

University of South Alabama
Civil Engineering Department

Rules and Regulations For The Sand Filter Competition



Presented by the Student Chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers at the University of South Alabama for the USA-ASCE High School Competition

Rules Updated October 2023

Rules revised based on USA Honors Freshmen Experience
Laboratory Rules subject to change

Build and Test a Sand Filter For Treating Water

Requirements

In *two hours*, use your engineering judgment to construct a sand filter to treat (purify) pond water. Assessment parameters are based on water turbidity (NTU), time (seconds), and cost (\$\$\$).

Design Your Own Sand Filter

Design and Engineer a sand filter to optimize the turbidity (cloudiness of water), time, and cost of treatment. Turbidity will be measured in nephelometric turbidity units (NTU) by a spectrophotometer. A cost per unit of materials is provided in **Table 1** below. A box of materials will be distributed to your school with all components needed to build the sand filter inside. You may use any combination of the provided materials to build your filter. Do not open the box until you are at the competition site. Once the box is opened, you have two hours to construct your filter at the University of South Alabama’s campus in the testing and construction location. Initial NTU value will be provided by the judges.

Table 1: Specification for Sand Filter per Item

Materials	Unit	Price Per Unit (\$)	Water Percolation	Filtration
Large Gravel	1 - inch	100	High	Low
Small Gravel	1 - inch	200	Moderately Fast	Moderately Low
Lab Grade Sand	1 - inch	300	Moderate	Moderately High
Activated Charcoal	1 - inch	500	Moderate	Moderate
Cotton Ball	1 - inch	1000	Low	High

*1-inch units will be judges discretion

Building a Model Sand Filter

1. Empty the bottle of water issued.
2. Cut off the bottom of the bottle (be careful!).
3. Turn the bottle upside down so the top is now the bottom.
4. Unscrew the cap from the bottom.
5. Use a rubber band to hold the mesh to “cap the bottom.”
6. With the mesh bottom, fill the bottom layer with gravel to form a flat base to start building your filter. The type of gravel used to form the flat base is your engineered decision!!
7. With the flat base, start the build of your filter! Use any amount of gravel, sand, charcoal, and cotton balls provided in your kit. Just know that each unit of material has a price per unit and will affect your score.
8. After construction, flush the built sand filter with 1000mL of clean water. This will get rid of any preexisting contaminants.

9. Get ready for testing and acquire 500mL of pond water.
10. Bring the filter and collected pond water to the judge. Make note of the time.
11. In front of the judge, pour and collect the pond water through your filter. Time how long it takes to collect and treat 50mL with the provided stopwatch and graduated cylinder. The 50mL of treated pond water will be used to determine the filter's effectiveness with the NTU measurement. Make sure not to dump it out.
12. Report the construction and filtering/treatment time to the judge.
13. Leave the filter with the judge to calculate the cost per material. All rulings made by the judge are final.
14. Collect the filter after judging to keep or dispose of in appropriate dispose locations.

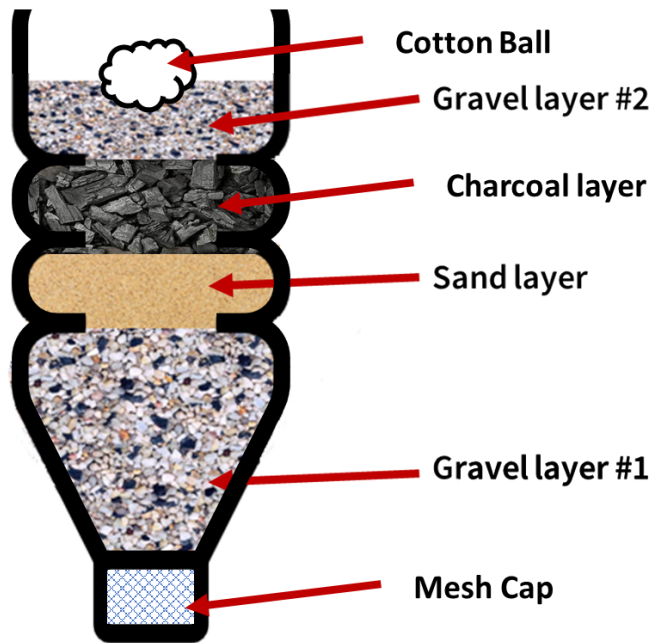


Figure 1: Example Filtration System

Building Specifications

1. Participants must complete the project within two hours at the construction/testing site.
2. Construction will be monitored by the judges and participants visually or using video. The video will then be shared with the judges for verification of the allotted time.
3. Any project that surpasses the *2-hour* limit will be deducted 10 points from the final score of this competition.

Rubric

Team Name: _____

Judge Name: _____

Category	Requirements	Points
Largest difference in influent NTU and effluent NTU	<input type="checkbox"/> - First Place (50 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Second Place (40 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Third Place (30 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Nth Place (50-7(N-1) points)	
Lowest Cost	<input type="checkbox"/> - First Place (30 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Second Place (25 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Third Place (20 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Nth Place (30-4(N-1) points)	
Fastest Time	<input type="checkbox"/> - First Place (20 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Second Place (18 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Third Place (16 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Nth Place (20-2(N-1) points)	
Point Deductions	<input type="checkbox"/> - Surpassing 2 hour limit (-10 points) <input type="checkbox"/> - Use of excess materials not included in the box (-20 points)	

Influent NTU: _____

Effluent NTU: _____

Time: _____

Total: _____

Materials	Unit	Price Per Unit (\$)	# of Units Used	Total
Large Gravel	1 - inch	100		
Small Gravel	1 - inch	200		
Lab Grade Sand	1 - inch	300		
Activated Charcoal	1 - inch	500		
Cotton Ball	1 - inch	1000		

Total Cost (\$\$): _____