



Annual Conference Guide to Preparing a Presentation

General

Congratulations on being selected to present a paper for the AREMA Annual Conference. AREMA's Annual Conference technical presentations and the *Conference Proceedings* are an important reference for the railway engineering and maintenance-of-way community. Thank you for your contribution to our base of knowledge.

This guide will help you to prepare your presentation in a format that ensures its lasting value for all AREMA members. It will also guide you towards a presentation that will deliver your message effectively.

Your cooperation in adhering to the guidelines provided in this document will help produce an informative and trouble-free technical presentation.

Timelines for Submissions

The following dates and procedures apply to the review and acceptance of papers and presentations for the AREMA Annual Conference.

December

- Board develops final plan for conference sessions and Hot Topics are identified
- Call for Papers Deadline – mid-December
- Abstracts reviewed by Program Chair and Functional Groups

February

- Abstract Final Selection
- Authors notified of final decision on submissions
- Authors confirm participation

May

- Final Papers due for review – deadline will be emailed in advance

June

- PowerPoint presentations due for review (including any video files) – deadline will be emailed in advance
- Program Finalized by the end of the month



July

- Final Papers and presentations due for publication on flash drives – deadline will be emailed in advance

August

- Any minor tweaks to presentations must be turned in. Absolutely **no changes** to presentations will be honored on site at the Conference. For security reasons, USB drive ports are disabled on presentation laptops. **If you have added data to your presentation since the July deadline, please contact Stacy Spaulding regarding replacement (sspaulding@arema.org) PRIOR to conference.**

*****NO CHANGES ALLOWED TO PRESENTATIONS ON SITE*****

Review

Your paper and presentation will be reviewed by the Conference Program Committee to ensure consistency within the sessions and that it will meet AREMA standards. Final approval of your paper and presentation will occur by **the end of June**. If your paper and/or presentation do not meet AREMA standards, the presentation will be withdrawn from the Conference and not included in the *Conference Proceedings*. The peer review process is an important factor in maintaining the quality and integrity of AREMA Conferences.

Presentation Submittal Procedures

In order to streamline the flow of presentations and uniformity of the technical and general sessions, as well as reduce the possibility of technical difficulties, PowerPoint presentations will be preloaded and tested within a **Master Slide Show on an AREMA laptop** prior to the Conference.

Presenters must use the AREMA-approved PowerPoint template and submit the presentation file along with any supporting audio/video files in Windows Media Video (.wmv) format to AREMA no later than **the June deadline**. Full PowerPoint file may not exceed 50 MB in size, including all videos.

AREMA will provide the laptop, computer projection equipment, audio line, and laser pointer. Technicians from the AREMA-contracted audio-visual service will be available on-site to assist. **You may not bring your own presentation on a thumb drive nor a laptop to the session. You must use the AREMA laptop with the Master Slide Show that is already loaded with your presentation.**



For presentations containing videos, please create and upload a .zip file with your presentation and video files included. Please upload video files separately even if your videos are already embedded within the presentation. Please name your files according to the example below.

Please name all files beginning with your last name and a small portion of the title of the content, including slide number for video files.

EXAMPLE:

Smith J Construction Site Clean Up.pptx
Smith J Slide 3 video.wmv
Smith J Slide 16 video.wmv

Presentations must be submitted online on the AREMA website via the online submission page at www.arema.org, under Conference/Presenter Information/Presenter Resources. Follow the instructions to upload your .ppt, .pttx or .zip file.

Registering for the Conference

As a presenter, you are entitled to a generous discount on your full Conference Registration.

All Presenters MUST register for the AREMA Conference by the August deadline in order to be published in the Program. Any presentation for which there is no presenter registered for the Conference by the deadline will be REMOVED from the Program and an alternate presentation will be selected.

Preparing Your Presentation

Good visuals can amplify and clarify a message, stimulate interest and often help the speaker keep on track. However, visual aids should be for the benefit of the audience, not the speaker. It is annoying not to be able to read or comprehend a speaker's visual aids. To ensure that the entire audience will be able to read and comprehend the visual message, AREMA has issued the following guidelines for preparation of visual aids.

Presenters must use the approved AREMA PowerPoint template. The template is available for download at www.arema.org under Call for Papers, Presenter Resources.

The **minimum** character size for PowerPoint slides is 24-point for labeling done entirely in capital letters and 36-point for labeling done in capital and lowercase letters.



