

# ISEF DISPLAY & SAFETY REGULATIONS

Please address any questions regarding ISEF Display & Safety Regulations to  
[displayandsafety@societyforscience.org](mailto:displayandsafety@societyforscience.org)

## DISPLAY & SAFETY COMMITTEE MISSION

The mission of this committee is to ensure that all competitors qualify for competition according to the rules established in conjunction with the Scientific Review Committee and Society for Science.

The ISEF Display & Safety inspection process can be initiated only when all items are present at the display. The Display & Safety Committee will offer guidance on Display & Safety issues for projects approved by the SRC to compete in ISEF. Occasionally, the ISEF Display & Safety Committee may require students to make revisions to conform to Display & Safety regulations. Persistent issues will be directed to a committee of individuals which may include Society for Science (the Society) personnel, Display & Safety (D&S) and/or Scientific Review Committee (SRC) executive committee members.

The following regulations must be adhered to when a finalist exhibits a project at ISEF. All projects must adhere to the Display & Safety requirements of the affiliated fair(s) in which they compete to qualify for participation in ISEF. Affiliated fairs may have additional restrictions or requirements. Knowledge of these requirements is the responsibility of the Finalist, Adult Sponsor, and Fair Director.

## DISPLAY REGULATIONS

### Maximum Size of Project

**Depth (front to back): 30 inches or 76 centimeters**

**Width (side to side): 48 inches or 122 centimeters**

**Height (floor to top): 108 inches or 274 centimeters**

Please be aware when ordering posters that the mechanism that supports the poster should conform to the maximum size limitations stated above.

- All project materials and support mechanisms must fit within the project dimensions (including table covers).
- Fair-provided tables at ISEF will not exceed a height of 36 inches (91 centimeters).
- If a table is used it becomes part of the project and must not exceed the allowed dimensions.
- Nothing can be attached to the rear curtain.
- All demonstrations must be done within the confines of the finalist's booth space. When not being demonstrated, all project components must be returned to the project display and must fit within allowable dimensions as defined above.
- Projects can be continued under the table BUT this area is not to be used for storage.

### Position of Project

The fair provided table or freestanding display must be parallel to, and positioned at, the back curtain of the booth. Projects may NOT lean against the back curtain.

### Forms Required to be Visible and Vertically Displayed at the Project Booth

The placement of the required forms may include the front edge of the table, the display board, or in a free-standing acrylic frame placed on the table top.

### Forms required to be vertically displayed at all projects:

1. An original Official Abstract and Certification as approved (stamped/embossed) by the ISEF Scientific Review Committee.

- a. Upon SRC approval, the stamped/embossed Official Abstract and Certification will be provided.
    - No other format or version of an abstract will be allowed for any purpose at ISEF, including display at your project." Judges are provided the official Abstract and Certification digitally; no handouts are permitted.
  - b. The term "abstract" may NOT be used as a title or reference for any information on a finalist's display or materials at the project except as part of displaying the official stamped/embossed abstract.
    - It is the recommendation of the Display & Safety Committee to NOT include the word "abstract" nor the abstract itself when preparing backboards or posters prior to the fair. However, it is reasonable to leave a blank space (8½" x 11") on the backboard/poster so as to facilitate the addition of the official abstract. Keep in mind this document can also be displayed vertically on the front edge of the table or in a free-standing acrylic frame.
2. ISEF Project Set-up Approval Form (received on-site at the Fair)
    - a. This form documents the project as approved by the Scientific Review Committee and is used to document the Display & Safety Committee's review process and final approval.
    - b. This form must be signed by the finalist and the Display & Safety Committee member at the time of inspection.

### Additional Forms required (only when applicable):

1. Regulated Research Institutional/Industrial Setting Form (1C)
  - a. If work was conducted in a regulated research institution, industrial setting or any work site other than home, school or field at any time during the current ISEF project year, the **Regulated Research Institutional/Industrial Setting Form (1C)** must be completed and vertically displayed at the project booth.
  - b. The information provided by the mentor on Form 1C may be referenced to confirm that the information provided on the project board is that of the finalist. Only minimal reference to a mentor's or another researcher's work is allowable and must only reflect background information

or be used to clarify differences between finalist's and others' work.

