

# Special Problems

## From Worldcon Runners' Guide

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## Special Problems

### Copying

Doesn't sound like a problem, but it is.

Worldcons make lots of copies of things. Lots and lots of copies. More copies than you would believe.

The most obvious need for copies is the daily newsletter. A far smaller (but still significant) need is for daily handouts for the WSFS business meeting. Various departments have forms that need copying. Pre-ordered forms may run low. Etc. Etc. Etc.

The traditional solution was to do much of this via the fan mimeo room. However, this problem has had increasing drawbacks:

1. The demand upon the staff of the fan mimeo room can end up being a severe strain on personnel.
2. Most departments do not adequately warn other departments of their needs until the convention is upon them. The issue of how many copies will be needed is one of the worst offenders. As a result, fan mimeo rooms usually have inadequate supplies.
3. Traditionally, fan mimeo room supplies have been donated or partially underwritten by major mimeo manufacturers such as Gestetner and A.B. Dick. The rise of high-speed photocopiers has all but killed the mimeo industry, and as a result the mimeo manufacturers have dramatically decreased their budgets for donating to groups such as ours.

Even when donations do occur, the terms often end up being less than desired. At Noreascon 3, one mimeo manufacturer had originally promised supplies, but as it turned out, Labor Day weekend was their annual inventory weekend and they would not provide supplies while in the middle of their inventory.

4. The daily newsletter in particular is now often being done using state-of-the-art desktop publishing software. These techniques often use typography that is beyond the capabilities of mimeography to reproduce well.

Thus, the use of high-speed copiers is recommended. A combination of the following should be used:

1. The convention should buy or lease at least one high-speed copier. The buy/lease decision needs to be calculated by each convention; either option can be advantageous depending on how the costs work out.

The cost of moving and service after moving equipment needs to be factored into the decision of whether to purchase or lease a high speed copier.

The convention needs to stock supplies sufficient to meet anticipated demand. The best way to do this is to either find a supplier who will deliver during Labor Day weekend or a supplier who will take back unopened cases/cartridges for full credit.

A service agreement needs to be made with a service company who will be able to come out and do same-day repairs during Labor Day weekend. Note: this is important; many reporters will not do this.

2. An account should be set up with a nearby photocopying store.

Competitive bids should be asked for from several nearby locations, and they should be informed that we are going to award the bulk of convention business on the basis of the competitive bid. The cornerstone of the carrot should be the number of copies needed for the daily newsletter. The bids should be such that anyone with proper authorization can get a discount on their copying.

The account should not be set up so that anyone with authorization can walk in and get however many copies made that they need!!!! This invites abuse, and could result in a very surprising copying bill after the con.

Either:

- a. Individual accounts should be set up for individual departments, with a maximum amount that can be charged to each account
- b. No limit should be set, but each purchase must be cash-and-carry, and for each copying job, the department must either get a check cut or use money from the department's petty cash supply. (This is not practical for the daily newsletter, but should be OK for the other departments).

## **SFWA and ASFA**

Be sure you are aware of past precedence regarding perks given to these groups.

You will need to appoint a liaison to each of these groups, and must request that these groups appoint a liaison to your Worldcon. It is theoretically preferable that the SFWA liaison from your committee not be a member of SFWA, and the ASFA liaison not be a member of ASFA; any other situation invites a potential conflict of interest. In practice, having the concom liaison being a member of these groups has not caused problems thus far; a decision needs to be made based on who the potential candidates are.

## TAFF and DUFF

One of the saddest aspects of many Worldcons has been that TAFF and DUFF have often gotten lost in the shuffle. In particular, several concoms composed largely of people who are not fanzine fans and who don't date back a ways, have forgotten until the last minute that TAFF and DUFF are important.

The concom needs to recognize that TAFF and DUFF winners are usually people who have made important contributions to fandom. In addition, one of the conditions of their selection is that they are financially unable to make the trip with their own resources. I.e., these **are** charities, as well as awards of sorts that have historical and educational significance.

The TAFF and DUFF winners should be granted a status that is higher than the average program participant, but lower than the convention's formal guests of honor. While there is no constitutional requirement to do anything for TAFF/DUFF, historically Worldcons have been supportive of these groups.

