



Great Scale Model Train and Railroad Collectors Show

Seller Guidelines & Checklist

IN GENERAL:

The Great Scale Model Train Shows provides a place, promotion, services and support. But the vendors and clubs provide the interest, action and value to the buyers and visitors. As many of you have told us, it takes a balance of variety on one hand, and consistency on the other, to hit the sweet spot that keeps bringing people back, again and again, as they have done for over 3 decades.

The "variety" part of the balance is entirely at your discretion (within the bounds of good taste, of course). The consistency is up to all of us, reading from the same page. Here are the key points:

What's New Since the February 2014 Change in Ownership? Nothing we say here is a change to any policies or procedures of the past. Given the 3 decades of past experience, there's really little that can be added or improved upon. What has changed is the format and style of presentation -our attempt to consolidate information and make it easily accessible on the web or in print. We've also attempted to clarify and emphasize some points, such as the existing policy for take-down at show closing, and also, at the behest of Fair Management, the public safety initiatives, a statement of which is just a good idea, anyway.

Move-in and set-up: Here's the schedule:

Group	Venue	Fri.	Sat.
Layouts	Cow Palace North Hall	1 pm – 8 pm	7 am – 9 am
	Cow Palace All Other	11 am – 8 pm	
	Exhibition Hall		
Vendors 8+ Tables	Cow Palace North Hall	10 am – 8 pm	
	Cow Palace All Other		
	Exhibition Hall		
Vendors 1-7 Tables	Cow Palace North Hall	1 pm – 8 pm	
	Cow Palace All Other		
	Exhibition Hall		

As the early arrivals know, there is already a great deal of activity inside the building when you get here. That's staff and management, setting up our part of the show, and preparing to receive you and assist in any way we can. Just as you need to work without undue interruption, so do we. If we get backed up, then **everyone gets backed up**. So, please do not ask for an early admission, or just to check for your table location, or something else which seems (and probably is) relatively minor. There is only **ONE exception**: Access to the comfort facilities. After what may have been hours on the road and in traffic - we totally understand. Hey! We may be strict on a few things, but were not inhuman!

Parking and Vehicle Movement: We are amazed and delighted, frankly, at the efficiency with which vendors seem to self organize to off-load their goods. In truth, we can't think of a better way to go about it than the way you currently handle this drudgery. But, again, as most of you know, there will be announcements about vehicles which seem to have been unattended, too long, are blocking fire lanes, etc. The Fire Marshall and Fair Safety Inspector are pretty understanding when it comes to this, but there are limits. Thus we ask you to **first** drop your goods at your show floor area, and immediately move your vehicle. **Then** come back and start setting up your tables, displays, etc.

Trolleys: We provide large 4 wheel trolleys for the efficient movement of goods. But there are only a limited number of them, so load and unload them promptly and roll them back to a loading area where they will be available for others.

Show Hours: The official hours of public admission to the shows are:

9 am to 4 pm Saturday
10 am to 4 pm Sunday

Although **admissions close** at 4 pm on Saturday, the show floor **remains open until 5 pm** for those who have been previously admitted. Consequently, vendors should anticipate a Saturday exit at 5 pm. On Sunday, the show actually does shut down at 4 pm - all visitors must leave by then.

Juried: Simply for the sake of a complete guide, we briefly mention that the show is juried. Your goods should pertain to railroading, model railroading, high rail, railroading, etc., without too much of a stretch of the imagination.

