

# CALIFORNIA ENVIROTHON OPERATING RULES AND REGULATIONS 2026

## **Introduction**

The California Envirothon annual competition will be conducted according to the Operating Rules and Regulations (ORR). The ORR is subject to periodic updates, revisions, or modifications by the CAE Steering Committee (SC) as needed. The ORR is posted on the CAE website (caenvirothon.com). All participants in the annual competition are advised to know the ORR. The CAE ORR is consistent with the rules and regulations set forth by the National Conservation Foundation-Envirothon.

## **I. Team Eligibility Requirements**

1. The CAE annual competition is open to students from grades 9–12, and who reach age 14–19 by August 8 of the current competition year. Eligible teams must be registered in either a public or private high school, or a non-traditional school; and/or participate in a youth organization such as environmental/science clubs, after school groups, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H, or Future Farmers of America (FFA). Any exceptions must be approved by the CAE SC.
2. Each team will consist of five students from the same school, non-traditional school, or youth organization. Each team is encouraged to have an alternate to substitute for a team member who may be unable to compete at the event due to unexpected circumstances. Any substitution for a member(s) of the competing team must receive approval from the CAE SC. An alternate accompanying a team will be allowed to take tests for practical experience only.
3. A team or teams, comprising a combination of students from two unaffiliated schools, may compete in CAE if they meet the following criteria to the SC's satisfaction: a) are located within the same school district; b) present an official coordinating mechanism or agreement of their mutual affiliation regarding organizing and sharing resources, logistics, and staffing to support and prepare the team(s); c) designate a teacher advisor from either school and an adult chaperone from the other to instruct and guide the students. The SC understands this approach may encourage teams from those schools located in rural school districts, tribal youth organizations, and/or those serving underrepresented students in dense urban school districts.
4. The team(s) must have one adult advisor defined as a high school teacher or youth organization coordinator. The advisor must be from the high school or youth organization with which the team is affiliated. All advisors must have experience to work hands-on with students that includes appropriate training and skill-set to direct the team. If an advisor cannot be secured, a willing parent may request and be accepted by the Steering Committee to serve as the team's advisor. If the parent advisor lacks experience, he/she will be instructed to collaborate with a teacher from the school.
5. The advisor is responsible for team organization and logistics, oversees the student team's study program, coaching, as well as registration, payment of fees, and coordination with administrators of the high school or youth organization. The team(s) must have at least one chaperone: an adult male, age 21 or older, to chaperone male team members and/or an adult female age 21 or older, to chaperone female team members. The advisor and chaperone will oversee and supervise the students' conduct throughout the competition. All teachers and advisors are responsible to ensure their team's understanding of the CA Envirothon's Rules and

Regulations as well as any accompanying chaperone.

6. The advisor must document affiliation with the high school, non-traditional school, or youth organization. The high school principal or youth organization director is required to submit a signed letter from the school principal, on official organization letterhead, documenting its authorization allowing the students participation. It will agree to consent to the school/organization liability coverage and school sponsorship. Any requests for time extensions may be considered by the CAE SC. The team teacher/advisor is responsible for contacting the school administration to satisfy this requirement.
7. It is recommended that teams have support or sponsorship by a local California Resource Conservation District that can help provide assistance in natural resources education, training and guidance. The CAE SC will be flexible on sponsorship if there is no local RCD involvement or coverage.
8. All team registration fees are non-refundable and payable in full by the final registration deadline established by the CAE SC.
9. The team registration document shall list the name of the sponsoring school or organization, list each student, a team name, a student captain, alternates, and team teacher and their email and phone contact. All registration forms shall be submitted by the date set forth by the CAE SC. The CAE SC must be notified if forms or registration payment cannot be met by the deadline. The CAE SC must be notified immediately if there are any subsequent changes or substitutions in the registration document.
10. FORMS: A Modeling, Performing and Narration Release form for each student is to be completed by the student & signed by parent or guardian. Also, the student must provide proof of health insurance upon registration at the competition. This may be as simple as having a health care identification card and an emergency contact phone number for a parent or guardian.
11. Each attendee will be required to abide by CAE's Code of Ethics to maintain a positive and fun environment at the competition. The advisor shall certify that their students have reviewed and understood CAE's Rules & Regulations with particular emphasis on Section IV Code of Conduct.
12. Any exceptions to the team eligibility rules must be approved by the CAE SC.