Also note that TAFF and DUFF administrators have also often made the mistake of assuming the Worldcon had already made appropriate plans. Thus, it is incumbent upon both the Worldcon and the TAFF/DUFF administrators to inform the other of what arrangements are being made.

Economically, a number of Worldcons have shown generosity in order to help the TAFF/DUFF delegates make the trip. At a minimum, the Worldcon should offer free memberships for the winners and their spouses; if the financial resources are available, they should also be given (standard) sleeping rooms during the convention itself (if you want to do this, make sure it's budgeted in from the beginning!) Note that it has been customary to provide either an inexpensive or free room for the delegates.

Beyond that, if the concom has any special banquets or dinners to which the formal con guests are invited, it is a nice gesture to invite the TAFF/DUFF delegates as well and pick up the cost of their dinner.

In addition to economic aid, the Worldcon usually integrates TAFF/DUFF winners in ways such as the following:

1. Including their pictures/bios in the souvenir book.
2. Introducing them at opening and closing ceremonies.
3. Making sure they each have at least one program item devoted specifically to them.

Usually, the winners have enough interests that they can (and will want to) participate on several panels in addition to the one dedicated to them.

4. Providing a time slot for a TAFF/DUFF auction (to be administered by TAFF/DUFF).

5. Providing them with special identification (ribbons or whatever).
6. Granting them special seating at masquerade and Hugos.

## Weapons Policy

This is something that has been a bitter necessity. Weapons incidents have increased over the years.

The weapons policy at your convention will be driven by several factors:

1. Committee preferences and biases
2. Local laws
3. Special rules in your facilities (especially if they've seen stuff like this before)
4. Recent incidents in fandom that have people upset
5. The committee may wish to distinguish between what is allowed in hall costumes and by fans walking around in general areas, and special props used by masquerade contestants only during the masquerade.

Be sure your weapons policy is advertised in your progress reports well in advance of the con, so people don't show up with stuff they thought they could bring in. Also, be sure to repeat the policy in the final progress report mailed prior to the convention.

A sample weapons policy (feel free to make it more generous or more strict):

*Any members wearing props as part of a costume, both Hall and Masquerade, must act with common sense and full consideration for the safety of others and their surroundings. They must conform to all Federal, state, and city statutes, and to any restrictions placed on the convention by the facilities and hotels. Most weapons are prohibited by local laws. These include genuine firearms, facsimile firearms and functional projectile weapons (i.e., sharpened knives, battle axes, throwing darts, stars, nunchajku, etc.) Additionally, Genericon prohibits anything except a match or cigarette lighter that emits real flame and anything that emits a harmful energy field (i.e., lasers.) All weapon facsimiles must be peace bonded in a visible manner in such a way that they cannot be removed. The use of a weapon as part of the Masquerade must be approved by the Masquerade director prior to the event. Failure to do so is grounds for immediate expulsion from the Convention.*

*Any weapons purchased in the Dealers' room must be securely wrapped, and the buyer provided with a copy of the weapons policy.*

*The safety of our members and cooperation with our hotel and convention center facilities, as well as present liability laws, necessitates this policy.*

## Multi-Facility Conventions

### Shuttle Buses

If you are spread out over a large area, **shuttle buses** will be needed.

Make sure:

1. Whoever negotiates the contract actually sees the types of buses that will be used, and that the contract spells out the types of buses that will be used. If you think you're getting Greyhound-type shuttles and end up with non-air conditioned school buses, there will be complaints.
2. Hours of operation should match fannish hours.

Start early enough for dealers staying in outlying hotels to get in for setup and go to at least 3 am.

3. An exact schedule is not necessary, but rule of thumb is no more than 15 minutes between shuttles (yes, even late at night—people are tired and cranky by then!), preferably no more than about 10.
4. Air conditioning is a must for most cities, and operational air conditioning must be written into the contract.
5. If the masquerade is in a facility that is not close, make sure extra shuttles are provided to and from the masquerade. And, most important—have a special shuttle for the masquerade participants, who will be coming back later, and with heavy costumes and such.

## Setup and Teardown

For setup and teardown, be sure to provide a special ID tag or sticker of some kind, so that you can be sure that the people wandering randomly through secure areas have the authorization to be there, and are not just scoping things out in preparation for theft.

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