

## **Symposia FAQs at AIHce (and other locations)**

### **1. What is an AIHce symposium?**

An AIHce symposium takes place on the weekend preceding the conference. It may be scheduled for Saturday, Sunday, or both of these days. AIHce symposia differ from the weekend PDCs in that they consist of multiple invited speakers presenting various aspects of a subject. Most PDCs are only taught by one or two presenters.

### **2. Who organizes AIHce symposia?**

Generally, AIHA technical committees organize AIHce symposia once approval has been given. However, occasionally other OEHS partners may also sponsor or be involved with symposium development for AIHce.

### **3. How are AIHce pre-conference symposia topics selected for presentation?**

AIHce symposia have a different selection process from any other AIHce program. With all other AIHce submissions (PDCs, roundtables, podium sessions, etc.) there is a well-publicized submission deadline and online submission and peer review system. AIHce symposia are the one format that works differently.

The AIHce symposia slot is reserved for timely, cutting –edge programs of high interest to a large number of OEHS professionals that may also gain the attention of the news media, gaining public relations and recognition for the profession.

The AIHA board and staff keep track of “symposium-worthy” topics by tracking extensive attendee and membership survey input, various trade press publications, informal feedback from the membership, web list serves and other sources of input.

There is no formal submission process or announcement of a Call for Papers for AIHce symposia. Technical Committees and other volunteer groups are generally invited to organize a symposium. Sometimes there is not a clear-cut group to assign a symposium to and a “project team” or “inter-committee group” must be found.

### **4. Why would a symposium that had been on a 3-year rotation for several years have that pattern changed?**

Generally, we have found that symposia have a life cycle. The first few times a symposium is presented there is tremendous excitement, energy and enthusiasm by the organizers to develop a program and by the audience to attend. After awhile, interest tends to lag on both sides and “taking a break” often helps all key players to “recharge.” Additionally, new topics are always developing and flexibility is needed so timely, high-demand topics can rotate in and others can be given a chance.

### **5. What if I have not been “invited” to organize a symposium but my volunteer group is still interested in doing one?**

You can still submit a proposal and try to “sell” your idea. However, keep in mind that it may not result in a symposium. Your topic may, in fact be very “solid” with a good track record but if a timely, very high-interest topic emerges (i.e. nanotechnology) that one will take precedent. Discuss your idea with the CE Department manager before you write a proposal.

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### 6. Wouldn't an early proposal to do a symposium take precedent over a new, emerging topic where no proposal had been submitted?

In the case of all other AIHce submissions, this would be the case. However, with the pre-conference symposia at AIHce it would not. The over-riding goal with these symposia is the presence of cutting –edge, timely topics with demonstrated high member interest and ability to generate media interest. If a topic surfaces that fits this description more than an earlier submission, the latter topic would be pursued.

However, once a group has been formally “approved” for a symposium presentation that decision is final and will not be rescinded. Generally symposium topics are approved no later than at the prior year's AIHce or shortly thereafter.

### 7. Doesn't this seem somewhat out of sequence?

To some it might, however that is not the intent. All other formats at AIHce are handled via an open submission process with an advertised calendar of steps and peer review cycle that apply to all. In the past, AIHce has been criticized at times for not reacting quickly enough to new trends and topics, or for not gaining enough recognition for the profession. The highly visible symposia slot at AIHce has been reserved to fill these needs and has been very successful in accomplishing these goals. AIHce symposia have the highest attendance of the pre-conference weekend program and always generate requests from the media to attend, which in turn, benefits the profession by the press coverage generated.

### 8. What are some examples of successful AIHce symposia over the years?

Nanoparticles in the Workplace: Infectious Disease and the Role of the IH in Preventing and Managing the Coming Epidemic; EHS Management Systems Symposium; Fungal Contamination: Current Concerns and Industrial Hygiene Practice; Methamphetamine Lab Clean-up; Exposure Assessment Decision Making – Making Decisions in the Face of Uncertainty.....and others.

### 9. Are there other symposium slots besides those offered at AIHce?

Yes. PCIH has a pre-conference symposium and the same process described above for AIHce symposia applies to PCIH. Symposia can also be presented as a “stand alone” event that is not attached to a conference. However, this symposium format is riskier to successfully develop and present.

### 10. Once a symposium has been approved for presentation, how can my committee/volunteer group get started?

Contact AIHA's CE Department directly. AIHA's symposium coordinator will distribute and explain all the symposium guidelines and procedures, in addition to supplying a formal timeline for symposium development. A series of conference calls to develop the symposium will be scheduled.

### 11. Additional Questions?

The staff in the Continuing Education Department is always available to assist. For questions and additional information please contact:

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