2. Continuation/Research Progression Projects Form (7)
  - a. If a study is a continuation/research progression, the Continuation/Research Progression Projects Form (7) must be completed and vertically displayed at the project booth.
  - b. The display board and abstract must reflect only the current year's work. The project title displayed in the finalist's booth may mention years of continuing research (for example, "Year Two of an Ongoing Study").
  - c. Reference to past work on the display board must be limited to summative past conclusory data and its comparison to the current year data set. No raw data from previous years may be publicly displayed; however, it may be included in the student research notebooks and/or logbooks if properly labeled.

### Forms Required at Project but not Displayed

1. Forms, excluding those listed above, that were required for the Scientific Review Committee approval should not be vertically displayed, but must be available in the booth in case asked for by a judge or other ISEF official. These forms include, but are not limited to, Checklist for Adult Sponsor (1), Student Checklist (1A), Research Plan, Approval Form (1B), and a photograph/video release form.
2. A photograph/video release form signed by the subject is required for visual images of humans (other than the finalist) displayed as part of the project.

### Forms NOT to be at the Project Display Booth or in the Exhibit Hall

Completed informed consent/assent forms for a human participant study are NOT to be displayed and should NOT be present at the project display. The Finalist may include a sample (incomplete) form in their logbook or research notebook but under NO CIRCUMSTANCE should the completed informed consent/assent forms for a human participant be in the Exhibit Hall.

### Photograph/Visual Image/Graph/Chart/Data Table Requirements

1. ALL graphics that are created by the Finalist MUST BE properly cited individually using statements such as "Photo taken by Finalist," "Image created by Finalist using . . ."; Graph created by Finalist using . . ."; Chart created by Finalist using . . ."; or "Data Table created by Finalist."
2. ALL graphics not created by the finalist(s) MUST BE properly cited individually (APA format is preferred). If the graphic was obtained via the Internet, then a URL must be provided (digital object identifiers are acceptable in place of long URLs). This applies even if the license under which the graphic was obtained does not require credit or citation. For more information and examples please see our D&S Graphic Credit Guidance.
3. Citations must be provided alongside the graphic or in a vertically displayed reference list.
4. Photographs may not be offensive or inappropriate in nature. This includes, but is not limited to, images/photographs

showing invertebrates, vertebrates or humans in surgical, necrotizing dissection or distressing situations.

5. Photographs or images of people other than the Finalist need to have a signed photo/video release form from those individuals in a notebook. These signed release forms must be available upon request during the set-up and inspection process, but may not be displayed.

Sample release text: "I consent to the use of visual images (photos, videos, etc.) involving my participation/my child's participation in this research."

6. Finalists using any digital display/device outside of a project board must be prepared to show these materials in their entirety. All aforementioned rules regarding photos, images, data tables, graphs and charts apply to these materials. These materials may not be altered in any way after the Display & Safety inspection has been completed. Examples include, but are not limited to, PowerPoint, Prezi, Canva, BioRender, computer code, Keynote, software program/simulation and other image and/or graphics displayed on a screen.

### Items/Materials Not Allowed on Display or at Project Booth

1. Personal items or packaging materials stored in or around the booth, including under the table.
2. Any information on the project display or items that are self-promotions or external endorsements are not allowed in the project booth
  - a. The use of commercial logos including known brands, institutional crests or trademarks, and flags unless integral or incidental to the project and approved by the ISEF D&S Committee.
  - b. Any reference to an institution or mentor that supported the finalist's research except as provided in an acknowledgement section of the poster and within official ISEF paperwork, most notably Form 1C.
  - c. Published research papers may only be present within a lab notebook. Lab notebooks must be closed when a finalist is not present at their booth.
  - d. Plans for additional/future work that includes any reference to a mentor, institution, conference, or pending publication.
  - e. Any reference to patent status of the project.
  - f. Any items intended for distribution such as disks, CDs, flash drives, brochures, booklets, endorsements, giveaway items, business cards, printed materials or food items designed to be distributed to judges or the public.
2. Any awards or medals, except for past or present ISEF medals that may be worn by the finalist.
3. Postal addresses, World Wide Web, email and/or social media addresses, QR codes, telephone and/or fax numbers of a project or finalist. Note: The only personal information that is permissible to include on the display is the finalist name, school, city, state, country, age and grade.
4. Active Internet or email connections as part of displaying or operating the project at ISEF. Exceptions will only be made if requested by email to [displayandsafety@societyforscience.org](mailto:displayandsafety@societyforscience.org) and approved in advance by the Display & Safety Committee.

