
GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL HEALTHCARE EXHIBITIONS AND CONGRESSES



Endorsements

These Guidelines have been reviewed and endorsed by the following organizations:

IAPCO

The International Association of Professional Congress Organisers

IEARC

The International Exhibitors Association on Radiological Congresses

IPCAA

The International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association

HEALTHCARE CONVENTION & EXHIBITORS ASSOCIATION GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL HEALTHCARE EXHIBITIONS AND CONGRESSES

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HCEA's Guidelines for International Healthcare Exhibitions and Congresses are designed to assist healthcare congress and association personnel planning exhibitions, and companies exhibiting at these meetings. The Guidelines are continually reviewed and updated by the HCEA Guidelines Committee; any changes are approved by HCEA's Board of Directors. The Guidelines for International Healthcare Exhibitions and Congresses were developed in conjunction with the International Chapter of HCEA. By suggesting information for inclusion in a prospectus, the Guidelines enable societies and associations to more effectively market their exhibitions and congresses to potential industry participants. Orders for additional copies or comments on these Guidelines should be directed to HCEA, 1100 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite 300, Atlanta, GA 30342, USA. Phone: +1 (404) 252-3663, Fax: +1 (404) 252-0774. This revision completed October 2000.



HEALTHCARE CONVENTION & EXHIBITORS ASSOCIATION

Guidelines for International Healthcare Exhibitions and Congresses

Healthcare congresses and exhibitions around the world follow a widely divergent set of "rules." There are a number of reasons for this variance. Some relate to the size or arrangement of the venue, to the nature of the city in which the congress is held, to the availability of hotel rooms or to transportation. Some are political, such as varying national and local government regulations regarding the exhibiting activity.

This divergence creates a challenge for those involved in the worldwide healthcare exhibiting industry: to first know, then be able to work within, the variety of systems and regulations which have evolved in the global healthcare exhibiting environment. Much time, effort, and therefore money, are expended in learning and adjusting to these systems. In an era when companies around the world are seeking to cut costs and improve return on investment, efforts to improve the efficiency of the healthcare exhibition as a marketing medium would benefit the entire industry.

The Healthcare Convention & Exhibitors Association's (HCEA's) main purpose for more than 60 years has been to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare exhibitions. HCEA is an association made up of the entire range of organizations involved in healthcare exhibitions: healthcare companies (including pharmaceutical, medical device, supply and other healthcare companies), congress organizers and associations, and companies which supply products and services to the industry (e.g. exhibit designers and builders).

The following Guidelines are an accumulation of facts and recommendations regarding healthcare exhibitions developed by members of HCEA and reviewed by outside sources for accuracy, fairness and completeness. Their purpose is to provide information and suggested regulations that will increase the efficiency of healthcare exhibitions and improve the process of participation for all parties involved. There are guidelines for both congress organizers and exhibiting companies. Each has a responsibility, and each stands to benefit, from the increased efficiency of healthcare exhibitions. The intent of this document is that it be applicable to as much of the world as possible, and that it be flexible — open to revision to adapt to changes as they occur.

HCEA recommends that these Guidelines be adopted by congress organizers and associations, and be followed by exhibiting companies.

GUIDELINES FOR CONGRESSES AND ASSOCIATIONS

THE PROSPECTUS

The prospectus, or exhibitor's guide, is an accumulation of information on a specific congress. It may have other names, but its purpose is to provide this important information to the healthcare companies considering participation in the congress' exhibition. The more complete the prospectus, the better-informed the companies will be, resulting in smoother operations for those coordinating the exhibition. It is recommended that any new information from the previous prospectus be highlighted (e.g. bold type) and also addressed in the letter transmitting the prospectus to exhibitors. In a complete prospectus, the following information should be provided:

Basic Information

Name and address of congress (and/or of Association, if appropriate).

Name and exact titles of Key Personnel involved with the congress, their mailing addresses, telephone, FAX and E-mail numbers where applicable.

Dates of the Congress and exhibition, also identify whether any local/national holidays occur during or immediately preceding or following and specify their implications, (e.g., no one available for stand build-up).

Venue (and city and country).

Background information on congress, including: list of previous exhibitors; how long congress has been held; locations of previous and future meetings; and frequency (e.g., annually, every four years).

