# : Hotel

Locate a suitable hotel; negotiate and sign contract; make arrangements for hotel rooms for AALL representative, any other special guests, and any speakers whose expenses are being paid for by MAALL. *(See also the following Manual chapters: Equipment and Meeting Rooms, Exhibits, Food*, *Hospitality Room*.)

***Hotel Selection***

The first thing the Local Arrangements Chair has to do is locate a suitable hotel and sign a contract. This should be done at least a year before the meeting, longer in areas that have a lot of conventions, or where local events (such as football games in college towns) fill up the available hotels in the fall.

The following are some factors to consider in selecting a hotel. After you have visited several hotels and discussed their contract terms, make a chart to compare them. *(See samples at end of chapter.)* Contact the MAALL President for approval of your proposed choice. When approved, the Local Arrangements Chair signs the contract.

Sleeping room cost:

Try to secure a rate that will keep costs reasonable for MAALL members.

Location: Convenience to restaurants and attractions, or to a law school, especially if it is being used for some meetings.

Availability: MALLCO and MAALL are typically held beginning on Thursday morning and continuing until Saturday noon, in October if possible, though Halloween should be avoided. A limited number of sleeping rooms will be needed on Wednesday and Saturday nights. The largest number will be needed Thursday and Friday nights. Meeting rooms will be needed Thursday, Friday, and Saturday morning. *(See section on Contract below in this chapter.)*

Meeting rooms and Hospitality Room:

Adequate number and size of meeting rooms for programs and meal functions. Rooms should hold maximum number expected without overcrowding. Reasonable deal for cost of meeting rooms and Hospitality Room *(See section on Contract below in this chapter.)*

Hotel staff: Responsiveness, cooperation, politeness. (Note: If they do not return calls or are difficult to deal with during the selection process, you could really have a tough time during the meeting!)

Technology: Availability of Internet connections for meeting rooms and exhibit area, preferably wireless throughout the hotel.

Special areas: Convenient, adequate spaces for exhibits and registration.

Food: Good quality and varied menu selection for banquets. (Try it!)

Bus pickup area:

Adequate space for bus(es) to pull up and load/unload passengers for off-site events.

Parking: Adequate, convenient, safe, reasonable cost for parking.

Room amenities:

Attractive, reasonable size room. Availability of non-smoking rooms and rooms for disabled. Availability of hair dryer, coffee, iron, wireless connections, voice mail, mini-bar, etc.

Other guest facilities/services:

Airport shuttle, pool, exercise room, continental breakfast, copying facilities, cleaners, convenience store, etc.

***Contract***

*(See sample contracts at end of chapter.)*

There should be a written contract with the hotel which should include specific terms for the following:

Sleeping rooms

The contract should specify the dates, number, and cost of sleeping rooms.

This is an important and somewhat scary calculation! If you reserve too many rooms, you may not meet the contract requirements and have to pay for some of the unused rooms. It may also affect the cost of meeting rooms.

On the other hand, if you reserve too few and the hotel gets busy with other events, you may not have enough rooms and attendees may have to search for other hotels.

Note: The calculation of room usage is based on “room nights.” For example if you have 10 rooms on Wednesday, 50 on Thursday, 50 on Friday, and 5 on Saturday, that is 115 room nights.

Check with previous recent Local Arrangements Chairs for hotel usage, especially in similar-size locations. Other factors which might affect usage include location (whether it is easy to get to and has a lot of attractions), program (which you will not know yet!), joint meeting with another chapter, etc. (*See end of chapter for information on recent room usage.)*

Meeting rooms

The contract should specify the days, times, number, capacity needed and cost for meeting rooms.

For this, you will have to estimate the number of programs and meal events, as well as the number of people likely to attend each, all before the Education Committee has even started planning! Use previous recent MAALL meetings as a guide. Also consult the MALLCO Executive Director to determine the rooms it will need for roundtables.

Some contracts provide that the meeting rooms will be free IF you meet certain other minimum requirements–either sleeping rooms used or catering services purchased. Otherwise, there will be rental costs for the meeting rooms that will have to be included in the budget.

