Internal Review Board (IRB) and Scientific Review Committee (SRC)

The rules set up by ISEF are the rules that are followed by our school district. ISEF has very strict rules involving experimental research that involves the use of pathogens (disease-causing organisms), controlled substances (drugs or alcohol), humans, animals... If you are conducting an experiment that involves any of these items you will need PRIOR approval by an Institutional Review Board. The IRB is a school-level committee. Prior approval means the board okays your research plan before you actually begin experimenting.

In order to get approval from the IRB the following needs to be completed:

1. A VERY detailed, thoroughly thought out research plan.
2. Supervision by a qualified scientist must be apparent if required for the project.
3. Complete information and signatures on required certification papers. (Adult sponsor, 1A, 1B, and any others needed for your specific project)
4. Compliance with rules that govern research involving the project you have chosen. (Humans, pathogens...)

Once you have completed the research plan and forms, your teacher will get the necessary signatures from members of the IRB at your school.

The Scientific Review Committee is a district-level committee. At the district STEM fair a member of the SRC will approve projects when needed. In some instances there are projects that need PRIOR approval by the SRC (such as projects involving bacteria). If this is the case your teacher will assist you in meeting any requirements of this committee before you begin experimenting.