

FAQ & Advice to Avoid Common Registration/SRC (Safety Review Committee) Problems

1. School registration and project registration are 2 different tasks. No project is automatically in the fair just because the school has registered for a slot.
2. Pay attention to deadlines! See Important Dates under the Project Registration tab.
3. Form 3 is required for ALL projects. Frequently forgotten hazards to include on form 3: voltages, use of power tools, culturing unknown organisms, use of PPE, disposal of cultures and chemicals, privacy concerns in survey projects.
4. Form 2 is required in most hazardous projects AND for supervision of work done in a HOME or fieldwork setting.
5. Form 4 is required for MOST projects with humans. IRB (Internal Review Board) signatures are required on this form from school staff (An admin, a teacher and a medical adult like the nurse). These 3 signatures CANNOT be the same as the other adults (like the designated supervisor or the qualified scientist) that are on your other forms.
6. Many form 4 projects also require a copy of any survey used and a copy of the consent form you use for your test subjects. Data must be deidentified before the student scientist has access and this must be stated in the research plan and/or form 3. If data is de-identified (ex. from a medical database) prior to the student receiving it, then they don't need Form 4, but they DO need it in writing that the data was de-identified.
7. All vertebrate animal projects need a signature from a vet or a trained animal care provider with expertise in that species on a 5A form (or be working with a research institute- 5B form), including FISH!
8. 6A form is needed whenever cultures of unknown organisms are involved- pond water, school “germ” studies, soils, molds etc. In addition, unknown cultures must be done at school (not home) and must remain sealed for the duration of the experiment; otherwise they require a BSL-2. Lab.
9. Research plan procedures should have enough detail so that SRC knows what you are doing for your experiment: all tools and materials, specific organisms used, how the data is collected.
10. Some handwritten forms are difficult to read. Try to get all forms typed.
11. Sending blank forms often results when you do not upload the completed form as a SAVED PDF FILE from your device. SAVE it after you complete it and THEN upload.
12. Unsigned forms are not complete. Electronic signatures are acceptable.
13. All CAPS or all lower case names for team members and schools on the registration forms create problems. This form sends data to certificates, awards, status reports, judge lists etc. Please make the effort to enter them correctly.
14. Each time you submit something, it should be acknowledged by an autoreply email. If that isn't happening, that's a big problem, especially later on for interview slots etc. Usually 2 things are responsible: your school is blocking outside emails or there are email typos on your registration forms.

The current ISEF rulebook and CSEF Student Guide (at ctsciencefair.org) contain many details and examples for clarification. Consult them often!