

FAQs

VOLUNTEERS IN OREGON AND SW WASHINGTON

REFER TO THE "NEM CLASSROOM VISIT GUIDE" FOR FURTHER DETAILS

1. What is NEM?

National Engineers Month is an annual event to celebrate engineering and generate student excitement for math and science. Throughout the month of February, engineer volunteers present in K-12 classrooms to provide career information about the engineering field and to engage students in a hands-on experiment to show how math and science are used.

Managed by the [Business Education Compact](#) (BEC), the NEM program began in 1995. Through the interactive visit by an engineer, students learn about math and science in a relevant and meaningful way, supporting the mission of the BEC to Make Learning Real. NEM runs concurrently with [National Engineers Week](#), a national initiative to promote engineering across the country that occurs annually during one week in February.

2. Who can participate?

Eligible volunteers include engineers, technicians and other engineering representatives that work for a partner organization and are able to knowledgeably represent the engineering field and give a hands-on classroom presentation that uses math or science.

3. How do volunteers register for NEM?

Volunteers register for the program on the [NEM Volunteer System](#). The volunteer system is available from the BEC Website: www.becpdx.org.

Volunteers have two options for registration and can do one or both:

- **Request BEC Classroom Match:**
Volunteers can submit a request to be matched with a classroom by the BEC. To do that they fill out the [Request BEC Classroom Match](#) form on the NEM Volunteer System. The BEC matches volunteers from a large pool of teachers in Oregon and SW Washington that have requested an engineer visit.
- **Log Self-Arranged Visit:**
[See "How To Contact Schools"](#)
If volunteers already know the classroom they are going to, i.e. their child's classroom, they enter visit details on the [Log Self-Arranged Visit](#) form after the visit is scheduled.

4. What are volunteers expected to do?

[Refer to "Volunteer Responsibilities" in the NEM Classroom Visit Guide.](#)

Prepare and deliver an approximate 50-minute presentation in the classroom.

The presentation includes career information about the engineering field and a hands-on experiment to show how math and science are used in engineering. The hands-on activity should be simple and easy to do, and be able to be accomplished in 30 minutes.

There are three parts to the presentation:

1. 10 minute presentation about careers in the engineering field
 - a. **Slideshow templates** are in [Volunteer Toolkit Section](#) of system
2. 30 minute hands-on experiment
 - a. **Experiment ideas** are in [Experiment Library Section](#) of system
3. 10 minute questions and wrap-up

5. What is the best way to present to a classroom?

Presentation slideshows are available in the [Volunteer Toolkit Section](#) of the system.

It is important to know what is age-appropriate for the students. Elementary, middle and high school students each have unique characteristics. See ["Tips by Grade Level"](#) and ["Dynamic Demonstrations"](#) in the [Volunteer Toolkit Section](#) of the system.

For new volunteers, we recommend pairing with another volunteer as a volunteer team. This provides support and collaboration in preparing for and presenting to the students.

6. How should volunteers choose their experiment?

Experiment ideas by grade level are in the [Experiment Library Section](#) of the system.

There are many experiments to choose from in the [Experiment Library](#) on the system. Volunteers should find an experiment that is simple, can be completed in 30 minutes, is fun, age-appropriate and most importantly is something the volunteer feels comfortable doing.

7. What is the volunteer time commitment?

Volunteer time commitment is approximately 4-8 hours:

- 2 to 6 hours for planning and practice
- 2 hours for presentation time (2 classes, 50 minutes in length)
- Travel time to and from the school (varies)

We suggest that volunteers present in a minimum of two classrooms. This is an effective way to increase the impact of their involvement and time spent to prepare and go to the school. Generally the visitations can be scheduled back-to-back at the same school.

8. How are the classroom visitations scheduled?

Refer to ["Scheduling the Classroom Visit"](#) in the [NEM Classroom Visit Guide](#).

- **The volunteer schedules the visit with the teacher to occur in February.**
Send an email to the teacher to request scheduling for the visitation. Keep in mind they teach all day long and may be difficult to reach. If after 3 days there is no response, send a second email and also call the teacher as emails may not be getting through.

