

## **Suggestions on How to Organize and Run a Full-Day Technical Meeting**

Judson L. Kenoyer, HPS Society Support Committee

The following are suggestions on how to organize and run a full-day technical meeting, assuming that:

- This is part of a local chapter effort.
- The organizer has support from his/her local Board.
- Funding for the meeting will be coming from the money the participants pay to attend the meeting and subsidization by the local chapter or affiliated vendors, if applicable.
- The location is such that the venue may be a small convention center, hotel, or restaurant.

These suggestions are listed by the different phases of the overall effort: the planning stage, holding the meeting itself, and post-event activities.

### **Planning the Event**

The following are items that need to be considered or acted upon during the planning phase of the event:

- Start the process at least six months in advance of the proposed date for the meeting.
- Get help from within the chapter; form a Program Committee with each member having specific responsibilities during the entire event. These may range from identifying speakers, gathering information on the different venues available, helping make phone calls, etc. [See the list of suggested topics at the end of this document.](#)
- Develop a theme for the meeting; get ideas from others who have either organized meetings in the past or from those who remember themes over the past 4-5 years.
- After the theme is determined, decide how many speakers and the (approximate) length of time for each talk. It is good to plan for a break in the morning and one in the afternoon. People will need them for restroom breaks and/or networking opportunities, and the breaks provide some flexibility with the timing of the presentations in case one or more of the speakers talk too long or there is good, long discussion or question/answer sessions after the presentations. Different members of the Program Committee can take the responsibility of identifying potential speakers and ensuring that they continue to be available and are working on their presentations prior to the meeting. If handouts are going to be provided, Program Committee members can also help ensure that they are ready for the meeting. It is important to keep the speakers informed on the number of people expected at the meeting as well as the other topics and speakers that are going to be on the program. [See attached suggestions on how to obtain speakers.](#)
- Decide on the date to have the meeting; try not to interfere with other important dates (e.g., holidays, major sporting events, or other meetings that have already been planned, such as the national HPS meeting or ANS conference). The day of the week may also be important. Think about how convenient it will be for people in your area to get off work on that day. Many chapters favor Saturday meetings, and the possibility exists to host the meeting near an attraction so that families can attend. This may be especially important if the chapter covers a wide geographical area. The organizers should also have hotels with an appropriate number of rooms blocked off so that travelers can arrive the night before. Adequate time

should be given for planning so that the hotel manager can set a special price and attendees have time to reserve rooms. Some employers require a large lead time to financially plan for meeting attendance. This should be kept in mind during planning.

- Decide on the length of the meeting (e.g., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with registration starting at 7 a.m. or 7:30 a.m.).
- Decide on the venue (e.g., hotel, restaurant, convention center). This will take some research to determine the availability of different-sized rooms and services/costs associated with the choices. Some hotels or restaurants will provide the meeting room for “free” if you can guarantee a certain number of people and/or meals/food and beverages will be purchased. You will have to estimate the number of attendees and decide on the type of seating (e.g., round tables, long tables organized in rows, chairs only, etc.).
- Decide on what type of food will be needed for the meeting; the exact choices are not important early in the planning process but can be decided on later. But the type of food, number of breaks (with snacks), continental breakfast, coffee service, buffet for lunch over different entrees, etc., will impact the overall cost per person and, therefore, the overall cost for the meeting.
- Decide on a maximum cost per person that is reasonable for your geographical area and determine if the chapter Board is willing to subsidize the cost if practical or necessary. If the cost per person is too high, it will impact the attendance at the meeting.
- Other costs may arise from additional services provided by the venue. These could include:
  - Rental fees for equipment (projectors, screens, overhead projector, computer image projector, laser pointers, electronic signal splitters if two or more screens are used, audio equipment such as speakers or sound systems).
  - Continuous coffee/soda service.
  - Charge for use of the room.
  - Set-up/break-down charges.

A key point when negotiating with staff members at the venue is to find out what is provided at no cost, what you can bring in yourself, and what items they state that they have to provide (as part of the package or as an additional cost to you).

