

3 Competition Eligibility and Inspection (I)

3.1 Team Eligibility Rules

I101 ***Teams must be registered with FIRST.** Teams must be “competition ready” in order to compete in FIRST Tech Challenge official events and earn MATCH points or be eligible for judged awards.

- A. North America - competition ready requirements:
 - i. complete annual registration process through the *FIRST* dashboard
 - ii. pay annual registration fee
 - iii. 2 adults must be assigned in the Lead Coach 1/Lead Coach 2 roles and have passed [Youth Protection Program \(YPP\) screening](#),
 - iv. complete any additional Youth Protection screening requirements (may vary from region to region), and
 - v. register all youth team members on the *FIRST* dashboard.
- B. outside North America - competition ready requirements:
 - i. complete annual registration process through the *FIRST* dashboard and
 - ii. complete any additional requirements by the local *FIRST* Program Delivery Partner with regards to program fees, registrations and youth protection screening.

The local Program Delivery Partner may, in rare cases, make exceptions for delayed payment on a case-by-case basis. Teams who have not paid annual registration fees will not earn any official season record and will not be allowed to advance.

I102 ***Check-in at the event on time.** An adult team member must check-in at the Pit Administration station, or designated check-in location, no later than 45 minutes before Qualification MATCHES are scheduled to start, unless otherwise specified or approved by the Event Director. Check-in must be completed by a team adult and at least one STUDENT must be present at the venue before check-in can be completed.

Additional check-in requirements will vary by region but may require one or more of the following items:

- A. A current, completed team roster from the team's [FIRST dashboard](#) as specified by the local Program Delivery Partner,
- B. local Program Delivery Partner team member registration or consent forms (varies by region),
- C. a ROBOT built to specifications in Section [12 ROBOT Construction Rules \(R\)](#), if they intend to participate in MATCHES, and
- D. a printed team PORTFOLIO (optional, see Section [6 Awards \(A\)](#)).

Teams should be aware of the competition schedule and note any key activities (such as inspection or judging) that may occur prior to the check-in deadline.

All teams, regardless of how “ready” they think they are, are encouraged to participate in gameplay and judging. Teams are encouraged to reach out to their Program Delivery Partner and other teams to request help getting their ROBOT ready to compete before attending an event.

I103 ***A responsible adult must be present for the whole event.** At least 1, preferably 2, adult(s) responsible for the STUDENT team members must be present at all times during the event. Responsible adult(s) are recommended to be listed on the team roster.

3.2 Awards Eligibility Rules

To be eligible for Team Judged Awards, a team must participate in an Initial Interview ([A203](#)). For some awards, submitting a PORTFOLIO ([A201](#)) is also required.

Teams competing in multiple Qualifying or League Tournaments, or at events outside of their HOME REGION, are subject to [A213](#) and [A214](#). Details on a HOME REGION can be found in Section [4 Advancement](#).

Complete details and rules about FIRST Tech Challenge awards can be found in Section [6 Awards \(A\)](#).

3.3 MATCH Eligibility Rules

Prior to participating in Qualification or Playoff MATCHES, teams are required to pass a ROBOT inspection facilitated by INSPECTOR volunteers. The goal of inspection is to ensure the team's ROBOT meets baseline safety and competition requirements before engaging in MATCH play.

Some events may offer scheduled Practice MATCHES. Teams are permitted to participate in scheduled Practice MATCHES before passing inspection, but they may not participate in unscheduled or "filler line" Practice MATCHES before passing inspection. Teams are responsible for ensuring their ROBOTS are safe and will not damage the playing FIELD.

The FTA, LRI, or Head REFEREE may prohibit a team from participating in a Practice MATCH if they determine that their ROBOT is unsafe or likely to damage the playing FIELD.

3.3.1 Inspection

Inspection is often one of the first activities a team experiences upon arrival at an event. Some events may assign specific inspection time slots for teams, and others may schedule a general span of time for teams to complete inspection. Teams are responsible for completing inspection within the scheduled time.

