



## Austin Energy Regional Science Festival 2012

# ELEMENTARY

# RULES FOR PARTICIPATION

### 1. Participation

Students **must be in grades 3 – 6** to participate in the Elementary Division of the Austin Energy Regional Science Festival.

### 2. Project Forms

All Elementary students must complete an **Elementary Project Research Form** and submit it with their registration packets.

### 3. Scientist Training

The Scientist Training program is **not available** at the Elementary Level.

### 4. Projects That Are Not Allowed

No student in the Elementary Division will be allowed to design or conduct any science project that involves

- firearms, explosives, or discharge air pressure canister devices (i.e. potato guns)
- **growing bacteria or mold at home**
- causing pain, suffering, sickness, or death of an animal
- any activity or substance that presents a danger to the student or the environment, including hazardous chemicals or radioactive materials

### 5. Display and Safety Guidelines

All student projects must follow the guidelines listed below to be allowed to display in the festival exhibit hall.

#### Items Not Allowed

- **No organisms; living, dead or preserved (plants or animals)**
- No human/animal parts or body fluids (for example, blood, urine)
- No human or animal food
- No bacteria or mold cultures
- No liquids – laboratory/household chemicals including water
- No poisons, drugs, controlled or hazardous substances
- No sharp items (for example: syringes, needles, pipettes, knives, tacks, nails)
- No glass or glass objects unless encased or an integral and necessary part of a commercial product (for example, a computer screen)
- No pressurized tanks or containers
- No batteries with open top cells (so that battery acid can be seen)
- No dirt, soil, gravel, rocks, sand, waste product, etc.
- No project, device, activity, or substance that may be deemed hazardous to student health or safety
- No photographs or pictures of animals or people in surgical techniques, dissections or necropsies.

#### Discouraged Items

- Expensive, breakable or fragile items.

*(More on next page)*

## **Allowed and Encouraged Items**

- Photographs, drawings, stuffed animals/artificial plants or imitation (play) food should be used to depict the prohibited or discouraged items.
- Students should always plan on taking photographs of their project steps as a visual explanation of their effort. Students must ask permission before photographing any other individuals for display on project.
- Be sure to properly credit/acknowledge all sources of graphics and photographers on the display board (Photograph taken by ...).
- Students may use a computer and printer for written parts of the project.
- Electrical projects may use batteries as sources of electricity.

## **6. Display Board**

Project display should be on sturdy tri-fold board available at local craft and office supply stores. Written material, drawings and pictures should be securely attached to the display board.

Projects will be displayed on tables that are 36 inches high. Size of display area may not exceed the following measurements: 15" deep, 48" wide, and 72" high. Due to space limitations, displays that exceed these measurements cannot be accepted.

## **7. Electricity for Your Display**

- Electrical projects may use batteries as sources of electricity.
- If a project requires electricity, indicate this need when registering the project online.

## **8. Project Organization at Austin Energy Regional Science Festival**

*(See Project Types & Judging Criteria in this document or on the website for more details.)*

**A. Grade Level:** Each project is categorized by grade level or grade level equivalent

**B. Project Categories:** There are two types of projects that students may enter. These categories are explained in detail later in this guide.

(1) Exhibit: Model or Display

(2) Experiment

**Note:** Many students have difficulty discerning the difference between Exhibit and Experiment projects. Remember, an **Experiment** follows the steps of the scientific method. It clearly asks a question to which you do not already know the answer without testing. An **Exhibit** is an explanation of how or why something works. It reveals details about the topic. An Exhibit is an explanation, not a question.

*(More on next page)*

## **9. Parental Help**

Some students are fortunate to have parents who have time to help them. However, parents who do the thinking or build the project for them do not really help students. Parents are encouraged to help their children in these ways:

- Read and discuss the "Rules for Participation"
- Select projects which are appropriate for the child's age and grade level
- Plan and manage project work, documentation and clean-up times
- Take your child to the public library or other places for research
- Help draw straight lines for a young child
- Listen to your child's oral explanation of the project
- Ensure the child's safety

*Students must list any parental help in the References and Acknowledgements section of the project.*

## **10. Registration Deadlines**

All online registrations must be submitted at [www.sciencefest.austinenergy.com](http://www.sciencefest.austinenergy.com) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 9, 2012. All paperwork must also be submitted to our office by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 9, 2012.

**Due to space limitations, late registration will not be permitted.**