

GENERAL ARRIVAL/SAFETY BRIEFING (Rev. RBF)
2016 NIFA Region VII SAFECON (Oct. 13-17)

Welcome to the 2016 Region VII SAFECON hosted by Schenectady County Community College. This document will serve as a pre-briefing for the formal General Contestant Briefing. Qualifying teams from Region VII will receive invitations to the National SAFECON to be held at The Ohio State University, May 9-14, 2017.

Contact Information

Chief Judge/NIFA Council Rep	Sean Breen	xxx-xxx-xxxx	xxxx@xxxx
Associate Chief Judge/Safety Judge	Larry Cutler	xxx-xxx-xxxx	xxxx@xxxx
Host School Contact	Barbara Jones	xxx-xxx-xxxx	xxxx@xxxx

Rules

Please review the general NIFA rules as many rules apply from the time you leave your home school until return. The current rulebook may be found at <https://nifa.aero/schools/rules/>

Paperwork

ALL PAPERWORK AND ANSWER SHEETS MUST BE CLEARLY AND PROPERLY FILLED OUT WITH NAME, SCHOOL AND CONTESTANT ID AS INDICATED.

Paper answer sheets will all be scanned and if we don't know who you are we cannot give you points. Please ensure your team has pencils for the bubble sheet fill-ins and that all information is recorded properly or your team will lose points; we don't want that to happen.

Schedule

We plan to have 7 teams competing this year. As a result, we are going to make every effort to prioritize the schedule so that every participant has an equal opportunity to compete, balancing the wear and fatigue on our judges... Registration is scheduled for 1800-1930 on Thursday, October 13th in Stockade Room 101 at Schenectady County Community College (SCCC). Immediately following registration on Thursday evening is the General Contestant Briefing. You have all received the draft schedule from Barbara Jones, our host this year. The schedule is likely to change for a variety of reasons; those changes will be communicated to you as soon as we have them.

Welcome / General Contestant Briefing

The General Contestant Briefing (GCB) will be held from 1930-2100 on Thursday, October 13th in Stockade Room 101 at Schenectady County Community College (SCCC). All competitors must be in attendance for the entirety of the GCB. Let me emphasize, the General Contestant Briefing WILL begin at 1930 on Thursday, October 13th. Barring an emergency (SCH airport closure, etc.) or natural disaster (earthquake, hurricane, etc.), the GCB will not be delayed. Thank you for your proper planning to ensure we don't have any issues.

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Unfortunately, team members that miss the General Contestant Briefing will not be eligible to compete in any events, flight or ground during the 2016 Region VII SAFECON. No alternate briefings will be provided, except for extraordinary circumstances at the discretion of the Chief Judge.

Information Dissemination During the Region 7 SAFECON

Each morning we will hold a briefing for the events of the day (flight and ground) as planned on the schedule, in the North Hangar near the Empire State Aerosciences Museum (ESAM) at Schenectady County Airport. Updates will also be provided during lunchtime in the North Hangar. We will do our best to provide near real time information and updates on the Region VII website event page for "[Region VII 2016 @ SCH](#)". We will also utilize the Region VII Twitter account ([@nifa_region_vii](#)), so please have at least one team member monitor the account.

The judges' room will be located on the second floor of the ESAM hangar; this is a secure area and cannot be accessed without an escort. If you would like to speak with the judges, use the contact information above.

Safety Award

Safety is the root word in SAFECON (Safety and Flight Evaluation Conference) and is our highest priority. We will continue to emphasize the need to develop and nurture a formal safety culture during our event. The formalization of a risk-mitigation strategy is now an expectation in aviation and it is something we have incorporated here in Region VII. Each team will participate in the Safety Award competition, which will be based on a variety of metrics designed to accurately evaluate the safety culture and practices of each flight team. We have made some tweaks and improvements to the safety award outline score sheet from last year. The new and improved outline is attached as "*R7_SAFE_Safety Award Assessment Rev. 3 100915.*" Please review it and if you have any questions, prior to the SAFECON is the time to ask, please feel free to send them along.

