

CONvergence Parties Manual

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2009 edition
Changes from the 2008 edition are **highlighted**.

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1) Overview

1.1) You are in a twisty maze of party rooms, none alike.

Hosting a room party at CONvergence is one of the best ways to make the convention your own. You get a piece of the action, you get to make your own fun and impress other people, and you get to hang out with old friends and meet new ones.

Past parties at CONvergence have been fantastic. From party-throwing newbies to experienced veterans, from those poolside to those in the Satellite Party Zone, scores of hosts have done a fabulous job of providing atmosphere, entertainment, and fun. **If you've been to the con, you know how impressive the parties can be.**

What's the catch? Well, there's a lot of info you might like to know! This document is intended to answer and even anticipate any possible questions.

1.2) I think I want to host a room party. What do I need?

1.2.1) Idea

Your party idea should be related to science fiction, fantasy, horror, speculative fiction, or geekdom in some way. Ideas in the past have included TV shows, movies, books, comics, special interest groups, and even coffee, the eldritch brew of the Old Ones.

1.2.2) Help

It's not very fun to host a party alone and be stuck there all night unable to visit any other parties or just relax. Think of all the stuff you have to lug in! And if you serve alcohol, someone has to stand there and card. Planning and hosting a party is a great way to spend time with your friends, so talk to them about it.

1.2.3) Money

The hotel room will cost you several hundred dollars (see 2.1), and that's before you factor in refreshments, decor, and anything else your idea requires. While it's not necessary to spend thousands, you should pass the hat or dig deep in your pockets to make sure you can afford it.

1.2.4) Email

Once you have those things covered, email your idea to parties@convergence-con.org. We'll help you get signed up for space and be your liaison to the convention's planning team.

1.3) I'm late! I'm late! For a very important date!

Check Appendix A for the important dates you need to know. In general, sooner is always better than later; if you're the fourth *Spaceballs* party, we'll encourage a variation on your theme. Party space at CONvergence is usually nearly full by New Year's Day, so registering in the fall will put you ahead of the curve. Groups that present a workable concept by April 1st will almost certainly get space, but after April 1st it becomes less likely. However, since cancellations do happen, please let us know if you feel inspired at the last minute.

1.4) Rules

IMPORTANT RULES OF THE NON-NEGOTIABLE TYPE		
Commerce	OKAY	NOT OKAY
	Suggested donations. Tip jars. Giveaways and prizes which require no payment. Freebies in exchange for volunteer labor. Memberships to future conventions (as long as they are actually future cons and not something like a "beer-lover's club" happening onsite during CONvergence.)	SALE (aka mandatory payment in order to receive item) of items, including raffle tickets, drinks, food, or promotional items. Entry fee to any kind of contest or event. Giveaways directly tied to a financial donation. Signage indicating "item...price". Taking orders for future purchases. Fees for services.
Alcohol	If you serve alcohol, you are prohibited from serving anyone under 21. "Adult" convention badges are 18+, not 21+, and lack pictures. While we recommend checking government-issued ID, we will not dictate your specific methods, only your end result. The operations department will be doing compliance checks. You can refuse alcohol at your discretion to people you judge to be too intoxicated (or to anyone else you choose).	
Host	At least one adult (18+) who is a registered member of the convention must be physically present in your party room and responsible for your party the entire time it is open. This does not have to be the host(s) of record.	
Hours	No closing the party during your hours as listed in the at-con guidebook. You can run <i>*more*</i> than your listed hours but not <i>*less*</i> . Use staffing substitutes, not party closure, to get breaks.	
Badges	Your party should be a welcoming environment to anyone wearing a convention badge (excepting only age restrictions). You are not required to admit anyone without a badge.	
Smoke	No smoking in or around any party areas. No smoke or fog machines or other simulated smoke such as that produced by immersion of dry ice: seeing smoke worries hotel staff, leading to building evacuation. No disabling hotel room smoke detectors.	

2) Money Stuff

2.1) How much does renting a hotel room for a room party cost?

First and second floor cabanas cost \$125 per night, plus 13.6% tax, bringing the total to \$142 per night. Some parties check in Friday and out Sunday, so their total hotel bill would be \$284. Parties running Thursday night or with more extensive décor needs often check in Wednesday or Thursday and out Sunday. A Thursday-Sunday stay would be \$426, and Wednesday-Sunday would be \$568.

Fourth-floor standard rooms cost \$99 per night, plus 13.6% tax, bringing the total to \$112.46 per night. A Friday-Sunday stay would be \$224.92, while a Thursday-Sunday stay would be \$337.38. Double that if your party is going to use two rooms.

2.2) Are there any other fees I should take into account?

