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BECOMING A NIFA JUDGE

How do you become a NIFA judge?

The first step is to complete an NIFA Judges Application and submit it to the National Headquarters office of NIFA. You may also submit the application to the Chief Judge presiding at any regional or national SAFECON. You may obtain an application by contacting: The National Intercollegiate Flying Association; Box 3204; Delta State University; Cleveland, MS 38733. Or photocopy the application found in Appendix "B" of this manual.

Do you receive compensation as a NIFA Judge?

No. All NIFA judges contribute of their time and expertise without any compensation from NIFA. However, judges who incur expenses while judging at a NIFA regional or national SAFECON can request a letter recognizing their contribution for tax purposes.

How do I become a NIFA Chief Judge?

To become a NIFA Chief Judge, requires that an individual have served in the capacity of; (1) a regional or national SAFECON Short Field or Power Off Landings event judge, (2) a regional or national SAFECON Chief Navigation event judge, (3) a regional or national SAFECON Scorekeeper, (4) a regional SAFECON Chief Judge, and (5) a national SAFECON Assistant Chief judge. For this reason, it is very important that each NIFA judge update his/her judging record at each SAFECON they actively judge.

What are the senior judging positions?

The senior judging positions at a national SAFECON are: Senior Chief Judge, Chief Judge, Associate Chief Judge, Chief Navigation Judge, Short Field Landings Judge, Power Off Landings Judge, Message Drop Judge, Staging Officer, Safety Officer, SCAN Judge, Manual Flight Computer Judge, Electronic Flight Computer Judge, Aircraft Recognition Judge, Ground Trainer Judge, IFR Judge, Preflight Inspection Judge, and Scorekeeper. At a regional SAFECON, some of these judging positions may not be used due to certain events not being held. In addition, some individual judges may hold more than one of the above judging positions due to a lack of judging staff.

How much time and travel is involved?

It depends. There are eleven regional and one national SAFECON held each year. The amount of travel required depends on how close you live to one of the regional SAFECONS sites and the location of the national SAFECON each year. Historically, the national SAFECON is held in the mid-section of the United States. This has been the rule due to the concentration of NIFA schools in this area as well as the favorable weather conditions in late spring.

The amount of time required depends on whether you are judging at a regional or national

SAFECON, and the number of teams competing in the regional SAFECON. At every national SAFECON, the Senior Chief Judge and the SAFECON Chief Judge conduct a judges school. Typically, this school is held the afternoon prior to the start of competition. Every judge is strongly urged to attend the school. Before being allowed to judge at a regional or national SAFECON, a judge must have attended a NIFA judges school within the preceding two years.

What are the entry level judging positions?

Generally, new judges are placed with experienced judges at their first competition. These positions are: Assistant Preflight Inspection judge, Aircraft Recognition Judge, Computer Accuracy judge, SCAN judge, Electronic Flight Computer judge, Quartermaster, Message Drop Measurer, Technique Card Observer (A, B, C, D, E, F, and G technique cards), Line Observer, Line Judge, and Navigation Fuel judge.

What equipment and/or supplies am I expected to provide when I judge?

Each judge is expected to arrive at a SAFECON prepared to judge under varying meteorological conditions. What this means, is that because of the time of year SAFECONS are held, the weather can and often does change dramatically and quickly. One day the weather may be cold and damp. Calling for ponchos and sweaters. The next may be hot and humid when light cotton clothing, a hat, and lots of "sun-block" is needed. Each judge should bring with them to a SAFECON, apparel suitable for such rapid changes in conditions. Requests for any other items may be made by the Chief Judge.

What equipment and/or supplies will be provided?

Unless the Chief Judge has asked you to bring a specific piece of equipment, you can expect that all items needed by you to perform your duty as a NIFA SAFECON judge will be provided.

How do I know what the rules are?

With the start of each new competition year (July 1st - June 30th) every judge who maintains their judging history with the NIFA Headquarters office receives a current year "pocket" rulebook. This is a reduced version of Appendix D (Rules for Intercollegiate SAFECONS) from the NIFA Redbook.

What are the conflict-of-interest possibilities?

The most common conflict-of-interest problem occurs when there is a judging shortage. If you are an active coach or team member of a competing school this may cause a problem. The decision as to which judging positions you would be assigned would be made by the Chief Judge.

If you have a relative competing in the competition, you should let the Chief Judge know before judging assignments are made.

Most perceived conflict-of-interest problems are not real. However, because of the amount of money, time, and effort expended in preparing for competition by the teams, judges must make every effort to eliminate any suggestion of a conflict-of-interest.

What must I do to remain current as a NIFA Judge?

You can do either of two things. The first is to judge at a regional or national SAFECON every two years. The second is to attend a NIFA judges school every two years.

Who is responsible for travel arrangements/accommodations?

Each NIFA judge is responsible for his/her own travel arrangements. Information regarding hotels and special fares on airlines will be provided to each prospective judge by the NIFA National Headquarters or the host school.