



The Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

March 22, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTAL ELEMENTS

FROM: BILL RICHARDSON *Bill Richardson*

SUBJECT: Department of Energy Notice DOE N 110.3, "Conference Management"

The Notice on "Conference Management" is attached for your action. The Notice establishes Department of Energy (DOE) policy, procedures, and expectations for effectively managing DOE or DOE contractor sponsored conferences and DOE or DOE contractor employees' participation in or attendance at any conference. The Department's conference policy is designed to minimize conference costs consistent with good management practices and effective mission accomplishment.

This Notice is published for immediate implementation. DOE contractors will receive a unilateral modification to revise List B of their contracts--per paragraph (b) of the laws, regulations and DOE directives clause of the contract within 90 days of the effective date of this Notice.

If you have any questions concerning the Notice, please contact the Executive Secretariat at 202-586-5230.

Attachment



Approved: 3-22-99

Expiration: 3-22-00

SUBJECT: CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT

1. OBJECTIVES. To establish requirements and responsibilities with respect to managing conferences sponsored by the Department of Energy (DOE) or by DOE contractors (when using funds that will be reimbursed by DOE) and with respect to attendance by DOE and DOE contractor employees. To reduce conference costs to the minimum amount that will permit good management practices and effective mission accomplishment; ensure that the appropriate number of DOE and DOE contractor employees attend conferences; and clarify the requirements for funding conferences in compliance with existing laws and regulations.
2. CANCELLATION. None.
3. APPLICABILITY.
 - a. DOE Elements. Except for the exclusions stated in Paragraph 3c, this Notice applies to all DOE Elements. For purposes of this Notice, a conference is defined as a meeting, seminar, retreat, symposium, or similar event that involves official travel.
 - b. Contractors. Except for the exclusions stated in Paragraph 3c, the Contractor Requirements Document (CRD) at Attachment 1 sets forth requirements that apply to DOE contractors. Compliance with the CRD will be required to the extent set forth in the contract.
 - c. Exclusions. This Notice does not apply to the following situations:
 - (1) formal, structured training programs (including seminars specifically held for training purposes) that have specific objectives identified to improve certain knowledge, skills, and abilities;
 - (2) activities concerning work not funded by DOE that is conducted by DOE contractors;
 - (3) meetings requiring only local travel;
 - (4) Federal Advisory Committee meetings;

- (5) contract preproposal, bid opening, and negotiations;
- (6) public hearings and associated briefings;
- (7) audit, inspection, and investigation activities;
- (8) DOE technical program/project reviews; and,
- (9) activities funded through arrangements such as grants and cooperative agreements.

4. REQUIREMENTS.

- a. A senior agency official must approve DOE sponsorship (or co-sponsorship) or funding of a conference. A senior official is the head of a first-tier Headquarters or field organization. This authority cannot be delegated below this official's principal deputy. DOE field offices should provide a copy of the conference approval to the Director, Office of Field Management.
- b. In managing DOE sponsored conferences, including conferences that are co-sponsored, funded, or co-funded by DOE Departmental Elements must do the following:
 - (1) Keep Federal expenditures for conferences to the minimum necessary to accomplish program objectives.
 - (2) Determine that each conference will make a cost-effective contribution to accomplishing the program mission or improving DOE's operation.
 - (3) Independently justify a recurring conference (i.e., Departmental Elements should not assume that an annual conference must be held merely because it has been held annually).
 - (4) Select sites that minimize conference costs by, among other actions, minimizing conference administrative costs and attendees' travel and time costs, and maximizing the use of Government-owned or Government-provided facilities.
 - (5) Select sites only after evaluating cost differences among prospective locations. The selection process should identify opportunities to save costs in selecting a particular conference site or the timing of the conference (e.g., off-season rates). Offices must maintain a record of costs of alternative sites. Avoid selecting resort or recreational sites unless true cost savings will result.

- (6) Make binding conference arrangements only after obtaining the approval required by this Notice. Employees are reminded that only designated contracting officers have authority to make contractual commitments on behalf of the Department. (Do not make tentative commitments before obtaining the approval required by this Notice, (including contracting officer approval) unless the circumstances are extraordinary, the tentative commitments are critical to mission accomplishment, and minimum funds are committed.)
 - (7) Comply with applicable statutes and regulations on conflict of interest and ensure DOE attendees also comply.
 - (8) Avoid commercial conference facilities for DOE-sponsored conferences involving classified or sensitive information.
 - (9) Use a format similar to that in Attachment 3, "Suggested Format for Conference Approval Request," in requesting conference approval to ensure necessary information is included.
 - (10) Hold conferences only at sites that meet the fire protection requirements of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-391, as amended), and publicize this fact in the conference advertisement.
 - (11) Use Attachment 2, "Criteria for Conference Approval," as an aid in deciding whether to hold a conference.
- c. In determining the number of and which employees to send to any conference that requires employees to travel, Departmental Elements must—
- (1) Minimize the number of employees attending conferences consistent with achieving the objective(s) of the conference.
 - (2) Ensure only the appropriate, designated senior official (head of the organization or principal deputy) approves conference attendees. An employee, other than the Secretary of Energy, cannot approve his or her own attendance or that of a superior.
 - (3) Consider travel expenses when selecting conference attendees.
 - (4) Maintain documentation supporting the decisions on sending the proper number of and appropriate attendees.

