▶ INSTRUCTIONS

1. Each speaker in a session is **allotted 20 minutes** for presentation and Q&A.
2. Include a brief biographical description at the beginning of your presentation. We suggest you allow **15 minutes for the presentation** (including your brief bio information) and **5 minutes for Q&A**. If there are more questions than you can answer during your Q&A period, ask those with lingering questions to see you at the next break.
3. **Sessions will start on time.** If you can't make the conference or your assigned presentation time, please let us know ASAP!
   NOTE: There will be a speaker preparation room in Regency Club Boardroom, but it will NOT have a laptop computer.
4. Load your presentation onto the **laptop computer in the session room** during the break just prior to your session.
5. **Please introduce yourself to the moderator.**

▶ AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT

The following audio-visual equipment will be available in each session room:

- LCD Projector for PowerPoint presentation
- Laptop computer

Bring your presentation on a flash/jump drive.

Additional equipment may be rented at the presenter's own expense. Please contact events@awra.org and we will contact AWRA's A/V vendor on your behalf.

▶ BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

1. **Register for the conference –** register here.
2. Prepare your presentation. AWRA provides an LCD projector and a laptop in each room. **Bring your presentation on a flash/jump drive.**
3. Plan your presentation for **20 minutes maximum**, including a very brief bio and time for Q&A afterwards. Out of courtesy to the attendees and other presenters, your session moderator will cut you off if you run over. There will be an author-preparation room for you to rehearse (NO LCD projector or lap top computer in this room). Time goes by faster than you think, so we recommend focusing on your key points. Plan ahead: Which slides can you skip if time gets short?
4. **Let the AWRA staff and your session moderator know if you have any special needs.** For example, because the rooms are reasonably small and seem to have very good acoustics, there will be no microphones unless you request one in advance.

5. Show up **20 minutes before your session** and get acquainted with the moderator and the other speakers. Relax! AWRA attendees don't bite!
6. We will not be using the traditional riser-and-podium setup. Instead, on a single table in front, there will be a laptop on which to load your presentation. After testing, please take a seat in the front row.
7. Be prepared with your own pointer if needed. A limited number of laser pointers are available at the AWRA Registration Desk on a first-come first-served basis.

DURING THE SESSION

1. When it is your turn to speak, come to the table in front, where you may sit or stand as you choose.
2. Give a brief biographical description of your background at the beginning of your presentation. Remember you only have 20 minutes.
3. Speak clearly, reasonably slowly, and confidently. Project your voice. Use a pointer sparingly, if at all. Don't read your slides word for word! Make eye contact and remember all those other things they teach in public-speaking classes.
4. Watch your time. Your session moderator will have cards reminding you of the time remaining.
5. Try to answer as many questions as time allows. Remember that AWRA meetings typically have lots of time for networking or continuing discussions before and after sessions.

UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES

1. Water will be available in the meeting rooms in case you start to lose your voice.
2. If the LCD fails, don't panic! The session moderator will send someone to the registration desk. AWRA staff will contact hotel services, which is responsible for the LCD, and a backup will appear shortly.
3. Worst-case Scenario. Everybody's laughing at you because you forgot to get dressed and showed up in your pajamas. Wake up! You're only dreaming. You'll do just fine!

TIPS FOR A BETTER ORAL PRESENTATION

Communication is a window. Your talents and achievements could be considered the "exquisite furniture" of your technical career. You are judged or evaluated as a professional based on these talents. Unfortunately, this "furniture" is in a room with no doors and only one window. Your peers cannot walk in and touch or smell your talents directly. Instead, they must judge you by looking through your window of communication. Your talents are revealed to others only through writing, speaking, or other forms of communication. Communication windows which are smudged, dusty, or fogged over give others a distorted, unclear view of your abilities. The following are some "tips" that we hope will be helpful for you to open up your window of communication.

Paper Presentations

The quality of oral paper presentations at AWRA meetings is very important. Whether we like it or not, the audience judges us by how well we condense our work into a 15 to 20-minute talk. Effective speaking requires preparation, organization, interest, action, and visual impact. When

you are prepared, your attitude improves, and your confidence grows. Preparation can compensate for lack of talent in public speaking.

Know Your Goal
Even if you are simply "presenting information," your real goal is to have the audience understand ideas. You may not want any specific action or change in behavior, but you at least want the audience to understand the information and ideas in the way you intended them to be understood. Spend at least 5 to 10 hours preparing your 15 to 20-minute talk. Preparation of good visuals will take even longer.