Fitness for Competition

Each year, NIFA has areas that the Council feels require additional emphasis in order to maintain the highest levels of safety while we conduct our SAFECON events. While teams need to be familiar with the entirety of the NIFA Rulebook, advisors and competitors should pay particular attention to Section I.A *Fitness for Competition Policy*. When competitors sign their Competitor Certifications, they are attesting to their proficiency to compete in whatever events they are entered into. More importantly, they attest that they will notify a judge or advisor if they believe the conditions exceed their personal limits – **putting safety before competition**. Advisors and coaches, for their part, are expected to exercise control over their team, and to allow only those team members who have demonstrated, to their satisfaction, an appropriate level of proficiency and capability to compete as pilots. You will hear us say this a lot – **safe, sound flying must come before competition**. Competitors must know how to operate the aircraft safely, they must be well versed in SAFECON rules and event guidelines, and then they must go out and be able to combine those two in a safe, professional manner. Anything less will be cause for action by the judges, including prohibition from competing in the flying events.

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Host School Items

Teams should keep in mind that breakfast and lunch will be provided Friday through Sunday. The awards banquet dinner will take place Monday afternoon at 1500 at SCCC. Also, teams may want to bring additional drinks/snacks with them in case they are unable to leave the airport during the day.

Schools that have not returned the team registration form that Barbara emailed to the schools should do so ASAP, so that she can ensure there is food for everyone – a critical component!

Lastly, please be prompt with payment, while this is outside of NIFA's purview, teams should be paid in full by the general contestant briefing and most certainly by the end of the first day of competition. Payment details were also outlined in Barbara's email.

Fuel

Fuel and maintenance, if necessary, can be coordinated with Richmor Aviation. Contact David Buono at 518-399-8171 to set up a fuel account.

Supplies

Schools will be required to provide tie-down ropes and chocks, in addition to the usual safety vests and other items. Each Nav contestant will require their own, current New York Sectional. Contestants are not allowed to use tablets, phones, etc. to complete their Nav planning. Please remember plotters and flight computers for the Navigation and SCAN events as well as writing implements for all of the tests (we recommend a pencil with a good eraser). Additionally, a flight computer is highly recommended for use in the Computer Accuracy event (manual only, of course).

Documents

All competitors will have their pilot and medical certificates checked prior to competition. All documentation and items required by FAR must be present with the pilot and aircraft at all times. Pilots who will be carrying passengers (Nav and Message Drop) will need to present proof in the form of logbook entries of being current under Part 61.57. Schools are encouraged to scan the pilot and medical certificates and logbook entries prior to arrival and email them to the Chief Judge.

Landing Events Traffic Pattern

As in years past, we provide schools with "limit" diagrams for each of the runways at the host airport. These are **not** ideal patterns; they are the basic limits beyond which penalties will be assessed for improper patterns. The pattern has a downwind width of 0.75 nm and the maximum final is 1.25 nm. These patterns will be covered during the General Contestant Briefing. The patterns are available at <https://reviewbeforeflight.com/region-vii-2016-sch/>.

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About Schenectady County Airport

Schenectady County Airport (KSCH) is a towered airport (0730-2230 daily) at 378' elevation with standard left traffic to all runways. Winds in the autumn generally favor Runway 28, but you should be prepared to use all runways. The local approach control is ALBANY APPROACH on 118.05.

Schenectady lies under the floor of the outer ring of Albany's Class Charlie airspace, which begins at 2000' MSL. The traffic pattern altitude is 1200' MSL. Please be aware that the NY Air National Guard regularly conducts operations with C-130's at SCH. **Under no circumstances should you overfly the Air National Guard Base on the east side of the airport.**

Control Tower/CTAF ----- 121.30
Ground----- 121.90
AWOS-3 ----- 119.27 (518-399-6586)

Communications / Transponder Operations

Communications and transponder operations are outlined in the document which will be distributed as "R7_ADMIN Comm Procedures v2 091616" All competition aircraft will be required to have an operational Mode C transponder due to the proximity to the Class C airspace of Albany.