During inspection, student team members present their ROBOT, all COMPONENTS that will be used by that ROBOT, and their OPERATOR CONSOLE. INSPECTORS will review baseline safety and competition requirements with the team. If any requirements are not met, INSPECTORS will work with the team to find a resolution. The Lead ROBOT INSPECTOR (LRI) has the final authority on a team's eligibility to participate in Qualification and Playoff MATCHES on matters related to ROBOT construction.

Teams may power on and enable the ROBOT during inspection to demonstrate adherence to ROBOT construction rules. Team members should let INSPECTORS know if the ROBOT must be powered on and/or enabled to meet any inspection criteria. Team members should also inform INSPECTORS if the ROBOT, in its inspection configuration, has any stored energy (for example, springs stretched) and collaborate with each other to ensure a safe inspection experience.

Inspection is not comprehensive. Teams are expected to adhere to the spirit of the rules in Section [12 ROBOT Construction Rules \(R\)](#), even if INSPECTORS do not check every part of the ROBOT. Teams that STRATEGICALLY circumvent ROBOT construction rules are not adhering to the Competition Integrity Contract (CIC) and may be subject to mitigation.

An [Inspection Checklist](#) is available to help teams self-inspect their ROBOT. Teams are strongly encouraged to self-inspect before every event.

Inspection may not happen all at once if, for example, a team needs to take a break to resolve a ROBOT construction issue or participate in a scheduled Practice MATCH. The process may involve multiple inspection volunteers. Either the INSPECTOR or the team may request assistance from the LRI.

- I301** ***Bring the complete ROBOT and supporting equipment to inspection.** Teams should present the ROBOT and OPERATOR CONSOLE with all COMPONENTS, including decorative parts, that will be used during MATCHES. Teams are not required to use all inspected COMPONENTS in every MATCH, but they should not add any un-inspected COMPONENTS to the ROBOT without re-inspection. Teams should demonstrate to INSPECTORS all ways the ROBOT will be configured for a MATCH.
- I302** ***Certain limits apply to all configurations.** The total number of electronics (motors, servos, Android Devices, etc.) used to build all MECHANISMS and base ROBOT, whether they are used on the ROBOT at the same time or not, may not exceed the constraints specified in Section [12 ROBOT Construction Rules \(R\)](#).

3.3.2 Re-Inspection

Teams may make changes to their ROBOT during an event after they complete their initial inspection. With some exceptions, all changes to the ROBOT must be re-inspected before the team can participate in further Qualification or Playoff MATCHES. During re-inspection, teams demonstrate the changes to INSPECTORS and make any additional changes necessary to meet baseline safety and competition guidelines. Re-inspection may also be requested by the Head REFEREE or FIRST Technical Advisor (FTA) if they observe potentially unsafe or disallowed ROBOT construction.

Teams are encouraged to seek the advice and assistance of Team Support volunteers when making a change to their ROBOT. Attempting to participate in a MATCH with a ROBOT that does not meet the rules in [Section 12 ROBOT Construction Rules \(R\)](#) may cause unnecessary delays and stress for teams. Deliberately making changes to a ROBOT after inspection to gain a competitive advantage without re-inspection is against the spirit of the competition.

I303 *Request re-inspection for most changes to the ROBOT. A team should request re-inspection when it makes changes to a ROBOT that may cause it to not comply with safety and competition guidelines or when requested by the Head REFEREE or FTA.

Re-inspection is generally **not** necessary for the scenarios listed below (unless they result in a significant change to the ROBOT'S size, legality, or safety):

- A. addition, relocation, or removal of fasteners (e.g., cable ties, tape, and rivets),
- B. addition, relocation, or removal of labeling or marking,
- C. addition, relocation, or replacement of the team SIGN,
- D. revision of ROBOT code,
- E. replacement of a COMPONENT with an identical COMPONENT,
- F. replacement of a MECHANISM with an identical MECHANISM (size, weight, material), and
- G. additions, removals, or reconfiguration of ROBOT with a subset of MECHANISMS already inspected.

All teams should make a good faith effort to comply with ROBOT construction rules if they make changes to their ROBOT during an event.

If a team is unclear if reinspection is required, they should confirm with the LRI or FIELD STAFF. For example, if a team is unsure if reassembling a part changes their ROBOT'S size, they should have it checked.

I304 *Do not exploit re-inspection. Teams may not use the re-inspection process to circumvent any other rules.

