

NEGOTIATING A HOTEL CONTRACT

HOTEL SELECTION:

After you've narrowed down the city where you want to hold your meeting, contact the local Visitors & Convention Bureau for help in selecting a hotel. (Plus, they may be able to help you with other information, discounts, and even donations.) Normally, they are able to put out a proposal to local hotels once they have your information as to number of attendees/guests, dates, and needs such as a comped suite, A/V, and event space. This reduces your need to get in touch with each one until you get their preliminary proposals. The hotel should be selected at least 2 years in advance. It is best if your event is the only large one at the hotel during that time period, so it is a good idea to ask up front.

ROOMS:

GUEST ROOMS: You will need an estimate of how many rooms you will need and what type (doubles, king, family, suite). The best way to get this is to look back at your recent Section meetings to get the numbers and types of rooms used. The hotel will set aside the number that you need but will normally only require that you meet 80% of that number, just in case you aren't right on. Require a comped suite for the Section Governor and ask for amenities such as flowers for her room. Confirm that if an attendee uses points to book room(s), they count as room nights for your group. Information should be included as to how reservations are to be made and cut-off dates. The hotel should give you one comped room night for each 40 room nights reserved and used. Be sure to include a few room nights scheduled before and after the meeting in case some attendees want to stay over or come in early. Ask about additional taxes on rooms and resort/facility fees.

MEETING ROOMS AND SPACES: A hospitality room should be at no cost and it should be checked out to confirm that there is room for a large table and chairs. Find out their policies on bringing in food and other refreshments. Reserve space for Fly Markets and/or Silent Auctions, if that is needed. The hotel should give you all meeting rooms and office space at no cost, including the Business Meeting and Banquet events. Water service should be provided in all meeting rooms. Tables and chairs for meetings and events are to be at no cost.

FOOD & BEVERAGES

The largest part of your expenses will be the food and beverage costs. Set menu and prices two years before event if at all possible, including children's prices. Most hotels now include an entrée that meets the requirements for vegan/vegetarian/gluten-free attendees. Confirm the meal expenses, including taxes and service charges which can be a substantial part of the cost. The hotel will state what the guaranteed minimums are expected in Food and Beverage expenditures. If cash bars are part of your meeting, the bartenders are normally at no charge if your guests' purchases meet a required minimum. This should be part of your contract, including an hourly rate if the required minimum is not met.

REGISTRATION AREA

It is best if the registration area is in plain sight as attendees enter the hotel. If that is not available, the hotel may be able to provide you with signage directing them to its location or allow you to provide your own.

AUDIO-VISUAL

Check out if the hotel can provide you with your A/V needs or if 1) you bring your own, or 2) contract with local vendors.

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PARKING

Confirm the hotel has adequate parking facilities at no charge or reduced fees.

PAYMENT

The hotel may require you to fill out a credit application and/or pay a deposit. Your hotel contract will stipulate the billing arrangements, requirements, methods, and due dates of payments.

OTHER:

The hotel may have regulations regarding such things as smoking (& vaping), decorations, photography, shipping, noise control, etc. It is best to discuss before receiving the contract.

Once you have a viable contract, but before signing the contract, with your selected hotel, email it to Martha Phillips at martha99s@yahoo.com for preliminary approval of the above items. She will get back to you with any questions or proposed changes. The contract is then forwarded to our corporate attorney, Cecile Hatfield at cecilehatf@aol.com for final approval of the contract including the legalese (cancellation, hold harmless, governing law, etc.)