

BOOKING A HOTEL

Things to look for when reviewing a hotel contract for a room block and/or space

- Ensure all contact information, dates and timing are accurate.
- Review the negotiated guest room rates to ensure they are accurate for your requested room types and corresponding nightly rates. Please note that the rates do not include applicable taxes and miscellaneous fees.
 - {HINT}** Consider negotiating complimentary suites to be allocated for VIPs (like the International President) or for use as a hospitality space for your planning committee and volunteers.
- Review the number of sleeping nights you are committed to, and your agreed upon room night revenue.
 - You should be getting a 20 percent attrition rate. That means if you book less than your agreed upon room nights or revenue, you have a 20 percent cushion before you will be penalized for the empty rooms.
 - Ensure that there is a clause in the contract that the hotel will resell any unused rooms in your block and you will be credited if these unused rooms in your block are resold.
- Ensure that the agreed upon room block cutoff is correct. This is usually two to four weeks prior to your event (with two weeks being ideal).
 - {HINT}** Double check that the hotel has provided you with a booking website or phone number with your applicable group name or special identification code.
- Make sure that the hotel knows which charges go on the master account and which ones will be covered by the individual at their own expense.
- Provide the hotel with a basic schedule of events and make sure that this is reflected in the contract. This should include dates, event start times, event end times, the name of the function, the room assigned, the setup required and the estimated guest count. Please make sure you have accounted for adequate setup and teardown in your listed event times.
 - {HINT}** Hotels may include a clause that meeting rooms cannot be guaranteed and are subject to change. Make sure that you have them add a clause that states that no changes can be made without discussing with the client.
- Ideally, you should not be paying a room rental fee. This is something that many hotels will waive with a food and beverage minimum.
- Make sure that the agreed upon food and beverage minimum is accurate. This quoted amount is usually negotiable if needed. Also, please note that this figure does not include service charges and taxes. Please take this into account when figuring out your minimum costs.
 - {HINT}** Ask to review the hotel banquet menus prior to agreeing on a food and beverage minimum. Make sure that your estimated attendance multiplied by their menu costs (plus service charge and taxes) is of equal or lesser value than the minimum required.
 - {HINT}** Menu prices are negotiable. Tell them what you want to spend per person and see if this is feasible before signing a contract. Make sure you are comfortable with the menu pricing before signing a hotel contract that will hold you accountable to a minimum spend.
- Review and understand the schedule of penalties should you cancel. The percentage owed is usually dependent on how far out you cancel. This varies from hotel to hotel.

- Ensure that the billing procedures and deposit schedule are accurate and that you understand how they will be processed. Are you paying by credit card? Direct bill? When is the deposit due? When is the final payment due?
{HINT} Final bills are typically paid 10-14 business days post contract.
- Are shipping policies and pricing listed in the contract? If not, be sure and ask about these handling/storage costs and see if they can be waived.
- Make sure the contract includes a Relocation/No Walk clause, a Construction/Remodel clause and Force Majeure clause. These clauses will serve to protect your event and your guests. If you don't see them, ask for them to be added.
- Other helpful hints:
 - Ask the hotel if they would like to be included on communications with your invitees. This is helpful to keep them in the loop on when to expect an influx of room reservations.
 - Negotiate a discounted rate on your audio-visual equipment if you use the in-house provider. This is usually anywhere between 10 and 25 percent. You will contract these needs directly with the supplier. Be up-front with your budget as they are usually willing to help you out with costs as much as they can.
 - If you would like to bring a special cake or desert in from an outside source, please make sure you receive permission from the hotel.
 - Take note of hotel logistics so that you can prepare your guests accordingly and respond to questions when asked.
 - General helpful hotel knowledge: check-in time, departure time, parking fees, available valet, luggage storage, coffee shop hours, available food/beverage outlets and their operating hours, airport or area shuttle availability, hotel amenities (e.g., pool, etc.), location of restrooms (when onsite), where to access the banquet space, etc.