

ABSTRACT REVIEW INSTRUCTIONS

1. General:

The purpose of the Waste Management Symposia (WMS) Program Advisory Committee (PAC) Program Development Meeting (PDM) is to review, and place received Abstracts in the most suitable Session at the WMS Conference, including rejecting Abstracts that do not meet the WMS quality and format criteria, and to schedule the Conference Sessions. These are the abstract review instructions used before and during the PDM.

There are the following three authority levels of abstract reviewers:

- (1) PAC Chair
- (2) Track Co-Chairs
- (3) Reviewers

The PAC Chair is responsible for the organization, initial Track assignments for the Reviewers, orderly conduct of the Program Development Meeting (PDM), and for approving all Abstract Rejection Letters or other disposition of rejected Abstracts. **Track Co-Chairs** are responsible for organizing the review of Abstracts online and at the tables designated for their Track and determine final sessions based on room allocations. **Reviewers**, which include Topic Lead Organizers, Topic Organizers and other Volunteers will develop and propose individual Sessions in each Track based on review and assignment of Abstracts. The Lead Topic Organizer is responsible to make sure the reviews are performed for their Topic that are received before the PDM.

All Abstracts must be reviewed and graded by at least two subject-knowledgeable Reviewers. Topic folders for each Track without an "X.0" (e.g., 3.0, 7.0, etc.) contain unassigned Abstracts and those with an "X.1" (e.g., 3.1, 7.1, etc.) contain proposed Poster Abstracts for their Track.

Only the Plenary, Panels, Roundtables and Workshops may be exempt from having an Abstract for each Oral Session presentation. All proposed papers shall have an abstract number.

At the PDM, **Topics** are converted into **Sessions**. Topic Lead Organizers and Organizers, shown on the Topic Listing (Form WM20), dependent on PDM abstract results and their involvement, may become the listed Session Lead Organizers and Session Additional Organizers listed in the Program. The information from the online data will be used to prepare the Program.

2. Session Organization Overview:

Abstracts tentatively assigned to a Topic by the WMS Staff are not "cast in concrete" because Session contents will be decided only after all Abstracts have been reviewed and tentatively placed in Sessions by the Reviewers. Although Abstracts are initially placed within requested and/or best-suited Topic, the Track Co-Chairs, Lead Organizers and Organizers should also consider these Abstracts for other Topics or similar Topics in other Tracks. Transfers of Abstracts between Tracks should be approved by the relevant Topic Lead Organizer where it originates and also the receiving Track Co-Chair before being reassigned online.

Reviewers should be seated at the table corresponding to their requested Primary or Secondary Track affiliation. Initial Reviewer assignments are based on Track affiliation; however, Reviewers should feel free to participate in reviews of other Tracks with approval of both affected Track Co-Chairs', especially if they are the Lead Organizer or Organizer of a Topic assigned in another Track.

Topics may be cancelled, modified, or added as deemed necessary by the Track Lead Co-Chair. When the Track is complete and with the review of the PAC Chair, Topics for that Track will be converted to a Session(s), merged, or eliminated from the Conference. Final Session titles should also be revised, if needed, based on the content of the accepted Abstracts per the Review Guidelines provided in Item 7 below.

3. Abstract Reviewers' Responsibilities:

Abstract Reviewers can make recommendations for the proper Topic for each Abstract and assist in the organization of the Topic, as requested by the Track Co-Chair(s). **Any two Reviewers can accept Abstracts, but rejections and mandatory revisions, require two reviewers plus the concurrence of an affected/cognizant Track Co-Chair.** Affected Topic Lead Organizers and Track Co-Chairs are responsible for writing the final draft rejection or mandatory revision which then goes to the PAC Chair for final approval. Once approved by the PAC Chair, the rejection or revision letter is provided to the Staff at the PDM to be subsequently provided to the author after the PDM.

