



## EFFECTIVE MEETING FACILITATION FOR CEMA ENGINEERING CONFERENCE CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS

- Start with a review of the goals, or anticipated outcomes, and the agenda to set the framework for the meeting. If necessary allocate a time limit for certain items.
- Keep participants on track to ensure the accomplishment of expected results from the meeting.
- Use and/or reference the pre-work and/or information that you sent out prior to the meeting, send an e-mail to all participants 48 hours before meeting to advise of information that has been sent and ask them to be prepared.
- Use the Parking Lot method: This can be a flipchart, overhead, or the agenda itself that is used so all can see. Use this to deal with topics that slip into the meetings and which may threaten to derail your agenda. Some participants will simply hog the floor, and discuss side issues that are so far off track that they don't even belong on the Parking Lot. However, as the meeting leader, you must rein these people in by making them accountable for bringing in new subjects that are not on agenda.
  - Some useful words to use are, "Bob, this is interesting but can you help me understand how it relates to the agenda item we're discussing?" If he has a logical tie-in, you can then invite others to give their views, if not, (and this is more likely!), you can then say, "Ok, then in the interests of staying on schedule, let's get back on topic."
  - In some cases, your agenda may specify a start and finish time, not only for the meeting as a whole, but for each agenda item. Suppose the item under discussion is supposed to finish at 2:30 p.m. It's now 2:27 p.m. and there's no sign of an end, you give the group two choices.
    - You can continue this discussion and take another item off the agenda,
    - or table this discussion for a later meeting.
- You'll be surprised how often this will lead to a quick, and successful, conclusion to any discussion.