

**CALIFORNIA ENVIROTHON**  
**OPERATING RULES AND REGULATIONS**  
(Revised September 22, 2023/Adopted September 28, 2023)

**Introduction**

The California Envirothon annual competition will be conducted according to the Operating Rules and Regulations (ORR). The ORR is subject to periodic updates, revisions, or modifications by the CAE Steering Committee (SC) as needed. The ORR is posted on the CAE website (caenvirothon.com). All participants in the annual competition are advised to know the ORR. The CAE ORR is consistent with the rules and regulations set forth by the National Conservation Foundation-Envirothon.

**I. Team Eligibility Requirements**

1. The CAE annual competition is open to students from grades 9–12, and who reach age 14–19 by August 8 of the current competition year. Eligible teams must be registered in either a public or private high school, or a non-traditional school; and/or participate in a youth organization such as environmental/science clubs, after school groups, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H, or Future Farmers of America (FFA). Any exceptions must be approved by the CAE SC.
2. Each team will consist of five students from the same school, non-traditional school, or youth organization. Each team is encouraged to have an alternate to substitute for a team member who may be unable to compete at the event due to unexpected circumstances. Any substitution for a member(s) of the competing team must receive approval from the CAE SC. If there are enough alternates amassed at the event with interest in competing for the experience, they will be allowed the option to form for exhibition purposes only.
3. A team or teams, comprising a combination of students from two unaffiliated schools, may compete in CAE, if they meet the following criteria to the SC's satisfaction: a) are located within the same school district; b) present an official coordinating mechanism or agreement of their mutual affiliation regarding organizing and sharing resources, logistics, and staffing to support and prepare the team(s); c) designate a teacher advisor from either school and an adult chaperone from the other to instruct and guide the students. The SC understands this approach may encourage teams from those schools located in rural school districts, tribal youth organizations, and/or those serving underrepresented students in dense urban school districts.
4. The team(s) must have one adult advisor defined as a high school teacher or youth organization coordinator. The advisor must be from the high school or youth organization the team is affiliated with. If there are any certain circumstances in which an advisor, as defined, cannot be secured, a willing parent may request and be permitted by the Steering Committee to serve as the team's advisor. If the parent advisor lacks the experience, he/she will be instructed to collaborate with a teacher from the school to provide support to the team.
5. The advisor is responsible for team organization and logistics, oversee the student team's study program, coaching, registration, payment of fees, and coordination with administrators of the high school or youth organization. The team(s) must have at least one chaperone: an adult male, age 21 or older, to chaperone male team members and/or an adult female age 21 or older, to chaperone female team members. The advisor and chaperone will oversee and supervise the students' conduct throughout the competition.

6. The advisor must document affiliation with the high school, non-traditional school, or youth organization the team identifies with. The high school principal or youth organization director is required to submit to the CAE SC, a signed letter from the school principal, on official stationary letterhead, documenting its authorization allowing the students participation. It will agree to provide liability insurance coverage and school sponsorship. This official letter is to be submitted to the CAE SC and included with the team(s) pre-registration. Any requests for time extensions may be considered by the CAE SC. The team and/or the advisor is responsible for reaching out to the school faculty and the principal or the director of the youth organization, to satisfy this requirement. All advisors must have experience to work hands-on with students such as proper training and a skill set to direct the team.
7. It is recommended that teams have support or sponsorship by a local resource conservation district. There are benefits associated with RCD sponsorship and/or support such as assistance in natural resources education, training and guidance. The CAE SC will be flexible on sponsorship if there is no local RCD involvement or coverage.
8. To be eligible to compete in CAE, all advisors are responsible to ensure their and the team's understanding of the CAE's ORR as well as the chaperones.
9. All team registration fees are non-refundable and payable in full by the final registration deadline established by the CAE SC.
10. All registration forms (pre- and final) shall list the name of each team member including the designated team captain, any alternates, team name, the team advisor and adult chaperone. Listing of the chaperone may be deferred to the final registration form. All registration forms shall be submitted by the date set forth by the CAE SC. There is one registration form per school or organization. This process is administered online at CAE's website ([caenvirothon.com](http://caenvirothon.com)). The CAE SC must be notified in advance of any anticipated late registration or payment. Any changes or substitutions of students, teacher, or chaperone beyond the final registration date are discouraged. However, the CAE SC may take this under consideration on a case-by-case basis if there are compelling reasons and make a decision.
11. The pre-registration form includes two requirements: a Modeling, Performing and Narration Release to be completed by each student and his/her parent or guardian; and each attendee will be required to certify CAE's Code of Ethics to maintain a positive and fun environment at the competition. The advisor shall certify that their students have reviewed and understand the CAE ORR, with particular emphasis on Section IV Code of Conduct.
12. All teams are required to add California Envirothon to their organization's general liability policy covering their team(s) on the day of the competition.
13. Each team member must provide proof of health insurance upon registration at the competition. This may be as simple as having a health care identification card and/or an emergency contact such as a parent or guardian.
14. Any exceptions to the team eligibility rules must be approved by the CAE SC.

