Made in Montana Trade Show for Food and Gifts

Frequently Asked Questions

Apr. 15 - Apr. 17, 2027

Montana Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533
Phone: 406-841-2700 | Fax: 406-841-2701
commerce.mt.gov
Montana 711: montanarelay.mt.gov

The Made in Montana Trade Show is a **wholesale trade show,** and all exhibitors are expected to sell product at wholesale pricing for resale.

While the show includes a Public Showcase Day, it is not the purpose of the show and is only included to help promote recognition of Made in Montana products among the public. On Public Showcase Day, you can expect to see some wholesale buyers who are returning to close a deal, and others who were unable to attend on Wholesale Buyers Day.

These answers to frequently asked questions should help you be prepared for a successful show. They are listed in alphabetical order by topic.

For a more detailed review of our rules, see the Rules and Regulations section.

Awards

What are the "booth awards" for exhibitors?
The 2027 Trade Show Awards are:

- Best in Show
- Best in Show – New Exhibitor
- Best in Show – Honorable Mention
- Retailer of the Year (decided by nominations ahead of the Show)

The awards recognize exhibitors' efforts to use their booths as part of their marketing strategies. The recipient of the Best in Show is guaranteed first choice of booth(s) for the next year's show.

What are the qualifications in terms of booth design, layout, ideas and advice – especially if this is my first trade show?

Judges who are not affiliated with the Made in Montana Program review your booth setup and design. They consider originality, eye-catching details and overall presence. They also look for engagement with buyers on Wholesale Day. There is no "magic formula" to win a booth award, but judges look for elements of the Made in Montana brand pillars and program guidelines. All exhibitor booths are judged without bias, regardless of location or show tenure.

Badges

How will I be identified as an exhibitor?

We prepare badges for the people you listed as booth staff in your application. If your booth staff changes, let us know as soon as possible to ensure each staff member (see also: Booth Staffing) has a badge that identifies them as an exhibitor. Badges are the sole source for access to the Exhibit Hall on setup day (Thursday), before the Trade Show opens to the wholesale buyers on Friday, and before it opens to the public on Saturday.

Badges are in the packet when you check in at the registration booth on Thursday.

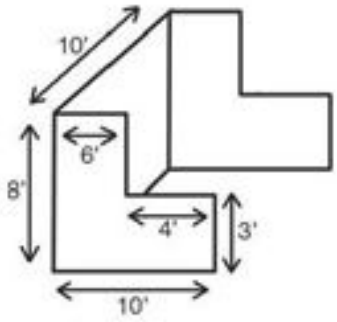
What should I do with my name badge and neck lanyard when I leave Saturday?

You may keep your name badge and lanyard when the show ends; you do not need to return them.

COMMERCE

Booth Size and Layout

What are the booth specifications?



Example of a booth layout.

"Stair Step" Pipe and Drape Booth (black)

All booths are 10 feet wide by 10 feet deep unless otherwise noted on the floor plan.

Back wall: 8 feet high

Side divider: 8 feet high extending 6 feet from back wall, and then 3 feet high to aisle (4 feet)

Note: As per the Official Rules and Regulations, each exhibitor agrees to confine their exhibit and staff personnel within the 10 feet by 10 feet contracted space. Also, the exhibitor agrees not to block or detour any other exhibitors' right-of-way during show hours. Displays, merchandise, models, signs and attention attracting devices shall be confined to the exhibitor's booth.

Solid side panels or grids with product cannot extend beyond 6 feet from the back wall of the booth. Only moveable, non-solid displays may be used on the final 4 feet of display space towards the aisle. Pop up canopies are not allowed; however, you may use the frame alone for lighting or hanging items for sale.

If you have questions on booth specifications, or want to know if your décor is allowed, please call us directly 406-841-2757.

What does a basic booth include?

- Two chairs (standard height)
- One – 6 feet by 24 feet skirted table (standard height; black drape with white top)
- One - 500 watt/110v electrical outlet per booth (exhibitor must supply own extension cord)

K&J Convention Services will contact you after Jan. 1, 2027, with the information you need to order supplies or purchase additional or alternate booth furniture and services. You can also get information on the Exhibitor Service Kit at kjconventions.com.

Booth Staffing

How many people should/can I have staffing my booth during the Trade Show?

We recommend you have at least two people working in your booth on both days. One to take orders and one to welcome buyers. The traffic can be high on both days; you might need extra help with wholesale buyers who stopped by to see you Friday (Wholesale Buyer Day) and might return on Saturday and want to close a deal with you.

You can have up to three booth staff per single booth and up to five booth staff per double booth. We do not recommend having children in your booth on Friday, Wholesale Buyer Day.

If you will be attending alone and are concerned about staffing, we have a volunteer who can mind your booth for a meal or restroom break.

Break Rooms

Where can I relax a little and have some snacks and drinks?

The Exhibitor Break Room has complimentary snacks, coffee, hot and cold water. Signs will lead you in the right direction.

Business Development

What if I'm looking for more help with my small business?
There are many resources available to you within the Montana Department of Commerce and partners, including:

- Montana Small Business Development Center
- Indian Country Economic Development Programs
- Montana Manufacturing Extension Center
- Small Business Administration
- Montana Arts Council / Montana Artrepreneur Program

Buyers

Where do the wholesale buyers come from?
We contact buyers throughout the state, as well as neighboring states and Canada, through email campaigns, print, radio and social media.

Make sure you're promoting the Trade Show on your own website and social media sites. If you have additional ideas for attracting buyers, please contact us at 406-841-2757 or madeinmontana@mt.gov.

