

## OVERVIEW

Applying leadership and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, participants use a team approach to develop a computer- controlled model solution to a given problem, typically one based on an industrial setting. Teams analyze the problem, build a computer-controlled mechanical model, program the model, explain the program and mechanical features of the model-solution, and leave instructions for judges to operate the device.

## ELIGIBILITY

One (1) team of three (3) individuals per state may participate.

## TIME LIMITS

The preliminary round consists of three (3) phases:

- A. Thirty (30) minutes for set up (team captain)
- B. Fifteen (15) minutes for analysis (team)
- C. Two and a half (2 ½) hours for problem solution (team)
- D. All students participate in an interview at the conclusion of the programming

## ATTIRE

TSA competition attire is required.

## PROCEDURE

### PRE-CONFERENCE

- A. Participants review the TSA Honor Statement for Competitive Events found in the General Rules and listed in the individual competitive event rules.

### PRELIMINARY ROUND

- A. Each team selects a team captain prior to the orientation meeting.
- B. A team orientation meeting will take place at the beginning of the event at the conference.
- C. The captain checks-in for the team during the set-up time by submitting his/her student identification number and the team's identification number for the written and model portions of the event.

- D. The problem and the Inventor's Log are presented to teams at the beginning of the thirty (30) minute problem analysis session prior to model-building.
- E. Teams must complete their description or interpretation of the problem during this time.
- F. Each team is given a maximum of two and one-half (2½) hours to:
  - 1. Construct a model that simulates realistic industrial processes
  - 2. Program the model
  - 3. Test the solution
  - 4. Describe the program and mechanical features of the model-solution
  - 5. Complete directions for judges to use to activate the model
- G. When finished, teams save their programs and leave them on-screen in operable form with the ability to be reset.
  - 1. Before leaving the event room, teams demonstrate the operation of the model with judges present.
  - 2. Judges may ask questions during the demonstration.
  - 3. After judges have observed the operation of a team's model, the team leaves the room.
  - 4. The coordinator determines the amount of time permitted for the team's demonstration based on the number of teams and the complexity of the problem.
  - 5. Evaluation of the solutions takes place without the teams present.
- H. Team members report to the event area at the time and place stated by the event coordinator to pick up their equipment.
- I. Ten (10) finalists will be announced during the conference awards ceremony.

## REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Students will work to develop their leadership and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the process of preparing for and participating in this TSA competitive event. The development and application of those skills must be evident in their submission, demonstration, and/or communication pertaining to the entry.

**PRELIMINARY ROUND**

- A. No reference materials or building cards are allowed.
- B. Participants provide their own laptop computer with hardware and software systems. All equipment must be labeled with the team's identification number, advisor name, and advisor contact information.
- C. Access to AC power will be provided. One electrical outlet per team. Each team should bring a power strip.
- D. Each team provides pencils and scrap paper along with its own materials kit, which must be appropriate to build a system that can identify, secure, and move objects and that has light and/or sound outputs.
- E. A problem will be developed by the coordinator based upon the assumption that every materials kit will contain at least:
  - 1. Two (2) optical sensors
  - 2. Two (2) touch sensors
  - 3. Two (2) motors
  - 4. Two (2) audio and two (2) light outputs
  - 5. Gears, wheels, and axles appropriate to build a motorized vehicle and/or conveyor belt
  - 6. Balls, blocks, and pegs that can be used as objects to be moved and manipulated
  - 7. Velcro, tape, clamps, and other materials to secure or move the above objects (balls, blocks, and pegs)
  - 8. No cutting devices may be used during the on-site challenge; materials must retain the original form in which they were brought to the competition.
  - 9. Power tools may not be used.
- F. The following definitions are an integral part of the event regulations:
  - 1. Repeatability – the device is programmed to reset automatically.
  - 2. Functional control – the device must accomplish the task in an efficient manner and be user friendly.
  - 3. Model-solution – the physical device must simulate the realistic processes used in the industry.

- 4. Conservation of materials – the model reflects the best use of materials to solve the problem, without being overbuilt.

- G. Programs must be written completely on-site.
- H. Use or modification of any programs written prior to the competition result in disqualification.
- I. An example of a problem for this event is provided below to help students understand and interpret a typical issue common to business and industry that might be used at a national TSA conference.

*Johnson Recycling Center needs an automatic system for separating its two primary types of recycling material products. If type A material is detected in the product, the system should move the product to the right side of a sorting line. If type B material is detected on the assembly line, the product should be delivered to the left side. Whenever a product is delivered, a light or buzzer should activate for 10 seconds to alert workers that a product is available on one or the other of the sorting lines. The system should then reset to separate and deliver a new product. Design a prototype that can automatically deliver at least four products without any user intervention, then reset.*

**EVALUATION**

- A. Inventor's Log
- B. Model solution
- C. Programming structure and efficiency
- D. Interview

Refer to the official rating form for more information.

**TSA HONOR STATEMENT**

All work must be created and completed by individual competitors or teams. Plagiarism, the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) software, copyright violation, cheating, and falsification of information are prohibited. Participants may NOT use any generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Gemini, GitHub Copilot, etc.). Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will not be tolerated. Competitors at any level of TSA competition understand and agree to abide by the TSA Honor Statement.

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If it is determined that a student violated the TSA Honor Statement, a rules violation of twenty percent (20%) will be incurred.

### **STEM INTEGRATION**

This event has connections to the STEM areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

### **LEADERSHIP AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS**

This event provides opportunity for students to build and develop leadership and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills including but not limited to – Communication, Collaboration/Social Skills, Initiative, Problem Solving/Risk Taking, Critical Thinking, Perseverance/Grit, Creativity, Relationship Building/Teamwork, Dependability/Integrity, and Flexibility/Adaptability

### **CAREERS RELATED TO THIS EVENT**

This competition has connections to one (1) or more of the careers below:

- CNC programmer
- Computer programmer
- Robotics engineer

## SYSTEM CONTROL TECHNOLOGY INVENTOR'S LOG

Participant/Team ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Use only the space provided. This section must be completed DURING the process of problem analysis.

1. Description or interpretation of the given problem:

The two parts below must be completed AFTER the problem analysis session.

2. Description of the team solution (explain the unique features of the program and model):

3. Directions to evaluators to start the system:

# SYSTEM CONTROL TECHNOLOGY

## 2026 & 2027 OFFICIAL RATING FORM

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

Judges: Using minimal (1-4 points), adequate (5-8 points), or exemplary (9-10 points) performance levels as a guideline in the rating form, record the scores earned for the event criteria in the column spaces to the right. The X1 or X2 notation in the criteria column is a multiplier factor for determining the points earned. (Example: an "adequate" score of 7 for an X1 criterion = 7 points; an "adequate" score of 7 for an X2 criterion = 14 points.) A score of zero (0) is acceptable if the minimal performance for any criterion is not met.

#### Go/No Go Specifications

- Before judging the entry, ensure that the items below are present; indicate presence with a check mark in the box.
- If an item is missing, leave the box next to the item blank and place a check mark in the box labeled ENTRY NOT EVALUATED.
- If a check mark is placed in the ENTRY NOT EVALUATED box, the entry is not to be judged.

- ☐ Laptop computer is present
- ☐ Materials kit is present
- ☐ ENTRY NOT EVALUATED

INVENTOR'S LOG (20 points)				Record scores in the column spaces below.
CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance	
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points	
<b>Description of Problem</b> (X1)	The written description is incomplete, and/or it is illogical and unorganized; the description is simply a restatement of the problem's guidelines.	The written description includes a logical and general understanding of the problem's guidelines.	An organized, logical, and concisely written description of the problem is provided; it includes all major aspects of the problem's guidelines, as well as original thoughts.	
<b>Description of Solution and Activation Instructions</b> (X1)	The team's written solution does not correlate with the final system creation; the solution is illogical related to the problem's guidelines, and/or directions to activate the solution are included but incomplete.	The team's written solution correlates generally with the final system creation; adequate directions to activate the solution are included.	A strong correlation between the team's written solution and final system creation is provided; the solution is written clearly and concisely; activation instructions are included and written concisely.	
<b>INVENTOR'S LOG SUBTOTAL (20 points)</b>				

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM (60 points)				Record scores in the column spaces below.
CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance	
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points	
<b>Realistic Simulation</b> (X1)	The simulation is not realistic; it has an abstract design that would not work effectively in its intended environment.	The simulation is somewhat realistic and logically designed, and it may work effectively in its intended environment.	The simulation is realistic and similar to a system that would be effective in its intended environment.	
<b>Dependability of Solution</b> (X1)	The solution is not constructed with dependability in mind; when the system is operated, construction pieces fall off, etc.	Most of the solution is well constructed and dependable, with only a few components that are questionable.	Every component of the solution is well constructed and dependable; practical construction techniques have been used.	
<b>Conservation of Materials</b> (X1)	An inefficient use of construction materials is obvious; too many unnecessary materials are incorporated into the design.	Most of the components of the solution are designed with conservation in mind; the construction is generally adequate.	All components of the solution are designed and assembled with conservation of materials in mind; the construction is elegant and not overbuilt.	

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM (60 points) – continued				
<b>Solution to Problem</b> (X2)	The solution is missing three (3) or more required attributes/criteria and several do not function as intended.	The solution includes most of the required attributes/criteria, and they function adequately.	The solution includes all required attributes/criteria listed in the design details, and all attributes function appropriately and correctly.	
<b>Ingenuity and Creativity</b> (X1)	The solution and design are unauthentic, complex, and do not function as a system.	The solution has some original ideas in its design, and its construction is adequate.	The solution is truly unique and authentic; its construction is concise and designed with simplicity.	
<b>SOLUTION TO PROBLEM SUBTOTAL (60 points)</b>				

PROGRAMMING STRUCTURE (20 points)				Record scores in the column spaces below.
CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance	
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points	
<b>Programming Efficiency</b> (X1)	The software used to program the system is overly complex and inefficient; advanced programming techniques, which would have simplified the programming of specific tasks, are not included.	The programming software is efficient, with some advanced features that simplify the solution's criteria and/or attributes.	A concise and logical programming application is used that incorporates advanced features to simplify the solution's criteria and/or attributes.	
<b>Program Structure</b> (X1)	The programming structure is illogical, unorganized, or overly complicated and/or complex; the program does not reset.	There is evidence of an organized programming structure and adequate use of sub-routines; the program resets.	The programming structure is concise and predictable; there is appropriate use of sub-routines where needed; the program resets.	
<b>PROGRAMMING STRUCTURE SUBTOTAL (20 points)</b>				

DEMONSTRATION/INTERVIEW (10 points)				Record scores in the column spaces below.
CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance	
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points	
<b>Articulation</b> (X1)	Communication of the design process is unclear, unorganized, and or illogical; leadership and/or 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills are not evident.	Communication of the design process is somewhat logical and clear; leadership and/or 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills are somewhat evident.	Communication of the design process is clear, concise, and logical; leadership and/or 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills are clearly evident.	
<b>DEMONSTRATION/INTERVIEW SUBTOTAL (10 points)</b>				

Rules violations (a deduction of 20% of the total possible points for the above sections) must be initialed by the judge, coordinator, and manager of the event. Record the deduction in the space to the right.

Indicate the rule violated: \_\_\_\_\_

**PRELIMINARY SUBTOTAL (110 points)**

To arrive at the TOTAL score, add any subtotals and subtract rules violation points, as necessary.

**TOTAL (110 points)**

Comments:

I certify these results to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

**JUDGE**

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# SYSTEM CONTROL TECHNOLOGY EVENT COORDINATOR INSTRUCTIONS

## PERSONNEL

- A. Event coordinator
- B. Judges:
  - 1. Preliminary round, two (2) or more
  - 2. Semifinal round, two (2) or more
- C. Assistants, two (2)

## MATERIALS

- A. Coordinator's packet, containing:
  - 1. Event guidelines, one (1) copy for the coordinator and each judge
  - 2. TSA Event Coordinator Report
- B. Stopwatches
- C. Copies of the written problem
- D. Copies of the Inventor's Log
- E. Large room with sufficient electrical outlets to accommodate a first place team from every state and affiliated country
- F. Power strips with surge protectors and extension cords
- G. One (1) table and three (3) chairs per team

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### AT THE CONFERENCE

- A. Attend the mandatory event coordinator's meeting at the designated time and location.
- B. Report to the CRC room and check the contents of the coordinator's packet.
- C. Review the event guidelines and check to see that enough personnel have been scheduled.
- D. Inspect the area(s) or room in which the event is to be held for appropriate set-up, including room size, chairs, tables, outlets, etc. Notify the event manager of any potential problems.
- E. At least one (1) hour before the event is scheduled to begin, meet with judges/assistants to review time limits, procedures, regulations, evaluation, and all other details related to the event. If questions arise that cannot be answered, speak to the event manager before the event begins.
- F. Ensure the judges have access to the online judging system.

### PRELIMINARY ROUND

- A. Begin the event at the scheduled time by closing the doors and checking the entry list.
- B. All participants and judges should be in the room at this time.
- C. Late participants and/or entries are considered on a case-by-case basis and only when lateness is caused by events beyond the participant's control.
- D. In order to compete, participants must be on the entry list or must have approval of the CRC.
- E. Secure teams' equipment in the area designated.
- F. At the orientation meeting, obtain identification numbers for each team captain and the captain's respective team.
  - 1. Judges must be present at the orientation meeting.
  - 2. Review the time limits, procedure, and regulations with team captains.
- G. Distribute the problem and Inventor's Log to teams at the beginning of the event.
- H. Teams have fifteen (15) minutes to complete their interpretation of the problem, using the Inventor's Log.
- I. Each team is given two and one-half (2 ½) hours to complete the remaining portion of the event.
- J. Prior to leaving the event room, teams must demonstrate that their device/model is operable and has the ability to reset.
  - 1. Judges must observe this demonstration and may ask a few questions.
  - 2. Judges also may take notes, but evaluation of a team's work occurs only after the team has left the event room.



- K. Judges independently evaluate the entries.
- L. Decisions about rules violations must be discussed and verified with the judges, event coordinator, and the CRC manager to determine either:
  - 1. To deduct twenty percent (20%) of the total possible points in this round
  - 2. To disqualify the entryThe event coordinator, judges and CRC manager must all initial either of the violations on the rating form.
- M. If necessary, manage security and the removal of materials from the event area.