## **II. Competition Rules and Regulations**

1. Violating the CAE competition rules and regulations in any way by students, advisors or chaperones may result in disqualification and dismissal from the event and host site.
2. All resource materials including lap top computers, must be checked in upon arrival at the host test site. Use of these materials or anything else other than what is provided at each field station test site, is strictly prohibited. **The only exception is each team may use a calculator.** All materials checked may be retrieved at the end of the competition.
3. **No electronic equipment including personal cell phones or other devices may be used by, or be in the possession of, team members during the instructional periods, station testing, and**

oral presentation preparation and delivery. Student cell phones must be collected by teacher advisors/chaperones for safekeeping prior to the start of the competition. Access to personal cell phones may be allowed during breaks and lunch periods but must be returned when the competition resumes. The only exception to the use of electronic devices is allowed for use in medical or physical situations. The CAE SC must be informed during registration if a student requires special equipment, a special device or assistance.

4. The CAE competition officially starts at the time the team checks in and until such time the winning team are decided and the event closes.
5. During the competition, all team members, advisors, and chaperones must wear the CAE Tee-shirt provided upon check in or received by previous mail. No other identification regarding school, team, or student name, either written or stated, is permitted. Name tags may not be worn at any time.
6. Any team, team member, or team advisor, or chaperone shall not arrive at the host site facility prior to the designated day and starting time of the competition. Moreover, any team, team member, or team advisor or chaperone discovered on, near, or around the host site facility or testing stations other than during scheduled times, in the course of the competition, may be subject to immediate disqualification.
7. No animal, other than a service animal on which the individual is dependent, will be allowed at the CAE competition. The service animal is required to have the proper documentation.
8. Judges' and test proctors' decisions will be final unless any disagreement or challenge is submitted to the CAE SC for review. Any challenges or disputes may be submitted in writing or orally by the advisor to any member(s) of the CAE SC, up to 15 minutes after the first place team is announced. After that time, all decisions are final.
9. For CAE 2026, schools were notified that they may enroll up to four teams per school to be eligible to officially compete and rank in the annual competition. The registration form will list up to four teams that are officially competing. All teams will receive their scores. However, only one team per school shall advance to the finals of the competition.
10. If any student of the winning team cannot advance to the NCF International Envirothon, the advisor shall recommend an alternate having current CAE experience. The designated alternate must be approved by the CAE SC.
11. If the CAE first-place team is unable to advance the second place team will be designated to proceed to the international competition. If the second-place team is unable to advance, the third-place team shall be designated. In the event that none of the three teams is able to advance, the CAE SC shall make the final determination of which team will advance.
12. The first-place team and the advisor will receive the CAE trophy for display at their school. It will be returned to the following year's competition for award to the next winning team.

### **III. Oral Presentations**

1. Team oral presentations will be 20 minutes in length, followed by 5 minutes of questions to team members by the judges. Judges are allowed ten minutes to score each team between presentations.

2. All five team members must equally participate in the presentation. If a team is participating with less than five team members, that team may receive a two-point deduction per each missing team member.
3. **Teams are allowed the use of computer laptops to prepare and display computer-generated slides during their oral presentations.**
4. The top three winning scores, based on a team's written and preliminary scores, will determine which three teams will present their final in-person presentation to the CA Envirothon collective audience and a panel of judges who will use a score sheet like that of the National Conservation Foundation-Envirothon.
5. During the final oral presentations, the audience is expected to observe quietly without distraction to the speakers. No distracting photography or video recordings shall be allowed, other than approved by the CAE SC.

#### **IV. Station Tests: Wildlife, Soil, Forestry, and Aquatic Ecology**

1. Teams have 30 minutes to complete each test. They are given a five-minute warning before their time is up. Each station may have a proctor or volunteer to assist and serve as timekeeper.
2. Proctors are encouraged to score the tests at the stations. Teams will remain at the station until told to rotate to the next test station. All students are required to stay together as a team throughout the testing period.
3. Teacher advisors and chaperones are not allowed access or contact with their students during testing.

#### **V. Code of Conduct**

1. Advisors will be responsible for the team's conduct at the event site facility. Any conduct by advisors or students deemed to be inappropriate will be grounds for disqualification and dismissal. Team members, advisors, and chaperones must attend all scheduled events at the competition. No team member, advisor, or chaperone may wander in curiosity away from the general area of group activity. Nor may anyone leave prior to event adjournment without first notifying a CA SC member in charge.
2. Conduct of all CAE participants must act in an ethical manner appropriate for a youth-oriented educational setting. Students must wear appropriate dress attire. The CAE SC reserves the right to exclude anyone in violation of these standards.
3. Participants are expected to attend all general sessions and other scheduled activities, be prompt and show respect to those in the audience and those presenting or having the floor.
4. Student/minor guest participants may not be in possession of, or use: tobacco/vapor products (including smokeless); alcoholic beverages; illegal/illicit drugs; and weapons, including firearms and knives. This is strictly prohibited at any and all CAE functions.
5. If any student is determined to be cheating or disregarding CAE rules and regulations, he/she and the entire team shall be disqualified.