Arriving / Parking / Practice Flying

The tower/ground controllers have always been good to us and we look forward to working with them again this year. Practice flying is allowed anytime until Thursday evening. Pilots should exercise extreme vigilance and keep radio traffic to an essential minimum as the pattern tends to be very busy during practice. Remember that success at NIFA means **incorporating the competition into your safe flying habits, and not the other way around.**

We will accommodate parking for as many aircraft as possible on the North Ramp and in the adjacent grass areas. Overflow parking will be designated on the Richmor ramp. Teams that may end up having to park on the Richmor ramp will be authorized to taxi to the North Ramp in the morning for competition, utilizing the appropriate marshalling and shutdown procedures.

Beginning with the commencement of the General Contestant Briefing, no flying, other than for competition, will be allowed without the permission of the Chief Judge.

Paperwork – Take Two

PLEASE be thorough when filling out all answer sheets, message drop forms, etc. You should fill out all required information, as required for each event. It is in each contestant's best interest for the information to be both **complete** and **correct**. If you noticed that we mentioned this twice, you'll know how important we think it is.

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Heat Sheets

Whereas last year we set a benchmark for getting the heat sheets out to the schools well in advance of the SAFECON, we will be distributing them to everyone at the General Contestant Briefing this year. As we are utilizing a new scoring and registration system beginning this year, we are still working out some logistical items behind the scenes.

General Staging Procedures

What follows in this section are a list of time-honored guidelines that allow for the safe, efficient event flow during a SAFECON. They may seem repetitive to seasoned competitors, but being thoroughly familiar with them will set your team up for success; failure to follow them will have predictably poor results.

- Contestants must review and be familiar with the ramp-flow and airport diagrams.
- NO KEY...NO FLY! Be prepared before you get to the start box or lose your turn.
- Timeliness is essential. Teams must have aircraft staged at proper time.
- As always, all aircraft are to be towed from the NIFA parking areas to the start box. **Please** use no more than 5 people to stage an aircraft. Once the aircraft is in the start box, all nonessential personnel shall leave the area. ONLY required crew can be near the aircraft once the airplane is staged for an event.
- Please make certain your aircraft are fueled the night before. If you decide to have your aircraft fueled in the morning, allow ample time to accomplish this prior to the morning briefing on the days of competition.
- Fueling will be in a designated spot during the Nav event and by truck in parking spot otherwise. Fueling arrangements can be made as specified above.
- After the General Contestant/Welcome Briefing and until the awards banquet is concluded there will be no aircraft operations without the express permission of the Chief Judge, with the exception of taxi operations required for parking as outlined above.
- Once the SAFECON begins, all aircraft will need to be cleared to start engines by the Chief Judge or Staging judge.
- During an event, engines may ONLY be run when aircraft are in the start box.
- Staging Judge will give you a start-signal by spinning arm and finger above head.
- Last aircraft must give thumbs up to his/her right leading back through each aircraft to lead aircraft when ready for taxi.
- Have adequate ground personnel available to recover aircraft after shutting down in the designated area. The burden of being prepared falls on the entire team.

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Electronic Devices

Cell phones, tablets and other portable electronic devices are not to be utilized on the ramp or during any competition event, except where specifically allowed by the rules. If you are on the ramp and have an absolute need to use a device, please stand against the building or go in the hangar. A safe rule of thumb is, if you go onto the ramp, shut your phone off. **Failure to follow this guidance may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, disqualification.** Please demonstrate your commitment to safety by being alert to ramp operations and avoiding distractions.

