

# Huckster Room

## From Worldcon Runners' Guide

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## Dealers (Huckster) Room

### How Big?

The controversy of how many dealer tables to have is an ongoing one. If there are too few, then fans will complain about a lack of variety. If too many, then many dealers will barely break even or have low profits.

### How expensive?

Setting dealer rates can be very controversial as well. If the rates are judged to be too high (in the opinion of the dealers), then they will complain bitterly about the rates and have a chip on their shoulder regarding your convention.—And since they regularly travel to cons for years before your Worldcon, and will have lots of opportunities to badmouth you.

On the one hand, most of these people are fans just like us. On the other hand, most of the dealers are setting up in order to make money, and thus there is a reasonable case that the dealers room should be a profit-contributing source rather than a break-even proposition. The only question is: how much profit is fair?

This is complicated by the fact that given most function space, your dealers room will almost always be smaller than the theoretical number of dealers who could buy tables. If a Worldcon chooses to charge whatever the market will bear, many dealers have little choice.

When deciding how much to charge for a table, be sure to include the following costs:

1. Rental for the room itself.
2. Union fees for groups like the teamsters who rule the loading dock.
3. Cost of table rental.
4. Cost of renting 2 chairs/table.
5. Cost of renting 2 tablecloths/table, one to go under merchandise, one to go over.  
Depending on fire laws, you may be required to rent fireproof tablecloths; these will cost extra.

Many hotels agree to give the above at set rates up to the amount of such items that are in the hotel's inventory. But—Worldcons are very rough on hotel inventories—we use up lots and lots of tables and chairs throughout the hotel. If there is **any** possibility that tables and chairs and tablecloths will have to be rented from outside, be sure to include prices in the contract.

## Special Charges

While the base dealers rate should probably include some "profit" over and above what the cost of the dealers room will be, some dealers need "extras" such as more chairs, connections to electrical outlets, etc. Traditionally, these charges are passed on to dealers at whatever the cost is, with no profit factor added.

Sometimes the Worldcon will buy a blanket license for electricity in the dealers room, at which point the cost for electricity gets factored into everyone's base price.

## Fire and Electrical Codes

Be sure to read local fire and electrical codes carefully. The exhibit hall manager should have booklets on this subject. The facilities liaison and dealers room manager should go over this together to make sure both are clear on what can and cannot be done.

## Table assignment

Before tables are assigned, the room layout should be submitted for approval by the local Fire Marshall. The Fire Marshall may decide that your aisles aren't big enough, or that certain tables must be eliminated to make room to get through exit doors. This can **dramatically affect how** many tables you can have.

## Non-US Worldcon Considerations

Dealers (Hucksters) and Artists from outside the host country may be inhibited from bringing in Art/Wares because of local import restrictions, charges and bods or tax prepayments demanded up front (some of which are refunded after months of paperwork and correspondence.) A Con which expects foreign Arts/Ware must deal with this as early as possible. Torcon 2 had its Dealers Room and Art Show declared a Bonded Warehouse; similar solutions are available. Other Cons have worked with a knowledgeable Customs Person. This process should begin before the year **of the vote so voters are aware that** the problem has been dealt with. If opinions are needed from any Government body, **Get It**

**In Writing** and/or confirm it by responding in writing setting out clearly what was agreed. Don't assume you will get the same opinion orally a year later, you may not even get the same person.

## Adult Material

In recent years, more and more dealers have been selling material of an adult nature—sexually explicit prints/art books, lingerie, bondage items, etc. If the concom's dealers room policies allow in dealers who primarily sell material of an adult nature, it would be best if dealers of this type were all clustered together in an "Over 18 only" aisle, with large signs in front. That makes it easier for families with children to enjoy the dealers room (and may also minimize hassles with police in unenlightened venues).

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