If you want one or both beds removed from your party room, the hotel charges a flat fee of \$100 until the last week before the con, at which point it goes up. See section 3.5 for more details.

2.3) Why would I want to spend extra money on a different room for sleeping?

Deciding whether or not you want to sleep elsewhere in the hotel is a personal choice. You are allowed to sleep in your party room if you want to, but please be warned that we recommend against it if your budget permits and if you think you will be bothered by noise, mess, and the potential of strangers interacting with your toothbrush.

Party floors can be **extremely** loud until dawn and beyond. We recommend against sleeping on floors 1 and 2 in particular, and those who choose to sleep there will risk encountering noise. Fourth floor is not usually as loud, but anyone assigned a sleeping room on fourth floor will know it's a party floor, and similarly anyone who has closed their fourth floor party for the night must be aware that other parties may run all night. The hotel will not provide refunds for those unhappy about party floor noise. So, if you decide to sleep in a party room, bring earplugs.

Other factors beside noise can lead people to choose a separate sleeping room. Some parties want maximum free space and so choose to have the hotel remove one or both beds from their party room, making it less than comfortable for sleeping. Others prefer not to keep their personal possessions within reach of the general public or prefer a staging ground for clothes and sleep that isn't covered in the detritus of a party.

2.4) Will you automatically assign sleeping rooms to party hosts? Or are they discounted in any way?

No and no. Party hosts must apply for sleeping rooms in the same fashion as any convention attendee. The hotel room form you turn in with a party registration is for acquiring the actual party room and will not help you acquire another room. To get a separate sleeping room, email hotel@convergence-con.org as soon as possible. Warning: the hotel does fill up months before the convention. Standard sleeping rooms cost \$99 per night, plus 13.6% tax, bringing the total to \$112.46 per night. This is the rate negotiated with the hotel which all of us must pay: party hosts, concom, and attendees alike.

2.5) If I host a party, does that mean I get my CONvergence badge for free?

Party hosts need to pay for a badge (as do those of us on the convention planning committee). Hosts can pre-register online at the website (www.convergence-con.org) or by paper mail until May 15. At-the-door registration is more expensive, and if party hosts do not buy a badge they will not be able to host a registered party.

2.6) Does everyone helping with a party need to buy a badge?

The two party hosts of record are required to be registered, badge-holding convention members.

At all times while your party is open, a registered convention attendee aged 18 or more must be physically in the party room and responsible for running the party. Parties make their own choices about whether or not to admit guests who did not buy a con badge (though we want everyone attending the con to buy a badge), so you could have helpers without badges as long as there is always a qualified person in charge.

Bear in mind that badge-sharing is strictly prohibited and can lead to consequences ranging from badge confiscation to party cancellation and being barred from hosting future parties. Your badge belongs to you, not to your buddy who wants to go to Consuite or the DJ dance. The convention is the major fundraiser for MISFITS, our parent organization, a non-profit which supports literacy and science in schools. Don't be the schmuck cheating the school-kids out of education; that's uncool.

Mobile registration is available all night via the Bridge, for late-comers who would like to participate. "Ghosting", or attending parties without buying a convention badge, similarly reduces the ability of the convention to achieve its fund-raising goals, so is looked upon as detrimental to the convention. "Ghosts" in official convention space (including the Garden Court) may be asked to leave.

Bottom line: since there are many exciting con events and services requiring badges, and badges are cheap until May 15, we recommend that all your helpers get one!

2.7) Hosting a party is expensive! So it's okay if I sell drinks/shirts/mugs/raffle tickets/entry fees/etc to defray the cost of the party, right? Or, I want to fund-raise for a Worthy Cause. So it is okay to charge for goods and services provided by my party, right?

No commerce is permitted in party rooms. This means no *mandatory* exchange of money for goods and/or services. “Goods” are physical items such as food, drinks, books, autographs, etc. “Services” could be something like massages or fortunetelling. The one exception to the commerce policy is the pre-registration of members for other conventions taking place in the future (note to jokers: not okay would be a Give-Me-Five-Dollars-For-A-Beer-Membership con held during CONvergence).

For all other offered items/actions, you can *accept donations* but you cannot require payment; it must be optional. You cannot charge mandatory fees even if they are for charity, but you can encourage voluntary donation.

You also cannot use the party to take orders for future purchases or as a base of operations for a traveling sales company. Yes, that means you cannot avoid the commerce rules by walking around the convention conducting your commerce on a mobile basis. If you want to sell stuff, get a table in the Dealers Room.

We recognize that throwing a party does cost money. We recommend saving throughout the year and getting pledges from party participants and supporters. You probably don't expect to make a profit on any other party you throw during the year, and a convention party is no exception. While a convention party can be a great way to raise awareness for your non-profit, you should not be expecting your party to function as a fund-raiser.

3) SPACE ALLOCATION

3.1) Can I choose the room or floor I want? If my party had a particular room in the past, do I get dibs on it?

When you register your party, you can indicate any space preferences along with your reasons. We take those into account, but space is allocated based on convention needs. This may mean that we space out the crowded parties, cluster the related parties, and place people near their friends' parties when possible. Noise levels and traffic flow are important factors as well; some parties don't need ten merry-makers per minute stumbling through the door, and others depend on that.

This often means that people don't get the specific room or even the specific floor they requested. Since we have a limited amount of each type of room, there's the breaks. Being a returning party and/or getting your form in early can't hurt, but there is no guarantee of getting exactly what you want. Even returning parties may need to move in order to accommodate the convention's changing needs. Party room assignments, sent out June 1 or before, are non-negotiable and final (unless party cancellation leads to openings).

3.2) What kinds of party rooms are available?

Party space is available on three floors. See Appendix C for a floor plan of a typical 2nd-floor room, though there is no guarantee that your room will look exactly like that. It is strongly recommended to visit the hotel well in advance of the con and view your assigned room.

As of October 2008, all hotel rooms at the Sheraton Bloomington are entirely non-smoking. Party-goers who wish to smoke must leave the building. There are several designated areas where people may smoke if they are 25 feet from the entrance.

3.2.1) First floor (18 rooms):

The 18 first floor cabanas are numbered 102-110 and 123-131. We do use a 19th room (114) for the MISFITS party, and since that particular room is part of the convention's rental of function space, it will never be available to other parties.

First floor also has two rooms with porches (101 and 132) that are not actually hotel rooms. 101 is used for convention programming, and 132 is a hotel storage space which is used for party check-in. Neither of these spaces is available for party rental; they are not hotel rooms. They lack items such as a bathroom and cannot even have card-keys generated.

Each first-floor cabana room (about 15'x14') has a semi-enclosed porch (about 6'x14') outside the lockable area, meaning that equipment should not be left out there overnight. Party guests usually enter and leave through the porch, which does have stairs. The rooms are also accessible through doors into the back corridor, though parties often block the bathroom area and back doorway off, creating a staff-only staging area. This is allowed, though making the space accessible to those who cannot navigate stairs is nice if it's feasible for your layout. It's also important to make sure that whatever you set up can be brought down quickly in case of emergency.

Parties on the first floor usually decorate their porches and keep a staff presence out there as a way to attract guests. There is a window-wall between the porch and the main room, so guests can see into the room. First floor usually sees high traffic during prime time (anywhere between 10pm-2am, Friday & Saturday nights).

3.2.2) Second floor (20 rooms):

The 20 second floor cabanas are numbered 201-210 and 223-232. The rooms between 210 and 223 are used for Consuite and other con functions, and are not available for parties.

The layout of these rooms includes a main room (about 15'x14') and a balcony (about 11'x14'). A glass window-wall divides the main room from a balcony which overlooks the pool & garden court. Because the balcony is within the room, it is lockable at night.

Second floor rooms pose somewhat more of a promotional challenge than first floor rooms do, since passers-by (usually) cannot see through the walls. Second-floor party hosts do, however, get to decorate the hallway outside their room as well as hang posters/signs/banners on their large courtyard-facing slanted balcony wall (about 14' wide by 6'7" high), if desired. Traffic usually flows better on the second floor than on the first floor.

It is acceptable to cordon off the bathroom and adjacent closet area as a staff-only area, but the balcony must be available to guests as part of your party room. Balcony activity will attract guests, as will a hallway greeter.

3.2.3) Fourth floor (variable):

The amount of the fourth floor devoted to parties will vary, since it doubles as a sleeping floor. For this reason, we try to put quieter parties on the fourth floor. Viewing parties and LAN gaming parties are some examples of this. Depending on overall party counts, though, it's possible that other types of parties can be on the fourth floor. **Quiet is not guaranteed.** Late-registering parties of any type might find that the fourth floor is the only remaining option.

These rooms are standard hotel rooms, not suites. Rooms on the even side of the hallway are slightly larger than rooms on the odd side and offer some adjoining rooms. **If you are only familiar with the cabana rooms on 1 and 2, and you are assigned a room on 4, you should visit it so as to set your size expectations appropriately. Keep in mind that on the 4th floor, there may be another party or perhaps a sleeping room directly across the hall from you.**

The fourth floor is not poolside, so it's a bit removed from the main party area. This offers the benefit of less interruption for viewing/gaming events. The challenge, of course, is attracting guests up the stairs/elevator to your party. Good postering is essential for fourth floor parties. See 4.2 for more information about postering.