Background information on venue, including photographs or diagram, date of construction, etc.

Background information on host city/country.

Delegate demographics and information from the most recent previous congresses, including: attendance figures, nationality (including, if available, region, province or state) and medical specialty of delegates, buying or prescribing influence, age, and any other available delegate data pertinent to exhibitors' decisions about participation in the congress

Official language of the congress (when applicable) and whether simultaneous translation (to which languages) is available.

Official travel agency (if applicable).

Official carrier airline or other transportation (if applicable).

Official currency (if applicable). If only one or a limited number of national currencies can be used, this should be stated.

Official customs agent (if applicable).

Bank (if applicable).

Post Office (if needed).

Passport and visa requirements.

Health regulations and requirement for inoculations.

Weather information.

Public transportation information (including prices). If shuttle service will be provided to the venue from hotels, complete information about the service such as the names of the hotels served and the dates and hours the shuttle will be operating should be given. If this information is not available in its entirety when the prospectus is printed, indication of where and when it will be provided should be given.

Credit cards accepted.

Rental car agencies.

Parking.

Airports, including shuttle busses or other dedicated airport transportation services.

Deadline for abstracts.

Date that final program will be available.

Objectives of the Meeting.

Additional Marketing Opportunities Available to Exhibitors. (e.g., newspaper, ad space in journal, availability of labels, hyperlink to association web site.)

Exhibition Specifics.

Exhibition Hours should appear in the exhibit information section as well as in the floor plan in a format designed to stand out. The times set aside for delegates to visit the exhibits should be clearly specified. As much time as possible should not be conflicting with educational seminars.

Stand Build-up/Installation and Breakdown Dates and Hours.

Stand Build-up (Installation)/Construction. The day and time when installation/construction of exhibits may begin, and the times allotted for this, should be stated. If delivery times differ from build-up time, this should be stated. The time when unneeded packing material should be cleared should be stated, if applicable. The time at which installation/construction must be completed also should be indicated. If decoration, computer programming and similar activities can continue until a later time than initial installation/construction, this also should be stated. It is recommended that sufficient time be allowed for stands to be made completely ready. The amount of time for installation/construction should be adjusted to accommodate large stands (i.e. larger stands may require more time). To avoid additional costs, build-up and breakdown should occur during normal working hours as much as possible. Consideration should be given to the availability of stairs, lifts, exits and the size of the

venue when determining the amount of build-up time. The hour at which stand personnel not involved in build-up may enter the hall should be stated.

Stand Breakdown Time. The day and time when breakdown of stands may begin, times allotted for breakdown and when stand removal must be completed should be stated. It is recommended that a minimum of 24 hours be allowed. Establishment of a greater minimum number of hours is especially important when large stands are utilized.

Registration Hours. Exhibitor registration should be open on the first day of build-up so that personnel arriving to set up can obtain their badges and be admitted into the hall. This should be clearly noted by listing Exhibitor Registration times separately in the prospectus.

Requirements for application. The procedure and requirements for applying for participation in the exhibition should be stated in the prospectus. If there are limitations on the types of companies or products and services which may participate in the exhibition, this should also be stated.

Space Assignment. Space assignment methods should be well defined and explained in the prospectus. If a priority point system is used, an explanation of the system is necessary. Also, when the point system is used, some floor space should be made available to new exhibitors to preclude a permanent shutout of these firms. If storage space, hospitality suites, hotel rooms or other amenities are also being assigned, the prospectus should clearly state whether the system for doing so is the same as for exhibit space assignment.

Space Relocation. Space relocation, after exhibitor acceptance of assigned space, is a serious matter which should be avoided if at all possible. When relocation is unavoidable, quick and complete communication with the exhibitor should be carried out. The reason for the relocation should be explained. In any and all instances of space relocation, the affected exhibitors should be given the option to cancel and receive a full refund of all payments made (within a reasonable time frame, if notification was made well in advance of the congress) in the event the reassigned space is not acceptable to the exhibitor.

Mergers & Buyouts. Space Assignments can be severely impacted by mergers and buyouts. Impact on/and procedures for assignment of priority points, booth space assignments, etc. should be clearly identified.