Please abstain from reviewing Abstract's where you are the Author, Co-Author or from your own or competing companies in order to maintain impartiality of the review process and avoid any notion of a conflict of interest. Let the PAC Chair know if you need an additional Reviewer.

4. Topic/Session Lead Organizers' and Organizers' Responsibilities:

Prior to the PDM, periodically check other Topics on-line during the Abstract Review site for Abstracts that could be in the proposed Session. Checking the Review site every two weeks prior to September and the weekend before the PDM is recommended. During PDM an Abstract should only be moved to a different Topic outside the Track once prior agreement of the affected Track Co-Chairs and Lead Organizers has been received. The Session Organizer should also consult with the affected Track Co-Chairs to define new or additional Sessions as needed.

All Abstracts, including invited Abstracts, are subject to review and approval/rejection. The Topic Lead Organizer (or their PDM on-site designee) must be kept informed of transfer and problem Abstracts. The Track Co-Chairs shall review any recommendation of the Reviewers to revise or combine Abstracts and shall prepare outline letters to the Author(s) using the form letters provided at the PDM by the WMS Staff. All proposed/requested combinations of Abstracts require all the Authors' concurrence. Combining Abstracts is restricted to multiple Abstracts originating from: (i) the same organization; (ii) contractors working on the same project; or (iii) the same Author(s).

Any Abstract may be placed in a Poster Session if it meets the requirements as defined on the Online Review form. All Abstracts rejected by at least two Reviewers along with the related draft rejection letters are reviewed by one affected/cognizant Track Co-Chair and then submitted to the PAC Chair for final approval. The PAC Chair will edit, as deemed appropriate, and sign all final rejection letters. As an alternative to rejection, the Abstract should be considered for the Non-Paper Poster Session. This still allows the Author to attend and present, but not publish in the proceedings. The PAC Chair should be consulted for selection of this alternative option.

Abstracts designated as "Oral Only" but found unacceptable with no Oral Session space available in any relevant Track may be placed in the appropriate Poster Session (preferred) or rejected. WM Staff will later contact the primary Author and determine if they want to remove it or maintain it in that Poster session.

5. Track Co-Chairs' Responsibilities:

At least one-Track Co-Chair from each Track, preferably the Lead, shall attend the Sunday Technical Program Track Co-Chair meeting. The attending Track Co-Chair is responsible for promptly informing any non-attending Track Co-Chair(s) of the result of this meeting and any changes to the review process that will start the next day.

Responsibilities include:

Coordinate and monitor review of their Track Topics, resolve differences with Reviewer recommendations, and ensure that all Abstracts are given full, fair, and objective considerations. They may also electronically transfer an Abstract to a different Track/Topic, with that Track's Co-Chair approval.

Follow the development and organization of a Session and ensure preparation of draft letters to Authors of (i) rejected, (ii) combined or (iii) revised Abstracts using the forms provided by WM Staff. Obtain PAC Chairs approval for rejection draft letters and place with abstract in the final session "Reject" folder.

After all Abstracts in the Track have been reviewed, ensure that they have been transferred to the correct topic, and verify that the following information is correct: (i) proposed Session Title (ii) the order of Abstract presentation, and (iii) the recommended Session Lead Organizer, Session Co-Chairs, Paper Reviewers (one per Oral Session and one per Poster Session on each Subtopic) are identified, and (iv) the expected Session attendance. **All Abstracts must be accounted for in the online system and all information completed (with concurrence from all Topic Lead Organizers for each Topic assigned in the Track).**

Develop a priority and a sequencing of Track Sessions for use in Technical-Program Scheduling discussions and any alternative plans for Sessions being organized above the allocated Track targets. Form WM36 for Track Targets and Time Slots will be distributed before the PDM and will show room space and time allocations for each Track. The Track Co-chairs will use this form to schedule their sessions in the available spaces and confirm with the PAC Chair their placement. This will be provided to the WMS staff to be uploaded to the Preliminary Program Schedule module.

6. Preliminary Technical Program Development Process:

After all Abstracts have been reviewed, Sessions formalized, and Track Co-Chair Session Schedule confirmed by the PAC Chair and turned in to the WMS Staff, at least one-Track Co-Chair will convene with the PAC Chair in a separate Track Co-Chairs meeting to organize the Technical Program. Other Volunteers are not required to attend but may do so. The PAC Chair may display at the PDM a digital schedule as it proceeds.

The process will generally follow the steps used in the Track Co-Chairs Session Program Development

1. A Co-Chair from each Track enters the title of the selected Session in each of the assigned Conference-time blocks provided by the PAC Chair, and notify the PAC Chair of the results for the PDM digital display.
2. All present Track Co-Chairs review the composite schedule for conflicts and suggestions.
3. Track Co-Chairs may add their additional Sessions to the Schedule, with approval from the PAC Chair, and where acceptable space is available.
4. Track Co-Chairs again review the composite schedule and adjust to avoid Session conflicts*.
5. The full Symposium schedule is displayed to all attending and if possible, virtual PDM participants on Monday evening.
6. Track Co-Chairs reconvene on Tuesday morning with any critical issues and recommended modifications.

** Oral and Panel Sessions should avoid, if possible, schedule conflicts with the same Tracks' Poster Session. The exception is Track 1.0 and Track 9.0 Cross-Cutting Poster Session and Track 12.0 Posters. Track 1.0 and 9.0 Cross-Cutting Poster Sessions, by their crosscutting nature, will conflict with all Tracks. Track 12.0 Poster Session for **Non-Paper** Posters is available to accept transferred Abstracts or marginally acceptable presentations from all other Tracks.*

7. Review Guidance:

Abstracts should be classified as either technical or policy/program on the on-line form to aid in assignment. Criteria for acceptance of Abstracts are based upon the significance and value of the information to Attendees. Papers and Presentations that have been presented or published elsewhere will not be accepted without updating.

a. Abstract Review Guidelines:

Abstracts shall meet the guidelines established in this document along with guidelines established in the PAC Policies (Form WM01) and in the applicable Call for Participation. These guidelines call for the rejection of Abstracts that fall outside of the scope of the WMS Conference. Proposed exceptions or commercial sales pitches should be promptly brought to the attention of the PAC Chair for approval.

Refrain from accepting more than two abstracts for Oral presentation per Presenter. Additional Abstracts may be considered for a Poster Session or rejected. (Attendance cancellation by the Presenter could severely disrupt the Conference program when more than two Abstracts for Oral sessions are accepted in the Program.)

To bolster the number of abstracts assigned to Track 4 (NPP), care should be taken when assigning Abstracts between Track 3 (LLW) and Track 4. If an Abstract is related to the waste generated, treated, or packaged at the nuclear power plant, it should be assigned to Track 4.

Track Co-Chairs determine the assignments and sequence of events for Reviewers in their respective Tracks. The following eight-step review process for Track Co-chairs is recommended for most Track Topics:

1. Scan all Abstracts in the Track and ensure that they are assigned to the appropriate Topic. (Preferably this is performed online well before the PDM by the Track Co-Chairs, Topic Lead Organizers, and Additional Organizers).
2. Evaluate each Abstract using the WMS on-line Abstract Rating form, sort acceptable from non-acceptable Abstracts, and rank acceptable Oral Presentation Abstracts.
3. Select the best Abstracts that support the Topic (or a new theme) and meet the intent of the Conference objectives and guidelines for either a half (four abstracts) or full (eight abstracts) session.
4. Transfer non-selected Abstracts to a related open Oral Session or to the Track's Poster Session.
5. Repeat steps 2-4 for additional Track Sessions.
6. Consider a new theme or session if sufficient abstracts warrant and support the new theme or session.
7. Begin organizing the Poster Session into Sub-Topics.
8. Complete the WMS Final Session Schedule with the PAC Chair and verify accountability and proper documentation of all of your Track's Abstracts (disposition of initially-received, subsequently transferred, and rejected Abstracts).