3.3) Can my party reserve two adjoining party rooms?

If you are assigned space in the 4th floor Satellite Party Zone, then yes, you may have a two-room party. No problem; just turn two copies of the hotel form and note that the rooms should be adjoining. Due to high demand, the Parties Department currently restricts 1st and 2nd floor cabanas to one per party. This policy went into effect in 2007. Two groups can throw complementary parties and request that their cabanas be adjoining (which will not be guaranteed), but one person or organization cannot reserve two cabanas.

3.4) It's May or June and I've been assigned a specific party room. Now what do I have to do to guarantee I will get to hold my party in that room?

Watch your email for confirmation **regarding your hotel room.** You need to call and **guarantee** the room reservation with a credit card **or make arrangements to send a deposit.** Failure to do this within the specified time can lead to party cancellation.

You can make arrangements directly with the hotel to visit and measure your room for purposes of decorations/props. Every room is slightly different (and half of them have an orientation mirror-opposite to the other half), so don't assume you know what a room looks like unless you've been in it before.

3.5) I want one or both beds removed from the room. Will the hotel give me other furniture? Will they remove any non-bed furniture?

Once you have confirmed the room, you can, if desired, send in the Bed Removal Form. (Appendix B.) You can fax this form to the Sheraton Bloomington attn: Housekeeping at 952-893-8419, mail it to the hotel, or drop it off at the front desk. Make sure to specify your room number. No telephone or email options are possible for this form.

It may be possible to rent tables, chairs, etc from the hotel. Supplies are limited and you must deal with the hotel directly; the Parties department cannot help with that. The hotel only removes beds, not headboards (which remain attached to the wall) or bedding (which they stash in the closet). They have even been known to store the bed's wooden frame in the closet. You must arrange the rest of the furniture in the room to meet your needs, with one exception.

If you want the overstuffed chair removed from your party room, the convention can use it elsewhere in the hotel. Note: bolsters and ottomans must stay in party rooms. Email parties@convergence-con.org by the weekend before the con if you decide you won't want this chair, and you may be assigned a location within the hotel in which to place your chair. If you choose this option, your party is responsible for chair removal upon check-in and chair return on Sunday.

3.6) My party wants to hold an event outside our assigned party room. How do we arrange that?

If you want to do something in a panel room, contact Programming: programming@convergence-con.org. If you want to use the Garden Court or other non-panel-room parts of the hotel, contact Special Events: events@convergence-con.org. If you want a Dealer Table, contact Dealers' Room: dealers@convergence-con.org. You can certainly inform Parties of your plans, especially if you want them printed in your guidebook blurb, but Parties cannot grant you the use of non-party-room space.

4) Pre-Convention

4.1) Planning

4.1.1) Money

You will want to start saving money for your party. Some parties find it helpful to have their staff donate a small amount of money each month. Over the course of the planning year, that can add up!

Figure out how much you want to spend, and make a budget that includes the hotel cost, bed removal if needed, and everything you plan to have/do in the room.

4.1.2) Staffing

Get commitments from your friends as to when and how long they can help staff your room. This can be as specific as an hour-by-hour schedule or as general as “Friday night”, but it's a good idea to know what kind of help you're going to have. Some parties find it useful to make a schedule with rotating shifts for your party staff, so you all get a chance to enjoy the other parties. Don't forget to line up help for your party's load-in and load-out.

4.1.3) Look and Feel

Decide what you want your party to be like. Consider your décor and costume choices, any food or drink you plan to serve, any activities you want to run, and any technical equipment you will need. Make lists of the stuff you will need to borrow, set aside, buy, or make. Think about what you want con-goers to experience in your party room, and how you will make your party room unique. Some parties are built around a signature giveaway or experience that becomes a “must have”; if you like that idea, brainstorm on that topic.

4.1.4) Promotion

The con provides a guidebook entry (assuming you submit one by April 15) and some limited signage, but you probably want posters and possibly promotional items to draw attention to your party. No stickers, please; they are too likely to end up on inappropriate hotel surfaces.

4.2) What kind of signage or posters do parties use? Where do they hang them?

Most parties hang many 8.5x11 or larger posters around the hallways to advertise their party. These typically include party name, room number, and something about the concept or scheduled events. Be creative; you want them to stand out! Anything from full-color images to stark letters on a white background can be effective. Many people find that 20-30 posters can be the right amount, but you can print more depending on how many you want to hang up. **If they are clever or decorative, people may take them, so you will want extras just in case.**

Please be sure these can be affixed to the walls and garden court railing. Free-standing easels, posterboard, props, and the like, if left on the floor or on surfaces away from your party, will be removed. The convention's “freebie” table near the Bloomington and Edina rooms is the one place you can leave literature and giveaways.

Be sure to reserve any content inappropriate for general audiences for inside your party room. Consider that many hundreds of people will read your signage, and if they find it upsetting, they may avoid visiting your party or may take it upon themselves to remove your posters.

The hotel does not want posters in the 1st floor lobby area **(including the nice green wallpaper near poolside)** or in the elevators. All posters must be hung with standard beige masking tape. Any posters hung in the wrong places or with other tape will be removed. **(Yes, we are aware your blue painters' tape is lower-tack. No, the hotel does not care to differentiate between that and colored duct tape.)** Corkboards are for official convention use only.

4.3) Do I need to serve food? What about alcohol?

Serving food and beverages is entirely optional, but most parties offer some kind of refreshment.

- There is no requirement to acquire the food or drink from the hotel, and the con won't be providing parties more than what's in the Party Pack. **Consuite will not supply your party.**
- Party hosts bring in anything they want to make or buy; party refreshments in the past have ranged from chips to elaborate home-baked goods to eggrolls, from soda to home-brewed beer to vats of mysterious mixed drinks.
- If you plan to reheat food onsite, avoid open flame and unattended heating elements.
- In order to reduce your liability, it is a good idea to clearly label potential allergens.
- If you are planning on serving alcohol at your party, you can purchase it at any area liquor stores. **There is no corkage fee.**

4.4) Suggested Supplies

Everything on this list is optional, but suggested. Overall, use this as a reference but bring anything else needed to support your party's theme (decor, tools, fasteners, tarps, posters...)

Decor

- floor protection such as plastic tablecloths, painters' floor covering, or carpet scraps
- "caution" tape for blocking off bathroom
- wall decorations if desired
- tables, chairs, or other furniture as desired. Hotel rooms contain a desk and a nightstand, a desk chair, an overstuffed chair, an ottoman, and a floor-standing lamp. Cabanas also include a low bench and patio furniture (two plastic chairs and a small, low plastic table)
- shelving or other display furniture, if you have anything you need to display
- step-stool or small ladder
- hand cart or dolly for load in/out (hotel carts are likely to be unavailable)

Office Supplies

- paper (colorful or white) for last-minute signs and notes. post-its are good too.
- pens, pencils, crayons, and the like, as desired. Particularly important if you are playing a game and need to be able to note scores.
- markers if you want more than the black Sharpie in the Party Pack
- masking tape if you want more than the 1"-wide roll in the Party Pack
- glue (especially hot glue guns) if your décor requires it.

Food & Drink

- cups, plates, napkins – anything your food requires. In 2007 and 2008, two different parties came running to the Parties Department in a panic because they were out of cups on Saturday night. They were supplied them out of the author's own party, but this is never a guarantee! If you are serving a beverage, bring twice as many cups as you think you'll use. If you have extra, it's not like they go bad.
- labels for your food. People like to know what they are eating!
- beverage dispensers if needed
- cooler(s) if needed

- ice in bags (the machines at the hotel frequently run out) and/or dry ice
- mini fridge if you need more cooling than a bathtub full of ice can provide

Light & Sound

- extension cords and power strips
- lamps, clip-on lights, or other lighting
- **speakers** to play music, projector, computer, etc
- game system and/or DVD player, composite RCA cables to plug into the hotel's TV

Environmental Controls

- electric fans (rooms often get quite warm). **Box fans can move a lot of air, and small oscillating ones everywhere are lovely. Just be sure they aren't going to catch costumes.**
- door stop (not provided by hotel, and the room doors swing closed automatically)
- **anything that will add to your comfort or relieve your stress**

Cleaning

- **sponges, dish soap, shop towels, other supplies**
- vacuum and/or broom
- large trash can & trash bags (hotel room trash cans are very small)

4.5) Room Banner & Hours

Many parties also like to create a banner to hang outside their rooms. These are usually sized according to your floor assignment. First floor often has a smaller banner since they tend to hang it over the porch, while 2nd floor often puts a larger banner on the sloped wall under the balcony. Make sure you bring string or whatever else you will need to hang your banner. See 3.2 for more information about the placement and sizing of banners.

Some parties also like to post their scheduled hours outside their party room. This can add to your traffic since people like knowing when to come back (if they happen by while you're closed). Posting hours is not mandatory, **but you must abide by the hours you chose when finalizing your guidebook blurb.**

5) Onsite

5.1) What should I do immediately upon arriving at the hotel?

The party host whose name you put on the hotel form should check in to your party room at the front desk, at or after 3pm on your check-in day. (While early check-in is possible, it's not guaranteed that your room will be clean and available.)

Get sufficient card-keys for your party hosts; they will usually give you four **to six** without question. Ask for late check-out; regular check-out is noon and late check-out is 4pm or so. (Do you really want to have to be out before noon on Sunday? Didn't think so.) **It's not a good idea to give them a check-card at check-in, with the intention of paying via some other method at the end. They are likely to place**

a large hold on your monies, making using an ATM over the weekend a problem.

When you can get into your party room, check it to make sure that the beds are the way you expect them to be. The hotel sometimes removes or leaves beds contrary to your stated wishes. Report any bed issues immediately to the Hotel Issues desk immediately opposite the hotel's front desk.

After you are checked into your party room, come to room 132 and check in with the Parties department if parties check-in is open. If you miss the official hours, go to the Bridge (or call at 7215) and give them your party room number so they can inform Parties.

When you sign in, you will receive a copy of the rules listed in 1.4. You will need to sign saying you have read and understood them. You will also sign to confirm receipt of your Party Pack.

The Party Pack is a small “thank you for hosting a party” gift bag from the convention to you. Due to the number of parties and the speed at which we need to check parties in, it is not feasible to customize these packs. If you want specific sodas or candies, it is recommended to buy them before the convention and bring them yourself.

The Party Pack will include items such as masking tape, a couple of trash bags, a sharpie, printed info, soda, and snacks. The snacks are meant to help as you are setting up. They are not enough to supply your party guests for the weekend. Make sure you and your helpers eat something! You will get very busy and don't want to get lightheaded or faint.

Go to Registration and get your convention badge (pre-reg or at-the-door). The official party hosts must be registered members of the convention. Early registration is only for pre-registered convention volunteers or pre-registered party hosts (just tell them which party), and runs for a few hours (usually 3pm-6pm) in the late afternoon of the day before the convention opens. Regular registration runs all day on official convention days.

5.2) Okay, I have the room. What do I need to do before opening my party?

Decorate your party room. Covering the carpet, especially in areas with food and drink, is recommended. Controlling the hotel lighting to set a mood is also recommended. Keep in mind that the hotel often dims the Garden Court lights at night, including those lighting porches and balconies. If you have a porch or a balcony, you have the responsibility to use this extra space well. Be sure that any over-the-balcony or above-the-porch signage is carefully secured with low-tack tape.

Unplug or hide your room's hotel phone, or just request that the hotel turn off outgoing phone calls.

Block off your bathroom. You will need it for storage, and you do not want strangers being sick in there. Tell guests to go use the public hotel bathrooms.

Set up and test any gadgets or technology. You don't want to find out that you're missing important cables five minutes before your viewing party opens.

For multiple-night parties, divide up your food, giveaways, and other items by the number of nights

you will be open. Set aside the supplies for later nights so you don't run out of your entire stock on the first night.

While you are setting up, be sure you are in compliance with Bloomington fire code; specifically, do not block the sprinklers **and do not cover the ceilings**. The fire marshall conducts an inspection every year before the convention kicks off.

Post a sign with your party name and hours. While you're doing this, stand at your doorway and check your room. Is it welcoming? Organized in a way all your helpers understand? **Free from** any obvious hazards?

Post your advertising according to **the guidelines in 4.2.**

5.3) Okay, it's party time!

First things first: commit the list of rules from 1.4 to memory, post them on your wall, do whatever you need to do to make sure you follow them. Violations of these rules (particularly the alcohol and commerce rules) are the primary cause of conflict between parties and the convention; nobody wants that!

When you are ready to open (**and it should be** on time!), prop your door open to create a more welcoming environment. Remember, the hotel does not provide door stops.

Assign a greeter to greet convention guests when they enter your party. Coming into a party and being ignored makes people feel unwelcome! Remember, the con typically has a warm body count of **well over** 2500; you might have a few score visitors or a few hundred. Be flexible, and be ready to accommodate lots of people.

If you run out of ice and the hotel is out, you can buy extra ice from the Shell station on the corner. And most importantly, while you are open, have fun! It's a party, after all!

5.4) Serving alcohol responsibly

If you decide to serve alcohol, carding to avoid serving minors is your responsibility. **An adult badge just means that the badge's rightful owner (who may not be wearing it) is 18, so do not serve alcohol based on con badges. Unless you are carding for 21+ at the door, you must not leave your alcohol unattended in your party room. You must have one of your party staff members dispensing your alcohol.**

Watch out for drinks abandoned in and near your party. Someone could put something in them, or someone under 21 could pick them up and drink them. Dispose of any unattended drinks immediately.

While glass containers are not banned, please think carefully before serving beverages using glass. Consider the cleanup hassle if someone drops a bottle. The hotel is not likely have a shop-vac you can use at a moment's notice. This would mean more work for you.

Every year, some convention guests leave the hotel by ambulance. You don't want the EMTs and/or the cops coming to your party and scraping someone out of a pile of vomit on your floor. So, do not

overserve! Use your best judgement to decide if you want to give someone a drink. If they seem like they are on the verge of falling over, tell them to try food or coffee or sleep instead. There's nothing fun about your guests missing the rest of the con because they are locked in a 72-hour mandatory detox.

5.5) Cleanup/Move out

You can take trash out to the hotel dumpster at any time. It's near the South Entrance, through the loading dock. You can also reach it from outside the building by going out the South Entrance, past the smoking section, and then taking a right. Hotel or convention staff can direct you to the dumpster.

Clean up a little at the end of the first night, if you can. That way you can go to some con events during the next day and you won't be cleaning all day in preparation for the next night.

On your check-out day you will want to be out of your party room by late check-out, and there may be things you want to do on Sunday, so plan accordingly.

If you have loaned out your chair, it is your responsibility to go find it and return it to your room. You cannot check out until your chair is back where it belongs.

Tip housekeeping. A reasonable tip for a messy room is \$5/night. You need to leave it with a piece of paper that says "Housekeeping" so they know it's a tip.

Move all your stuff to vehicles and check out. Late checkout may not work on the hotel's TV-based system; going to the front desk might be your only option.

Head to Registration and get signed up to host your party for CONvergence 2010. Make sure you fill out both a party form and a hotel form for the party space.

Pre-register for your con badge for next year.

Fill out the convention's at-con survey. Concom reads these at the post-mortem and takes the feedback seriously; this is a valuable way to get your opinions heard.

Congratulations on a con party well done! Now go sleep for a week. :)

Appendix A

Important Dates for CONvergence 2009 Parties	
April 1	No fooling; this is the last recommended date for new or returning groups to register their parties. While we will continue to add parties as long as possible, this is the last date by which we will guarantee registered party perks (such as a guidebook entry).
April 15	Guidebook blurb due. The blurb is your chance to promote your party in the at-con guidebook. You get 50 words or less to convince people they can't miss it. Blurbs should describe the theme or planned activities for your party; anything over 50 words will be edited for space.
April 19	The Parties Info Session is mandatory for new party hosts and recommended for returning party hosts. It is held from noon to 1:30pm at the Sheraton Bloomington. Bring your questions and your input. Returning hosts, bring ideas! If you are a new party host who cannot attend this event, please email parties@convergence-con.org ahead of time so we can arrange a makeup session.
May 1	Last recommended day for party cancellation. If you cancel later than this, your (now incorrect) entry may be printed in the guidebook, making you look bad. (Of course, if you must cancel even after May 1, please let us know as soon as possible , even up to the start of the con.) Of course we'd love to see all parties actually take place. But if you're on the fence, May 1 is the date by which we'd like to know if you have to cancel.
May 15	Convention badge pre-registration deadline. People without convention memberships will not be able to host room parties. Register your helpers on the cheap, before they have to pay at-the-door rates! A responsible convention-registered individual aged 18 or over must be in charge of your party room the entire time it is open. Ideally you want many of your friends to qualify!
June 1	Room number assignment. On or before this date, the Parties Department will email you your assigned room number. This allows you to plan your party's layout and print your flyers. When you get your room assignment in your email, call and confirm the party room. 952-893-8438 is the number for the Sheraton Bloomington's group coordinator. After June 1, room assignments will only be changed if a specific convention need or hotel issue arises.
June 24-27	One week before your check-in is the last day to request \$100 bed removal from the hotel. Mail, fax, or drop off the form. Faxes go to 952-893-8419, Attn Housekeeping. It costs more after this date.
July 2-5	CONvergence 2009 Weekend
July 5	Register your party for CONvergence 2010!

Appendix B

Housekeeping/Acct use only

Date: _____

Housekeeper _____

Same Day Fee: _____

Acctg invoice #: _____

BED REMOVAL - CABANA GUEST ROOM/EXHIBITS

- Bed removal order form to be returned seven (7) days prior to set up date.
- Payment **MUST BE INCLUDED** with this form, or the request cannot be processed.
- If payment is not received, the request will be subject to an additional same day set up fee
- Payments need to be made to the Sheraton Bloomington.
- **ABSOLUTELY NO ORDERS WILL BE TAKEN OVER THE TELEPHONE!!**
- All other guest room furnishings must stay in room

BILLING INFORMATION

Check or Credit Card Type _____ and Number: _____

Expiration Date _____

Billing Name/Company: _____

Billing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Ordered by: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____