- Depending on your chapter size and the number of affiliate members (i.e., local companies) that the chapter has, it could be worthwhile asking the affiliates if they would like to assist with the cost of the meeting. One or more could “sponsor” the overall meeting or part of it. An affiliate could pay for one of the breaks and in turn could receive special recognition or additional advertising during the meeting.
- You could provide a time during the meeting when representatives from the affiliate members can say a few words about their equipment and/or services. If there are tables and space available near or outside the meeting room, those representatives could staff small exhibits during the breaks. Financial support for the meeting from the affiliate members will be easier to obtain if they feel they can get access to attendees.
- Decide early in the planning process if proceedings are going to be a product of the meeting. This adds an entirely new level of formality to the meeting. Authors/speakers will have to provide copies of their presentations to the meeting organizers a month or more in advance of the meeting (if the proceedings are going to be handed out at the meeting) or may have to get some of their material cleared for release by the organizations for which they work. Proceedings can be in the form of paper documents, or CDs can be made with copies of the

presentations on them. One advantage to this is that you get assurance that the talk will occur since you have the paper in advance. If a speaker cannot meet his/her obligation, there is time to add an alternative speaker or even an affiliate member talk can be substituted for the original speaker.

- Get advertising for the meeting out early (at least two months prior to the meeting). Use the chapter's newsletter, emails, announcements at chapter dinner meetings, special mailings, and any other avenue available. Promote early registration. Network with administrators with larger membership, such as state radiation control groups, power plants, etc., to promote the meeting.

## **Running the Meeting**

It takes more than one person to run the meeting, as you will see below. These are just some of the activities that need to be covered:

- An example agenda (with brief descriptions of each talk) is included as [Attachment 1](#). It shows times, speakers, topics, breaks, lunch, etc.
- Decide who is going to facilitate the meeting. Will it be the current president of the chapter? The president-elect? Other Board members? The best choice is probably the person who chaired the Program Committee, but if he/she is going to be tied up with the ongoing interactions with the venue personnel making sure things go well, then the current president or someone else can do it. The facilitator would open the meeting, provide directions, introduce speakers, keep the meeting running on time, and provide closing statements.
- Registration for the meeting should start at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the technical session; an hour is better. Printed name tags let everyone identify each attendee and allow some control for people utilizing food and beverages during breaks. This also allows for a computer database of attendees that can be used for future meetings, for membership drives, and as an additional benefit to hand out to the affiliate members if they have financially supported the meeting.
- Make sure the speakers stay close to their allotted times for their presentations. It is important to leave time after each presentation for questions and discussion.
- It helps to have the speakers send a brief biography to the meeting organizers prior to the meeting. Thirty seconds to a minute is plenty of time to introduce the speakers, so the biography has to be brief and concise.

## **Post-Event Activities**

- A follow-up meeting should be held by members of the Program Committee and representatives of the chapter's Board to discuss the results of the meeting. Discussion points should be:
  - What went right?
  - What went wrong?
  - Where did issues arise?
  - How could we improve the effort for next year?
  - What was the attendance?
  - How many no-shows were there?

- How many walk-ins were there?
  - How did the overall costs compare to the original estimates?
- Copies of the presentations could be put on the chapter's Web site, or a CD of the presentations could be distributed to the attendees. Attention has to be made to any copyrighted materials that were used in the presentations, and some material may have to go through a clearance process by the companies for which the presenters work.
- An alternative to distributing copies of the presentations would be to have a good summary of the meeting presented in the chapter's newsletter.

**Attachment 1**  
**Baltimore-Washington Chapter of the Health Physics Society**  
**Annual Meeting Agenda - Radiological Emergency Response**  
**Date: 21 May 2007**

Location: Sheraton Hotel, 10207 Wincopin Circle, Columbia, MD

8:00 Registration, vendors exhibits, coffee, and refreshments

9:00 Welcome

9:10 Revision of the EPA Protective Action Guides (Sara DeCair, EPA)

The EPA is currently drafting a revision of its Protective Action Guides (PAGs) for radiological emergencies. The new guidance will be based on the ICRP 66 dose conversion factors. This talk will discuss the changes that are being considered.

9:45 DHS Protective Action Guides for Radiological Dispersal Devices and Improvised Nuclear Devices (John MacKinney, EPA)

In January 2006, DHS published protective action guides for RDDs and INDs for public comment and for interim use. The guides selected optimization as the criteria for evaluating cleanup actions. The DHS guides and the public comments received will be discussed.

