

AMS Green Conference Guidelines

As a scientific and professional organization whose members are keenly aware of environmental issues, AMS strives to be in the forefront of environmental stewardship. As atmospheric scientists, we are particularly concerned about rapidly increasing atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations and associated climate change. The following guidelines summarize the AMS's commitment to conducting conferences in a manner that stresses responsible use of natural resources and minimization of greenhouse gas emissions and other waste and pollutants. These guidelines are provided for coordinators, committees, contractors and all AMS members, and aim to educate and inspire continued mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions both within AMS and the larger society. These guidelines should be continually evaluated as technologies and mitigation options continue to develop.

Conference Organization and Planning

1. Participants and presenters are advised in advance that the meeting will strive to minimize environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions. The registration materials ask that participants respect and assist this process as they feel appropriate.
2. For all goods procured for the meeting, preference is given to the most environmentally-appropriate, locally-produced alternatives that are available at a reasonable price. We are willing to pay more for environmental responsibility.
3. Printed material are kept to a minimum, and all printed paper (i.e. conference proceedings, registration papers, photocopying etc.) aims to have certified recycled content, with a high proportion of post-consumer content. Chlorine-bleached paper is avoided.
4. Gifts for participants are minimized, but when provided are minimally packaged and aim to minimize the use of toxic materials.
5. Conference CDs are not offered, rather materials such as abstracts and proceedings are provided online.
6. Attendees are provided with options to offset their transportation-related emissions at the time of registration.
7. Steps are taken to minimize environmental impact of transportation to the conference and during the conference. This includes choosing a locale accessible by public transportation, walking and biking.
8. Attendees and organizers are encouraged to walk, bicycle, carpool or use public transit to attend meetings and events whenever possible. Venues are evaluated in part based on their environmental policies and practices.
9. Attendees who fly are encouraged to travel by direct flights.
10. Sponsors and donors are actively sought who reflect positive environmental values and practices.

Registration

11. Measures are taken to reduce paper waste at check-in (e.g., short registration forms, computerized systems).
12. Registration package and name tags are provided in a reusable or reused holder.
13. Placards and banners are reusable or made from recycled materials.

Program

14. Educational efforts are undertaken as part of the program to make participants aware of their environmental impacts during the conference.
15. Attendees are reminded of waste reduction and other environmental opportunities during the conference.

16. The program includes on-line informational opportunities for people who choose not to attend the conference.
17. Any conference evaluation form has a section for participants to comment on the environmentally-friendly practices of the conference and provide suggestions for improvement.
18. Indoor climate-control systems are set to avoid excessive heating or cooling.

Conference Site Systems

19. Recycling and composting systems are in place with convenient and well-marked receptacles.
20. Distribution of handouts and session notes is limited to those with a genuine need or interest.
21. Exhibitors are encouraged to reduce environmental impact through use of reusable materials and by limiting handouts and giveaways. It is suggested that instead they collect business cards or names of those interested in receiving more information or product samples.
22. Receptacles are provided at convenient locations for the return of nametag holders at the end of the meeting.
23. Lights and other electrical equipment are turned off when not in use.

Food Systems

24. Explicit effort is made to utilize food that is locally grown, organic, low in processing, purchased in bulk and emphasizing vegetarian options.
 25. No Styrofoam is used. Disposable dishes, cutlery, straws, stir-sticks are not used for coffee breaks and meals, nor are single portion package items (ketchup, coffee, cream, sugar etc.) Reusable china and cutlery is used, or if necessary biodegradable tableware (i.e. made from corn/sugarcane etc.) which is then preferably composted. Disposable napkins if used are made from recycled paper and are bleach free.
 26. Local tap water (filtering to improve taste if necessary) is used in place of bottled water, with preferably reusable or compostable cups.
 27. Leftover food is given away to appropriate food banks.
 28. There is a composting program to remove and compost organic material.
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