

EVENT SAFETY

In an effort to provide our participating students high-quality, standards-aligned academic challenges, Science Olympiad designs a variety of tasks to be accomplished. In some cases, these are hands-on activities or explorations that require the participating students to use scientific equipment or hand tools as well as interact with chemical, mineral, microbial, biological, or physical samples.

In all instances, Virginia Science Olympiad encourages our tournament directors, event supervisors, coaches, participants, and parents to follow science practices that allow all program participants to learn, prepare, and compete safely. To that end, proper precautions must always be taken to create a safe environment whether that be at a workshop, practice, or tournament. The use of samples and equipment should follow age-appropriate use rules and the use of personal protective equipment should follow appropriate safety guidelines and event rules– including, but not limited to goggles. See the Safety Policies section of the VASO website for additional policy information on Lasers, Eye Protection and Constructed Devices.

Particular care must be exercised in the chemistry-based events, where the use of chemicals and equipment such as Bunsen burners may require additional safety training and awareness. Virginia Science Olympiad encourages all coaches, participants, mentors and volunteers to be familiar with and to abide by the safety programs and guidelines established by their school or county during practices.

Suggestions for finding safety resources and information include:

- Your school chemical safety liaison or county safety specialist
- Flinn Scientific's [safety resources](#), [safety data sheets](#) and [online video trainings](#)
- National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) [safety portal](#)

During impound and competition, event supervisors may stop competitors from using equipment, tools or chemicals that they are using incorrectly or unsafely. No allowance will be given in judging if students are thus unable to complete some of the tasks or test.

In some cases, Science Olympiad events suggest the use of common household items (e.g. latex balloons or gloves) or food items (e.g., peanuts) that may contain potential allergens. Just like in a school situation, it is the responsibility of the student or volunteer to alert his or her coach to potential allergies so that he or she can communicate with Tournament Organizers before the date of the tournament to verify if such items may be present.