Listing Merged Companies. The Exhibit Guide (e.g. Convention Program) is the primary tool attendees use to find exhibitors. HCEA's Guidelines recommend that healthcare associations make available for a period of one year a second listing for companies that merge. For example, if Company A and Company B both exhibited at an association's meeting in the past, and if Company A merges with or is acquired by Company B and they take one booth space as Company B, the listing should be:

Company A: "See Company B, Booth No. ____".

Company B: The listing should be the typical full listing of products and services.

If the association incurs additional costs to provide the second listing, it is acceptable that the association charge a nominal fee to provide the second listing.

Cost of Space. A list of what is included in the space cost (e.g., shuttle, access to general sessions, aisle cleaning, programs) should be included in the prospectus.

Stand Payments. Up to 50% of the cost of space may be required within a reasonable time frame of space acceptance, as a demonstration of good faith. Balances due for space should not be required more than 180 days prior to the congress opening.

Space Cancellation.

1. If an exhibitor cancels space more than 180 days prior to the opening, no more than 25% of the total amount due should be retained by the congress organizer.
2. If an exhibitor cancels space less than 180 days but more than 90 days prior to opening and the space is not resold or the exhibition not sold out, up to 50% of the total amount due may be retained.
3. If an exhibitor cancels space less than 90 days prior to opening and the space is not resold or the exhibition is not sold out, 100% of the cost may be retained.

4. In the event the canceled spaces are resold and the entire exhibition is sold out, the congress organizer may retain a reasonable administrative fee up to 25% of the canceled exhibitor's space cost; the balance of deposits/payments should be refunded.

Congress cancellation or postponement. In the event that the congress is postponed for any reason, exhibitors should be given a reasonable period of time after notification of postponement (2 weeks is recommended) to cancel and receive a full refund of all payments made. In the event of complete cancellation of the congress, exhibitors should in all cases receive a full refund of all payments made.

Congress curtailment. In the event that the congress is curtailed for any reason, exhibitors should be entitled to a refund of payments made, proportionate to the curtailment (e.g. curtailment of a four-day congress by one day should result in a 25% refund to exhibitors).

Subtenants. If the exhibitor is prohibited from sharing stand space with another company, this should be stated in the prospectus. Exhibitors should seek permission from the congress organizer if they wish to share space.

Shell Scheme/Stand Description. A description and explanation of the shell scheme, including size and color, should be provided if applicable. The size of the standard stand (if applicable), minimum and maximum heights, availability of other types (e.g., island or peninsula) and furnishings which will be provided (if any) should be indicated.

Carpeting. If the exhibition will be carpeted, this should be stated along with the color and type of carpet. If the aisles of the exhibition will be carpeted, the color and type of carpet will be important to the exhibitor.

Exhibitor Lounge. If an exhibitor lounge(s) is provided, the location should be given.

Hotels. The names and addresses of any headquarters hotel(s) should be stated. Exhibitors need to know with which hotels, if any, the congress organizer has made arrangements for room blocks, whether reservations should be made directly with the hotel or through some other party, and any information (including restrictions) which will expedite the room reservation procedure. Congress organizers should make every effort whenever possible to set aside room blocks for exhibitors on a fair and equitable basis. When rooms are being held in a company's name, the company should provide a rooming list to the appropriate official approximately 4 to 6 weeks in advance of the meeting, but have the opportunity to substitute names as necessary.

If hotel arrangements are handled by another agency, the name, address, phone and fax numbers, as well as the names of key personnel, should be provided in the prospectus.

Customs Regulations. The prospectus should include complete information on exporting and reimporting displays and materials. The name, full address, and telephone number of the official customs offices and/or broker should be indicated.

Other Legal Requirements/Restrictions. The most important legal requirements should be identified (e.g., fire standards).

Taxes and Duties. The prospectus should provide information on how exhibitors may claim any appropriate tax and duty refunds available to them. If possible, forms for this purpose should be sent to exhibitors in advance, or made available at the congress.

Exhibition Layout/Floor Plan. The prospectus should include a floor plan which should be accurate and to scale. Floor plan information should include:

- Description of all stand space (including island space plus cross reference to stand specifications and restrictions).
- Price of each space
- Entrances and exits
- Post and column locations and sizes
- Scientific poster areas
- Meeting Rooms
- Registration area
- Refreshment area
- Congress management offices
- Ceiling height
- Aisle width
- Staircases
- Obstructions such as balconies, air ducts, pipes, light fixtures, and lifts (location, dimensions, and capacities)

- Utilities available in stands
- Electrical hookup
- Floor composition (wood, concrete, stone, carpet)
- Floor load restrictions
- Lift locations (including dimensions and weight limitations)
- Loading area (ramps)
- Dimensions of passages
- Security area
- Service desk
- Dining area
- Telephones/fax machines/computers, as applicable
- Storage
- Rest rooms/lavatories
- Meeting point
- Exhibitor lounge
- Hospitality offices

Footnotes should identify any symbols used to indicate columns or other stand obstructions. Any restrictions, such as locations near lifts or loading docks where build-up and breakdown hours are reduced, should be identified.

Any floor plan changes should be conveyed to exhibitors at least 60 days in advance of the congress.

Stand Services/Exhibitors Kits. Congress management should provide exhibitors with a packet giving complete information on available stand services. If possible, this should be available six months prior to the meeting. The packet should also contain all necessary forms required for contractual services such as cleaning, hostesses, refreshments, plumbing/water, electrical power, stand furnishings and telephones. Whether or not the venue is air conditioned, and the type of lighting, also will be important to the exhibitors.

Exhibit Stand Specifications. Clear information about the technical specifications for stands in the exhibition will be critical to exhibitors. Following are some of the most important specifications which should be included in the prospectus.

- **Exhibitor Responsibilities.** If exhibitors must have stand designs approved, the procedure for this should be stated clearly in the prospectus. Exact mechanisms required (e.g. photographs, blueprints, drawings, or some combination of these) as well as exact information needed for approval to be obtained (e.g. utility hook-ups and moving parts) should be stated. The congress organizer should communicate with the exhibitor clearly and quickly whether an exhibit has been approved, conditionally approved, or whether modifications will be required. The exact conditions of approval (if any) and/or modifications required for approval should be stated clearly.
- **Stand sizes.** If possible, uniform stand sizes should be used (e.g. in-line, peninsula and island or free-standing), though the layout of the venue may sometimes prohibit this. When uniform stand sizes are used, the following will be important.

1. In-Line Stand

It is recommended that a standard in-line shell scheme stand size be followed to allow exhibitors to economize participation in congresses. In some cases in-line stands of greater height than standard may be ruled acceptable if confined to perimeter walls.

2. Peninsula Stand

Essentially an island exhibit attached to the end of a row of in-line stands, a peninsula stand should not cause a visual disadvantage to adjacent exhibits that is greater than would be caused by an in-line stand in the immediately adjacent space. In-line stand restrictions should apply to the portion of the exhibit which borders on another exhibitor's stand; island specifications/restrictions should apply for the remaining portion of the peninsula stand. Since island exhibits are frequently used in peninsula space and are not designed to the same height requirements as in-line exhibits, the likelihood of violation is significant. Therefore, congress management should take special care in reviewing and approving sketches of peninsula exhibits in advance, and exhibitors should take extra caution to ensure their peninsula stands do not violate exhibition rules.

3. Island Stand

A large or multiple stand space completely surrounded with aisles, an island exhibit should be limited in height only by the ceiling height of the hall, though other maximums settled upon by congress management in consultation with exhibitors are satisfactory as well. Island blueprints and photographs should be reviewed and approved well in advance of the meeting to avoid unresolvable problems during the exhibition itself. Additional fees assessed by congress management for the use of multiple story exhibits in island spaces, or the prohibition of multiple story exhibits, is not recommended. When vertical exhibit space expansion is prohibited or made prohibitive by cost, the alternative for the company needing more space is to buy more floor space. The net result in a sold-out exhibition is a reduction in the amount of space available to new exhibitors.

Exhibitors should be sure that their use of floor space in an island exhibit does not interfere with traffic flow in adjacent aisle space, and should not erect walls on any side of an island booth so as to interfere with traffic flow or visibility.

