

Society of Toxicology Scientific Session Chair Standard Operating Procedures

SOT prides itself on being the “preeminent organization for toxicologists around the world”. As such, each member’s behavior is important in projecting a positive and professional face for the Society.

One setting in which professional behavior is extremely important is in the chairing of scientific sessions at the Annual Meeting. Tips on projecting appropriate professional conduct as a session chair or co-chair are listed below:

- 1) Familiarize yourself with the abstracts of the talks to be presented in your session prior to the Annual Meeting.
- 2) Communicate with your Co-chair prior to the Annual Meeting to organize your session.
- 3) Communicate with speakers prior to the Annual Meeting:
 - Make sure that you know the correct pronunciation of speakers' names.
 - Remind speakers of their time allocations and how time will be monitored and communicated.
 - Remind speakers to include a Conflict of Interest statement (even if there is no COI) as their second slide.
- 4) Arrive in your session room a few minutes early and communicate with the A/V team in that room. Ask whom should be contacted if there are problems with equipment (microphones, pointers, etc).
- 5) Remind the audience members that talks are not to be photographed or recorded.
- 6) Assure that speaker introductions are professional and collegial. If a speaker is a good friend, it is fine to say that, but do not make jokes or references to personal topics that the audience will not understand.
- 7) Give each speaker your undivided attention during the presentation. There should be no appearance of distraction (there should be no use of phones, laptop computers/pads, etc.) while the speakers are speaking. If you wish to take notes, use a pen and paper.
- 8) Formulate a question to ask each speaker ahead of time. It is very awkward to open the floor for questions and have none asked. The Chair can ease the tension by asking a question if there are none from the audience. If you have a question of genuine interest, feel free to ask after members of the audience have had their chance.
- 9) The Society considers the scientific debate and dialogue that can occur during Scientific Sessions to be beneficial to advancing our science, but we do not support dialogue that becomes disrespectful or aggressive. Please review the SOT Code of Conduct prior to the session and if for any reason the question-and-answer period becomes less than collegial, please attempt to refocus the discussion by calling on other audience members or asking a question yourself.
- 10) Presence of children in scientific session rooms: Some attendees bring their children to the meeting. It is the policy of the SOT that for scientific sessions with oral presentations, children (including infants) are allowed in the room only if the chairperson gives approval. If given, approval should be accompanied by a polite reminder that these scientific sessions are professional learning opportunities and that the parent/adult should be courteous to others in the room and leave the session immediately if the child becomes disruptive.
- 11) After the session, SOT HQ will email you a survey for feedback about your session. Please respond!