

San Mateo County Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) Fair Guidelines

1. All work should be done by the student, and must be an experiment using the scientific method unless entered in the Engineering category. Appropriate assistance may be provided by teachers, parents or others.
2. The electronic entry form for each project must be completed and submitted online; During the project check-in, each project will receive an information card, with project number, and will be attached to the project on the back upper right corner with the information facing inward.
3. All entrants are responsible for the installation, maintenance and removal of their projects. (See Master Calendar.) No taping, securing or gluing display or items to the tables, as projects need to remain moveable.
4. The project display and all related equipment and/or materials should be contained within the following dimensions: 122 centimeters (48 inches) wide, 76 centimeters (30 inches) deep, and 274 centimeters (108 inches) high. Project boards should be self-supporting and enclose all of the display items within the assigned space. Items that are too large should either be omitted (use photographs instead) or placed on the floor beneath the project display.
5. An abstract is required with each project submitted by 6th-12th graders. An abstract helps facilitate the work of the judges. An abstract is a brief summary (200 words or less) of the purpose of the project, the method of solution, and significant conclusions. (See *Abstract of Project* form.) A research notebook is optional at the SMC Fair. If one is displayed, a backup copy should be kept at home since there is the possibility of loss or damage during public display. (*Abstracts are optional for 5th graders.*)
6. No names or photos of participants or their schools should be visible on the project display; this includes project reports, data notebooks, etc. Please remove any awards or ribbons received from previous school/district science fairs.
7. Projects requiring electricity may be displayed, but not plugged in. Hiller Aviation Museum does not allow the project to be turned on during the display hours; judges may ask for a demonstration during the interviews. All electrical apparatus must be built according to standard electrical safety laws. Projects that use 110 volts or more may not use push-button switch (doorbell type) or open-knife switches. All projects using 110 volts or more must have a main disconnect switch of a type approved by the National Board of Underwriters. All wires must be of the size and insulation appropriate for the current and voltage used.
8. No liquids of any kind should be in project displays. Please substitute photographs or drawings instead. If there are sample liquid containers in the display, they must be empty.
9. Controlled substances, hazardous materials or sources of open flames cannot be used or exhibited in any project; e.g., marijuana; firearms of any kind, bullets, any project dealing with high powered projectiles, fireworks, carbon dioxide bombs; candles. Any project that deals with illegal substances or can cause severe physical injury or death is not allowed.
10. Valuable items, such as special equipment, cameras, recorders, microscopes, etc., are NOT allowed to be displayed; please use photographs or drawings to illustrate their use.
11. No hypodermic needles or syringes can be displayed with projects.
12. Food samples cannot be included in the display. Drawings, plastic food or photos may be used or their labeled containers.
13. Live animals, mounted birds, mammals, or any stuffed specimens are not be allowed in the displays. Projects that use animals should substitute pictures or drawings for the display. Bones are acceptable if they are clean and free of decaying matter. (Note: Bones ARE NOT accepted for display at the Bay Area Science Fair.)
14. If plants are in the display, they should be completely covered and sealed (either the entire plant or the pot and soil). This includes soil, vermiculite or any product that could be easily scattered.
15. Protists (bacteria, fungi, molds, etc.) cannot be exhibited. Photos or drawings should be used instead.
16. Gravel, sand, dirt must be tightly enclosed and sealed securely if they are on display.
17. Projects that include the use of animals or humans (including surveys) must follow the Science Fair Guidelines established by the State Humane Association of California. (See enclosed guidelines). For grades 7-12, Bay Area Science Fair Special Project Proposal Forms must be filled out prior to experimentation for possible project entry into the Bay Area Science Fair.
18. DVDs will be allowed to accompany a project display. (See DVD guidelines)
19. All projects must clearly distinguish between the work of the student participant and the work of others. Students participating in a research opportunity in industry, a university, hospital, or institution other than their school, must display only their research. Students must clearly specify the assistance received and the role and contributions of others in the project. **It is required that such projects be accompanied by a letter from the principal research director indicating the level of his/her involvement in the student project.** This letter should be included in the project notebook.
20. Parents and advisors are not permitted in the display areas during judging. Violations may result in disqualification of student participants.

Remember, hundreds of people will be viewing your project. Please think carefully about what you want on display since everything may be handled. Projects that include any of the specified non-allowable items will be disqualified. If you are in doubt about an item, either substitute or omit it. The San Mateo County Office of Education, Hiller Aviation Museum and its affiliates shall not be responsible for the damage, loss, or theft of any projects or project-related items.

I have read and understand the SMC Fair Guidelines and have complied with them. I fully understand that my project may be disqualified if it violates any of these guidelines.

I hereby give my consent to all photographs, audio-recordings, academic work, and/or video-recordings taken of me or my minor child by the SMCOE staff or their designee. I understand that any such photographs, audio-recordings, academic work, and/or video-recordings may be used by the SMCOE, or others with their consent, for educational, instructional, or promotional purposes determined by the district in broadcast and electronic media formats now existing or in the future created.

Signed,

Fair Participant(s)

Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

Note: Signatures of ALL participants and their parents/guardians are required upon project check-in.