- **Minimum and Maximum Stand Sizes.** These should be stated clearly in the prospectus.
- **Visibility.** The congress rules regarding visibility from one stand to another should be stated in the prospectus. If full use of floor space or placement of exhibit items is limited due to visibility considerations, this should be clearly stated. If there are restrictions on the height of any portion of a side wall (e.g. the front half cannot exceed a certain height), this should also be stated.
- **Raised Floors.** If there are minimum or maximum specifications on raised floors, these should be stated.
- **Side Walls.** If a shell scheme is not provided and exhibitors will be required to provide their own side and back walls, this should be stated. Specifications for finishing the outer side of the walls should be given (e.g. whether a certain color required, etc.). These specifications should be minimal, as exhibitors should not be required to devote substantial time or effort in "decorating" surfaces that do not contribute to their exhibit space.
- **Roofs.** Fire safety regulations may prohibit totally or partially the construction of roofs for stands. If so, the specifications for allowable roofs, if any, should be stated in the prospectus (e.g. no more than 50% of any stand and 25% of the exhibit hall may be covered).
- **Materials/Construction.** Restrictions or regulations on materials (e.g. whether certain materials may be prohibited due to fire safety codes) or procedures (e.g. use of mortar, adhesives) which may be used in stand construction, if any, should be stated.
- **Damage to Building.** In general, it should be understood that exhibitors are to leave the venue in the same condition they found it, and should not make or attempt alterations of any kind without express written permission.
- **Load Restrictions.** In general, walls, columns and other structures of the venue should not be subject to loads from an exhibit. However, if any floor of the venue has load restrictions, this should be clearly stated in the prospectus so that exhibitors may plan accordingly and prevent any inadvertent damage.
- **Safety Regulations.** All safety regulations required by government or venue ordinance should be stated clearly in the prospectus. Examples include prohibitions regarding obstruction of exits, the use of heat or flame in the building, bringing certain materials into the building, having engines or vehicles inside the building, disposal of packaging and/or other flammable waste, transport of particularly large or heavy items, use of high-technology equipment, and animals.
- **Electricity.** The day and time that electricity will be turned on and off should be stated in the prospectus. It should also be stated clearly who is responsible for connection of electricity and installation of electrical equipment in which areas (e.g. which electrical connections or installation must be done by venue or congress organizer designates, and which can be done by the exhibitor or stand builder).

Of particular importance to exhibitors will be the cycle, voltage and other technical specifications of the available electricity. These should be stated clearly, along with any limitations these may place on the exhibitor's stand design. If the use of any particular electrical apparatus is prohibited, this should be stated.

- **Water Supply.** The availability of water and drainage services, along with any specifications thereof, should be stated in the prospectus. It should also be made clear who will be responsible for installing these services.
- **Telephone Connections.** The availability of telephone service and connections and any specifications thereof should also be stated in the prospectus.
- **Storage.** If storage space is available to exhibitors, this should be stated in the prospectus, along with any associated restrictions (e.g. prohibition against storing flammable items). If procedures regarding assignment of storage space are associated in any way with exhibit space assignment procedures, this should be made clear. In instances where storage is available, it is recommended that some minimum storage space be set and made available to all exhibitors. If no storage space is available, this should be stated clearly in the prospectus.

Inappropriate Exhibits/Congress' Right to Refuse Space. The congress organizer should reserve the right to refuse space assignment to any company whose products or services do not contribute directly to the meeting delegates' healthcare practice.

Badges. The congress' procedures for assigning and distributing exhibitor badges should be stated clearly in the prospectus. A set number of exhibitor badges should be included in the space cost based on stand size, assuming that exhibitors are entitled to a sufficient number of badges or a badge exchange procedure. The location and dates and hours of the exhibitor registration desk should be stated. If different badges only allow limited entry (e.g. to exhibition hall and not to meeting rooms), this should be specified.

If separate work passes strictly for use by stand construction personnel are to be given out, the procedure for this should also be stated clearly in the prospectus.

Surveillance/Security. The extent of responsibility and liability for each party regarding surveillance and security (congress organizer, venue and exhibitor) should be stated clearly in the prospectus. If the venue or congress organizer has arranged security, the extent of that security should be explained clearly. Regardless of security arrangements, it is always recommended that exhibitors take any valuable portable items out of their exhibits during off hours. If exhibitors desire additional security, procedures for arranging this should be made available to them.

