

2018 WSHNA Crisis/Hostage Negotiation Competition FAQ

What is a negotiation competition?

A negotiation competition is an event in which several negotiation teams each participate (separately and simultaneously) in an identical scenario, on the same property but from their own negotiation operations centers (NOC). The NOC may be a room provided for each team or the team's response vehicle if so chosen.

What is the purpose of a competition?

A competition is simply a training opportunity. While there will be trophies awarded, all are encouraged to focus on the training value and not the trophies. For teams that compete, the competitive nature of the event adds additional stress which helps make the training more realistic. It is also a training opportunity for those who role play, judge, help facilitate or simply observe. There is great value in seeing how teams of different sizes and backgrounds each address the same scenario in their own unique ways.

Who puts on the competition?

The scenario is designed and facilitated by nationally recognized trainers in cooperation with a WSHNA. There are several regional competitions held around the country, as this practice is raising the bar in negotiation conference training standards.

How is the competition scored?

Each team will be assigned a pool of judges (usually two or three judges) who will use standardized scoring forms to provide written feedback and an overall score. These scores are compared to the scores of the other teams, and teams are ranked first, second, third. Teams will be given their scoring forms at the end of the event. Teams may participate in the competition exercise and chose to have their scores withheld, if they do not want to actually "compete."

How can I prepare for the competition?

Teams are encouraged to prepare for the competition because the judging criteria for the competition are based on the nationally recognized principles of sound negotiation practices. Practicing to do well in each category will improve a team's performance during actual critical incidents. Teams may request the competition judging forms in advance as well as other forms which will be used during the competition. To do so, contact the competition organizer. Additionally, for teams that sign up to compete, a practice scenario can be provided to allow teams to practice in advance of the event.

Will there be photography and/or media coverage?

Typically law enforcement photographs are taken of the various teams during the event and made available to participants. Occasionally the news media is granted access to filming. If anyone who will be attending the competition is not willing to be depicted in either photographs or filming, specific notice should be given in advance to the competition organizer. Otherwise it will be assumed permission is granted.

What equipment will a team need?

Each team will need a way to communicate with the role player. Typically this is done by a "throw phone." Teams who have a throw phone which they use in actual events are encouraged to bring their own equipment. If a team does not have access to a throw phone, the competition organizer may be able to supply one. Pens, paper, situation board paper, etc. are all supplied by the hosting entity.

Are there other requirements for competing?

The only other requirement is for teams to contribute two people to the judging/role playing pool. In order for each team to have judges to score their performance and role players with whom they can negotiate, each team will need to contribute to this pool of people. Some very limited exceptions may be granted for very small teams, but these must be pre-approved at the time of competition registration. People added to this pool can be former team members or volunteers from teams not competing. However, each competing team is required to identify these people by name at the time of competition registration.

Is there a size limit to teams?

Yes. A competition team may include up to eight participants. Larger teams may enter two competition teams.

Can individuals without a team compete?

Yes. An ad-hoc team is usually formed involving individuals and smaller groups from various teams to form a competition team. In the past, these ad-hoc teams have done well in the competition.

Is there an additional cost to compete?

No. Your paid WSHNA registration fee covers the cost of the competition as well as the seminar. However, only eight teams will be allowed to compete, so teams wishing to compete should register early for the seminar and competition and fill out the separate competition registration form.

What is the process to register for registering for the competition?

1. Register online for the Seminar and Competition
2. Download the competition entry form and complete it.
3. Email the competition entry form to WSHNA President Troy King at troy.king@portlandoregon.gov
4. Wait for email confirmation that a spot has been held for your team.
5. Individuals wishing to join an ad-hoc team should use the above procedure, and indicate “ad-hoc” under team name.