b. Oral versus Poster Session Assignments/Presentations:

Some topics are better presented in Poster sessions, others in Oral or Panel sessions. Technical content and depth are not the only criteria for "Oral versus Poster Sessions" assignments. Poster assignments shall not be viewed as inferior but as equal in importance to Oral session assignments. Reviewers should make Abstract assignment recommendations based on the following criteria:

1. Lengthy, complex presentations are often good candidates for Poster presentation.
2. Complex or extensive visual aids are best presented in a Poster format.
3. Presentations that would benefit from one-to-one Author-Audience interactions are excellent candidates for Poster presentation or a roundtable session.
4. Presentations explaining or demonstrating design, process, model, or computer programs that are well defined are probably best suited for a Poster Session.
5. Presentations that are only of interest to a small group of attendees are better suited for a Poster or a Roundtable Session.
6. Abstracts from Authors who have cancelled presentations at prior WM Conferences and that the Reviewers and/or the Track Co-Chair doubt or suspect may cancel, may be better suited for a Poster Session where the potential cancellation be easier to address in the conference program.
7. Highly rated Abstracts that cannot be grouped with other Oral presentations should be considered for a Poster presentation. Poster presentations do not need to be as closely related to each other as presentations in an Oral Session. (Check with other Track Co-Chairs, Reviewers and Organizers to determine possible compatibility within related Sessions, especially crosscutting Tracks 1 and 9).
8. Conversely, an exceptional Poster Abstract may be converted to an Oral presentation in the event of the need for an additional Oral presentation or the cancellation of an accepted Oral presentation, (if the author agrees.) **Please email any possible replacement abstracts to Lisa at lparenti@wmsym.org.**
9. If an Author has indicated they prefer a Poster Session, do not add them to an Oral Session unless they have confirmed this change in writing. Please provide the change authorization to the WM Staff before you depart from the PDM. Historically, we have found that many of these changes are later withdrawn.

c. Acceptance/Rejection Criteria:

Use the above WMS Review and Guidance. It requires a minimum of two Reviewers to accept an Abstract and a minimum of two Reviewers plus at least one-Track Co-Chair to reject an Abstract. Additionally, the PAC Chair will decide final disposition.

d. Late Abstracts /Sessions

If an Abstract is received after the Monday PDM, but before the due date of the Draft Papers, the Lead Session Organizer for Oral and Panel/Paper Sessions may be asked to review and accept the late Abstract if space is available and it is noteworthy. For Poster Sessions, the Lead Track Co-Chair may be asked to review and accept the late Abstract for their Track's Poster Session.

If an Abstract is received after the Draft paper deadline, it will be assigned to the Non-Paper Poster Session unless it is a specific replacement for a cancelled presentation in an oral session. Exceptions are granted on a case-by-case basis by the PAC Chair. The Paper Reviewer should provide input, but if they cannot be reached the Lead Session Organizer or the respective Lead Track Co-Chair can make other arrangements.

New Sessions after the PDM can only be added with the approval of the PAC Chair and are contingent upon room availability.

Note – When adding a Panel Session please do not reserve Abstract numbers unless a paper will be submitted by the Panelist in that Session. (Abstract numbers should not be reserved for Panelists PowerPoint presentations or extended Abstracts, only for full papers.)