Use this subject line when sending an email to request scheduling:

[*Email Subject Line: National Engineers Month Class Visit Request*](#)

- **Clearly communicate what you are planning to do.** It is important to create a shared understanding of what you will be doing in the classroom, how much time you will have, and what resources are available in the classroom. Ask the teacher if they have any specific needs or expectations.
- **Ask about classroom level.** Find out what math and science concepts the students are familiar with to ensure the concepts you use are appropriate.

9. What if I need to cancel the visit?

If you need to cancel a visit, notify the teacher immediately and reschedule if at all possible. Last minute cancellations should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. Teachers plan their syllabus for the day well in advance and it is very difficult for them to change on short notice. Also it is a great disappointment for the students when they are expecting a visitor.

10. What if there is a substitute the day I'm supposed to present?

It can be challenging to be in a classroom with a substitute. If you find out before you go, we highly recommend rescheduling with the regular teacher for another time. If you find out when you arrive, we suggest making the best of it unless there are significant problems.

11. What if a volunteer already knows the classroom they're going to?

If a volunteer already knows the classroom they're going to, i.e. their child's classroom, they do not request the BEC to match them. Instead they fill out the "Log Self Arranged Visit" form to log the activity so it is included in volunteer results for their organization. We recommend logging it after the visit is scheduled to include the visit date and time.

12. How does the BEC match volunteers?

When volunteers fill out the "Request BEC Classroom Match" form, they identify their preferences for grade level, subject taught and number of classrooms to assist the BEC in making a match. The BEC pairs down the numerous requests from teachers in Oregon and SW Washington to find a classroom that most closely matches the volunteer preferences.

Volunteer are notified sometime between November and January that a match was made. Match assignments will be available from [Retrieve Classroom Assignments](#) on the system.

If a volunteer has any concerns about their match they contact the BEC as soon as possible. The BEC does our best to accommodate preferences, but are not always able to do so in matching hundreds of volunteers with hundreds of teachers.

13. Will volunteers be matched with classrooms at the same school?

For volunteers that request multiple classrooms, we strive to match them at the same school if at all possible. In the event multiple classrooms are not available at the same school, we may look at pairing volunteers with more than one school.

14. What if volunteers are asked to present in more classrooms than assigned?

Volunteers are not required to present in more classrooms than assigned. In the event a teacher requests additional presentations, it is up to the volunteer whether or not they are able to accommodate the request.

15. What if volunteers present in more classrooms than assigned?

If a volunteer presents in more classrooms than assigned for the **same teacher**, they email the BEC letting us know the class name and # of students. All volunteer matches are automatically recorded on the system and only the BEC can update the information.

If a volunteer presents in a classroom for a **different teacher** other than what they were assigned, they can fill out the [Log Self-Arranged Visit](#) form to record the activity.

16. How far should volunteers expect to travel to get to the school?

On average a volunteer should be prepared to travel between 15-25 miles as there are only a certain number of schools in any given area. The BEC may need to match a volunteer to a further away school in order to meet their preferences. It is difficult for us to know actual distances, so if at any time volunteers have concerns about their match, contact the BEC.

17. What training is available for volunteers?

The following training opportunities are available for NEM volunteers. All registered volunteers will receive an invitation to each of the training sessions.

<i>Dec 10th @ 11am:</i>	<u>Teleconference:</u> Role of Volunteer; getting ready for visit and experiment ideas
<i>Jan 7th @ 11am:</i>	<u>Teleconference:</u> Advice from an engineer on how to lead students in activity
<i>Jan 14th @ 11am:</i>	<u>Teleconference:</u> Advice from a teacher on how to present in the classroom
<i>Dec 8th 4:30-6:30pm:</i>	<u>Training at OMSI:</u> Experiment Demos and Idea Sharing for engineer volunteers
<i>Jan 12th 4:30-6:30pm:</i>	<u>Training at OMSI:</u> Experiment Demos and Idea Sharing for engineer volunteers