



American Peony Society Convention – Venue Requirements

This document is intended to define the requirements leading up to the hotel contract signing for an American Peony Society Convention

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

An APS Convention venue needs to meet the following requirements:

- Scheduled late enough for northern growers to bring flowers
- Accessible location
- Easy airport access / Shuttle Service?
- Ample Parking (preferably free)
- Co-located or near flower show
- Easy access for the public
- Offers event planning and catering
- Adequate Exhibition, Meeting and Banquet space

While not required, also consider:

- Restaurant options including both onsite and within walking distance
- Additional attractions including stores/shopping, museums, sightseeing, public parks/gardens, etc.
- Easy access to public transportation

First contact with the hotel

Speak with the Hotel events coordinator to set up meeting. Be prepared with list of requirements before meeting. First to find out is if the desired dates are available for booking. Once basic information is garnered then detail questions can be asked. To limit confusion, there should be one APS person assigned as liaison to the hotel contact person.

Once the details are agreed, the APS President, Treasurer or designee should sign the hotel contract. There will be a deposit required at the time. Contact the APS treasurer for funds. Make sure the APS liabilities are understood if room and food minimums are not met along with cancellation liabilities.

Hotel Rooms

Will the hotel offer a block of rooms at a discount? Are they affordable?

- Determine room usage. For example, 100 attendees at a convention will require about 30 to 40 rooms per main nights of the conference with less on the beginning and tail end of the convention. Most hotels will stipulate that if these are not filled, APS would be responsible for the difference. An ideal contract will spell out exact room expectation with the following:
 - Expected rooms per night.
 - Have defined the exact obligation if room quota not met. What is the required fill rate? Some will require 100% but better to negotiate to a 60% to 70% fill rate. In other words, if 40 rooms are blocked, we need to only fill 60% to meet our obligation. The fill rate is determined not per night but over the whole course of the event.
 - Ask for complimentary rooms and hospitality suite since booking a block of rooms.
 - Is the hospitality suite large enough? What are its hours, location and can we bring in outside food?
 - Fulfilling room requirements is occasionally combined with exhibition, space, meeting room space and food requirements.

Before finalizing the room requirements, all other aspect of the hotel needs should be discussed and put in writing. The Hotel events coordinator will submit a draft contract for review once discussed.

Banquet / Auction / Food

APS holds at least one banquet and usually a welcome dinner. The hotel will require a food budget. This is negotiable. The following should be asked:

- Banquet room size (know your audience and size accordingly, typically need 100 to 150 seating)
- Service style, sit down service or buffet
- Menu choices including deserts
- Cash bar
- Audio visual for auction
- Table coverings
- Cost per person (typically \$30 to \$60 per person per banquet, higher at hotels)
- Snacks, water and other beverages at meetings
- Board of directors' dinner
- Does hotel provide bus box lunches for tours if needed (may help food budget but may be expensive)
- Lectern with microphone for General Meeting (consider wireless mic to be used later for the auction)
- Table and outlets/power strip for laptop and digital projector
- Screen for auction presentation
- Need 6-10 skirted 8' tables at front of room for auction items
- 2 skirted 8' tables near electrical outlet for auction tally/check-out.

The hotel will usually set a one price food budget based on all the events. If the food budget is not met, then APS may need to make up the difference. This is why refunds are not given to convention goers after a certain date because the hotel requires about 3 weeks in advance the number of people in attendance. APS pays for that number of meals even if the attendee is not present. Sometimes with a preset food budget, the banquet rooms are complimentary and sometimes the use of the rooms have a fee. This must be made very clear by the hotel. It is best to try to get an all-inclusive package. That is, if APS promises a certain number of hotel rooms along with a specific meal count, then APS gets a hospitality suite thrown in along with meetings rooms and an exhibition space. On the contract is typically a food budget total amount. This is for all meals, snacks and set-ups. This amount divided by the expected attendance can be used for the APS convention budget planning. Tax and tips are not included in the hotel food budget.

Meeting Rooms

Is the exhibition to be held on the hotel site? What about seminars and other meetings? Are the meeting rooms complimentary or is there a fee for usage? These are the requirements:

- **Board meeting(s)** – A board meeting will be scheduled and may include BOD dinner in either the same or an adjacent room. Seating for 15-30 people with conference tables.
- **Special classes / Training sessions** – Will APS be offering any special training (i.e. exhibiting peonies, ALM, judges training, educational workshops, etc.) during Convention? Check with APS Committee Chairpersons for requirements.
- **Educational Seminars** – Lecture hall seating for 75-100 people, digital projector and screen, microphone, etc. Also, easel for schedule

Exhibition Space

If the exhibition is in the hotel, the following is required:

- Minimum 3000 square feet of exhibition space adjacent to minimum 1500 square feet of prep space
- Is the prep room close to the exhibition room
- Water source close to exhibition and prep room (both for filling and dumping)
- Hall space outside exhibition for info tables and vendors
- Is there easy access to the exhibition space
- Is there cold storage available
- Audio visual set up and costs
- Who sets up tables and meeting rooms (have to let hotel know table layout)
- Table coverings (should be skirted to the floor)

- Loading and unloading access
- Hours of usage including pre-set up access times
- Can the room be kept cool at 64 degrees before open to the public
- Are the rooms lockable or secure

If expecting a large exhibition, closer to 4000 square feet for the show floor is better. Sometimes the prep space will become the banquet area so this area will need to be cleaned up just after the show opens. This is less than ideal and it would be better if prep space can be retained longer.

Miscellaneous

There will be many small details to consider. In the end, the hotel will have a contract to sign with hotel rooms, food and meeting rooms. The contract will also list liabilities, hours, noise factors, and cancellation liabilities. Make sure it includes a Force Majeure to cover disasters. Here are some of the miscellaneous details to be concerned about:

- Parking – is it free and accessible.
- Safety – Are convention goers going to feel safe in the area.
- Hospitality suite – what are the hours, can we bring our own beverages and snacks.
- Hours and access to meeting rooms. APS keeps late hours at the exhibition hall.
- Can we bring our own audio visual or do we have to use hotels?
- Limitation on signs?
- Does hotel post signs?
- Loading and unloading easy or hard (close to exhibition room and prep room)
- Some people may ship flowers. Will hotel accept?
- Does the hotel set up a separate web site for ease of convention goers' registration?