

# AMCA Regional & Nationals Specialty

## Evaluating & Choosing a National Specialty Venue

**NOTE: It is ideal to have the National Show Chair and venue selected AT A MINIMUM OF THREE YEARS IN ADVANCE. Ground work to find a show chair and venue should start FOUR YEARS IN ADVANCE. AMCA votes on their choices for the conformation judges THREE YEARS IN ADVANCE and these judges cannot be secured until we have specific dates and a specific location. If you have any desire to chair a future National Specialty event, no matter how many years away, please come forward and contact the AMCA VP.**

A satisfactory show site and host hotel is important for the enjoyment of exhibitors as well as the smooth conduct of the event. The internet or word of mouth from other similar size breed clubs is valuable resources for researching potential venues. AMCA's VP's can help an initial search using AKC's Specialty Locator website (login id and password required). Personal experience by attending past AMCA Nationals can be used as a primary guideline as to what worked and what did not. Since the AMCA Region where the event can be held covers numerous states it is helpful if members in the specialty region offer suggestions and provide some insight into locations near them that might work.

Contacting representatives from other breed clubs that have held specialty events in your region is a good place to start narrowing down possible venues. Valuable information can be obtained with a simple phone call. Find out if they were satisfied with the facility and the services provided by the venue.

All venue options should be investigated. Initial investigation can easily start using the internet. Many venues have the function space information posted on their websites. This includes hotels with sufficient function space; conference or exhibition centers that have nearby hotels; fairgrounds with nearby hotels should also be looked into if the weather in the area of the event allow for an outside event. Some fairgrounds also have building that may meet AMCA's needs. If looking into a venue that does not have an on-site hotel you will also need to investigate and find a hotel that can serve as the "HOST HOTEL". An important aspect of our yearly event is the commodity that exists when the majority of attendees are staying in the same hotel.

The AMCA National Specialty Show Site Committee should be included starting from the beginning of your investigation process.

In general, things to consider when identifying a potential venue should include:

- Ability to accommodate conformation, obedience & rally competition.
  - Conformation Ring: AKC recommends that your specialty ring be at least 45 x 60'.
  - Obedience Ring: AKC requires 40' x 50' ring
  - Rally Ring: AKC requires 40' x 50' minimum
  - Agility Ring: 100' X 100' – note that although it is desirable to be able to every competition onsite the space requirements for agility sometimes will make it very difficult to include the competition onsite. The Agility Committee should be consulted and be able to provide input as needed.
  - 10 ft aisles and spectator seating must be considered; local fire codes may have different requirements
  - Crating/Grooming area (inside or outside tenting)
- Availability of sufficient hotel rooms to accommodate block needed
- Reasonable rates
- Total cost of function space that is needed; this is an important negotiating point and can either make or break a venue as being affordable for our club. Consideration of offsite venues are an important aspect of the total expense when evaluating the location. There may not be any negotiating power when the hotel and competition venues are separated.
- Dog Friendly hotel (allows dogs in rooms – typically up to 4 dogs allowed per room. Hotel usually charges a fee of \$25 - \$50 per room with dogs. Language in contract should include this fee and if refundable or not.

- Availability of restaurants in or near the venue. You need to consider that many people fly to our National and may or may not have transportation so having a restaurant on site is desirable.
- Availability of dog exercise areas
- Ability to accommodate RV/motor home parking (provides electricity or allows use of generators)  
If not allowed due to local ordinances, are there facilities nearby?
- Banquet and meeting room facilities
- Accessibility to airports (typically should be within 1.5 hr travel time and accommodate large crate sizes).

## National Specialty Host Hotel Requirements (where event will also be held)

The following are the guidelines when reviewing various show venue at HOTELS and there may be variations to these requirements depending on what area of the country this show is being planned. Typically whenever the shows are on one coast or the other, entry levels are lower. Centrally located events draw more entries since it is easier for more members to attend. The information below is based on average entry of **150-175** dogs or less (entry level is higher due to multiple entries of the same dogs). This is considered an average entry level for our RS & NS events.

The information below relates to holding the event at a host hotel which has been the normal type of show site for the past several years. Other options may be considered and different requirements would need to be reviewed. There are several advantages of holding the events at a host hotel. These include the ability to negotiate the price of function space since AMCA will be providing substantial income to the hotel through the sale of rooms and food functions. Many hotels will provide function space at little or no charge since they will acquire the income from the rooms booked and food functions held.