10:15 Coffee

10:30 Implementing the DHS Late Phase Optimization PAG (Stephen McGuire, NRC)

In the DHS PAG guidance, the late phase criterion for evaluation of cleanup options is optimization. A method that can be used to implement the criterion will be discussed.

11:00 IAEA Guidance for Recovery from Radiological Emergencies (Elizabeth Thompson, NRC)

In 2005 the International Atomic Energy Agency published new guidance on protective actions for radiological emergencies that was based in large part on the lessons learned from the Chernobyl and Goiania accidents. The IAEA guidance and lessons learned will be discussed.

11:30 Guidance on the Use of Potassium Iodine and Implementation during Radiological Emergencies (Patricia Milligan, NRC)

	In 2005, the FDA revised its guidance on the administration of potassium iodide to protect against the intake of radioactive iodines. The new guidance and its basis will be discussed. Implementation of the new guidance will also be discussed.
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Affiliates
1:15	The BWC-HPS First Responder Assistance Team (Judson Kenoyer, Dade Moeller & Associates)
	In 2006 the BWC-HPS initiated the development of a "First Responder Assistance Team" for radiological emergencies. This presentation will describe the efforts to date to line up with the national HPS technical assistance program, the vision of the overall effort, short- and long-term expectations, and details of the current training program.
1:45	Ingestion of Polonium-210—What We Know and What We Don't Know (Mike Noska, FDA)
	Polonium-210 has been used as a lethal poison. What do we know about how polonium-210 behaves in the body?
2:15	Break
2:30	Practical Problems in Radiological Emergency Response
	What really happens: A discussion of the practical problems that have been encountered in responding to radiological emergencies.
3:15	Open Discussion
3:45	Awards
4:00	BW Chapter Business Meeting
4:30	Close meeting

## **Suggested Topics for a Health Physics Society Chapter Meeting**

Laser use, laser safety  
Food irradiation  
Radon, general, regulations  
Radon abatement techniques  
Radar installations (military installations?)  
Cell phone use—radiation biology studies  
Hazmat topics  
Radiation response topics, patient sorting  
First-responder training (members can meet first responders, commanders)  
Train-the-trainer meetings  
History of radiation, in general, in area, older companies  
Nuclear power safety, training opportunities, security, new technology  
President-elect chapter visit  
State/federal regulations update, issues  
Meet the state regulators  
State x-ray program  
Digital x rays, how they work, new uses, technology  
CT scanning, how they work, new uses, technology  
Nanotechnology—health physics  
Medical uses of radiation, new medical modalities (dual-energy CT, PET scanning, shielding, health physics)  
Linear accelerators use  
HDR technology  
Radiation safety in pharmaceutical production  
Radiation safety in commercial nuclear medicine hot labs, new pharmacy regulations

Please add to this list!!! If you have suggestions for more topics please contact the [chair of the Society Support Committee](#).

## **Suggestions on How to Obtain Speakers for a Technical Meeting**

John M. Salsman, HPS Society Support Committee

For each of the suggestions below, the idea is to contact the group, indicate you intend to hold a local chapter Health Physics Society technical meeting, and see if the group would be willing to make a presentation. It would be beneficial if you could discuss the topic for the meeting.

- Contact the state radiation control agency.
- Contact your NRC regional office and/or headquarters.
- Contact any nearby nuclear power facilities.
- Contact any nearby government health physics-related agencies or national laboratories (i.e., EPA, NIST, DOE).
- Contact semiprivate professional groups (i.e., INPO, ANS, NEI, CRCPD, etc.).
- Contact faculty of nearby universities/colleges/medical schools/health science centers with health physics, medical physics, or nuclear engineering programs.
- Sponsor a student papers meeting for nearby institutions of higher education.
- Contact nearby medical institutions/cancer-treatment centers.
- Contact health physics equipment vendors (i.e., Canberra, SAIC, Landauer, Global Dosimetry, etc.).
- Contact your HPS chapter liaison.
- Contact other health physics-related professional groups (i.e., CIH, AAPM).
- Contact large private employers with health physics-related activities (i.e., Boeing, ICN, GE, etc.).
- [Use the resources available on the Mountain and Plains Education and Research Center Health Physics program Web page.](#)