Catering services

The contract should specify the minimum amount of catering services that will be used. You will have to pay the minimum amount no matter what!

For this, you will need to get copies of the hotel price lists and do some ROUGH calculations on costs for meal events that will be in the hotel.

The amount of catering services used may also affect the meeting rooms cost.

More specific guarantees for each meal will be required a few days before the meeting.

Complimentary rooms

The contract may grant some complimentary rooms provided the sleeping room minimum amounts are met.

These can be very useful for the Hospitality Room, any special guests, or any non-MAALL speakers whose expenses are being paid by MAALL. Note that this will be expressed in “room nights.” That is, if you get 1 free room night for every 50, you will get 1 room free for 1 night (not 1 room free for the whole conference).

Hospitality Room

Try to include a suite in the room block that can be used for Hospitality. MAALL will have to pay for this, unless the hotel will allow it to be one of your complimentary rooms (perhaps with payment of an upgrade cost).

Also, clarify up front how food and drink in the Hospitality Room will be handled. The hotel will want you to pay for catering services, but this tends to be cost prohibitive for the type of use MAALL makes of the Room. Sometimes, the hotel will agree to letting MAALL bring in its own food and drink if we agree to sign a liability waiver. (*See Hospitality Room chapter*.)

Deadlines

The contract should specify registration deadlines (after which the hotel does not have to hold the rooms) and cancellation deadlines and terms. The deadline is usually one month before the start of the meeting.

***Special Guests***

Local arrangements should make hotel reservations for any special guests or speakers whose expenses will be paid by MAALL, and billing should be made to MAALL rather than the guest. Typical guests include:

AALL Executive Board representative:

AALL pays expenses for an Executive Board member to visit, but MAALL should make sure the visitor has information about the hotel in time to make reservations at MAALL’s group rate.

Speakers:

MAALL may need to pay costs for one or more speakers who are not MAALL members. (MAALL member speakers are expected to pay their own costs.) Work with the Education Chair to identify. President should approve. Be sure to send the speaker hotel and program information.

***Working with the Hotel***

After the contract has been signed, there may be a lull in contact with the hotel for awhile, however this will pick up! A schedule for a few of the key activities follows:

3 - 6 months before the meeting:

Menus for group meals need to be selected.

8-12 weeks before the meeting:

The hotel should provide instructions for MAALL members to make reservations at the conference rate, both online and by telephone.

4-6 weeks before the meeting:

Reservations should be made for any special guests by the registration deadline (usually about a month before the meeting).

Arrangements should be made for any audiovisual equipment that is being rented from the hotel or its subcontractor, and meeting room assignments need to be finalized. Work closely with the Education Chair to determine needs.

The hotel will need to provide a map of meeting areas for the printed program.

You may need to fill out a “direct billing” application which establishes MAALL’s credit with the hotel. Contact Treasurer for incorporation and bank information.

1 week before the meeting:

Do a “walk through” with hotel representative of all spaces that will be used. Be sure all schedules and responsibilities are clear and any questions resolved.

Notify hotel staff which 1 or 2 team members will handle contacting hotel staff about any problems or needs during the meeting; and ensure that one of them will be on-site at all times during the meeting. Also be sure they know which hotel staff member(s) to contact and how to reach them. Exchange phone and/or pager numbers.

Designate person who will sign daily catering bill.

Less than a week before the meeting:

Meal guarantee numbers will need to be provided approximately 72 hours before the meeting or meal event. (Check with hotel for exact requirements.)

During the meeting:

Check everything! Have designated person(s) notify hotel staff as needed to request resolution of any problems.

Designated person should check hotel catering bill each day and sign.

After the meeting:

Carefully review the hotel bill, clarify any questions, approve and send to Treasurer for payment. *(See sample at end of chapter.)* Complete hotel’s evaluation form, if asked to do so.

**Hotel Samples**

Hotel comparison chart

St. Louis 2001

St. Louis 2012

Room night usage, St. Louis 2012 and Omaha 2013

Hotel contract:

St. Louis 2012

Omaha 2013

Hotel invoice, St. Louis 2012