Do not use too many slides for the allotted time; there should be no more than one or two per minute (unless they are photo slides). Do not show more information on one slide than can be assimilated in 30 seconds. Captions and details need not be shown; eliminate extraneous information.

Presenters may NOT place company logos on every page of their PowerPoint presentation unless necessary to help in understanding a slide. Company logos may appear on the opening and closing slides only.

Audio/Video Elements in Computer-Based Presentations

Any audio or video files that will be incorporated into the presentation **must be included when submitting** the PowerPoint presentation file. **Please also email Stacy at sspaulding@arema.org with the slide numbers that contain videos or animations, so that we may confirm that they work.**

***Most of the time, embedded video files must be reloaded into the file when being accessed on a different computer than they were created. PLEASE include .mov video files in a .zip file when uploading your presentation.

Be sure to set all embedded video files to play automatically in your presentation.

Please begin all file names with your last name and first initial. Please include the first few words of the title or slide number if it is a video file.

EXAMPLE:

Smith J Construction Site Clean Up.ppt
Smith J Slide 3 video.wmv
Smith J Slide 16 video.wmv

Equipment

A laptop computer, audio line, laser pointer and LCD projector with screen will be provided. If your presentation is computer-driven, it will be preloaded onto the AREMA laptop computer by AREMA staff. **There will be NO changes permitted on-site.** Other special equipment may be provided on **advance request.** Specialized presentation equipment requiring extra charges to AREMA will only be provided if the presenter agrees to pay for that specialized equipment and makes arrangements through AREMA in advance. Internet access is NOT available during your presentation, therefore internet links will not work in your slides.



Presentation Tips

The primary contributors to an effective technical presentation are (a) technical content, (b) visual aids, (c) facilities and (d) skills of the speaker. The tips given below should be helpful to speakers in improving their presentations.

Remember that the presentations can differ from the published paper and that the presentation gives the author an opportunity to discuss and emphasize highlights of the work, which may not be possible to do in the printed version.

On Site Check In

Please check in with your session moderator before the beginning of the session segment during which you will present. For Monday presenters, please check in before the start of the General Session or during the Coffee Break. For Tuesday presenters, please check in before 7:45AM for a morning presentation, over the coffee break or right after Lunch for later presentations. For Wednesday, please check in with the moderator by 7:30AM.

Timing

Each speaker is allotted thirty minutes for the presentation, but occasionally speakers either forget or ignore the time. Put yourself in the place of the audience or another speaker on the program and imagine how it would be if someone monopolized the time. It is suggested that you practice your talk beforehand, keeping track of elapsed time on the provided timer and recognizing that actual presentations usually take longer than rehearsals. If it is too long, cut the presentation (not necessarily the paper) to fit the time allotted.

It is *strongly* suggested that ONE or at most, two speakers present each paper (unless it is a Panel Discussion). ALL speakers must register for the Conference BEFORE the Presenter Registration Deadline in August in order to be published in the Program.

The session chair will tell you when to start, but most likely will be reluctant to tell you when to stop. Help the presiding officer, yourself and your audience by not exceeding your allotted speaking time.

Visual Aids

Visual aids should be used to complement the spoken word. They should be very concise, hitting key points. Bullet points are preferable to complete sentences.



A maximum of one or two visuals should be used per minute of presentation. Do not use all-text visuals that are nothing more than cues or notes and convey no additional information to the audience.

Giving Your Speech

Prepare your speech for delivery by having the manuscript printed in a large type, easy-to-read script format.

Practice your delivery, not just your speech. Stand straight at the lectern and look at the audience before you speak. Concentrate on your delivery. Speak clearly and at a pace somewhat slower than normal conversation. Avoid a monotone. Can you be heard throughout the room? Are you facing your audience and the microphone, instead of looking at the visual aids?

Time your delivery, particularly if you have been assigned a specific time limit. Most people speak in public at about 150 words per minute. In addition, you should allow at least 30 seconds per slide.

Good eye contact with your audience will do more to help your delivery than anything else. Use your natural body language, including gestures, to deliver your message. When you've spoken the last word of your speech, hold your position and look directly at the audience for a few more seconds. Allow your ending to sink in.

Nervousness is natural and you should make it work for you by directing this extra energy into eye contact, strong body language and vocal enthusiasm.

Dress Code for Presenters

Presenters should dress appropriately for their presentations. At a minimum, presenters should adhere to business casual attire. Professional dress is strongly encouraged. Treat your voice and body well on the day prior to your speech.