



# CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE JUSTIFICATION TOOLKIT

Western Canada Water's Annual Conference and Exhibition is the premier event for the water industry in Western Canada

Due to reduced budgets and increased expenditure scrutiny, WCW recognizes it is no easy task to secure approval for a training event. The tools provide here may assist you in getting approval to attend the WCW Conference.

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## Employer Approval Tips

Many benefits of WCW16 attendance can be hard to quantify. For example, experts agree that the top benefit of conference attendance is networking value. Where else can you find so many water industry contacts facing the same issues as your organization? Are there solutions you're not aware of?

Although networking is undoubtedly the most important benefit of attending a conference, it is also the toughest to quantify.

When you propose WCW16 for approval, don't focus on how much you want to go; focus specifically on the knowledge and experience you will bring back for your organization.

Here are several tips to guide you in your request for approval to attend WCW16:

- 🌱 Your organization is investing in you; provide details about what you will bring back from the event.
- 🌱 What sessions will you attend and what immediate impact will they have on your work?
- 🌱 What vendors will you visit on the exhibition floor and how will this help your organization?
- 🌱 Which experts will you have access to and what knowledge would you bring back to share with your organization?
- 🌱 With the huge variety of focus areas, WCW16 is a cost effective way to earn educational credits this year. Earn up to 0.6 CEUs at workshops and 0.9 CEUs for technical sessions (session CEUs available for Manitoba and Alberta attendees only).

Don't miss the early bird deadline of August 31 to save your organization up to \$100 on registration fees, and stay in the WCW hotel block for additional savings.

## Expenses Worksheet

Conference expenses are affected by a number of factors. Before you can even begin to justify your expenses, you need to calculate what those expenses are. Use the worksheet below to develop a cost estimate for attending WCW16. Refer to the registration and hotel information and forms online or in the conference announcement for details.

Expense	Guideline	Cost
Conference Registration	Early registration deadline August 31 for savings	\$
Tuesday Workshop	Optional, \$175 each - see program guide for details, 0.3 CEUs each	\$
Tuesday Tours	Optional, \$50 each - see program guide for details	
Thursday Ticketed Events	Optional, WFP Breakfast (\$25), Gala (\$85)	\$
Lodging	See program guide for details	\$
Mileage Reimbursement	Driving to conference or to the airport for your flight?  Use an online mapping tool to calculate distances  Is carpooling an option?	\$
Flight	Try an online travel service to get a quick estimate	\$
Transportation: Airport to Hotel	Taxi, rental car, etc.	\$
Transportation: Hotel to Airport	Taxi, rental car, etc.	\$
Parking Reimbursement	Airport parking for flight departure, or at hotel where conference is located.	\$
Food Per Diem	Check on your organization's policies.  General Conference Registration includes Exhibition reception Tuesday evening, Opening breakfast Wednesday and luncheon Wednesday, Thursday & breakfast on Friday.	\$
	Total	\$

## Benefits Worksheet

Powerful networking opportunities: people that can save us money	UTILITY CONTACTS: Finding other utilities facing the same problems we face at our company. We'll develop contact persons who can share their knowledge of cost effective solutions so that we can learn from their mistakes and benefit from their success.
	VENDOR CONTACTS: We'll meet vendors who know our processes and how they can be cost-effectively improved; and also new technologies that can save us money in the long term.
	SUPPORT CONTACTS: Government officials and engineers that know which technologies qualify for grant funding and how to obtain it.
	REGULATORY CONTACTS: Agency reps that can help us clarify and understand our regulatory requirements so that we remain current on compliance issues.
Continuing Education Credits	By attending WCW16, I will minimize my time away from my work while getting the continuing education credits I need to maintain my certifications.
Find solutions to our current problems (regulatory issues, equipment issues, management issues, customer service issues, process issues, etc.)	Issue 1:
	Issue 2:
	Issue 3:
	Issue 4:
Finding ways to do more with what we already have	We'll meet vendors and operators that know our processes well and can give us insights into how we can deliver better performance using equipment we currently use but at a lower cost.
Find new technologies we should be studying now	We'll see where the industry is heading and which innovations are making it much more cost-effective to operate our processes.
Cross-training - provide opportunities for others to learn my job and take on more responsibility	I plan to have _____ cover my duties while I am away. I will have this person fully ready to assume these duties before my departure, will meet with them for a debrief upon my return and will provide counselling / feedback / coaching for this person with written reports for supervision's use and for their personnel file.
Staff presentations to "Share The Information" gained from WCW16	SUPERVISOR'S REPORT: I will prepare and submit a written report to my manager of my findings and of the short term and long term action items that result from what I learn at WCW16.
	STAFF BRIEFINGS: I will prepare and deliver a staff briefing of my findings so that others may benefit from what I learn at WCW16.
	TRAINING ASSISTANCE: I will help others learn how to effectively attend a major conference like WCW16 and deliver the maximum benefit to the Utility upon their return.