- d. In determining conference registration fees, allowable conference (and related) costs, and funding, Departmental Elements must—
- (1) Reimburse a contractor for conference costs only if the principal purpose of the conference is to disseminate technical information or stimulate production per contract requirements.
 - (2) Consistent with paragraphs (e)(11) and (34) of Dear 970.5204-13, ensure that contractors who are sponsoring conferences are not reimbursed for entertainment costs, including alcoholic beverages, meals, tickets to shows or sporting events, lodging rentals, transportation and gratuities. Neither can such costs be included in a registration fee.
 - (3) Ensure that if a non-Government organization sponsors a conference and a single, mandatory, non-separable registration fee is charged for both attendance and meals or an evening social event, DOE will pay the employee's full registration fee. For each meal received, the DOE employee is required to reduce his/her per diem by the amount shown in the Federal Travel Regulation, Section 301-11.18.
 - (4) Ensure that if a non-Government organization sponsors a conference and a separate charge is made for meals, DOE will pay for the employee's meals if the "three-part test" is met (i.e., meals incidental to conference, employee must attend meals to participate fully, and employee can't take meals without missing essential discussions). For each meal received, the DOE employee is required to reduce his/her per diem by the amount shown in the Federal Travel Regulation, Section 301-11.18.
 - (5) Ensure that if DOE sponsors a conference, the Department will not pay for employees' meals, because of the general prohibition that the Federal government will not provide free food to its employees (per diem covers the cost of meals).
 - (6) Deny reimbursement of registration fees for DOE or DOE contractor sponsored conferences.
 - (7) Budget and account for the normal operating expenses of DOE or DOE contractor sponsored conferences without charging individual DOE or DOE contractor attendees a registration fee or other attendance-based fee.

- (8) Ensure that at DOE or DOE contractor sponsored or funded conference, DOE will not reimburse the costs of meals, coffee, or other incidental subsistence and will not authorize payment for such costs by purchase order or other contractual arrangements.
 - (9) DOE contractors may charge a separate voluntary fee to conference attendees to cover such items as meals and entertainment. This fee will not be reimbursed by DOE. However, when the employee pays this voluntary fee from personal funds, he/she is not required to reduce his/her per diem.
 - (10) Generally reimburse registration fees for non-DOE sponsored conferences.
 - (11) At all conferences, regardless of sponsorship, when DOE reimburses a registration fee that includes meals, ensure that DOE employees reduce his or her claim for per diem according to Section 301-11.18 of the Federal Travel Regulation. DOE contractor employees must also reduce claims for per diem if meals are included in a registration fee.
 - (12) Conferences sponsored by DOE contractors should not include events such as entertainment or meals that are being paid for by the contractor, without DOE or attendee reimbursement, which will result in Federal employees violating the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 CFR 2635.
- e. In determining whether employees should participate in a conference sponsored by a private interest, Departmental Elements must—
- (1) Ensure that the head of the organization (or deputy) approves participation or attendance of employees.
 - (2) Scrutinize employee conference participation carefully if it benefits private interests and the conference relies on DOE subject matter or DOE employees to attract other conference attendees.
 - (3) Make a determination that participation in the conference is in the best interest of the Department. In making this determination the following factors must be considered:
 - (a) The relevance of the event to the Department;

- (b) The potential benefit to the Department;
- (c) The need to get DOE-related information out to the attendees and whether the particular conference is an effective means to do that;
- (d) The number of DOE Federal or contractor employees who are either participants or expected attendees;
- (e) The total costs for DOE and DOE contractor attendees and participants;
- (f) The location of the event;
- (g) The potential for any adverse appearance associated with Departmental participation; and,
- (h) Whether the Department's interests would be better served by the Department's direct sponsorship of a conference.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. Heads of Departmental Elements.