Phone Number: _____

Removal Date and Time: _____

Room #: _____

Please drop off, mail or fax completed order form and payment to the

Sheraton Bloomington, Attn Housekeeping

In Person/Mail: 7800 Normandale Blvd, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55439

Fax: 952-893-8419

Bed removal - \$100.00

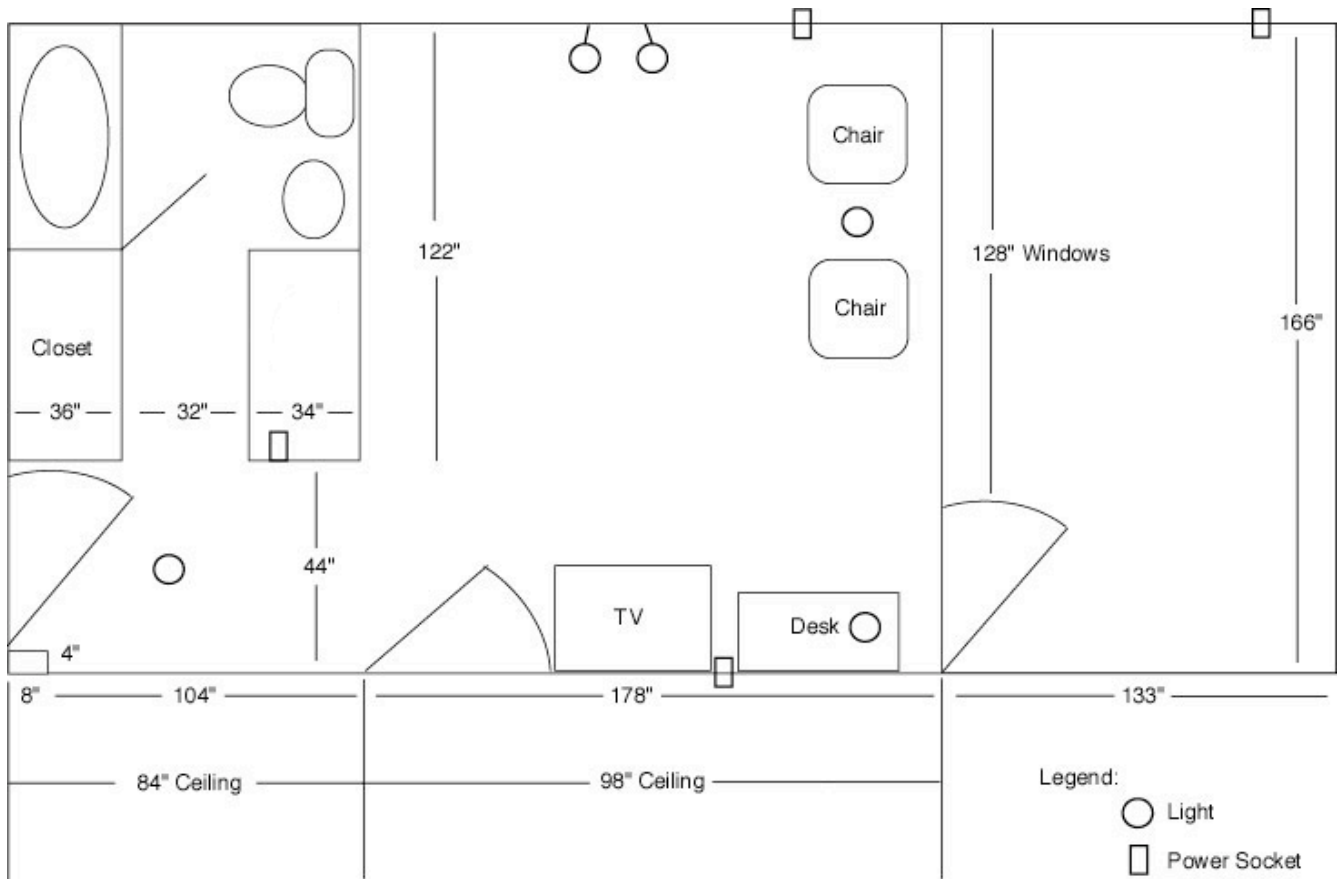
Both beds out _____

Choose if only one: Closest to the window _____ Closest to the door _____

Appendix C

This floor plan is not guaranteed to be accurate for your specific room. 4th floor rooms are smaller and have no balcony, while 1st floor rooms have a porch instead of a balcony. Note that both beds have been removed from this diagram.

All rooms are slightly different in size, so if you need measurements within a few inches, wait until you have your specific room and then go to the hotel and ask to measure it. Also, the room may be in a mirror-image from this configuration.



Floorplan originally created by Louis Duhon of Dystopia; modified by Bridget Kromhout.