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Display Rules and Regulations

Linear Booth

Linear Booths, also called “in-line” booths, are booths arranged in a straight line and have neighboring exhibitors on their immediate right and left, leaving only one side exposed to the aisle.

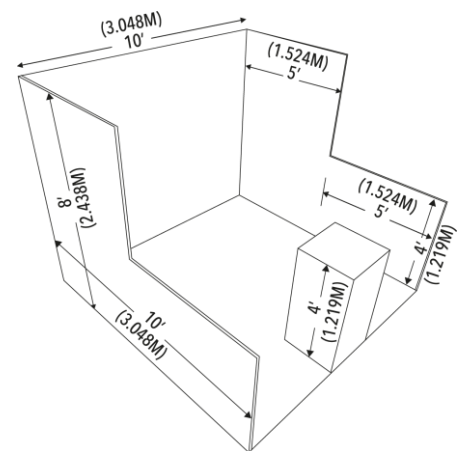
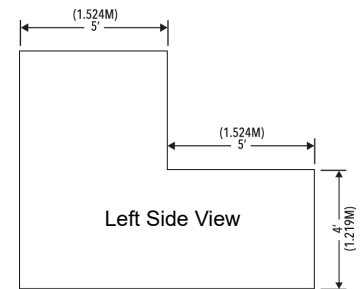
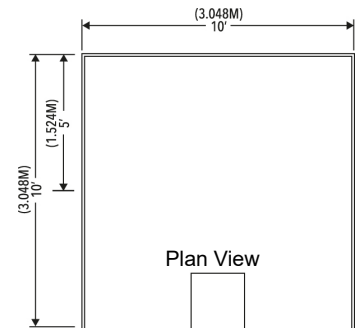
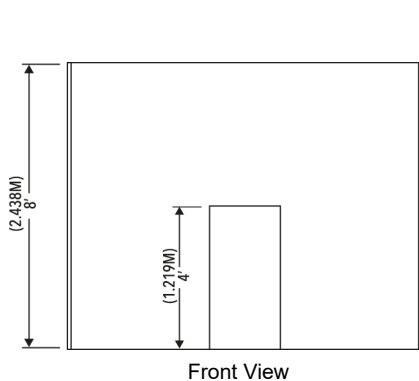
Dimensions

Linear Booths are most commonly 10 ft. (3.05 m) deep x some dimension in increments of 10 ft. (3.05m) wide, i.e., 10 ft. by 10 ft. (3.05 m by 3.05 m), 10 ft. by 20 ft. (3.05 m x 6.10 m), 10 ft. x 30 ft. (3.05 m x 9.14 m), and so on. The maximum back wall height limit for all linear booths is 8 ft. (2.44 m).

Use of Space

Display materials (including signs, displays, products, machinery, fixtures, furniture, and decorations) should be arranged in such a manner as to not obstruct sight lines of neighboring exhibitors. For booths that are 10 ft. x 20 ft. (3.05 m x 6.10 m) or smaller, the maximum height of 8 ft. (2.44 m) is allowed only in the back half of the booth space, with a 4 ft. (1.22 m) height restriction imposed on all materials in the remaining (front) space forward to the aisle.

For booths that are 10 ft. x 30 ft. (3.05 m x 9.14 m) or larger, or **corner** booths that are 10 ft. x 20 ft. (3.05 m x 6.10 m) or larger, the 4 ft. (1.22 m) height limitation is applied only to that portion of exhibit space which is within 10 ft. (3.05 m) of an adjoining booth.



10' x 10' Linear Booth

Corner Booth

A Corner Booth is a Linear Booth at the end of a series of in-line booths with exposure to intersecting aisles on two sides. All other guidelines for Linear Booths apply. The corner siderail may be removed if desired.

Hanging signs are NOT permitted for Linear Booths.

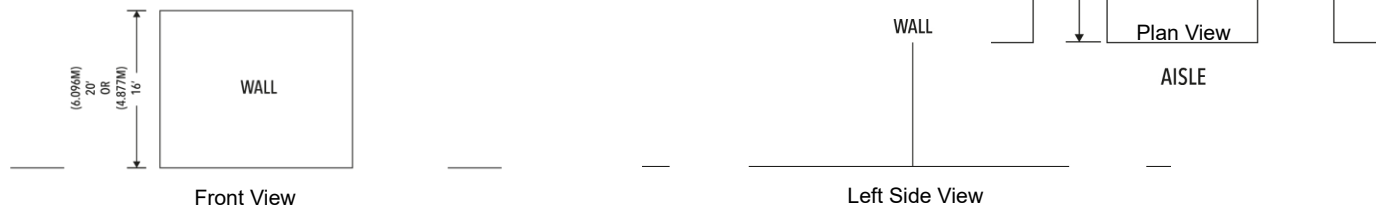


Display Rules and Regulations

Split Island Booth

A Split Island Booth is a Peninsula Booth which shares a common back wall with another Peninsula Booth. The entire cubic content of this booth (**see exception in red below**) may be used, up to the maximum allowable height of 20 ft. (6.10m), including company product, without any back wall line-of-sight restrictions. Refer to page 6 for hanging sign maximum allowable height.

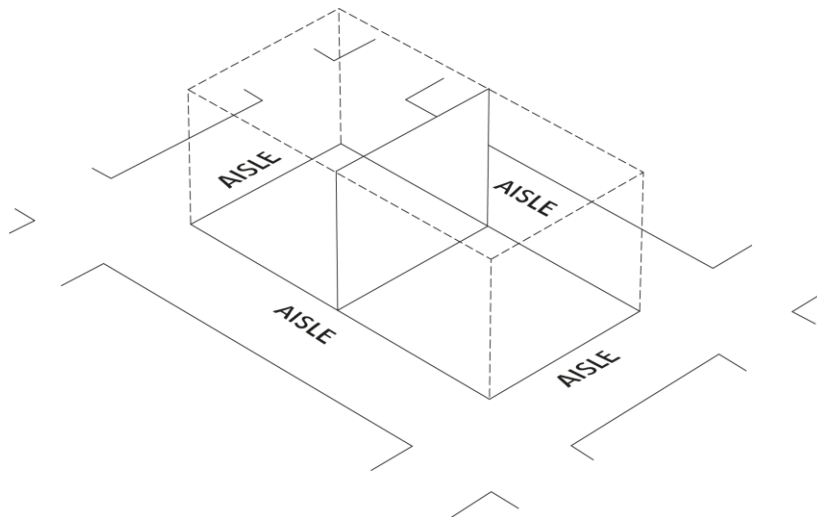
The maximum height for the common back wall is 20 ft. (6.10 m). See diagram for further information.



The back side of an exhibit structure along the common back wall that is over 8 ft. (2.44 m) high and facing the adjoining booth) must be “**finished in white**” and must not have logos, graphics, or branding. **Exposed structure or extrusion materials over 8 ft. (2.44 m) high must be covered or draped off at the exhibitor’s expense.**

Local code requires access to all electrical cords and connections along the back wall of split island booths. If your booth incorporates an exhibit structure along the shared back wall, the back 1 ft. (30.5 centimeters) of booth space must remain clear and accessible for this purpose.

Any double-sided signs, logos and graphics shall be set back 5 ft. (1.52 m) from adjacent booths. Please see specific Hanging Sign Guidelines that pertain to this booth type.





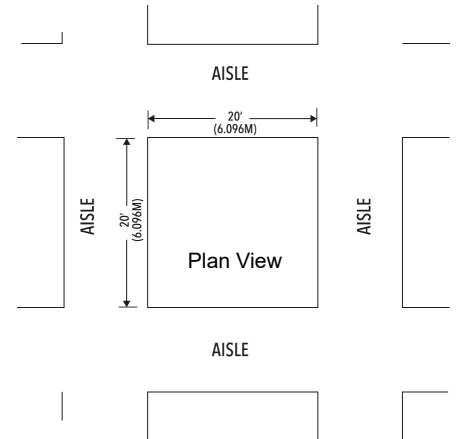
Display Rules and Regulations

Island Booth

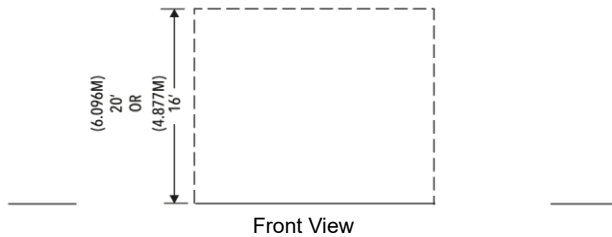
An Island Booth is any size booth exposed to aisles on all four sides.

