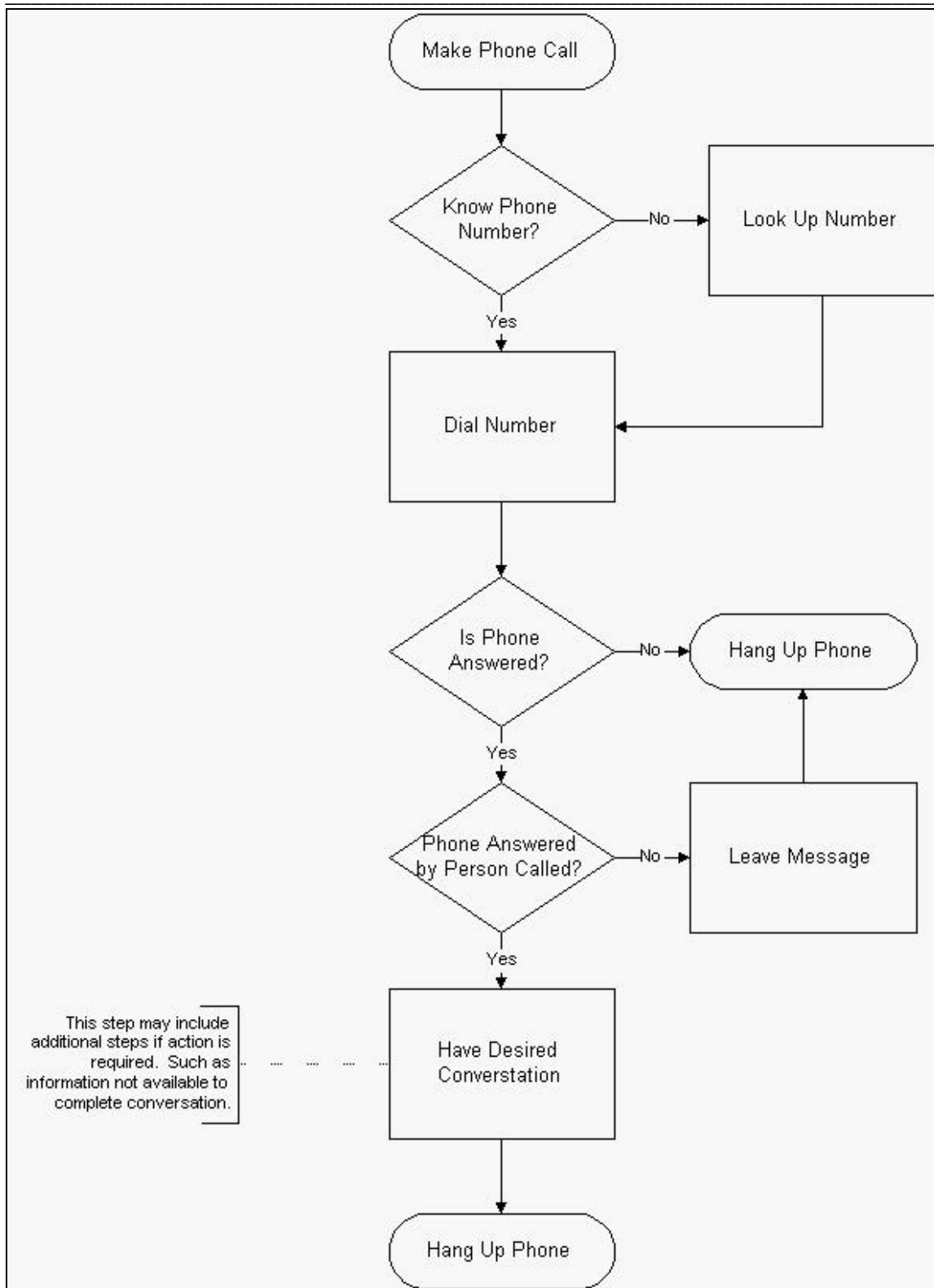
## Process

1. Gather a group of personnel together who have knowledge of steps in the process. They need not know the whole process but some components of the process. Collectively, this group should be able to map the entire process.
2. Draw a **flow chart** of what steps occur in the process and how those steps are related.
3. Review and expand the basic **flow chart** to include all steps that occur in the process.
4. Draw another **flow chart** of the ideal process.
5. Compare two **flow charts** to find out if there are any differences in what currently happens and what should happen.
6. Make corrections and develop a revised **flow chart** that shows an improved method of performing the process in question.
7. Make several test runs of the revised **flow chart** to ensure that all the steps have been included and that the desired end product is correct and requires either less time or generates a better end product.



## Example

(See Next Page For Example)





## Key Points

- Ensure that standard **flow chart** symbols are utilized. Use of standard symbols will help eliminate misunderstandings between people involved in the process and decision-makers in revising a process.
- Where appropriate, include time measurements to components of the **flow chart**.
- All **flow charts** should begin and end with a “terminal symbol.”
- The use of pre-printed **flow chart** worksheets can be of value in standardizing process **flow charts**.
- Use of computer programs can facilitate flow charting and making revisions.

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK