

AZVT NEWCOMERS CONFERENCE GUIDE

Who attends the conference?

Veterinary technicians from zoos, aquariums, wildlife centers, academic institutions, and anyone with a particular interest in the field of zoo medicine, including veterinary technician students.

Conference attendance is usually 120-150 people, including guests.

When does the conference occur?

The conference occurs annually, typically in September/October. Historically, the conference hosts try to schedule arrivals for early in the week in order to allow for cheaper travel expenses, however scheduling conflicts don't always allow for this and travel will sometimes occur over the weekends.

Conference Presentations

The conference consists of presentations, posters, and wet labs. Presentations are 30 minutes long, posters are typically presented during breaks, and wet labs are typically 4 hours long. Presentations occur over 2.5 days (with the half day on "Zoo Day").

Presentations are made during the conference by AZVT members and guest speakers. All AZVT members are encouraged to present at the conferences, as these presentations are the backbone of the conference. Topics are presented in four categories: Hospital Procedures, Case Studies, Innovations & Updates, and Clinical Pathology. Submissions are due mid-late February and presenters can submit an abstract or a full paper for the proceedings. If submitting a full paper, the material being presented cannot have been published in another publication previously nor can it be published in any other future publication. There are awards for Best Paper & Best Presentation. More information regarding presenting can be found on the AZVT website.

How many hours of Continuing Education are offered?

Attendees typically receive 10-20 hours of Continuing Education credit at the annual conference for attendance at presentation sessions and wet labs. Certificates are distributed to attendees on the last day of presentations.

Registration

Registration opens 2 months prior to the start of the conference. Late fees for registration will start on the 1st of the month prior to the conference, and registration is closed 4 weeks prior to the conference. Registration fees are refundable up to 3 weeks prior to the start of the conference.

Conference registration and wet lab costs can be found on the website (once available) and it includes a paper copy of the full proceedings, the Icebreaker, the Banquet, Zoo Day, some meals, and morning & afternoon breaks. Wet lab registration sometimes includes lunch.

Hotel

Conference attendees will receive a discounted group rate at the hotel selected by the conference host. Most presentations will take place in one of the hotel's banquet rooms. Attendees should book their hotel reservation early in order to take advantage of the discounted rate.

If you would like to find a roommate, you can use the Forum on the AZVT website to locate others looking for a roommate or you can contact the conference host directly to see if anyone else has contacted them regarding finding a roommate.

Hotels are typically selected in areas that offer access to restaurants and entertainment, which allows attendees to travel on foot or by public transportation, if available, thus eliminating the need for rental cars.

What do you do upon arrival?

A registration table will be set-up in the hotel for conference packet pick-up. Signage will be placed in the hotel lobby directing attendees to the location of the registration table and the hours that registration is open.

Your conference packet will include a paper copy of the proceedings, your name badge, some conference swag, and any pertinent meal tickets, post-conference trip tickets, etc.

When will we know the schedule of events?

A generalized schedule of conference events can be found on the AZVT website under the Conference tab. It can also be found on the AZVT Conference Facebook page. The list of topics being presented will be posted to the AZVT website & the Conference Facebook page a few weeks before the start of the conference. A detailed schedule will be located in the front of the paper proceedings that you receive at the registration table.

What should you wear?

Conference attire is business casual. Conference presenters wear business attire. Plan accordingly based on the local weather, and bring layers, as the conference rooms can often be a bit chilly.

Your name badge should always be worn when participating in conference events, and your badge holder will have space to hold your hotel room key. We recommend bringing business cards with you for networking with your colleagues.

Attire for the banquet varies from casual to business attire, and is based on personal preference. Attire for Zoo Day should be comfortable.

Special attire may be suggested for some wet labs (i.e. scrubs for a necropsy wet lab), so plan accordingly for those.

Are meals included?

Dinner is provided at the Banquet and food is provided at the Icebreaker, which depending on costs could be anything from appetizers to a full meal. Lunch is provided on Zoo Day, and some additional lunches and dinners may be provided throughout the conference, but attendees are typically responsible for a few meals on their own. The proceedings will have details on when meal breaks occur and whether they are being sponsored, or whether they will be on your own.

Mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks are provided during presentation days, and typically include beverages and light snacks.

Icebreaker & Banquet

The Icebreaker occurs on the same night as the wet labs, and provides an opportunity for attendees to network and mingle with one another in a casual environment.

The Banquet occurs one evening during the week, and it is typically on the last day of presentations, though not always. The Banquet will include dinner, award presentations, and some form of entertainment.

Annual Business Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting occurs during the conference. The entire membership is encouraged to attend. The meeting is a formal meeting and all Executive Board members and committees will share reports about their respective responsibilities. Executive Board election results are shared during the Business Meeting, and typically any vacant committee chair positions are also announced and filled during the business meeting. Conference bids are also made with presentations for the conference that will occur in 2 years, and votes for the conference location are collected and tallied during the meeting.

Zoo Day

The conference host facility hosts Zoo Day each year for all attendees. Zoo admission will be covered and host facilities will often offer discounts at gift shops. Attendees will also usually be treated to special encounters and tours by the host facility. Zoo Day will occur, rain or shine, so plan accordingly for the local weather.

Pre- & Post-Conference Activities

Conference hosts will often offer pre- and/or post-conference activities for attendees. These activities will be an extra expense, and typically have a limited amount of available space. If signing up for any of these pre- and/or post-conference activities, you will need to make your travel plans accordingly as they will typically require attendees to arrive early to the conference or stay an extra day.

The conference hosts will also provide information via the AZVT website and the Conference Facebook page about the local area and any places of interest that attendees can potentially visit.

Guests

Guests are welcome to attend any conference activities, for an additional fee. These fees will be listed on the registration form. Guests will receive a conference name badge as well, and guest registration will include any meals that are already being provided to conference attendees.

Silent Auction

A Silent Auction is held annually at the conference, with proceeds benefiting the Laurie Page-Peck Scholarship fund. AZVT members are encouraged to submit items for the Silent Auction whenever possible, and items are sometimes donated by corporate sponsors. Items typically found at the Silent Auction include animal paintings, t-shirts, jewelry, handbags/tote bags, décor, enrichment items, art, etc. Members must pay for their Silent Auction winnings while at the conference, and payments can be made in cash or by check or credit card.

Merchandise

AZVT operates an online store for members to purchase AZVT-logoed items. The Sales Committee will typically bring AZVT items to the annual conference for purchase.

How can you get involved?

There are lots of ways for members to get involved with the conference! Giving a presentation is a great way to get involved! The Program Chair needs Assistant Editors each year in order to help prepare all submissions for publication, which is a great way to get your feet wet if you are new to scientific writing. Silent Auction items are always needed in order to raise the most funds possible for the Scholarship fund. The conference hosts typically need help staffing the registration table. And by attending the Annual Business Meeting, you can learn about all of the different AZVT committees and sign up to fill any committee member vacancies!