- (1) Approve all DOE-sponsored and co-sponsoreded conferences. In addition, heads of Departmental Elements or their designees must approve attendance of their employees including those sponsored by non-DOE entities. This approval authority may be redelegated to the principal deputy only.
- (2) Ensure that conferences are being held only to support their missions and programs and conform with the requirements of this Notice.
- (3) Coordinate with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs on all foreign conferences (both DOE-sponsored and co-sponsored conferences, and attendance at all foreign-sponsored conferences).
- (4) Coordinate with the Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Director of Public Affairs where conference decisions may have congressional, intergovernmental, press, or public affairs implications or effects.

- (5) Ensure that proposed conferences do not duplicate conferences presented by others (i.e., DOE contractors or other non-DOE sources) that involve DOE funds. In addition, ensure to the extent possible that DOE-sponsored events do not duplicate private sector activities such as trade shows and similar productions.
- (6) Ensure that conferences are held at locations accessible to disabled employees and that such individuals are provided necessary accommodation and any needed special assistance to engage in conference activities.
- (7) Apply the CRD for this Notice to existing applicable contracts (and subcontracts thereunder) within 90 days after the effective date of this Notice.
- (8) Designate a point of contact who will have the responsibility for ensuring compliance with this Notice and maintaining central files on all conference activities within that organization. Within 30 days of issuance of this Notice, notify the Executive Secretariat (MA-7), by memorandum, of their designated organizational points of contact.

b. Organizational Points of Contact.

- (1) Ensure conference approval packages include all necessary information before the head of the organization decides to approve or disapprove a conference.
- (2) Ensure that all conference approval packages are centrally filed and accounted for.
- (3) Attend regularly scheduled meetings for all DOE conference points of contact.

c. Director, Office of Management and Administration.

- (1) Coordinates conference activities and maintains a central data bank of conference participation.
- (2) Alerts the Deputy Secretary to any proposed activities that appear to be inconsistent with Departmental conference policy or procedure.

8. REFERENCES.

- a. DOE 1500.2A, TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES, dated 6-7-89, which establishes travel authorization policies and procedures, including charging of registration fees for internal DOE meetings.
- b. DOE 1500.3, FOREIGN TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION, dated 11-10-86, which establishes policy and procedures governing official and unofficial foreign travel.
- c. Presidential Memorandum, GOVERNMENT FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND REDUCING PERQUISITES, dated 2-10-93, which includes guidance on conducting conferences.
- d. OMB Bulletin 93-11, FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND REDUCING PERQUISITES, dated 4-19-93, which provides additional guidance and instructions concerning implementation of the 2-10-93, Presidential Memorandum.
- e. Federal Travel Regulation, Part 301-74, CONFERENCE PLANNING, dated 7-1-98, which provides information on planning and attending conferences.

9. CONTACTS. Contact the Office of the Executive Secretariat at 202-586-5230 for additional information and guidance concerning this Notice.



BILL RICHARDSON
Secretary of Energy

ATTACHMENT 1

CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS DOCUMENT

DOE N 110.3, CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT

The contractor must comply with the requirements of this Contractor Requirements Document and apply them to managing conferences it sponsors, managing its employees' attendance at conferences, and managing its employees' participation in conferences sponsored by private interests.

1. REQUIREMENTS.

- a. A senior contractor official must approve funding for a conference. A senior official is the equivalent of the head of a Department of Energy (DOE) first-tier Headquarters or field organizations. This authority cannot be delegated below that official's principal deputy. The official must obtain concurrence of the cognizant field office head (e.g., Sandia National Laboratory must obtain the concurrence of the manager or deputy of the Albuquerque Operations Office).
- b. In managing contractor sponsored or co-sponsored conferences, contractors must:
 - (1) Keep Federal expenditures for conferences to the minimum necessary to accomplish program objectives.
 - (2) Determine that each conference will make a cost-effective contribution to accomplishing the program mission or improving the Department's operation.
 - (3) Independently justify a recurring conference (do not assume that an annual conference must be held merely because it has been held annually).
 - (4) Select sites that minimize conference costs by, among other actions, minimizing conference administrative costs and attendees' travel and time costs, and maximizing the use of Government-owned or Government-provided facilities.
 - (5) Select sites only after evaluating cost differences among prospective locations. The selection process should identify opportunities to save costs in selecting a particular conference site or the timing of the conference (e.g., off-season rates). Offices must maintain a record of costs of alternative sites. Avoid selecting resort or recreational sites unless true cost savings will result.

- (6) Make binding conference arrangements only after obtaining the approval required by DOE N 110.3. Employees are reminded that only designated contracting officers have the authority to make contractual commitments on behalf of the Department. (Do not make tentative commitments before obtaining the approval required by DOE N 110.3 (including contracting officer approval), unless the circumstances are extraordinary, the tentative commitments are critical to mission accomplishment, and minimum funds are committed.)
 - (7) Conferences sponsored by DOE contractors should not include events such as entertainment or meals that are being paid for by the contractor, without DOE or attendee reimbursement, which will result in Federal employees violating the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 CFR 2635.
 - (8) Avoid commercial conference facilities for DOE contractor sponsored conferences involving classified or sensitive information.
 - (9) Use a format similar to that in Attachment 3, "Suggested Format for Conference Approval Request" in requesting conference approval to ensure necessary information is included.
 - (10) Hold conferences only at sites that meet the fire protection requirements of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-391, as amended), and publicize this fact in the conference advertisement.
 - (11) Use Attachment 2, "Criteria for Conference Approval," as an aid in deciding whether or not to hold a conference.
- c. In determining the number of and which employees to send to any conference, contractors must—
- (1) Ensure that the contractor senior official (or deputy) approves participation or attendance of employees at non-DOE complex sponsored conferences.
 - (2) Minimize the number of employees attending conferences.
- d. DOE requirements regarding reimbursement of conference registration fees, allowable conference (and related) costs, and funding the contractor follow:

- (1) DOE will reimburse a contractor for its conference costs only if the principal purpose of conference is to disseminate technical information or stimulate production per contract requirements
 - (2) DOE will not reimburse a contractor for the cost of entertainment, including alcoholic beverages, regardless of how the cost is classified; for example, DOE will not reimburse an entertainment cost included in a conference fee.
 - (3) If non-Government organization sponsors a conference and a single, mandatory, non-separable registration fee is charged for both attendance and meals or an evening social event, the Government will reimburse the contractor employee's full registration fee.
 - (4) DOE expects the expenses for arranging DOE or DOE contractor sponsored conferences to be funded through the financial plan allotments as normal operating expenses; therefore, DOE will not reimburse contractors for their employees' charges for such expenses.
 - (5) DOE will not reimburse contractors for their employees' registration fees for DOE or DOE contractor sponsored conferences.
 - (6) While per diem is an allowable cost under DOE contracts, DOE will not reimburse contractors for any additional costs for employees for meals, coffee, or other incidental subsistence.
 - (7) In connection with conferences, DOE contractors may charge a separate voluntary fee to attendees to cover such items as meals and entertainment. This fee will not be reimbursed by DOE. However, when the employee pays this voluntary fee, he/she is not required to reduce his/her per diem.
 - (8) DOE will generally reimburse contractors for their employees' registration fees for non-DOE conferences.
- e. In determining whether employees should participate in a conference sponsored by a private interest, contractors must—
- (1) Ensure that the contractor senior official (or deputy) approves participation or attendance of employees at privately sponsored conferences and that the cognizant field office concurs (e.g., Sandia National Laboratory obtains the concurrence of the manager or deputy of the Albuquerque Operations Office).

- (2) Scrutinize employee conference participation carefully if it benefits private interests and the conference relies on DOE subject matter and DOE contractor employees to attract paying customers.
- (3) Consult with the DOE contracting officer before committing to contractor employee conference participation.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES.

Contractor Senior Official (equivalent in seniority to a DOE head of a Departmental Element).

- a. Approves all contractor-sponsored domestic conferences and approves attendance of contractor employees at any conference. This approval authority may be redelegated to the equivalent of a principal deputy only.
- b. Obtains the concurrence of the cognizant field office (e.g., Sandia National Laboratory will obtain the concurrence of the manager or deputy of the Albuquerque Operations Office) on the conference package.
- c. Ensures that contractor conferences are being held to support the contract's purpose and conform with the procedural requirements and policies of DOE N 110.3.
- d. Coordinates with the DOE Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs on all foreign conferences.
- e. Coordinates with the DOE Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Director of Public Affairs where conference decisions may have congressional, intergovernmental, press, or public affairs implications or effects.
- f. Ensures proposed conferences do not duplicate conferences presented by others (i.e., other DOE contractors or other non-DOE sources) that involve DOE funds and ensures that contractor-sponsored conferences do not duplicate private-sector activities such as trade shows and similar productions.
- g. Ensures that conferences are held at locations accessible to disabled individuals and that such individuals are provided special assistance to engage in conference activities.

- h. Designates a point of contact who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with DOE N 110.3 and maintaining central files on all conference activities within the organization. Within 30 days of issuance of DOE N 110.3, notifies (through your Contracting Officer) the Executive Secretariat (MA-7), by memorandum, of the designated point of contact.

ATTACHMENT 2

CRITERIA FOR CONFERENCE APPROVAL

The following areas should be reviewed and considered prior to approval of a DOE-sponsored conference.