Check-in

When and where do I check in and get my badge?
Exhibitors check in starts at 8 a.m. on Thursday Apr. 15, 2027 and ends at 5 p.m. Go directly to the registration booth in the Exhibit Hall entrance area when you arrive on Thursday. We will have your packet with necessary information and badges there. **You will not be allowed to load in until you have your badges**. (See also: Load-in / Set Up).

Exhibitor Agreement / Show Rules

Are there special rules exhibitors need to follow?
Yes; see our Official Rules and Regulations.

Food and Drink / Concessions

Where can I find food and drink at the Trade Show?
Concessions / food and beverages for purchase will be available.
We will also provide light refreshments in the Exhibitor Lounge (See also: Break Rooms).

Food Sampling

I want to provide food and/or drink samples in my booth. What do I need to do?
If your application indicated that you will be providing samples, you will need to complete and return a form to the Lewis and Clark County Health Department. We will send you the paperwork, and they will contact you if they have questions. There is no permit charge for you as the exhibitor, as the Made in Montana Program covers the cost

of the temporary food license. **All products sold at the show must comply with current food labeling and manufacturing laws.**

Information, General

What if I need more information about the Trade Show?
Please call 406-841-2757 or email us.

Internet Access, Wi-Fi

How can I access the wireless internet in the Exhibit Hall?
The Lewis & Clark County Fairgrounds provides Wi-Fi, we will provide details in your registration packet, on the back of your badge, and at the registration desk.

Load-in / Set Up

What time can I start loading products in on Thursday?
All set up must be completed between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Thursday, Apr. 15 so our support crew can vacuum isles and complete other maintenance work before the doors open Friday morning. Please contact us directly if you have an emergency or need to discuss this further at 406-841-2757.

Load-in is only allowed through the **east side** garage door of the building, no exceptions.

Please check in at the registration desk to receive your exhibitor badge before unloading. **Please do not park in the loading dock.**

Each vendor receives a 10 minute window to use the unloading dock by the garage. Immediately after unloading, vehicles must be moved to the designated parking areas. Staff will be monitoring the area to make sure loading is efficient.

Carts and/or hand trucks are not provided – **please bring your own**.

Load-out / Teardown

When may I tear down my booth?

Tear down begins after 4 p.m. on Saturday, Apr. 17. Any tear down before this time is not allowed and will affect your ability to exhibit in upcoming shows.

Please take everything with you and dispose of your own trash including cardboard boxes and packing materials. A dumpster will be located at the load-in area for all trash.

Lodging

What lodging is available to exhibitors?

We will offer some room blocks at area hotels. This information is posted on the Trade Show page.

Visit Helena Montana and Helena Area Chamber of Commerce feature information on area lodging properties, campgrounds, RV parks and other options.

Maps

Lewis & Clark County Fairgrounds site map with parking

Parking

Where can I park my car and/or trailer?

As soon as you are finished unloading, you must move your vehicle(s) to the exhibitor parking on the east side of the Exhibit Hall. Signs will designate the parking area.

Please see the Fairgrounds site map with parking above.

Payments

How do I accept payments at the Show?

We recommend you are prepared to accept payments including cash, check, credit card and other electronic payments.

It is a good idea to tell your customers which payments you accept.

What is cash and carry, and should I be doing this on Wholesale Day at the Trade Show?
Cash and carry wholesale is a sale option where buyers settle the invoice on the spot in cash and carry the goods away themselves.

We do not expect all exhibitors to adhere to cash and carry policies; many find this to be convenient on Wholesale Day, as buyers can get their products at the show and carry them home.

Buyers may also place orders to be filled later; this is an acceptable practice of wholesaling as well.

Pets

May I bring my pets with me indoors?
Pets are not allowed in the Exhibit or Entry Hall, except for documented service animals.

Products, non-Made in Montana (swag)

If part of my product line, or promotional swag items, do not qualify as Made in Montana, may I still display and sell them at the Trade Show?
No. Please remember this is the Made in Montana Trade Show, where only products that qualify as “Made in Montana” may be displayed and sold in your booth. Bring only qualified products.

State inspectors will be present both Friday and Saturday to ensure compliance. If you aren’t sure what qualifies as “Made in Montana,” please review the product eligibility on our website or call the Made in Montana Program office at 406-841-2757.

Reception

Is there a formal get-together for exhibitors?

No, but we encourage you to enjoy the dining and entertainment options in Helena.

Reset

When will we be able to reset our booths from wholesale to retail?

There will be time for you to re-set your booth after Wholesale Buyer Day. You may do so on Friday evening from 5-6 p.m. and again on Saturday morning from 8-9 a.m.

Security

How will the Trade Show be secured during the day and at night?

We retain the Sheriff's Reserves to provide 24-hour security. They will monitor both in and outside the building.

Please secure your products and valuables. The Show is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Always cover your exhibit display during non-Show hours. Many exhibitors bring sheets and tablecloths for this purpose.

Wholesale Buyer Day versus Public Showcase Day

What is the difference between the two days of the Trade Show?

On Wholesale Buyers Day, registered buyers from retail businesses shop the Exhibit Hall, purchasing items for resale. During this time, products are expected to be sold using wholesale pricing.

COMMERCE

On Public Showcase Day, we invite the public to shop products for their personal use. During this time, prices must reflect the price at which a retail store owner would reasonably sell the item.

If you have questions about how to price your products appropriately, please contact the Made in Montana Program at 406-841-2757 or madeinmontana@mt.gov.