## Letter to Manager

< Date >

Dear < supervisor's name >,

I would like to attend the WCW16 Annual Conference and Exhibition being held October 4-7, 2016 in Calgary Alberta. The conference will enable me to attend a number of technical sessions that are directly applicable to my work and will allow me to network with a variety of water industry experts and colleagues from around the world. Many of the presentations are tailored to the < your specific profession > water professional and give information on how to < list benefits to your responsibilities >. I am seeking approval for the registration fee, travel expenses to the conference, and living expenses during the conference. A detailed cost breakdown is included below.

After reviewing the conference program, I have identified a number of technical sessions that will allow me to gain knowledge and understanding about how we can improve our processes. The presentations are all facilitated by industry experts who have faced similar challenges. I chose each of these presentations because it is directly related to an issue we are dealing with currently. Getting the information in a presentation format will greatly reduce the research time and costs that < your organization's name > would normally incur in researching the topics. Incidentally, I have only listed some of the technical sessions that I will attend. Including them all would make this memo much too long.

< You will need to insert the session titles and descriptions which most apply to your responsibilities. >

The full-price conference fee is <\$xxxx>, if registered before August 31.

< You will need to insert your travel cost numbers in here >

Here is the breakdown of conference costs:

Roundtrip Airfare: <\$xxxx>

Transportation: <\$xxxx>

Hotel: <\$xxxx>

Meals: <\$xxxx>

Conference Fee: <\$xxxx>

The total costs associated with attending this conference are <\$xxxx>.

The opportunity for me to develop better contacts and gain knowledge in specific areas of the water industry makes my attendance at the WCW Annual Conference & Exhibition a wise investment, which will yield rich dividends for < name of your organization >.

Sincerely,

< your name here >

## Conference Follow Up Report

Prepared by \_\_\_\_\_

Executive Summary:

October 4-7, 2016 I attended the WCW16 Conference in Calgary Alberta intending to:

- Identify solutions to the problems I or my department faces today
- Identify new ways we can better perform at a lower cost over time
- Keep our finger on the pulse of the industry so that we know where it is going and how these changes will affect us
- Fulfil my continuing educational requirements to maintain my certification and;
- Establish contacts at other utilities, regulatory agencies, engineers and vendors that can help us continue to deliver high performance, consistent regulatory compliance and great value to our customers.
- (Other key drivers in your decision to attend WCW16)

Solutions:

I have identified a number of items that I feel can have great beneficial impact to our utility which are described as follows.

Existing Process Improvements:

(issues we are currently struggling with)

Leading Edge Concerns:

(i.e. new rule changes that are about to be implemented)

Networking Takeaways:

(new contacts, why they are important, who will follow up and when)

Trade Show Exhibit Takaways:

(information gathered from the Exhibition about products and services of interest to your utility)

Program Ideas or recommendations inspired from the conference:

(what process or innovation is your utility currently doing that could be showcased at a future WCW16 event, who will prepare and submit an abstract to cover this topic from your utility)

Action Items:

(who will do what and when; dissemination plan for briefing staff on information gathered; timeline for planning on next year's WCW16)

Conclusions and Recommendations:

(Comment on the overall cost-effectiveness of the WCW16 conference experience. Would you recommend continued attendance by yourself or others from your organization?)