Dimensions

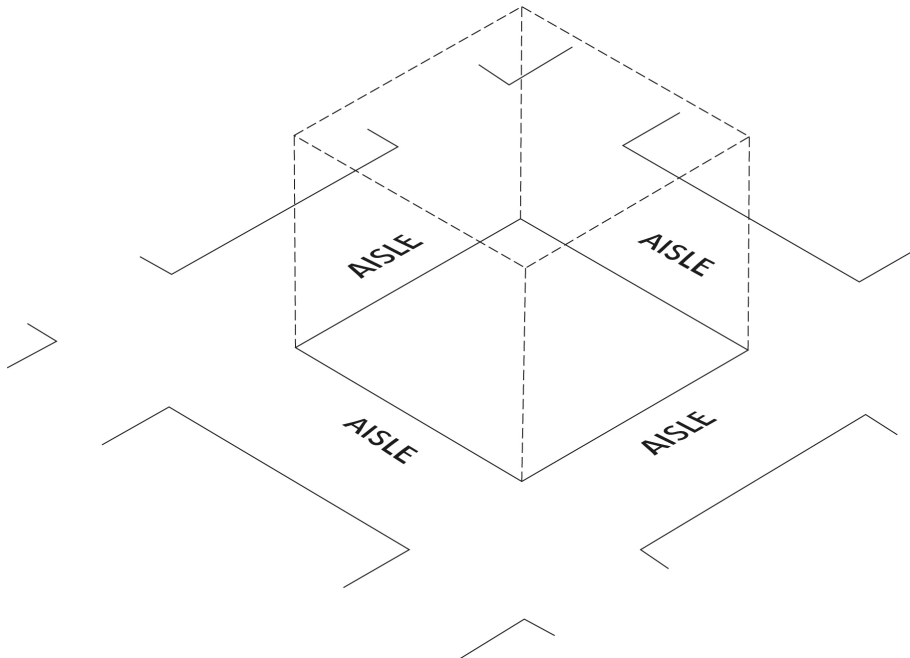
An Island Booth is generally 20 ft. x 20 ft. (6.10 m x 6.10 m) or larger. The entire cubic content of the space may be used up to the maximum allowable height of 20 ft. (6.10m) including company product. See diagram for further information. Refer to page 6 for hanging sign maximum allowable height.



The back side of any wall facing an aisle must be "finished". No exposed structure or extrusion materials are allowed.



Please see specific Hanging Sign Guidelines that pertain to this booth type.



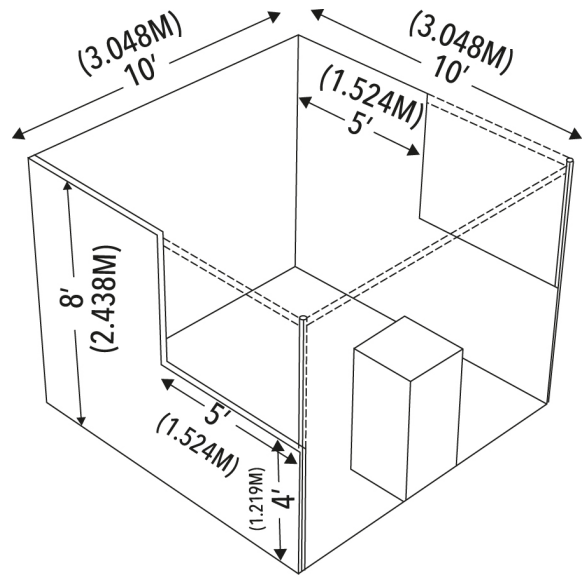
Display Rules and Regulations

Canopies and Ceilings

Canopies, including ceilings, umbrellas, and canopy frames, can be either decorative or functional (such as to shade computer monitors from ambient light or to allow for hanging products). Canopies for Linear or Perimeter Booths should comply with line-of-sight requirements.

The bottom of the canopy should not be lower than 7 ft. (2.13 m) from the floor within 5 ft. (1.52 m) of any aisle. Canopy supports should be no wider than 3 inches (7.62 cm). This applies to any booth configuration that has a sight line restriction, such as a Linear Booth.

Fire and safety regulations in many facilities strictly govern the use of canopies, ceilings, and other similar coverings. Check with the facility rules.



Towers

A Tower is a free-standing exhibit component separate from the main exhibit fixture. The height restriction is the same as that of the exhibit space configuration being used. Towers in excess of 8 ft. (2.44 m) should have drawings available for inspection. Fire and safety regulations in many facilities strictly govern the use of Towers. A building permit or safety lines may be required.

Multi-Story Exhibits

A Multi-Story Exhibit (sometimes called a “Double-Decker”) is a booth where the display fixture includes two or more levels. A Multi-Story Exhibit requires prior approval by the exhibit facility, and/or relevant local government agency, as well as show management because it is deemed to be a “structure” for building purposes. Please submit full drawings at least two months prior to move-in.

