American Water Works Association
VirginiaSection

2026 VA AWWA Rodeo Events Rules



Note: No walk-on registrants on the day of events. All contestants shall be pre-registered. All contestants shall be active members, either Individual or Utility, of the Virginia Section of the AWWA to compete.
Revised July 2026

VA AWWA Competitions - Rules and Regulations BURIED TREASURE

INTRODUCTION

1. The intention of the event is to recognize the profession of underground utility facility locating and to demonstrate the safety, skills and ongoing educational efforts associated with high quality workmanship.
2. Contestants shall be VA AWWA members. This membership may be an individual membership, as an Active or Affiliate Member of VA AWWA, or be a regular employee of a Utility Member or Organization Member of VA AWWA.
3. Each Utility may enter two (2) locators. The exception will be when a utility's locator is the current reigning VA AWWA State Champion. In this case a utility may enter another (third locator) in the contest with full privileges and rights as all other locators. There is no limit to number of contestants.
4. Contestants will perform a locate of an underground facility in the locate area, then measure and document their locate in several spots from a given reference point. The contestant with the most accurate accumulative score will be declared the winner.

GENERAL

5. Contestants are required to attend the mandatory contestants meeting to be held at the hotel.
6. Contestants shall report to locate site 15 minutes prior to announced start time and register with the Event Coordinator.
7. All contestants will be hidden in an area with no view of the event area. Contestants will be called out one at a time to perform their locate. At no time while waiting their turn or during the event shall a contestant be allowed to use a cell phone or pager.
8. The facility to be located shall be a 12 gauge coated copper wire, typically used as a tracer wire with plastic water piping.
9. One end of the wire shall be accessible outside of the locate area to allow direct connection for performing a conductive trace. A ground rod will be installed for use at the contestant's discretion.
10. The wire shall run in a random pattern through the locate area. The wire may cross some or all of the strings and will exit the event area.
11. The locate area shall have a reference system set up of a hub in the center of the area with eight (8) spokes of strings running toward the outer perimeter of the locate area. Strings shall be approximately six (6) inches above the ground. Each string shall have a color designation as shown on the attached event template. The locate area shall have a diameter of thirty feet (30').
12. Contestants will be provided flags to mark the location of the wire.
13. At the "Go" signal, contestants will have five (5) minutes to connect to the access point, locate the

wire, place flags where the wire crosses each reference string and document measurements on the provided template.

14. A tape measuring instrument will be provided at the locate area.
15. Contestants will be provided a template of the event area and will measure and record where they located the wire crossing each string.
16. When the contestant has completed the event, they must indicate to the judge to stop the time by saying **"I am finished"**. Only then will the clock stop. Time will be considered for tie breaking only.
17. No locating may be performed, or measurements taken after the judge calls "Time". Any measurements not recorded on the event template will incur penalty.
18. Contestant's shall certify the information on their event template and sign the template.

SCORING

19. Contestants will measure the location of the wire at each string crossing from a given reference point and record the results on the provided event template. Measurements can be taken to the nearest 1/8".
20. Any differences in the contestant's measurements and the actual measurements at each crossing will be added together for a total accumulative difference.
21. Penalty distances may be assessed for infractions spelled out in the penalty section of these rules.
22. The contestant with the lowest accumulative difference plus any penalty distance will be declared the winner.

PENALTIES

23. Penalties will be assessed as distance added or disqualification.
24. Contestants not reporting to the locate site before the start of the event will be disqualified.
25. At no time while waiting their turn or during the event shall a contestant be allowed to use a cell phone or pager. Use of cell phones/pagers will result in a disqualification.
26. Breaking a string: disqualification.
27. Recording a measurement on a string that the wire does not cross: spoke length will be added.
28. Not recording a measurement on a string that the wire does cross: spoke length will be added.

JUDGING

29. The event will consist of a Head Judge and Alternate Judges. The Head Judge shall oversee the entire event.
30. No judge shall solely judge a contestant from his or her utility. Alternate Judges will be available for such s c e n a r i o s .
31. In the event of a dispute, the decision of the Head Judge is final.