Oral Sessions cannot be converted into Panel Sessions after September 1st without PAC Chair approval since the room assignments have been set. Panel and Roundtable Session must be scheduled and pre-approved by August 31st.

e. Session Definition:

1. For full Oral Sessions, a maximum of eight Abstracts (including invited Abstracts) consistent with the objectives of the session, will be selected for presentation. **Permission to exceed eight presentations must be given by the PAC Chair.** Each full Oral Session should have a minimum of seven presentations. With prior approval of the Track Co-Chairs and PAC Chair, one Presenter could occupy two slots. Sessions with six or less Abstracts at the PDM should be reduced to four presentations and converted into a half Session, unless arrangements are made and confirmed to find additional abstracts.
2. Sessions may be canceled, renamed, added and/or changed to Workshops or Panels with the concurrence of the PAC Chair.
3. Care must be taken to have a balanced Session that is not dominated by one organization, its concepts or equipment.
4. Track Co-Chairs should flag Abstracts of Authors who have a history of cancellations at WM Conferences. The relevant past WMS data will be provided to the Lead Track Co-Chair but can be shared with any Reviewer requesting this information. Corrective action may be warranted with the consent of the PAC Chair. The affected Reviewers must also be alerted to these potential cancellations. Many of these are presentations not included on the Proceedings but listed in the prior Programs.
5. Session Organizers should recommend an Abstract sequence that anticipates some author cancellations but also enhances the overall Session program, e.g., overview or program summaries often provide excellent introductions to more detailed technical presentations. Consider audience preferences and re-order the early positions to flow from a) the reliable presenters compared to presenters with a historical cancellation record or who are deemed to have a high probability of withdrawal or no-show, b) the overview presentations to the specific, or c) the program/policy presentations to a technical presentation.
6. Poster Sessions will be organized according to Tracks (example: High-Level Waste or Low-Level Waste) and then Topics. Determine the new Topic grouping based on Abstract commonality. Each Poster Topic should contain at least five but no more than 15 Abstracts. (Preferably, one Reviewer is assigned per Topic and the 5-15 range of papers helps ease any consolidation due to late Poster cancellations.) Within a single Poster Topic, arrange two Abstracts next to each other if they have the same Author so the Presenter can handle/serve both Poster booths more readily. Also arrange Abstracts in sequential order for similar sites or subtopics. No Subtopic should have less than five posters, or they should be re-combined or have just one poster session in that Track.
7. For Session Co-Chair Selection, consider a non-US expert Co-Chairing along with a US expert; a PAC Member with a PAC Supporter; recognized experts in the topic area; and individuals from different companies or agencies. Do not consider the Presenters from the same Session as Co-Chairs, but a Presenter's Co-authors are acceptable if they are not speaking. Refrain from assigning one individual as a Session Co-Chair for more than two sessions for the entire conference. (Cancellation by the individual could severely disrupt the program when more than two Co-Chair positions are designated.) The Track Co-Chairs and/or PAC Chair have additional candidates for this honorary position if candidates cannot be found from the Track or PAC Supporter list.
8. For Session Paper Reviewers or Panel Reporters, consider both US and non-US subject matter experts for this position. Be sure they understand their roles and responsibilities and are willing to provide reviews and Panel Reports according to the WMS schedule. (Please take into consideration whether the individual selected as the Panel Reporter has performed their duties as requested previously in a timely fashion.)

9. After the Track Sessions have been formalized, the Track Co-Chairs will support the development of the Technical Program. A general program criterion will be to avoid concurrent scheduling of Sessions of common interest. Exceeding time and/or space limitations may require the PAC Chair to direct the Track Co-Chairs to shift Oral Sessions to Poster Sessions.
10. The listed Lead Organizer or Additional Organizers can print any Final forms, if desired, for later follow-up after the PDM. Track Co-Chairs should also obtain these records for all Sessions in their respective Track. WMS Staff will be requesting verification and accuracy from the Session Lead Organizer and Track Co-Chairs in the preparation of the Technical Program in the ensuing months.
11. The WMS policy is that one Attendee can give a maximum of two oral presentations at the Conference. This allows not only more Presenters and diverse views but also allows the Presenter to spend time improving the quality of their two accepted oral presentations. If more than two oral presentations are accepted, the PAC Chair and WMS Staff will ask the Author to withdraw, convert to a Poster session, or find a different Presenter until the policy is met.
12. All Session Co-Chair, Paper Reviewer and Panel Reporter designations must be completed on the online Final Session forms