- All double-deck booths or structures with closed solid ceiling booths must have hardwired electric powered smoke detectors and sprinkler system installed in their display. A sprinkler system may not be required, subject to Fire Marshal approval, if the exhibitor provides 24-hour security at their own expense.
- Electrically power smoke detectors with a backup battery power source must be hardwired to a circuit that is powered 24-hours-a-day. It must be installed in the ceiling of all multi-level booths and all rooms or storage areas that have ceilings.
- One smoke detector must be installed for no more than 900 sq. ft. of continuous ceiling.
- The placement of smoke detectors must be 30 ft. (9.14 m) on center. Be sure to advise Electrical Services that you will need 24-hour circuits when placing your electrical order. All hard-wired detectors must be wired to a Fire Alarm Panel. This panel must be accessible at all times.
- In the case where a double-decker booth is blocking building fire pull stations or strobe lights, additional approvals, and measures to rectify such blockage of fire safety systems may be necessary.
- Maximum height of a double deck booth structure is 20 ft.
- All double deck booth plans must have stamped seal from a State of Illinois licensed Engineer. Egress plan for emergency egress must be included.
- All plans must be submitted to the Event Manager for building review and Fire Marshal for approvals. Please check regarding the prevailing fees.



Display Rules and Regulations

Structural Integrity

All exhibit displays should be designed and erected in a manner that will withstand normal contact or vibration caused by neighboring exhibitors, hall laborers, or installation/dismantling equipment, such as forklifts. Displays should also be able to withstand moderate wind effects that may occur in the exhibit hall when freight doors are open. Refer to local building codes that regulate temporary structures.

Booth Renderings Required

All 20 ft. by 20 ft. (6.10 m by 6.10 m) and larger split island and island exhibits require a drawing, plans, or renderings, preferably digital, to be submitted to Craig Boehmke, Tradeshow Operations Manager by Friday, April 17, 2026 cboehmke@automate.org. This applies to booth layout and hanging signs only, not your utility requirements, which should be sent to GES.

Exhibitors should ensure that any display fixtures such as tables, racks, or shelves are designed and installed properly to support the product or marketing materials to be displayed.

Ceiling Heights

Exhibit Halls at McCormick Place have a ceiling height of 40 ft. under lights. All island or split island booth structures must be 20 ft. (6.10 m) high or lower. Inline booths must be no higher than 8' (2.44m) in all exhibit halls.

Hanging Signs (Overhead)

Hanging signs are only allowed for booths 20 ft. x 20 ft. (6.10 m x 6.10 m) or larger. Hanging signs will be hung at 18' (5.49 meters) from the floor to the **bottom of the sign**. Hanging signs are not allowed for Linear Booths regardless of size.

All hanging signs cannot extend out further than the contracted booth space. For split island booths, hanging signs must be hung a minimum of 5' (1.52 m) away from a neighboring booth.

All hanging signs must be pre-ordered at least 60 days prior to installation and approved through GES. Exhibitors must provide drawings for inspection (**see instructions above under Booth Renderings Required**). Variances may be issued at the show management's sole discretion. See the Hanging Sign order section of the exhibitor manual.

General Booth Regulations - For all booth types.

Floor Covering/Carpet

Exhibitors are responsible for providing floor covering for their full booth space, except in that area where they are demonstrating an AMR. Order carpet rental from GES or provide your own floor covering.

Flammable and Toxic Materials

All materials used in display construction or decorating should be made of fire-retardant materials and be certified as flame retardant. Samples should also be available for testing. Materials that cannot be treated to meet the requirements should not be used. A flame-proofing certificate should be available for inspection. Exhibitors should be aware of local regulations regarding fire/safety and environment which must be adhered to.

Exhibitors should dispose of any waste products they generate during the exhibition in accordance with guidelines established by the Environmental Protection Agency and the facility.



Display Rules and Regulations

General Booth Regulations - For all booth types.

Storage

Fire regulations prohibit storing product, literature, empty packing containers, or packing materials behind back drapes or under draped tables. In most cases, however, exhibitors may store a limited supply of literature or product appropriately within the booth area, so long as these items do not impede access to utility services, create a safety problem, or look unsightly.