HOTEL ROOMS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$100 a night or less, up to 4 people. This should be the goal but may not be obtainable; however, rates should NOT exceed \$120 per night. Remember the higher the cost the less people will attend – be sure to consider the room rates when determining the block being reserved.</li> <li>• Negotiate for comp rooms – typical arrangement is one room night per 50 rooms sold</li> <li>• Negotiate for additional comp rooms or discounts which can be used for show chair, room raffle, judges, etc. Typical arrangement is two rooms for the duration of the event.</li> <li>• Negotiate for room to be used for hospitality – some hotels have mini suites with living room space and small kitchenette area – NEED TO BE ABLE TO BRING IN FOOD</li> <li>• Typical room nights required can range from 450-750 over the period of the event. The AMCA region of the country where the event will be held will influence the number of room nights that will be needed. Additional room nights may be required in areas where higher attendance rates are expected (events that are centrally located typically draw more exhibitors compared to events held on each coast). Consideration should be given regarding the availability of additional rooms but NOT necessarily included in the contract as guaranteed numbers.</li> <li>• Dogs allowed in rooms, must be crated and floor protected. (Typically 4 dogs allowed)</li> <li>• If required by hotel, refundable deposit if no damage or non refundable deposit (\$25-50)</li> <li>• AMCA Show Policy requires that room reservations cannot be made prior to Dec 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. THIS MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE HOTEL CONTRACT.</li> </ul>
EVENT TIMING::	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between Mid October and Mid November, Check in Sunday through Sunday checkout</li> </ul>
BALLROOM or EXHIBITION AREA:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ABSOLUTE MINIMUM SIZE for the room where the conformation ring will be set up is 6000 sq. ft. This will allow for a minimum ring size of 45 X 60 ft. with two rows of seating around the ring along with tables along the walls for setting up the club's needs (auction/raffle area; official table; logo wear sales tables, etc. A room of this size will not fit vendors. You will need to consider fire regulations with regard to not blocking exits and having sufficient size aisles.</li> <li>• Obedience &amp; Rally should not use the same ring as the conformation ring unless all performance competition is scheduled prior to the conformation events or the ring is thoroughly cleaned between usage.</li> <li>• Agility requires a minimum ring size of 100 x 100 – typically we have not been able to accommodate the agility trials being held at the same venue due to this</li> </ul>

	<p>requirement. AMCA's Agility Committee (Wendy Corr &amp; Laura Heft) should be contacted regarding their specific needs and requirements. Typically this committee has preferred to find a local location that will also provide the equipment needed for these trials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition space nearby for vendors such as lobby area</li> <li>• 10-12,000 sq ft to include vendors inside exhibition area</li> </ul>
LOBBY AREA:	An area outside the exhibition area, size importance depends on ballroom size if space is needed for vendors. Determine if electricity can be provided.
GROOMING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preference given to locations where inside grooming area can be provided. Several venues have large exhibition rooms that can be utilized for grooming and also a large ballroom that can be used for the actual show rings.</li> <li>• Inside grooming areas are always preferred but may not be an option. If available the cost of protecting carpet and walls (if required by venue) must be taken under consideration and outlined in the contract. Carpet cleaning following the event typically is charged by the hotel. Consider the cost of covering the carpeting compared to the charge imposed by the venue to determine which option should be pursued.</li> <li>• Outside grooming areas can be provided under tent(s) located near exhibition room entrance, minimum tent requirements are 4800-6000 sq ft. Typically the largest tents available are 40X120ft (4800sq ft). Joining tents is not advisable due to water leakage problems. If additional space is needed you may consider erecting two separate tents. Tent size will vary depending on expected entry level. Cost of tent rental must be a consideration (tent cost can run around \$4-6000 + \$3000 cost of generator and gas)</li> <li>• Minimum space for each grooming space is 6 X 8 ft. which allows for space for 2 large crates and 1 grooming table. A 4800 sq ft. tent would accommodate approximately 80 spaces (140-160 dogs) allowing adequate aisle space.</li> <li>• Electrical power for grooming, either from hotel or portable generators (if generators needed, noise must be a consideration.)</li> <li>• 20 amp service is required to run blow dryers.</li> <li>• Some exhibitors will choose to set up grooming at their vehicles (box trucks, vans &amp; RV's). Need to determine if power will be made available in parking lot and the cost. A fee should be charged for any parking lot setup that is provided power.</li> <li>• AKC has implemented a new rule (1/1/13) that requires "day of event" grooming space which is free of charge to exhibitors. All dogs/equipment must be removed at the end of each day. Electricity does NOT need to be offered in this location. Location must be of equal desirability to the "paid" space.</li> <li>• Check with hotel if they can provide an area to be used to wash dogs (with hot water available).</li> </ul>
MEETING ROOM REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various meeting room sizes needed, minimum requirements are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Annual meeting – approx. 150-200 people</li> <li>○ JEC – approx. 25 people</li> <li>○ Seminars – approx. 75-150 people</li> <li>○ Boardroom – approx. 12-15 people (this room needed for duration)</li> <li>○ Storage space for trophies and other items (must be near show room)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Additional space may be needed depending on events planned</li> </ul>
HOSPITALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Hospitality room at hotel that can be used to bring in our own food and beverages (not purchased from facility). This room should be able to accommodate area for coffee and food set up and a few tables for people to sit at. In many cases the hotel will provide this type of room at no charge and it may have to be set up a distance away from the show area.</li> <li>• Banquet – final evening of event – approx. 80-180 attendees</li> <li>• Additional banquet type event (Top Twenty dinner) – approx. 35-75 attendees</li> <li>• Availability of restaurant facility with private area or separate room for Judge daily luncheons. Some hotels can provide a "business type" lunch menu that can be</li> </ul>

	preselected and available when the judge takes their break.
GENERAL FOOD SERVICE (non-AMCA events)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early breakfast availability, lunch &amp; dinner.</li> <li>• Fast service concessions are an option for quick food availability for exhibitors between judging. Consider what the hotel will charge if MIN sales are NOT met – any associated cost should be included in the contract (i.e.; Guarantee of \$250 per day sales or a \$100 service fee imposed)</li> <li>• These food services are not the financial responsibility of AMCA, customers pay for their own food purchases.</li> </ul>
DOG RESTRICTIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise areas – ex-pens together with some grassy areas must be available. Owners responsible for picking up after their dogs</li> <li>• Clearly define and publicize areas that are “off limits” to dogs</li> </ul>
WEIGHT PULL:	Flat area, usually outside and may need power for microphone, scales & computers. A tent may need to be erected in case of inclement weather or to provide shade.
MAINTENANCE & CLEANING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance &amp; cleaning should be included in the contract with the facility where the events are held.</li> <li>• The contract should include provisions for daily cleaning services, including trash removal and room maintenance.</li> </ul>
AGILITY	Either on site or an agility facility nearby. Arrangements are the responsibility of the AMCA Agility Committee. Agility committee should coordinate dates of trials with Show Chair.

## National Specialty Offsite Show Venues

There are numerous facilities throughout the country that have hosted National Specialty events. AMCA does not have any experience with holding an offsite National Specialty but this option should not be ruled out as a viable option but it may require more work on behalf of the Show Committee.

Important things to consider when looking at venues that do not offer a hotel option are:

- Lack of negotiation power for function space cost.
- Venue may be controlled by county or city regulations that have set fees which limit our options.
- Question what we “can do” vs. “is done by venue personnel”. Question if labor is union controlled. Many venues of this type are controlled by employees of the venue. Can AMCA move chairs; tables; ring set up etc. or do we have to call in help from the venue to do these simple functions? Remember to check what the additional cost would be or if their services are included in the function space cost.
- Host hotel will also be needed (close by) as a central focal point for attendee lodging. See above for hotel requirements (other than exhibition space).
- Transportation to and from the hotel to show site must be taken into consideration if the distance is not a short walking distance.
- Members that fly in will need transportation for their dogs on a daily basis if they do not rent a personal vehicle.
- Availability of food for daily lunches.
- Function space for meetings, seminars at the facility. These can also be planned to be held at the host hotel location.

### Nearby Airport & Transportation

Because many exhibitors may be flying in to the specialty, try to get as close to a major airport as possible. A reasonable distance should be within a 1 hr. drive. If the hotel / “show site” has an airport shuttle, see if they would be willing to help with the transporting of dogs and exhibitors. If not, try to organize a transportation committee to help shuttle dogs and exhibitors to and from the airport. Private transportation may also be available for hire, if so, it would be helpful to publish contact information in the premium list.