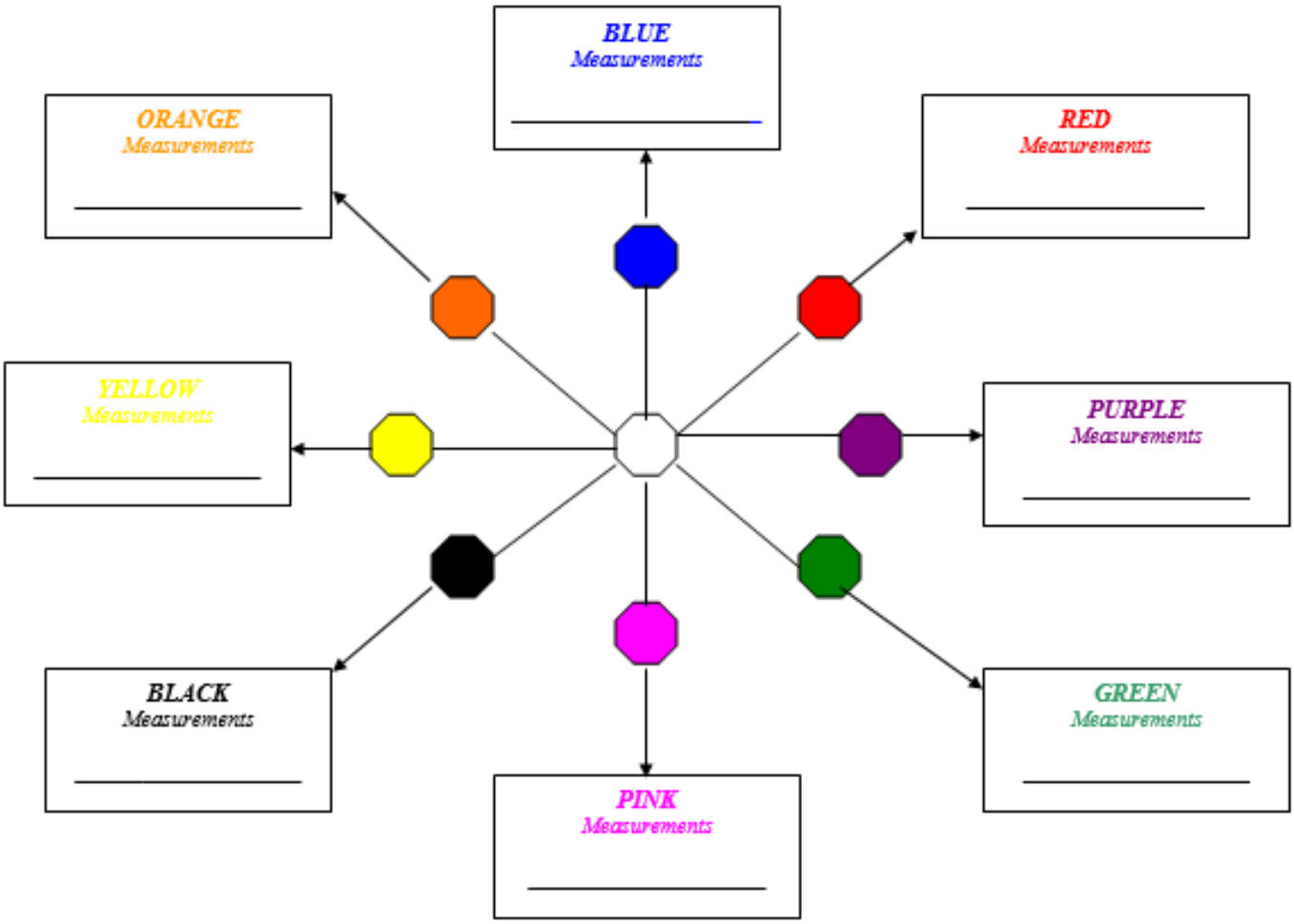
WHAT THE WINNER RECIEVES

32. The VA AWWA Annual Buried Treasure Champion is automatically eligible for the next year's VA AWWA Buried Treasure Competition as a special entry and is not counted as one of the Utility's entries.
33. The Champion will:
    a. Be presented with one traveling trophy to keep at the close of the competition for one year.
    b. Be presented with an individual trophy.

c. May be featured on the VA AWWA website and in publications.
d. Receive a stipend for expenses to attend the next AWWA ACE Conference (In general, expense reimbursement covers transportation costs to and from the convention site, hotel, and meals).
e. Amount of Stipend will be determined in December of each year and will be based on location of the Annual AWWA ACE Conference. Amount will be no less than $1,000.
f. Winners will be informed of the exact amount before ACE Registration opens

34. The Second and Third-place teams will:
    a. Be presented with individual trophies.
    b. May be featured on the VA AWWA website and in publications

EVENT TEMPLATE



(All measurements to be recorded in inches, i.e., 52 ¾")

Contestant _____ Time _____

Contestant's Signature _____

Judge's Signature _____

DISCLAIMER
Judges & Contestants

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, I HEREBY CERTIFY THE MEASUREMENTS INDICATED ARE FINAL AND UNDERSTAND CHANGES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED