Greer and Lowdermilk Conference Center

Frequently Asked Questions
(FAQ)

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HOURS OF OPERATION

Q: What are the office hours?
A: The Houston Firefighters' Relief and Retirement Fund (HFRRF) regular office hours are Monday – Friday 7:30am – 4pm. Changes to this schedule will be posted on the website main page.

Q: Do I need an appointment?
A: You can stop by during business hours to pick up a brochure/business card or make a payment. If you would like to meet with someone for a tour of the facility, to ask questions or plan your event, you will need to make an appointment.

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SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT TO VIEW THE FACILITY

Q: Why must I make an appointment to view the facility and/or meet with the conference center manager?
A: The conference center is booked with events during the week as well as on the weekends. An appointment is necessary to ensure you will be able to view the facility and that the manager will be available to meet with you.

Q: Can I make an appointment on the weekend?
A: The Conference Center Manager is available for appointments on weekdays during business hours Monday - Friday 7:30am – 4pm. To visit the conference center on a weekend, call or email the manager for specific days and times to stop in. On a weekend, you will be able to see the room set up and possibly decorated for a social event, but there won't be anyone available to answer questions or give you a tour.

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FACILITY RENTAL

Q: Do I have to be a firefighter to rent?
A: No, the facility may be rented by the public.

Q: My friend is HFD. Can he rent it for me?
A: Only Houston Firefighters receive a Member discount for events in honor of an immediate family member, but you can rent it at the Non Member Rate.

Q: I am a volunteer firefighter. Do I get a discount?
A: Only Members of HFRRF qualify for the discount. These are active and retired Houston Firefighters.

Q: Can HPD receive discounts?
A: Only Members of HFRRF qualify for the discount. These are active and retired Houston Firefighters.

Q: How far in advance can I book a date?
A: Events are booked up to 18 months in advance.

Q: What is the max seating?
A: A banquet with a DJ and dance floor can accommodate 250 people comfortably.

Q: Can I rent a small section or just section C for a night or weekend event?
A: No. We only rent the entire facility as one large room (ABC) for night and weekend events.

Q: What equipment do you supply? Is there an extra fee for these? Will everything be set up when we arrive?
A: Your rental rate includes tables, chairs and dance floor which will all be set by the start of your rental hours.

FACILITY RENTAL *cont'd*

Q: What size are the round tables? How many chairs fit per table?
A: The rounds are 60" or 5'. We place 8 chairs at each round table.

Q: Do you have easels available? If so, what color? Is there a charge for this?
A: Yes. We have a brass easel and a black wrought iron easel. You may use these at no charge.

Q: Do you supply linens? If so, is that an extra fee? What color linens are available?
A: We place complimentary white tops and black skirts on up to (8) rectangular tables for the guest book, bar, DJ, buffet, etc. The rental does not include linen for guest tables. We can special order (white only) 85" square tablecloths for the guest rounds. The charge is $10 per tablecloth. White Linen Napkins are also available for $1.25 each.

Q: Do you cater?
A: No. You can bring your own food or use any local vendor.

Q: Do you supply dishes?
A: No. You can rent them through a local vendor. Be sure to arrange for delivery and pick up during your rental hours.

Q: Is there a kitchen and can I use it?
A: Yes, the kitchen is equipped with stainless steel tables, stove, oven, refrigerator and freezer for your use.

Q: Does the kitchen come with pots, pans and utensils?
A: No, you will need to bring all of your cookware and serviceware.

Q: Do you have an ice machine?
A: No, only a freezer - you must supply bags of ice, but you can place them in the freezer.

Q: How many bags of ice will I need?
A: Most parties use ¾ - 1 pound of ice per person. So, if you are expecting about 250 guests, you should bring about 200 pounds of ice. That is 20 small bags (10#) or 10 large bags (20#) of ice.

Q: Do we need to supply garbage bags, etc?
A: No – our monitor will take out the trash throughout the event. He will also keep the restrooms clean & stocked.

Q: What do we have to clean up?
A: Please make sure that your guests place all trash in the trash cans and table tops are clear at the end of the event.

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DEPOSIT

Q: Is a deposit required to hold the date?
A: No. We can hold a date for two weeks while you decide. Complete booking information is required to enter the hold.

Q: How much is the deposit and when is it due? Do you cash my deposit check or hold it until after the event?
A: The deposit is $250 and is due with the contract. We do not hold your deposit. The check will be sent to our bank.

Q: I mailed a payment with a personal check over a week ago. Why hasn't it cleared my bank yet?
A: We do not bank locally so it may take several weeks for your check to clear. Feel free to call or email us to make sure we received it in the mail.

Q: When is the deposit refunded?
A: The deposit is refunded, less any late fees and/or damages, within 30 days following the event.

Q: Who gets the refund and do we need to pick it up?
A: The deposit refund check is mailed to the person on the contract.

Q: What if I paid the deposit – can't you mail the refund to me?
A: The deposit refund check has to be mailed to the person on the contract.

Q: I paid my deposit with a credit card. Can you credit my card instead of mailing the deposit refund check?
A: No. Deposit refund checks are mailed to the contracted individual.

Q: What happens to my deposit if I have to cancel my event?
A: If you cancel your event, you forfeit the deposit.

Q: Is there a fee to change the date of my event?
A If you request a date change while we are still more than 60 days beyond the event date, you are allowed to choose a new date. Any additional date changes will require a new contract and deposit.

Q: Is there form I can use to change the date of my event?
A: The attached form can be used for a date change while we are still more than 60 days beyond the event date.

Booking Date Change Form

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CONTRACTS & RENTAL PAYMENTS

Q: I want a contract. Do I need to make an appointment to pick it up?
A: No. Call or email us and we will place a contract in the mail. We will include a postage paid envelope for you to mail it back with the deposit.

Q: Can I drop off my signed contract and deposit or do I need an appointment?
A: You can leave the signed contract and deposit with the receptionist during business hours.

Q: Can I get a copy of the signed contract?
A: When you return the signed contract and deposit, an executed copy will be mailed to the contracted individual along with a receipt for the payment. If the contract is not in your name, we cannot send a copy to you. Since it is a legal document, it can only be given to the contracted individual.

Q: Do you accept credit cards for payment?
A: Yes – Discover, MasterCard and VISA.

Q: When will the rental payment be due? Can I make monthly payments?
A: The rental amount must be paid in full 60 days before the event. Yes, you may send in monthly payments. Be sure to write the event date on your check.

Q: Why does my contract state that I need to pay with certified funds?
A: If your date is within the next 60 days, it is a short term booking and we require payment to be made in certified funds.

Q: What are certified funds?
A: Cash, cashier's check, money order or credit card payment are all certified funds.

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SECURITY

Q: Is security required at all parties? If so, how many officers must be present?
A: Yes, security is required at all parties. If there will not be any alcohol present at the event, one officer is required for events with less than 200 guests. Events with 200 or more guests and/or alcohol present require two officers.

Q: Can I supply my own security? I have police officers in my family and they will be in attendance. Can I use them instead?
A: No. A group of officers that have been trained in HFRRF rules and regulations are scheduled for all events.

Q: Do we need the security officers for the entire time we are on the premises?
A: No. The officers are scheduled from 30 minutes before the beginning of guest time until the end of the rental time.

Q: When and how should we pay the security officers?
A: The officers should be paid early in the evening at the event with money order or cash.

Q: What are the security officers' duties?
A: Dressed in uniform, the officers monitor activity in the building, Memorial Garden and parking lot. The officers remain in these areas throughout the event.

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EVENT DETAILS

Q: What about rehearsals?
A: Most clients do not hold rehearsals at the facility. You would need to rent the facility for a rehearsal date.

Q: Can I decorate the night before?
A: Our offices close at 4pm and are not open at night. However, you could rent the facility for an additional day.

Q: Can we have our ceremony outside?
A: No. The area outside is a Memorial Garden dedicated to Houston Firefighters. You can have the ceremony in the same room as the reception, though.

Q: Can we take pictures outside in the garden during the event?
A: Yes. You and/or your photographer are welcome to take pictures in the garden.

Q: Can my vendor(s) pick up their linen/equipment on the next business day?
A: No, everything must be picked up before the end of the rental times. We cannot accept liability for supplies or equipment. In addition, the facility is generally set up for the next event immediately following your event.

Q: What is a certificate of insurance? Do I need it? Where do I get it?
A: A certificate of insurance is a document which states a company's insurance coverage and should list the following information under additional insured: HFRRF, Greer and Lowdermilk Conference Center, 4225 Interwood North Parkway, Houston, TX 77032. It is required of any vendor supplying equipment which could fall over such as columns, arches and, audio visual equipment. It is also required of any vendor using a ladder, scaffolding or similar equipment. The document can be requested from a vendor's insurance agent. It should be mailed to us or faxed to 281.372.5125.

EVENT DETAILS *cont'd*

Q: What is the latest my party can end? How late can we stay?
A: The latest rental hours are 2pm – 2am with guest time ending at 1am. At that time, all guests must leave and be off property by 1:30am. Only a few people may remain until 2am to pack and remove all equipment and personal belongings from the facility. Everyone must be out by 2am.

Q: Do the lights dim? How dark is the room with only the dimmer lights on?
A: Yes. There are several lighting options in the room including dimmers. If the dimmer lights are on, it is similar to night club lighting – just enough light so you can see to walk around and dance.

Q: How much time in advance should we work on the seating arrangement?
A: There should be a draft diagram in place 60 days before the event. It should be updated 30 days before the event by which time you should have received most RSVPs.

Q: Is there a charge if we make any last minute changes to my floor plan?
A: Yes. Significant changes in the final two weeks will result in a $250 fee. Changes are not permitted on event day.

Q Is it possible to see the facility set up similar to the way my event will be?
A: The Conference Center Manager can look at the upcoming events with similar floorplans. She will give you a date and time to stop by on a weekend to see an event before guests arrive.

Q: What is and is **not** permitted in the facility? Ex. Rice, bubbles, rose petals
A: We do allow bubbles and the release of butterflies.

- No bird seed, rice or rose petals on the floor or ground.
- No fireworks or sparklers – We are within the Houston city limits.
- No food coloring.
- No exposed flames - candles must be in a votive cup, hurricane, etc.
- No push pins, nails, etc which puncture the wall. We recommend that you use Heavy Duty magnets.

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EVENT DAY

Q: How early can I get in on the day of my event?
A: Your rental period is for 12 hours such as 12noon to 12midmight, 2pm – 2am, etc.

Q Can I split the 12 hours?
A: No, the rental period is for 12 successive hours. You can rent additional time for $150 per hour when purchased in advance. The additional hour(s) immediately precede the original rental start time.

Q: How early can my vendors have access to the facility?
A: The Event Captain will unlock the doors at the beginning of your rental time.

Q What if I need more time?
A: Additional time may be purchased, in advance, at the rate of $150 per hour. You may not buy extra time on event day.

Q: Who will be there when I arrive on event day?
A: An Event Captain will work the entire 12 hour rental time. He will be your main contact that day. He will unlock the doors at the beginning of the rental time and conduct a pre-event inspection with you or your appointed representative. The Event Captain will remain on property until everyone leaves at the end of your rental time, then he will lock up.

Q: How do we adjust the temperature in the room?
A: Let the Event Captain know if you want the room warmer or colder and he will take care of it.

Q: How do we adjust the lights in the room?
A: The Event Captain will adjust the lights for you or he can show you where the controls are located.

Q: My rental hours are 2pm – 2am. What does that mean?
A: The Event Captain will arrive and unlock the doors at 2pm so you and your vendors can begin decorating, etc. At 2am, everyone must be out of the facility so the captain can lock up.

Q: My guest times are 7pm – 1am. What does that mean?
A: These should be the times on your invitation. Guests will begin to arrive at about 7pm or slightly before 7pm. The event will end at 1am – at that time, the lights will be turned on, music will stop and guests will begin to leave. All guests must be off property within 30 minutes.

Q What time do I have to close my bar?
A: A LAST CALL announcement should be made 30 minutes before the end of guest time. The bar must close at least 15 minutes before the end of guest time to allow guests to finish their last drink.

Q: What if my guests are not leaving at the end of guest time?
A: Please tell them that the party is over and it is time to go. If guests remain in the room, the Event Captain will tell guests they must be going. If they still do not leave, the security officers will tell the guests that they must leave. Please note that everyone must leave the premises – they cannot linger in the parking lot.

EVENT DAY *cont'd*

Q Can several people stay after guest time to help me pack up?

A: Yes. A few people can stay until the end of the rental time to help you pack up your belongings, decorations, etc. Please note that everyone including vendors must be out of the building and in the process of leaving the premises by the end of the guest time. **(If not, you will be charged for late departure which is $150 for the first 30 minutes and each additional 30 minute period.)**

Q: Do I need to sign anything before I leave?

A: At the end of the event, the Event Captain will complete a post-event inspection with you or your designated representative.

Q: How will I know if I am going to get my deposit back?

A: During the event and during the post event inspection, the Event Captain will point out anything he sees that may affect your deposit. He will note these items on the post event inspection. If there are any damages or late fees, the conference center manager will call the contracted individual to advise if any portion of the deposit is being retained.

Q: When will I receive my deposit back?

A: The deposit (less any late fees or damages) will be mailed to the contracted individual within 30 days following the event.

Q: If one of my guests lose or leave something (cell phone, charger, etc) at the event, do you have a lost and found?

A: Yes. Give us a call and we will check our lost and found. Please use the final 30 minutes of your rental time to make sure you have checked the room for any personal belongings. We do not accept responsibility for anything left in the facility, but if something is found we will do our best to locate the owner.

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