



# Nova Woodturners Guild

Nova Scotia, Canada [www.novawoodturnersguild.com](http://www.novawoodturnersguild.com)

## Guidelines for Competitors

---

The following set of Guidelines is intended to assist turners when preparing entries for the annual NWG Competition. These are not rules, but intended to make life easier for competitors, judges and competition organizers and a more successful show for all involved.

---

### Before you begin

#### Design – What are you trying to create?

A successful entry is the result of careful designing with obvious thoughtfulness and rationale used in determining proportions, structural integrity, materials, intended use, finishes, colours and decoration.

Things to think about:

- Is your piece functional, artistic or a combination of the two?
- Are your selected materials (wood species, size, etc.) right for the piece you are creating?
- Remember the 30 x 30 x 30cm (12 x 12 x 12 in) size limitation
- If your entry has multiple parts, do they complement each other? For example, a pen and pencil set might be entered as a single entry and they will be judged as a set. To do well, they must be of similar quality and standard, look good together and be of the same or complimentary wood (species, grain pattern, etc.)
- If you are using non-wood components (eg. ice cream scoop or pen kits), does the choice of kit or finish complement the wood or detract from it? For example, a highly glossy chrome finish on a kit may tend to overpower plain wood species and your effort in turning will shrink into the background. Good results are often seen with very shiny kits when done with woods with bold, grain and colour (eg. Zebrano or Turlipwood) or with spalted or highly figured woods like burls. Satin finishes may be a better choice with woods with simpler or more subtle grain and colour.

### Turning and Finishing

Once you have settled on a design, it's time to get started turning. This is competition and pieces will be judged on four separate and equally weighted criteria. This means that Finishing is as important as

design, etc. so make sure you don't rush or skimp on any step to ensure the best overall result. The criteria are:

- Design
- Your turning technique (technical skill)
- Finishing
- Overall appeal

It is good to review the Judging Guidelines document on the NWG Website to see what types of things the judges will be looking for in each criterion. Here are some pointers to help you excel:

- Design
  - Does the overall design fit with your skill level and ability? While it's good to push yourself for competition, it is important that your pieces are executed well. A daring design with turning problems and finish imperfections will not do as well in scoring as a simpler design that is executed to a high standard.
- Turning technique
  - Precise techniques will vary depending on the category (spindle / faceplate, etc) and your design intent, but in general:
    - Curves should flow smoothly and feel good
    - Changes in curves should flow smoothly
    - Wall thickness should be consistent and even, appropriate to the intended use (eg. thicker in a fruit or salad bowl, thinner in a decorative piece)
    - Insides of vessels as well as outsides should be smooth and free of tearout and ridges
    - Any inlays, void filling or crack repairs should be smooth and flush with the wood surface (unless there is a design reason otherwise)
- Finishing

This is an area where pieces often fall short. Overall scores in a class are often quite close and the scoring for 'Finish' can make the difference between not placing and winning your class.

  - Note that the display location is not precisely climate controlled and may be drier or more humid than your shop. Pieces can change shape dramatically in just a few days while on display (eg. cracks opening up, snug lids becoming loose, getting wobbly on uneven bases, etc.). Keep this in mind and try to make sure your entries are completely dry and stable before the show commences.
  - Make sure your surfaces are free of sanding scratches. The judging area is typically very well-lit with good overhead lighting and often large windows with diffuse natural light. Make sure you examine your piece carefully in bright lighting for areas that may need more sanding attention.
  - The choice of finish (ie. satin, semi-gloss or high gloss shine) is largely a matter of personal preference. Note that high gloss or buffed finishes will often highlight and sanding scratches or tear-out, so make sure your surface preparation is thorough.

- Overall Appeal
  - Is the look of your piece appealing?; does it look “right”?
  - Is the base or foot too small making it look top-heavy?
  - Does it feel good in the hand (finish, grip, weight, etc.)?
  - If your piece is primarily functional, will it work well? For example, is your pen rather top heavy?; does the pepper mill work? Are the kit parts tight fitting and secure?
  - If there is a particular way your piece should be positioned or assembled, make sure you provide the Competition Committee with detailed instructions (a photograph is good). This will assist the Committee in making sure your entry is displayed in the show and presented to the judges in the way that you intend.

## Preparing your entries

### Paperwork

- Make sure you complete one (1) Competition Cover Sheet with your personal information and list of entries. This is the only form that will have your identifying information on it and will be used by the Committee to register and track entries.
- Complete three (3) Competition Entry Documentation Sheet for each entry. One original and 2 photocopies are fine. These are presented to the judges with your entries so that they each have the same information on your piece(s).
- Complete as much of the requested information as possible. It gives the judges the best idea of what your intent was and any challenges you encountered and overcame during the production.
- Titles:
  - Titles for pieces are not necessary, but you may choose to give your entry a particular title. If you choose a title that has an unclear, cryptic or personal inspiration, it is a good practice to explain the inspiration of the title in your description to avoid confusion for the judges.
- Description / Intent
  - Describe what you were trying to achieve with your design and the piece in general. This will help the judges to understand why you made certain choices in the creation of your piece.
  - If there is anything hidden or unusual in you piece, it is good to point that out in this section so the judges do not miss aspects of your work.
  - Any particular challenges you faced in the creation of the piece are good to describe, which may relate to the grain, problems with the wood or reasons for selecting your finish technique. These help the judges understand your choices.

### Packing

- Make sure your pieces are well packed, particularly for fragile or multiple part pieces.
- Any particular instructions for unpacking should be on a separate sheet packed on top of the packing material so that it is the first thing the Competition Committee will find when unpacking you entry.
- Clearly mark your name on the outside of your packing containers and mark the ‘Up’ direction for fragile pieces.
- Please use only rigid packing containers for your turnings.