

Popsicle Stick Bridge Contest – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I alter my bridge on the day of the contest?

A: You may alter your bridge up until you check-in at registration. Once you have checked in on the day of the competition, and your bridge has been handed over to the judges, you may no longer make any changes or fixes to your bridge.

Q: What will happen if my bridge is disqualified because it does not meet the requirements of the contest (e.g., too many sticks were used, wrong glue was used, portions of the bridge were bracing against the supports, etc.)?

A: A disqualified bridge will still be tested in the competition if possible, with no mention to the audience that the bridge was been disqualified. However, in order to be fair to the other contestants, a disqualified bridge will not be eligible for any prize money. Please read the rules very carefully!! Note that it is impossible to test a bridge that cannot span between the supports.

Q: Why do you calculate the score by dividing by the squared value of the weight of bridge? Why not simply award the prizes based on the top loads that were carried in each category?

A: In engineering, the goal is always to carry specific loads, with enough reserve capacity to be safe, but not so much reserve capacity that the structure is too expensive to construct. ASCE is trying to teach the engineers of the future to think about the most efficient way (and thus, the most economic way) to design a bridge.

Q: Can I choose where the load is applied during testing?

A: No. The load will be applied on the top of the roadway at the center/mid-span of the bridge. If your bridge cannot accommodate for the load to be applied at this location, it will be disqualified.

Q: Can I compete in other Celebrating Engineering Ingenuity Day events?

A: Yes! We encourage participation in all of the events that are part of the *Celebrating Engineering Ingenuity Day*. However, there will two separate awards ceremonies: one for the Popsicle Stick Bridge Contest and one for the all the other events that take place that day.

Q: Do I need to be present at the awards ceremony to win?

A: No, you do not need to be present to win. If you win any awards and are not there for the awards ceremony, we will contact you via the email you provided when you registered.

Q: Can I bring friends/family with me?

A: Yes, we encourage you to bring family members and friends with you! As part of your registration you and one parent/chaperone will receive free entry to the Science Museum of Virginia on the day of the competition. Anyone else who attends with you will be given a discounted admission to the Museum.

Q: Can I have my family/friends help build my bridge?

A: We strongly encourage you to get advice from friends, family, teachers and engineers regarding your concepts and the design of your bridge. However, the actual “hands-on” construction of your bridge must be done only by your official team members.

Q: Does the whole team have to be present?

A: No, the entire team does not have to be present to compete. In fact, no members of the team are required to be present on the competition day as long as your bridge is submitted to the judges during registration (for example, you may have a teacher or friend submit your bridge for you).

Q: What time can I check in? Can I check in early or late?

A: Middle School teams will check in from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm on the day of the competition. High School teams will check in from 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm. You may only check in during your designated time. No one will be allowed to check in early or late.