Program Mission: How is the conference related to the mission and goals of the organization? (Specifically, how essential is the conference to those goals and mission?)

Purpose and Objectives:

What is the purpose of the proposed conference?

Are alternative means available for achieving the same expected results?

Are other conferences planned or scheduled with the same objectives? Could this conference be combined with another?

If the conference is recurring, is the need for this one justified at this time?

Location:

Is the conference location the most cost-effective?

Is there a basis for criticism?

Have cost comparisons of other locations been considered?

Is the location necessary to accomplish the conference goal (e.g., site visit to demonstrate research and development activity)?

Is the conference site reasonably central to the majority of participants to lessen travel costs?

Is the location the best suited for the conference considering the cost, attendance, and conference purpose?

Number of DOE/Contractor Employees:

Is the total number of DOE and DOE contractor conference attendees necessary to achieve the purpose for which attendance at the conference is being approved?

Is there any basis for criticism from external entities (e.g., Congress, General Accounting Office, or the Inspector General)?

What is the cost per participant?

Who will attend and what role will each proposed attendee play (e.g., speaker, chairperson, expert in a complex subject that requires experts in several subareas, etc.)?

Can attendance be reduced without adversely affecting the objective?

Expected Benefits: What benefits will be derived from conducting this conference?

Support Contractor Performance:

What assignments will the contractor perform?

Do the contractor's responsibilities include any Government functions (e.g., exercising discretionary authority or making final value judgments that affect the day-to-day or long-term development, execution, and evaluation of Government programs).

Estimated Support Costs: Are support costs (printing, mailing, graphics, travel expenses, conference facilities, honorariums, etc.) reasonable and necessary?

ATTACHMENT 3

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR CONFERENCE APPROVAL REQUEST

Following is a suggested format that includes the type of information needed in an organization's conference approval package:

DATE OF REQUEST: (self-explanatory)

REQUESTED BY: (name/title of requesting official)

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: (title of DOE organization or DOE contractor organization sponsoring the conference)

CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: (title of DOE organization or DOE contractor organization or non-DOE entity co-sponsoring the conference, if applicable)

CONFERENCE TITLE: (formal title of conference)

CONFERENCE DATE: (proposed date(s) of the conference)

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE(S): (Describe the purpose of the conference, justify, and certify that sponsorship of this conference is important to the program mission.)

CONFERENCE LOCATION: (proposed city and state where the conference is to be held, or foreign location, if applicable)

RATIONALE FOR SELECTION OF CONFERENCE LOCATION: (Provide a rationale and justification for site selection; a cost comparison of alternative sites considered (if location is not at a principal facility site of the sponsoring organization); and certification that the site selected is the most cost-effective considering costs such as travel, per diem, and conference logistics.)

ESTIMATED COST BREAKDOWN: (Provide applicable information.)

TRAVEL AND PER DIEM COSTS

DOE Employees (HQ):	\$	XX,XXX
DOE Employees (Field):		XX,XXX
Contractor Employees (HQ):		XX,XXX
Contractor Employees (Field):		<u>XX,XXX</u>
Total DOE Travel Costs:	\$	XXX,XXX

OTHER EXPENSES

Logistics:	\$ XX,XXX	(facility arrangements)
Supplies & Support Equipment:	XX,XXX	(specify costs; e.g., materials, printing, etc.)
Other Costs:	<u>XX,XXX</u>	(specify, e.g., direct labor support and overhead)
Total Other Expenses:	\$ XXX,XXX	

TOTAL ESTIMATED DOE COSTS: \$ XXX,XXX

ESTIMATED COST RECOVERY REVENUE: \$ XX,XXX (specify source, if applicable)

ESTIMATED CO-SPONSOR COSTS: \$ XX,XXX (specify source, if applicable)

ESTIMATED TOTAL NUMBER OF CONFERENCE ATTENDEES:

	<u>Traveling</u>	<u>Non-traveling</u>
DOE Employees (HQ):	XX	XX (Detail number from each office)
-FM	X	X
-HR		
-etc.		
DOE Employees (Field):	XX	XX
-AL		
-etc.		
Contractor Employees (HQ):	XX	XX
- CACI		
Contractor Employees (Field):	XX	XX
- LBNL		
- FETC		
- etc.		
Others:	<u>XX</u>	<u>XX</u>
Total:	XXX	XXX

SUPPORT CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE: (If applicable, specify the support contractor who will provide support for the conference.)

IMPACT STATEMENT: (Provide an impact statement of effect if the conference is not approved.)

POINT OF CONTACT FOR THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: (Provide name and telephone number.)