## II. Competition Rules and Regulations

1. Violating the CAE competition rules and regulations, **in any way or at any time**, is prohibited by students, advisors, chaperones, and guests. This may result in disqualification and dismissal from the event and host site.
2. Only materials approved by the CAE SC may be used by the students during the station testing, and in preparing for, and presenting, in the oral competition.
3. All resource materials including lap top computers, must be checked in upon arrival at the host test site. Use of these materials or anything else other than what is provided at each field station test site, is strictly prohibited. The only exception is each team may use a calculator. All materials checked may be retrieved at the end of the competition.
4. **No electronic equipment including personal cell phones** or other devices may be used by, or be in the possession of, team members during the instructional periods, station testing, and oral presentation preparation and delivery. Student cell phones must be collected by teacher advisors and/or chaperones for safekeeping prior to the start of the competition. Access to personal cell phones may be allowed during the breaks and lunch periods but must be returned when the competition resumes. The only exception to the use of electronic devices allowed is the accommodation of medical needs or physical conditions requiring special devices, equipment, or assistance, and must be approved in advance by the CAE SC
5. The CAE competition officially starts at the time the team checks in and until such time the winning team is decided and the event closes.
6. During the competition, all team members, advisors, and chaperones must wear the CAE t-shirt provided upon check in or if mailed in advance by the SC. No other identification regarding school, team, or student name, either written or stated, is permitted. Name tags may not be worn at any time.
7. Any team, team member, or team advisor, or chaperone shall not arrive at the host site facility prior to the designated day and starting time of the competition. Moreover, any team, team member, or team advisor or chaperone discovered on, near, or around the host site facility or testing stations other than during scheduled times, in the course of the competition, may be subject to immediate disqualification.
8. No animal, other than a service animal on which the individual is dependent, will be allowed at the CAE competition. The service animal is required to have the proper documentation.
9. Judges' and test proctors' decisions will be final unless any disagreement or challenge is submitted to the CAE SC for review.
10. Any challenges or disputes may be submitted in writing or orally by the advisor to any member(s) of the CAE SC, up to 15 minutes after the first place team is announced. After that time, all decisions are final.
11. Up to two teams per school are eligible to officially compete and rank in the annual competition. If a school wishes to register more than two teams, the CAE SC shall be notified in

advance for approval given capacity considerations. The advisor must inform the CAE SC through pre-registration, which two teams are officially competing. The additional teams will receive their scores. Registered teams with fewer than five students will be considered for the purposes of exhibition only and are not eligible for awards, however, they will receive their scores. The CAE SC supports having as many students compete as it offers the CAE experience and expands interest in the event.

12. Only one team per school shall advance to the finals of the competition.
13. If any student of the winning team cannot advance to the NCF International Envirothon, the advisor shall recommend an alternate having current CAE experience. The designated alternate must be approved by the CAE SC.
14. If the first place team is unable to advance, the second place team will be designated to proceed to the international competition. If the second place team is unable to advance, the third place team shall be designated. In the event that neither of the three teams is able to advance, the CAE SC shall make the final determination of which team will advance.
15. The first place team and the advisor will receive the CAE trophy for display at their school. It will be returned to the following year's competition for award to the next winning team.

### **III. Oral Presentations**

1. Team oral presentations will be 20 minutes maximum in length, followed by ten minutes of questions to team members by the judges. Judges are allowed ten minutes to score each team's presentation.
2. All five team members must equally participate in the presentation. If a team is participating with less than five team members, that team may receive a two-point deduction per each missing team member.
3. No contact is to be made between the team advisors, chaperones, guests, and judges during the presentation.
4. Teams are allowed the use of computer laptops to prepare and display computer-generated slides for their oral presentations.
5. Oral presentation scores will be based on the evaluation criteria listed on the judges scoring sheet as approved by the National Conservation Foundation-Envirothon.
6. During the preliminary oral presentations, no audience or observers will be allowed.
7. During the final oral presentations, all other teams, teacher advisors, chaperones, volunteers, etc., will be allowed to quietly observe and not interfere or distract. No photography or video recordings shall be allowed, other than approved by the CAE SC.

### **IV. Station Tests: Wildlife, Soil, Forestry, and Aquatic Ecology**

1. Teams have 30 minutes to complete each test. They are given a five minute warning before

their time is up. Each station will have a proctor and a volunteer to assist and serve as timekeeper.

2. Proctors have ten minutes to score the test. The team will remain at the station until told to rotate to the next test station.
3. All students are required to stay together as a team throughout the testing period.
4. Teacher advisors and chaperones are not allowed access or contact with their students during testing.

## **V. Code of Conduct**

1. Advisors will be responsible for the team's conduct at the host site facility during the event. Any conduct by advisors or students observed or deemed inappropriate by the CAE SC will be grounds for disqualification and dismissal. Team members, advisors, and chaperones must attend all scheduled events at the competition. No team member, advisor, or chaperone may leave the CAE site facility prior to adjournment without first obtaining permission from the CAE SC.
2. Conduct of all CAE participants must be of an appropriate ethical manner for this youth-oriented educational setting. Students must wear appropriate dress attire. The CAE SC reserves the right to exclude anyone violating this rule from future events.
3. Participants are expected to attend all general sessions and other scheduled activities, be prompt and show respect to those in the audience and those presenting or having the floor.
4. Student/minor guest participants may not be in possession of, or use: tobacco/vapor products (including smokeless); alcoholic beverages; illegal/illicit drugs; and weapons, including firearms and knives. This is strictly prohibited at any and all CAE functions.
5. If any student is determined to be cheating or disregarding CAE rules and regulations, he/she and the entire team shall be disqualified.