

## FAQs about the AIHce Technical Program Submission and Peer Review Process

### 1. Who is involved with the AIHce technical program peer review process?

The Permanent Conference Committee (PCC) technical committees and staff.

### 2. What are their various roles?

The PCC is responsible for ensuring, through joint participation of AIHA and ACGIH that the AIHce technical program is of high quality and addresses current issues of the profession. This is achieved by:

- a) Reviewing and approving submitted abstracts and other proposals based upon established review criteria to develop the conference program.
- b) Providing assistance and guidance to session arrangers, moderators, and presenters
- c) Reviewing and recommending changes for the non-technical program to administrative staff, and AIHA/ACGIH boards as appropriate.
- d) Developing evaluation tools and conducting evaluations of AIHce programs and using this information for continued improvement of AIHce.
- e) Responding to requests from AIHA/ACGIH boards and administrative staff about the presentation/content of the AIHce.

The PCC is composed of 12 members – six each from AIHA and ACGIH. This includes the president-elect of AIHA and vice chair of ACGIH who both serve as Co-chairs of the current conference. It also includes the vice president of AIHA and vice chair-elect of ACGIH who serve as Co-chairs of the subsequent AIHce.

The technical committees are responsible for:

- a) Selecting a podium Session Arranger by June 30 for the upcoming AIHce who will organize a podium session(s) on behalf of their committee.
- b) Determining what roundtables to develop and deciding who will organize and submit these committee sponsored programs. (Note: roundtables may also be submitted by other persons/organizations for PCC consideration.)

AIHA staff is responsible for coordinating the AIHce technical program submission and peer review process from advertising the *Call for Presentations* through peer review and program publication.

### 3. What types of presentations can be submitted for the AIHce technical program?

Podium abstract – an oral presentation limited to 20 minutes usually accompanied by slides

Poster abstract – a visual display on fiberboard that is displayed for walk-by viewing and includes a two-hour period during which the author is present to answer questions.

EHS Crossover Program – practical information on non-industrial hygiene topics such as safety and environment. A maximum of two speakers deliver a 60-minute presentation that includes Q&A.

Roundtable – special interest sessions, two to four hours in length, comprised of invited speakers.

Presentations are to be in a panel discussion format and include audience participation and questions. Content relates to current OEHS issues, which can be approached as:

- a) A controversial or comparison issue requiring balanced content.
- b) An information-packed session with little controversy or opposing views.

### 4. When are presentations due?

All presentations are due electronically via the AIHce submission site, [www.aihce2007.org](http://www.aihce2007.org)

on Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 at 5:00p.m. CDT. The AIHce Call for Presentations is first distributed at the prior year's conference and then mailed immediately after it concludes. There are also additional reminders of the submission deadline in the *Synergist*, the AIHA website, IH listserv, and various blast emails throughout the months leading up to the deadline.

**5. Why can't the deadline be later?**

For a conference the size of AIHce an Advance Program must be mailed in January. In order for that to happen, complete technical program detail must be published in the program and on the website. Attendees do not want to register for the conference unless they can see what is being offered. The AIHce bi-level peer review process (see FAQ 6 below) is completed by mid-December. Early October is about the latest the submission deadline can be scheduled and still meet all the requirements of publishing an Advance Program in January. The submission deadline has been benchmarked with other conferences the size of AIHce and the timing is standard.

**6. How does the peer review process work for abstract submissions (podium and poster)?**

Step 1.

Abstracts received via the online system by the October 3 deadline are divided up into equal groups for online review and evaluation by teams of PCC members. PCC team members will individually review and score abstracts online, according to the criteria published in the *Call for Presentations*, making accept and reject decisions. On those abstracts where team members disagree, they must continue to discuss and debate their decisions until they reach consensus.

Step 2.

After the PCC finishes scoring abstracts, they are sent to the appropriate session arrangers (SAs) for peer review and arrangement into podium sessions via the online system. SAs may choose not to use an abstract that is substandard in their eyes, even if the PCC has accepted it. SAs may petition the AIHce co-chairs if they wish to use an abstract that has been rejected by the PCC. There is a special "appeal form" that is used for this purpose.

Session arrangers submit their completed podium sessions through the online system and also indicate any potential subject matter conflicts with other sessions or committees. Every effort is made to comply with those scheduling preferences that are specified by SAs. The PCC approves the final layout of the technical program once sessions are completed and submitted. The layout is forwarded to the SAs and then published.

**7. Describe the peer review process for roundtables and EHS crossover program.**

Roundtable proposals submitted by the October 3, 2006 deadline via the online system are all peer reviewed by the PCC online. After reviewing and rating each proposal, a special teleconference meeting is held by the full PCC to make the final status determinations on all proposals. All 12 members of the PCC read all roundtable proposals and consensus is achieved on all accept/reject decisions. The PCC will often make suggestions relative to the timing, balance of speakers, amount of Q&A time allotted, and merging of two roundtables if they are similar. This feedback is communicated to the roundtable arranger and is often a condition of acceptance. The PCC also makes decisions on speaker funding requests that have been submitted with the roundtable proposal. Funding decisions are also communicated to the roundtable arrangers at the conclusion of the PCC roundtable review.

