

## IES Professional Development Program - General Workshop Planning

- Workshop Planning
- General Advice

### Workshop Planning

As a general rule for planning, consider completing the pre-assessment and one activity in a one-hour workshop, and completing the pre-assessment and 3-4 activities in a one-day workshop.

This training manual uses Investigating Soil to illustrate how to conduct IES presentations and workshops. In a one-hour presentation on Investigating Soil, you should be able to complete the pre-assessment and Investigation 1. In a one-day workshop, you should be able to complete the pre-assessment, Investigations 1 through 4, and part 4 of Investigation 5. You should briefly describe portions of any investigations that you are not having teachers do.

The old saying that "the devil is in the details" is generally true for any workshop. Below are some of the issues that you should be sure to check into:

- What materials are needed for activities? How will they get to the workshop site?
- If materials are being shipped, is it better to have the materials go to the workshop facilitator so they can be checked before the workshop? (Such as to the facilitators' hotel.)
- Do some participants have specific dietary, mobility, or other needs? How can these be accommodated?
- Where will participants find parking? Are permits needed?
- Where are some suggested spots to eat evening meals that can be provided to participants from out of town?
- How should out of town participants get breakfast in time to be at the workshop on time?
- What form of transportation can be used from lodging to workshop site?
- What materials can workshop participants keep? What must be returned?
- What AV media will be needed for the workshop? Do presenters know how to use it? Where are extra bulbs and other backups?
- What kinds of activities will be done and what kinds of physical resources (sinks, windows, doors to outside) will be needed for those activities?
- Is the physical space large enough?
- Are there special tours and/or other events that are available for participants to take advantage of during their off hours?
- How can participants keep in touch with their homes and workplaces? Where can they find telephones? Where can they access e-mail?
- If participants would like to use computer resources, where are they available?

### Back to Top

### General Advice

- Go in prepared. Demonstrate respect for the group by planning ahead, and working your plan.
- Be open-minded about your approach or activity-if something isn't working, acknowledge that and shift the plan.
- If you make mistakes, don't gloss over them, but don't dwell on them either-mistakes are part of any human system, and participants will generally understand.
- Avoid trying to entertain the group-spontaneous humor is genuinely appreciated, but forced humor can be seen as inappropriate, especially if it offends.
- Stay on time, especially at the end of the day. Stick to the schedule as much as possible, and tell (or, better, ask) the group

if an alteration is needed so it does not seem careless.

- Get to know participants and their specific needs as much as possible. Acknowledge differences in background as a strength of the group and encourage participants to help each other.
- Don't make the workshop "about" you-anecdotes are often more fun for the teller than the listener, and as much as possible attention should be turned to the participants, their actions, and their attempts to do things.
- Remember that everything you do should be geared toward conveying specific messages-know your goals for the day and don't distract the participants through digressions.
- Pay attention to "off hours" when participants are traveling to the workshop site and are new to the area-consider how those individuals might want to spend time. Collect information about local sites and help participants make connections with others with similar interests so that off hours are enjoyable.
- Be enthusiastic!

**Back to Top**

---