One area of particular concern and potential confusion is the admittance of delegates into the exhibit hall when the exhibits are not open. It is recommended that congress organizers do everything possible to prevent the need for delegates to enter or pass through the exhibition hall when exhibits are not open, as this forces exhibitors to staff their stands purely for security reasons.

Catering. The extent to which exhibitors may (or may not) arrange food and drinks for their exhibits should be stated, as well as the procedures for making these arrangements. If a particular catering service is specified by the venue, the name, address and phone numbers of the service, along with the names of key personnel, should be given in the prospectus. Prices, items available, and services available (such as hostesses) should also be stated.

Press Relations. If the congress has a press room, briefing room, or press office, rules regarding its use by exhibitors should be stated in the prospectus. If exhibitors are not allowed to display materials or hold press conferences or briefings in the congress' press room, then other arrangements should be made available to them which do not interfere with the exhibitor's right to free and open contact with the press, nor with the congress organizer's right to an orderly congress and exhibition.

Cleaning. If the congress organizer has arranged cleaning services for the exhibition hall, the extent of these should be outlined in the prospectus. If further cleaning services are required, procedures for arranging this should be made available to exhibitors by the congress organizer.

Smoking. Any prohibitions on smoking in the exhibition hall should be clearly stated in the prospectus.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Selling in Exhibit Space. Exhibitors and congress organizers should become familiar with the laws of the host country regarding selling products and services and/or taking orders in the exhibit space. In some countries, it is prohibited. It is recommended that for each congress, the prohibition or acceptance of selling activity should be decided upon by the congress organizer in compliance with these laws, and the policy of the congress and the laws of the host country regarding this matter should be clearly stated in the prospectus.

Exhibitor Demonstrations. Demonstrations by exhibitors should contribute to the delegates in a professional way. Demonstrations and adequate space for an audience should be available within the confines of the individual exhibitor's stand. No interference with normal traffic flow and infringement on neighboring exhibits should be permitted.

Audio-Visual and Computer Equipment and Presentations. If closed sound systems cannot be arranged and/or open sound systems are permitted, restrictions or regulations should indicate that sound leakage should not interfere with any other exhibitor. Congress management should require compliance and reserve the right to take necessary corrective action.

If rental equipment is available, the supplier(s) should be identified by name, address, telephone, fax, and e-mail numbers where available. Any restrictions on such rental also should be stated.

Cleaning, floral/plant and other services supplier information and restrictions, if any, should be cited.

Market Research Stands. Market research companies should ensure that their activities do not interfere with normal traffic flow, and they should not attempt to canvass delegates outside the boundaries of their assigned exhibit space.

Prizes, Lotteries and Giveaways. The prohibition or acceptance of giving away prizes and/or holding lotteries or games at a given congress should be decided upon by the congress organizer in compliance with the laws of the host country. In some countries, these activities may be prohibited by law. The appropriate policies and laws should be stated in the prospectus. The congress manager should reserve the right to approve whatever giveaways may be allowed, within the framework of these laws, and should likewise reserve the right to prohibit lotteries if they are deemed not in keeping with the professional purpose of the exhibition. If a maximum or minimum monetary value is placed on giveaway or games, this should be stated in the prospectus.

Other Stand Publicity. Any congress regulations regarding other stand publicity activities should be clearly spelled out in the prospectus. Examples include advertising of goods and services other than those approved for the exhibition, and areas where publicity materials may be distributed.

Liability Insurance. Exhibitors should not be held responsible for any damage not caused by them or their agents. The following language is a suggested guideline for the balanced best interests of all concerned parties in the treatment of liability/insurance:

"Each party involved in the exhibition — venue owner, congress organizer and exhibitor — agrees to be responsible for any claims arising out of their own negligence or that of their employees or agents.

Each party agrees to be responsible for their own property through insurance or self-insurance and shall hold harmless each of the other parties for any and all damage caused by theft and those perils normally covered by a fire and extended coverage policy."

If proof of the exhibitor's insurance is required by the congress organizer, the deadline for receipt of such proof should be stated in the prospectus.

Stand Staff Conduct. All exhibits should be properly staffed at all times. Those leaving stands unstaffed for long periods of time, or those who vacate the stand prior to the official closing time, may be susceptible to penalties from the congress organizer. What those penalties are should be stated in the prospectus. The congress organizer should also reserve the right to remove or place penalties on any offensive promo-