



IEMG Meeting Planning Guide

Introduction

These guidelines and helpful hints were developed to assist you to successfully host the IEMG Meeting. Included are step-by-step instructions on how to plan the meeting from beginning to end. Topics include room reservations, food services, equipment requests, room configurations, and much more. This also includes the promotion of the IEMG through media relations efforts to use the meeting as an opportunity to share key activities that the group is involved with.

Set a Realistic Budget

- Estimate the number of attendees (including for those functions that include spouses/guests, as applicable)
- Does your jurisdiction permit Sponsors? If so, do you have Sponsors that could offset any costs such as:
 - continental breakfast
 - lunch
 - breaks/networking session
 - dinner
 - welcome gifts
- Obtain quotes from a minimum of three possible venues/hotels to ensure the best price possible, as well as availability of amenities for the attendees.
- Read all contracts and materials very carefully to understand terms and conditions completely. Items to consider:
 - Full American Plan or Complete Meeting Plan
 - Deposit amounts and due dates
 - Cancellation policies
 - Check in/check out times
 - Final payment due date (day of Meeting, 30 days, etc.)

Give program specifications to hotel including: number of overnight rooms; audiovisual needs; number of meeting rooms and configurations; and food and beverage.



Pick a Suitable Date

- The Co-Chairs will pick an approximate date for the next IEMG Meeting (approximately every 6 months) and work with the host to finalize it; this will also be based on facility availability in the host location.
- Avoid competing with other meetings, workshops, budget season, etc.
- Avoid scheduling around holidays and school vacations.

Location

Choose a location easily accessible by all attendees. Take into consideration nearest airport, interstate/interprovincial highway access and activities for after-hours and/or weekend activities and entertainment.

Choosing the Site

- **Overnight rooms:**
 - Reserve an adequate block of rooms; this can be based on previous meeting numbers.
 - Is there internet access from room? High speed or dial-up? Extra charge?
- **Meeting space:**
 - Is there a food and beverage minimum?
 - Is there a room rental fee?
 - Can venue accommodate IEMG needs?
 - Are there enough meeting rooms?
 - Day 1: Attendee arrival with optional welcome reception by host
 - Day 2 & 3: One (1) large room to accommodate approx. 40 people
 - See “table set up” for specifics on room set up
- **Audiovisual requirements:**
 - Is there a need; overall fee?
 - Is fee based on number of speakers?
 - If equipment is brought in, is there staff to assist with technical issues?



- Lavalier microphone & podium--are they needed?
- Microphones on head table? Attendee tables?
- **Food and beverage:**
 - Are the menus negotiable?
 - Are there alternative options for those with food allergies or special dietary restrictions?
 - Continental breakfast
 - Mid-morning break
 - Lunch
 - Mid-afternoon break
 - Dinner (host to provide one dinner; other nights are “on your own”)
 - Welcome party 1st night (not mandatory)
 - Meet in bar, rent room or use someone’s overnight room?
 - Alcoholic, non-alcoholic beverages, food?
- Insist on one dedicated hotel staff person to work with the entire time to ensure everything is exactly the way you want it.
- Ask about “hidden” costs such as parking fees, other room charges, phone, etc.?

NOTES:

- **The lowest price per person isn’t always the best deal; negotiate with the facility, they want your business!**
- **Check the hotel cancellation policy if you need to cancel a meeting room or change anything, what will it cost?**
- **Ensure attendees are aware of the overnight room reservation deadline to get the meeting rate.**

Invitation to the IEMG Meeting

Working with the co-chairs, develop an invitation letter with specifics on the upcoming IEMG Meeting that includes: date, location, hotel contact info, cost of overnight room w/approx. taxes, airport/driving directions, draft agenda and any other pertinent information. This should go out 3-4 months before the next meeting to allow time for travel to be approved by each state and province attending.



IEMG Program

- Results of telephone drill – conducted by host before meeting.
- Guest speaker/education program – coordinate this with the co-chairs

Program Costs

- Stay within your budget; there is no 'competition' to out-do the previous meeting
- Are there speaker fees and expenses? (honorarium, travel expenses) co-chairs can work with you to identify topics and possible speakers (at no cost) for the meeting. (Are there AV needs for speakers?)
- Social events
 - Set up and have attendees pay for it on their own?
 - Arrange for group dinner or let attendees do their own thing?
 - How will payment be taken care of if off-site:
 - Is rate set; make arrangements with venue for payment options?
 - How will payment be taken care of if on-site:
 - Is it possible to do Full American Plan (all meals included)?
- Develop timeline/schedule that includes:
 - Meeting start/end times each day
 - Workgroup Breakout Sessions
 - Speakers
 - Meals and breaks

Meeting Planning

- Main specifications to focus on are:
 - Overnight rooms – block rate (deadline)
 - Meeting space and rental fee, if any
 - Food and beverage costs
 - Audiovisual needs and costs
 - Breakout rooms for workgroups; if applicable
 - Security – can meeting materials be left in conference room overnight?
 - To include AV and computers?