Electrical

Every exhibit facility has different electrical requirements. However, minimum guidelines are suggested:

- All 110-volt wiring should be grounded three-wire.
- Wiring that touches the floor should be "SO" cord (minimum 14-gauge/three-wire) flat cord, which is insulated to qualify for "extra hard usage."
- Cord wiring above floor level can be "SJ" which is rated for "hard usage."
- Using zip cords, two-wire cords, latex cords, plastic cords, lamp cords, open clip sockets, and two-wire clamp-on fixtures is not recommended and is often prohibited. Cube taps should be prohibited.
- Power strips (multi-plug connectors) should be UL approved, with built-in over-load surge protectors.

Lighting

Exhibitors should adhere to the following suggested minimum guidelines when determining booth lighting:

- No lighting, fixtures, lighting trusses, or overhead lighting are allowed outside the boundaries of the exhibit space. Exhibitors intending to use hanging light systems should submit drawings to exhibition management for approval.
- Lighting, including gobos, should be directed to the inner confines of the booth space. Lighting should not project onto other exhibits or exhibition aisles.
- Lighting that is potentially harmful, such as lasers, ultraviolet lights or flashing or strobe lights that can trigger photosensitive epilepsy should comply with facility rules and be approved in writing by exhibition management.
- Lighting that spins, rotates, pulsates, and other specialized lighting effects should be in good taste and not interfere with neighboring exhibitors or otherwise detract from the general atmosphere of the event.
- Currently, some convention facilities are not allowing certain types of quartz halogen lighting fixtures in exhibits due to potential fire hazards. Check with show management.

Demonstrations

As a matter of safety and courtesy to others, exhibitors should conduct sales presentations and product demonstrations in a manner which ensures all exhibitor personnel and attendees are within the contracted exhibit space and not encroaching on the aisle or neighboring exhibits. It is the responsibility of each exhibitor to arrange displays, product presentation, audio visual presentations, and demonstration areas to ensure compliance. Exhibitors should be aware of local regulations regarding fire/safety and environment which must be adhered to.

Special caution should be taken when demonstrating machinery or equipment that has moving parts, or any product that is otherwise potentially dangerous. Exhibitors should establish a minimum setback and/or install hazard barriers as necessary to prevent accidental injury to spectators. Please refer to Automate's General Safety & Guarding Rules. Additionally, demonstrations should only be conducted by qualified personnel.



Display Rules and Regulations

General Booth Regulations - For all booth types.

Sound/Music

Exhibitors may use sound equipment in their booths so long as the noise level does not disrupt the activities of neighboring exhibitors. Speakers and other sound devices should be positioned to direct sound into the booth rather than into the aisle. Rule of thumb: Sound and noise should not exceed 85 decibels when measured from the aisle immediately in front of a booth. (Refer to OSHA at www.osha.gov for more information.) For AMRs, beeping sounds should be turned down or muted altogether if you have the capability to do so.

Exhibitors should be aware that music played in their booths, whether live or recorded, may be subject to laws governing the use of copyrighted compositions. ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC are three authorized licensing organizations that collect copyright fees on behalf of composers and publishers of music. Exhibitors take full responsibility for adherence to all laws related to sound/music.

Vehicles

Any vehicle on the show floor must have prior written approval from show management. Vehicles on display have no more than two gallons of gas and shall further be equipped with locking gas caps. All batteries must be disconnected. External chargers are usually recommended for demonstration purposes. Keys must be surrendered to show management while participating in Automate.

Welding

All welding requests must be approved by the Fire Marshal and a permit obtained at a nominal fee.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

All exhibiting companies are required to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and are encouraged to be sensitive, and as reasonably accommodating as possible, to attendees with disabilities. Information regarding ADA compliance is available from the U.S. Department of Justice ADA Information Line (800) 514-0301, and from the ADA website at www.ada.gov.

Some examples of how to design an exhibit for ADA compliance:

- Make exhibits wheelchair accessible by ramping raised exhibit flooring without extending a ramp into the aisle. Note: a standard wheelchair ramp should have a grade no steeper than 1:12. This means that for every inch of rise (change in height), there should be 12 inches of run (change in length). Ramps should have a minimum width of 36 inches.
- Avoid double-padded plush carpet to ease mobility device navigation.
- Provide the same attendee experience on both levels of a two-story exhibit.
- Offer a signer or other auxiliary hearing-impaired apparatus for sound presentations or have a printed copy of the presentation available.
- Run an audio presentation for people with sight problems.
- Arrange touch screen displays at a height to accommodate a person sitting in a wheelchair, or have personnel available to assist with touch screen displays.

To avoid potential fines by the U.S. Department of Justice, exhibitors must adhere to the ADA rules. Exhibits are not exempt from ADA compliance.