Take-Down: As the crowd dwindles in the final minutes, it is tempting to pack up early. We understand. But the show visitor or buyer has the reasonable expectancy that he/she may actually make a purchase or talk to a vendor for as long as the show is open. After all, that's what they paid for. Bare tables and stacked crates and boxes don't give the impression of being open. Thus every vendor should not only be ready to engage customers and do business up until the published closing time, but should also appear to be ready. Aside from the implicit promise to the public, there are two other very good reasons to be open, and to look that way:

- The cascade effect created when one vendor shuts down early, and others follow suit. One or two tables, here and there, is one thing. But entire rows is another. This sends a very dreary exit message to the public, and may cause other vendors to actually lose sales. So, if not for yourself, remain at the ready for the sake of others.
- The Sunday "bump." This is an actual phenomenon which occurs quite often. Some buyers wait until the 11th hour before making a purchase or opening negotiations with a vendor. This may either be the result of a conscious strategy, or simple indecision. But, regardless of the cause, you can't receive the business if you're in the process of tearing down. Bear in mind, as well, that transactions among vendors, themselves, often take place near closing time. Bottom line: what may facially present as slow time could be turned into a very productive opportunity.

Are there exceptions? Of course there are. If a winter blizzard descends at 2 pm Sunday afternoon and the crowd evaporates, then an early departure would not only be reasonable, but may well be prudent. Likewise, family or personal emergencies at home would reasonably be cause to take an early leave. That said, unless you marry frequently, there are a limited number of mothers-in-law who coincidentally and conveniently decease at 3 on a Sunday afternoon, so use yours carefully.

Drapes: Remember to drape your merchandise after setting up, and on Saturday night. You knew that. If you forgot to bring drapes, let us know and we'll give you some to use. No, *we won't make you buy them.*

Table Covers: We don't require it, but a cloth or plastic cover makes a table look pretty good, so consider using them.

Electricity: You bring a 50 foot or longer grounded extension cord, and we'll supply the power (free) and tape the cord down for you where any aisles are crossed, or otherwise provide the tape for you to do so on your own. If you see any cord that is NOT taped down, please let us know and we'll take care of it.

Perks: We've got 'em! The food service is open Friday so you don't squander time dashing out for fast food during set-up. Free do-nuts and coffee are here for you during Saturday pre-show set-up, and free coffee is available during Sunday pre-show. Who loves you?

Safety and Security: Aside from unspoken rules of common courtesy and common sense, there are regulations controlling on public assemblies, generally, and most of these fall within the jurisdiction of the local Fire Marshall and/or the Baltimore County government. We are bound by contract to observe these regulations, and are liable to fines and penalties if we don't make a reasonable effort to do so, or if we fail to do so.

***The most important regulation refers to
BLOCKAGE OF ESCAPE ROUTES in the event of an evacuation.***

In particular, exit doors must be operable so they open fully when pushed from within, and neither they nor the immediate pathways to them must be blocked or impeded by anything at all - not even an innocent chair, not even an empty box.

- What is an exit door? It is a door marked "EXIT." Loading doors, which are NOT so marked, may be used as exits, but are not exits within the meaning of the regulations.
- What is an "immediate pathway?" It is a rectangle, either imaginary or actually marked on the floor, defining the space which must not be occupied by anything at all. If you don't see the actual markings, then imagine a rectangle which is about 2 feet wider than the door, extending from the door to about 8 feet toward the building interior.
- Who checks for compliance? The Fair Safety Officer, the Fire Marshall, their appointees, and show management and staff. You will certainly be able to identify show staff members, but the others may appear as regular show visitors.
- What should I do if I see a possible violation? Tell us, right away. Please!

We strongly encourage you to read the additional material found at the "See Safety and Security" link, below,

Seller Tips: Again, there is little we can add to the collective wisdom of vendors whose experience stretches over decades. But the "collective" wisdom is not necessarily the same as "collected" wisdom, so we've attempted to gather the best practices you've given us over the years, and put them all in one document. The familiar voice you hear when reading it may well be your own. Follow link below to "See Selling Tips."

Other: We've prepared special information for first-time sellers. Much of the material is so well known as to be habitual to established vendors. We didn't want to clutter this page with such rocket science as, "remember to bring bags." However, you might find we missed something important, so follow the link below to See New Sellers. Please tell us about improvements we should make.

Need to talk? Contact us. By phone to 434-823-4809, or by email to jsgeare@yahoo.com.