Anyone using a camera in proximity to the ramp or flight operations should use the buddy system – if one person is focused on operating the camera, have another person looking out for nearby hazards. We understand that people will want to capture these events, but please make sure that **safety comes before getting a good photo.**

Number of Competitors

Power Off Landings	Maximum five (5) per team
Short Field (Power On) Landings	Maximum five (5) per team
Navigation	Maximum three (3) per team
Message Drop	Maximum five (5) per team
Aircraft Preflight Inspection	Maximum two (2) per team
Ground Trainer	Maximum three (3) per team
Aircraft Recognition	Maximum five (5) per team
SCAN	Maximum five (5) per team
Computer Accuracy (E6B)	Maximum five (5) per team

Event Notes

Landings

Heats will consist of no more than 4 aircraft (heat sheets to be provided). The number of heats completed will ultimately be determined by total number of registered competitors, weather, amount of daylight, etc.

We continue to strive for a reduction of DQs during the landing events and we will be highlighting some lessons we have garnered from ours and other regions during the briefing(s).

From a technique and safety standpoint, we expect to see students **FLY FIRST** and **COMPETE SECOND**. It is in the competitors' best interest to add the necessary power to make the runway or to go around early if a situation develops that will cause them to make a dangerously low turn to final or causes them to get too low/slow before going around. We will be looking out for these situations. **Remember, a safety of flight DQ will have a strong bearing on your standing for the Safety Award.**

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Preflight

The preflight aircraft is a Cessna 152. There may be scenario based preflight. Example: You are flying at night or IFR, so be prepared for that. Competitors will know the scenario during the event briefing ahead of time. **It is each competitor's responsibility to have a flashlight, with fresh batteries, and a stopwatch.** A sample score sheet is attached to this email for your review. In order to facilitate the flow of the event, it is imperative that contestants arrive at the preflight location at their appointed time. If you are going to be late, or you can't make your scheduled time, call the Chief Judge or the Associate Chief Judge. Lastly, there will be no penalty for competing the inspection in less than 13 minutes as is indicated on the score sheet.

Ground Trainer

The ground trainer will be configured as a light piston single. Teams will each be given 20 minutes to practice in advance of the event to get comfortable in the ground trainer. The pattern will be distributed to each team when their practice session is complete. Competitors may mark up and make notes on this copy, but will be given a clean sheet when they return for the competition. Competitors may mark up the copy they are given for the event once they arrive in the simulator. **It is each competitor's responsibility to have a method to keep track of elapsed time.** We suggest a kitchen timer or similar, with a way to mount it in an easily visible location in the ground trainer. Smart phones that lock themselves or dim the screen automatically are not recommended for obvious reasons.

Navigation

A current New York sectional is required for each pilot. This is a real flight, period. Plan, equip and fly it as such. Calculators, plotters etc. are competitors' responsibility. If you have a GPS in your aircraft (installed or handheld) that is capable of storing route information, it will need to be cleared prior to each Nav contestant departing. We will most likely be disseminating waypoint data for the Nav event in line with the method they will utilize at Nationals. Contestants will be given a picture of a sectional with the waypoints pointed out. It will then be their responsibility to transfer them to their own sectional. This is the same method we used last year.

Message Drop

We encourage very creative messages and containers with school spirit. There will be an award for the most witty message. Containers will be checked both before and after the event to ensure compliance with the published specifications. **Each team must have enough message drop containers so that none of them need to be recycled** -- if you have 5 contestants you will need 10 containers. If we can't get your message out of the container, you will not get credit for the drop.

Questions

Please address any questions to either the Chief Judge or the host school contact, as appropriate. Any questions that can be addressed prior to the event means less that has to be done by our volunteer judges during the SAFECON.

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Ramp Flow

The location of the ramp we will use for the SAFECON presents certain operational challenges. The biggest challenge is that ultimately the ramp is one way in/one way out via Taxiway Delta. We have successfully utilized this configuration in the past, but it requires pilots to be attentive.

Aircraft will be staged in the Start Box and proceed outbound on Taxiway Delta. Inbound aircraft will come up Delta, make the right turn and be recovered on the northeast corner of the ramp. We will provide more specific instructions at the GCB.