Reserving Rooms

When selecting the meeting and dining rooms, you will want to consider three basic criteria:

- 1) Size of the group
- 2) Room set up
- 3) Food service needs

To assist you with these criteria, refer to the facility information:

- 1) Meeting Facility Configurations and Capacities
- 2) Meeting Room Photos
- 3) Meeting Room Rates
- 4) Catering Guide
- 5) Meeting Planning Staff at the Facility

Table/Chair Setup

- Co-Chairs and Directors from each State and Province should be seated at a 'head table' to ensure all attendees can see them. Appropriate State and Province flags and name tents should be placed in front of them on the table.
 - Attendees can be configured:
 - Circle
 - U-Shape
 - Classroom – least preferred configuration as it is not conducive for interactive conversations.

What items/functions will IEMG (host) cover and what will attendees cover?

- Meals – IEMG host to pay for meals during the meeting and one dinner (dinner is optional – not mandatory).
- Receptions – IEMG host may elect to do this (it is not mandatory).
- Offsite activities – Attendees will pay for non-IEMG related activities.

Sponsorships: Look at your internal policy/procedures to see if there are exclusions on who you can/can not accept funds from. There is no obligation to use/have sponsors—it's simply one way of reducing costs, if your jurisdiction allows it.



Confirmations

As the date of the IEMG meeting draws near, it is necessary to confirm details with the attendee's (including speakers as applicable), food services and meeting services. You should receive an event confirmation report about one week prior to the event that will need to be reviewed for any changes, etc., before signing it and returning it to the hotel.

You will usually have to call the Hotel's Food Service staff 5-7 days before the event with your attendance number (guarantee). When giving the IEMG guarantee reduce the number by 5%. **Your catering bill is based on your guarantee and all facilities plan for 5% overage; there is no need to waste money unnecessarily.**

If your attendance is higher than your guarantee, Food Services will do its best to provide all of your participants with the pre-selected menu for your event.

How to Arrange for Food Services

When placing an order, ensure you have the following information handy:

- 1) Account number for billing
- 2) Date and starting/ending time of the meeting
- 3) Estimated number of participants
- 4) Room name(s)
- 5) Menu request(s)

Meals for IEMG

- Continental Breakfast
 - Coffee/tea/decaf/juice
 - Fresh fruit
 - Pastries & bagels w/cream cheese
 - Cold/hot cereal
- Morning break
 - Coffee/tea/decaf/juice
 - Fruit, pastries, bagels
- Lunch
 - Buffet
 - Sit-down/served
 - Decision is up to the host



- Afternoon break
 - Coffee/tea/decaf/soft drinks/water
 - Fruit/Cookies/Brownies/etc.
- Dinner
 - Attendees are on their own
 - Host may elect to host dinner – this is optional

Most facilities will require 5-7 working days notice for guarantee on all food service functions.

Audiovisual – working with the co-chairs and based upon the agenda, determine the need for:

- Overhead projector and screen
- Flip charts and markers
- TV/VCR
- LCD/Computer
- Stereo equipment
- Microphone
- Other: _____

Ask about availability to printer/photocopier, if it is needed during the meeting.

- On/off-site?
- Costs?

Registration Table & Packets

- Two six foot tables with four chairs for registration table
- List of attendees – by date (some may only attend 1 day or the other)
- Packets:
 - Agenda & minutes of previous meeting
 - Facility/Area information
 - Other info as appropriate (speaker bio's, etc).



Three Weeks Before the IEMG Meeting

- Send confirmation letter to attendees with any last minute changes to the agenda, facility information (including fax number), list of attendees and any other pertinent information.
- Contact State/Provincial Media Liaison in the host EM organization to ensure that they know the key message to develop a media release for the meeting to promote those activities.

The Day Before the IEMG Meeting

- Meet with hotel staff to ensure that all boxes/deliveries have arrived and are accounted for, if applicable.
- Arrange for a “walk-through” of the meeting agenda (timeline) and meeting rooms based on hotel your contract.
- Review final number for overnight rooms and all meals with hotel staff based on your hotel contract.
- Media release issued outlining activities; should include contact information.

IEMG Meeting Day

- Have contract with you to review/cross reference.
- Meet with hotel contact prior to the meeting regarding any last minute revisions.
- Set up registration table with meeting packets and other materials as necessary.
- Place handouts at tables prior to the meeting, if applicable.
- Arrange for group photo on Day 2; e-mail to secretariat to send to participants and post on website.
- Public Information Officer to coordinate with media the morning of the meeting to ensure access to the meeting.
 - Identify IEMG speaker to deliver key messages to media. (ie., speaker, co-chair, etc.)
 - If your organization utilizes social media (ie., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) you could post this information for further situational awareness of IEMG.



Other information to provide participants before their arrival

- Hotel amenities:
 - Business Center – what is available, cost, hours, etc.
 - Fitness Center – what is available, cost, hours, etc.

- List of recommended area restaurants
- Area activities of interest
 - Driving directions to/from activities
- Local transportation information – van, limo, shuttle with schedules to/from airport
- Contact information for hotel including phone, address and fax