5. Any changes, modifications, or additions to projects including any attempt to uncover, replenish or return removed language or items after the approval by the Display & Safety Committee and the Scientific Review Committee has been received is prohibited.

- a. Display & Safety inspections will include recording photographic evidence of the approved Project Display and Project booth.
- b. Finalists who do not adhere to this signed agreement on the ISEF Project Set-up Approval Form regarding this regulation may fail to qualify for competition.

*I/we understand that the initial Display & Safety Inspection has been completed, but that additional reviews occur and that I/we should check back regularly. I/we will vertically display this signed form at our project at all times. I/we have not and will not store packing material under the booth. I/we further understand that returning items that have been removed by the SRC or D&S and/or adding items that are not permitted after final clearance are grounds for failing to qualify for competition and/or forfeiture of all awards received.*

## SAFETY REGULATIONS

### Not Allowed at Project or Booth

Note: In the case in which a Finalist's Project includes an item that is prohibited from display, please consider taking photographs and/or documenting the significance of the prohibited item through video.

1. Biological materials (living, dead, or preserved) other than those commercially available. This includes but is not limited to:
  - Living organisms, including plants
  - Taxidermy specimens or parts
  - Preserved vertebrate or invertebrate animals
  - Human or animal food
  - Human/animal parts or body fluids (for example, blood, urine)
2. All chemicals including water. Absolutely no liquids can be utilized in the Project Display
3. All other hazardous substances or devices included but not limited to:
  - Soil, sand, rock, cement and/or waste samples
  - Poisons
  - Drugs
  - Firearms, weapons, ammunition, reloading devices
  - Granules or powders
  - Grease/oil and sublimating solids such as dry ice
  - Sharp items (for example, syringes, needles, pipettes, knives)
  - Glass
  - Flames and highly flammable materials
  - Batteries with open-top cells or wet cells or battery packs over 100 watt-hour capacity
  - Drones or any flight-capable apparatus unless the propulsion power source removed
  - Inadequately insulated apparatus capable of producing dangerous temperatures are not permitted

- Any apparatus with belts, pulleys, chains, or moving parts with tension or pinch points that are not appropriately shielded
4. Items that may have contained or been in contact with hazardous substances (Exception: Item may be permitted if professionally cleaned and documentation for such cleaning is available, and is approved by Display & Safety)
  5. Any display items that are deemed distracting including but not limited to:
    - Sounds
    - Lights
    - Odors
  6. Any apparatus or project material deemed unsafe by the Scientific Review Committee, the Display & Safety Committee, or the Society

### Electrical Regulations

1. Electrical power supplied to the project is 120 or 220 Volt, AC, single phase, 60 Hz. No multi-phase will be available or shall be used. Maximum circuit amperage/wattage available is determined by the electrical circuit capacities of the exhibit hall and may be adjusted on-site by the Display & Safety Committee. For all electrical regulations, "120 Volt AC" or "220 Volt AC" is intended to encompass the corresponding range of voltage as supplied by the facility in which ISEF is being held.
2. Electrical devices must be protectively enclosed. Any enclosure must be non-combustible. All external non-current carrying metal parts must be grounded.
3. Energized wiring, switches, and metal parts must have adequate insulation and over-current safety devices (such as fuses) and must be inaccessible to anyone other than the finalist. Exposed electrical equipment or metal that may be energized must be shielded with a non-conducting material or with a grounded metal box to prevent accidental contact.
4. Decorative lighting or illumination is discouraged. If used, lighting must be as low a voltage as possible and must be LED lighting that does not generate heat. Incandescent and fluorescent light bulbs are prohibited. When student is not at the exhibit, all electrical power must be disconnected, or power bars must be switched off (Exception: during pre-judging audio visual displays may be available).
5. An insulating grommet is required at the point where any wire or cable enters any enclosure.
6. No exposed live circuits over 36 volts are allowed.
7. There must be an accessible, clearly visible on/off switch or other means of quickly disconnecting from the 120 or 220 Volt power source.

### Laser/Laser Pointer Regulations

Any Class 1, Class 2, Class 3A, or Class 3R lasers are allowed to be used responsibly. No other lasers may be used or displayed.

1. Laser beams may not pass through magnifying optics such as microscopes and telescopes.
2. Lasers must be labeled by the manufacturer so that power output can be inspected. Lasers without labels will NOT be permitted.
3. Handheld lasers are NOT permitted.
4. Lasers will be confiscated with no warning if not used in a safe manner.