Organization
Organize your oral presentation like a front-page news story rather than a mystery novel. For a presentation longer than 5 minutes, consider the benefits of the "one-page executive summary" at the beginning. If you have only 2 minutes to review a typical ten-page research paper, which sections do you read? Typically, you would read the abstract, then conclusions, and look at the pictures. As a rule, you do not start on page 1 and read for 2 minutes. An oral presentation should provide the same quick overview for the audience. Your notes should not restrict physical action - especially movement, gestures, and eye contact; they should not call attention to themselves (they should be used subtlety). The less you have on the notes, the better (3x5 cards provide the greatest flexibility).

Repetition
Repeat main ideas; repeat main ideas; repeat… Readers can turn back a few pages to double check a key paragraph. Listeners cannot. If you emphasize 3 or 4 key points, you won't have time to cover all 10 or 20 less important points. Is this a problem? The audience will remember only 3 or 4 of the ideas presented anyway, so it's better if you select those for the listener. The success of an oral presentation is not determined by how much information is presented; rather, what counts is how much essential information is understood and retained by the audience. Just who gets tired? In any speech, either the speaker or the audience gets tired. If the audience has to work hard to understand what the speaker is trying to accomplish, they will rebel! The harder you work at preparing and presenting your talk, the easier it is on the audience, and they will like you better.

Audience Analysis
There are many "audiences" and each audience require somewhat different preparation. Don't expect to satisfy every person in an audience of 10 or more. If someone is obviously bored or not paying attention, don't knock yourself out trying to win him or her over. You can easily use 80% of your energy trying futilely to communicate with 5 percent of the audience. Concentrate on key listeners.

The Message Is #1
In an oral presentation to a technical audience, the content is critical. Speaking skills are still important but cannot rank above the content. Your audience must understand your words, or you cannot expect them to understand the message. Ask yourself these four questions about the words you use… Are you being specific? Are you saying what you mean to say? Are you saying all you mean to say? Will the audience understand your words?

People who attend seminars or single presentations tend to have a specific purpose, a sharp focus, and for the most part are demanding and serious. They value their time. If they feel their time is being wasted, they will certainly let you know. In dealing with technical material, a

speaker should take the audience from where they are to where you want them to be. A good presentation will: (1) render a service, (2) give valuable and important information the audience probably wouldn't have otherwise, (3) ought to be in a form they can put into immediate use, and (4) ought to motivate and inspire them to want to put it into immediate use.

Enthusiasm and Persuasion

A book by world-renowned speech expert Bert Decker (You've Got To Be Believed To Be Heard) points out a common problem for most speakers. Decker says we each have two brains: the "first brain" is emotional, non-rational; and the "new brain," which is the seat of conscious thought, memory, language, creativity, and decision-making. When most people speak, they aim their message at the new brain and overlook the first brain. The key: to reach the new brain (rational) your message must first pass through the first brain (emotional). Otherwise your message will be diminished, distorted, and may not get through at all. Decker suggests you reach the first brain by being warm, genuine, less inhibited, and by speaking with energy, enthusiasm, and expression. Here are some suggestions for you to do to keep the momentum of your presentation moving toward that end:

1. Concentrate on the first 15-30 seconds of a presentation. Establish eye contact and rapport before you turn out the lights for a slide talk.
2. Master your subject and be enthusiastic about it; you need to believe in what you're saying.
3. Never read or memorize your presentation; reading reduces eye contact, and memorization makes your talk appear canned. Strive to be as spontaneous as you would in everyday conversation.
4. Learn how to use your voice with high and low and loud and soft tones.
5. Use periodic power pauses. Refrain from talking. This allows you to think and your audience to digest what you've said. Pauses add a dramatic punch.
6. Be natural with your nonverbal actions. Smile, frown, or look surprised when the occasion calls for it.

Visual Aids

Good visuals can make a good technical presentation better, yet an excellent speech can be destroyed by poor visuals. Why use visual aids?

1. Retention increases from 14% to 38% when listeners see as well as hear.
2. Time required to present a concept can be reduced up to 40%.
3. Group consensus occurs 21% more often when visuals are used.

Use more visual aids than you usually do when presenting to an audience whose native language is not English. Also, if your native language is not the same as members of the audience, use more visuals. Seeing key words, photos, and illustrations will greatly improve the listener's understanding.

Basic Rules for Producing "Good" PowerPoint Slides

1. Present ONE and ONLY ONE central idea.
2. Be as brief as possible. It is better to make two slides, each of which will convey its message forcibly and clearly, than to make a single crowded slide that may confuse the audience.

3. A slide should not be entirely complete and self-explanatory, because it is supplemented by the speaker's explanation of the point it is intended to illustrate.
4. Only the specific items to be mentioned in the presentation should be included. All nonessential captions, figures, equations, and the like should be omitted; otherwise, audience attention may wander to unimportant details.

(Please Note: The above information has been gleaned from a presentation "How to Give Better Technical Talks," by Randall Reeder, P.E., American Society of Agricultural Engineers.)