The PCC reviews proposals for the following required elements of content:

- a. Timely topic: controversial or high-profile
- b. Invited speakers: knowledgeable and possess expertise in the are of discussion
- c. A balanced presentation: addresses both sides of an issue or a comprehensive treatment of a single topic.

- d. An organized proposal: includes time for questions and discussions.
- e. No commercialism. Proposals that do not suggest commercialism, particularly in the use of trade names as examples.

The PCC may also look at past attendance in a particular topic area to assess the interest in a proposed program(s). The PCC also looks at the quality of the overall roundtable submission to ensure that all requested information has been included.

EHS Crossover Programs are peer reviewed by a designated PCC team who must reach consensus on their decisions. Criteria outlined in the *Call for Presentations* and posted online are used when these programs are rated.

#### **8. How can I apply for funding a roundtable presenter?**

Arrangers of roundtables may request financial support for a non-AIHA/ACGIH member speaker(s) via the online submission system. The online form will guide you to justify your request by asking you to describe the uniqueness and qualifications of the presentation and speaker, plus listing speaker presentation objectives. You will be asked to describe the value this speaker will bring to AIHce attendees. The specific items to be funded are listed (coach air, \$60 per diem, number of hotel nights, comp registration). Please note – funding is limited and restricted to special circumstances. AIHce does not pay expenses for podium, poster, EHS Crossover, or session personnel, or AIHA or ACGIH members that are roundtable speakers.

#### **9. When are submitters notified if their presentation or program has been accepted?**

In mid-December email notifications will be sent to each submitter regarding his or her submission status.

#### **10. How are various podium and roundtables scheduled throughout the AIHce week?**

Scheduling decisions are made by weighing a number of criteria and factors:

- a. Rotation. First, every effort is made to ensure that sessions that were held Wednesday evening or Thursday afternoon will not get those same time slots for the next conference. Generally speaking, sessions that were held at the beginning of the week at the prior year's conference are rotated to the end of the week for the next conference. Sessions that were held at the end of the week the prior conference are rotated to the beginning of the week for the upcoming conference.
- b. Available time slots. There are more time slots available for two-hour sessions. Due to the scheduling of the Opening and General Sessions each morning, four-hour sessions will not fit in these morning slots and must be scheduled in the afternoon or Thursday morning.
- c. Requests that SAs make on their podium session paperwork regarding avoiding scheduling conflicts with various other sessions are given every consideration and are usually able to be administered.
- d. The PCC meets to review and approve the final technical program schedule draft. During this review process the committee often identifies additional subject matter conflicts between various sessions that will detract from the success of both sessions. When these are found, one or both sessions are rescheduled. Sometimes this will result in a domino effect whereby new conflicts are created that are worse than the original one trying to be resolved. In these cases, the program remains the same and the change is not implemented. It is virtually impossible to eliminate every single conflict due to the size of the program but most conflicts are generally avoided.

#### **11. How the AIHce Technical Program is generally received?**

Historically, the AIHce technical program receives excellent ratings. The 2006 AIHce was no exception. An average of all individual on-site technical session evaluations shows that 88% rated all the various sessions as good/excellent. This benchmarks closely with the results of the post conference online survey where 85% of those responding indicated that the AIHce technical program met or exceeded their needs.

**12. What suggestions do you have so that my submission has the best chance of being accepted?**

a. Submit a quality presentation. Thoroughly read the directions in the Call for Roundtables and Call for Presentations. These have been mailed out and are posted on the submission site. Follow the directions, and meet all the listed criteria and guidelines that are requested. The PCC review criterion comes directly from these published materials.

b. “Less is more.” Per AIHce evaluations, attendees indicate they would like to see more focus on “quality” as opposed to “quantity.” Committees are encouraged to concentrate their efforts on a few “super-charged” sessions, perhaps even rotating topics annually.

c. Read past evaluations. Get ideas on what attendees liked and suggested for future improvement. Evaluation scores from the prior conference are posted on the AIHce website and are also emailed to committee leadership along with attendees’ written comments. The written comments often have good feedback worth noting.

d. Select speakers with care focusing on both their technical/professional expertise, as well as their speaking ability.

e. Use your AIHce committee meeting to consult with your peers and brainstorm on potential topics for programming at the next AIHce.

**AIHce 2007 Schedule of Various Deadlines/Milestones**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
October 3, 2006	Technical papers and roundtable panel program submissions due
October 25, 2006	PCC meeting I (roundtable review)
November 17, 2006	AIHce Session Arrangers complete podium sessions
November 29, 2006	PCC meeting II to finalize the program schedule
Mid-December, 2006	AIHce accept/reject e-mail notice to submitters
January 2007	AIHce 2007 Advance Program mailed
June 2-7, 2007	AIHce 2007, Philadelphia, PA

**Additional Assistance and Support**

Miriam Glaser Heston, AIHA Conference Program Coordinator  
703-846-0752  
[mheston@aiha.org](mailto:mheston@aiha.org)

