

BIRKA 2017 MERCHANTS

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INFORMATION AND FAQ

Please check this document before emailing with questions!

When is Birka?

The event will be held Friday to Sunday, January 27-29.

What hours is it open to the public?

Please refer to page five of this document for all scheduling questions and a complete list of hour requirements.

What space do we use to sell?

The Expo Center at the Radisson Inn in Manchester NH. It is a vast room which easily houses 200+ merchants for the two-day event. Our spaces are arranged into 8-12 table islands. Please be aware that for 2017, there will be no spaces in the Armory, for any merchant. This is due to renovations which have moved many events around. We will do our best to accommodate the merchants usually in the Armory, and expect to return to it next year.

How much does it cost to merchant at Birka?

Every Expo center space a single table long (with a table or without) will cost \$20. Electricity at your booth will be an additional \$75.

Do not send payment via certified/signature required letter. This will delay your registration. Staff will confirm receipt of payment directly via email within 1 business day.

Your personal hotel room, food needs, and other expenses are not included in these fees.

Do I have to be an SCA member to merchant at Birka?

No, neither the primary merchant nor anyone on the merchant's staff needs to be a paid member to be accepted as a merchant, and this is not a factor in our decisions as to whether a merchant's application is accepted.

Is costuming/garb required?

Yes. All merchants must make some attempt at pre-1700s clothing. Please do not wear fairy wings, elf ears, anime wigs, or cosplay. Attendees will be required to follow the same rule.

Will I have to collect sales tax?

No. There is no sales tax in the state of New Hampshire. Please refer to the laws of your home state and whether they will require you to file taxes for sales made at Birka.

Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns before the event?

All questions regarding merchants or merchanting should be sent to the Merchant Coordinator at birka.merchants@gmail.com.

Additionally, all communications each merchant receives will come directly from the Merchant Coordinator. **Please do not email the Autocrat.** This will **only create a delay**, since she will have to send it along to the proper person.

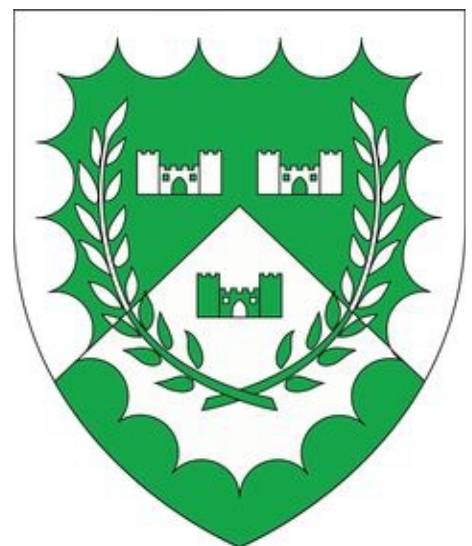
Do I need a business license?

No. Market Day at Birka will not require a business license to sell at the event.

DATES OF IMPORTANCE
Applications Open: September 1, 2016
Applications Close: October 1, 2016
Payment Deadline: December 1, 2016
Date of Event: January 27-29, 2017

IMPORTANT:
ALL MERCHANT DEADLINES HAVE BEEN MOVED BACK BY ONE MONTH, TO ALLOW FOR FASTER ACCESS TO A COMPLETED SITE MAP AND FOR THE FINANCIAL EASE OF EVENT STAFF.

Please double check all contact information given to staff. If we are unable to reach you by phone or email, we will be unable to reserve a spot for you for the event.



Merchant Coordinator Urgent
Contact Information
(781)254-5384

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Register for your hotel room early! Seek out alternate hotels in the area as needed!

What happens if I need to cancel?

Please contact the coordinator ASAP. If you cancel 7 days in advance or more, you will receive a full refund of all fees. If you cancel within the 7 days window, you will receive a refund only if we are able to fill your space with someone from the Waiting List. We cannot guarantee this, but typically we are able to fill spaces until 24 hours before the event. If it is the morning of the event, please attempt to contact the Coordinator anyway. We may have other merchants who can use the space. You will be furnished with the phone number of the Merchant Coordinator in your confirmation email, if you are accepted.

What constitutes a space?

A space is a unit of measurement we use for merchants at Birka. A single space is approximately eight by six feet, which accommodates a table and a merchant to sit behind it. If you have more than one table, your space behind them may overlap.

How many spaces can I rent?

Each merchant may request a maximum of 5 spaces. On the application, you will be asked how many spaces minimum you will need to effectively run. There will be no more than 5 spaces allotted to any merchant. No amount of appealing or cajoling will change this.

Each individual space includes a table that is 8' long and 2 chairs at no extra charge. Unless you specify otherwise, that is what you will receive.

How are spaces laid out?

Spaces are laid out either in rectangular islands, or in straight lines. A merchant may request the type of layout they prefer as part of the application process.

Can I get electricity in my space?

Yes. This requires a \$75 fee, and must be set up in advance with payment due at the time you pay for your spaces. The Merchant Coordinator will work with the hotel to be certain your space is equipped. Merchants are **not** permitted to use any outlets which may be present nearby unless they have paid for electricity. Doing so may affect future eligibility to participate as a Birka merchant.

Can I sleep in my booth?

No. The spaces in the Expo Center are in a large sales floor space and are not set up as living quarters. Merchants will have access only during setup, sales, and breakdown hours. The Expo Center will be locked down after 11 pm both nights. Saturday night, all wares and belongings must be removed by 11 pm.

Can I sell out of my hotel room?

No. We do not have permission to sell from a hotel room, and it is prohibited in New Hampshire.

While there are a host of smaller activities and personal parties taking place in hotel rooms, there will be no officially sanctioned sales nor any good traffic to hotel rooms for selling.

Can I have a specific space?

We will do everything we can to accommodate the requirements of merchants. We honor seniority first, and then allocate tables on a first-come, first-served basis. If you have specific needs, please put your application in **very early**.

What are the restrictions on displays?

Each merchant's display may not extend outside of their space in a way that intrudes on another merchant's space or into the walkways between spaces.

The walkways are laid out to a minimum specification as per the fire code. That space is non-negotiable.

No display may have a roof or top which would impede the effectiveness of the hotel sprinkler system in the case of a fire.

There are no official restrictions on the height of displays, but please keep both safety and fellow merchants in mind.

Displays which seem unsafe or significantly impede the traffic or safety of another merchant may be removed.

Will I be able to put racks inside the rectangle created by the tables?

In order to put racks or displays inside the island, you must make sure the other merchants in your table arrangement do not mind. Space inside of the tables is intended for the merchants to use for personal accoutrements and sales needs. Please be courteous.

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How do I apply?

Can I vend in the Armory room?

Because of renovations at the Radisson, there will be no vending in the Armory, at all. We apologize for the change, and will do our best to accommodate merchants accustomed to the Armory with decent placements elsewhere.

We expect that merchants will be able to return to the armory in 2018.

What are my responsibilities?

Merchants are expected to leave the space they used in the same condition that they found it. All trash and waste must be deposited in appropriate bins. Items such as boxes and displays must be removed. Merchants may not alter the space or attach displays to existing walls or columns.

Do I have to preregister? Can I pay at the door?

You are required to pay your booth (and electric) fees before the deadline of 12/1/16. All merchant applications must be accompanied by the pre-registration fees for the Primary Merchant. Additionally, we urge merchants to preregister their entire staff, since this saves both time and money at check-in. Do not send payment checks via certified letter. This will cause significant delays in your registration.

Do I have to pay event fees even if we're just going to be at my booth?

All event attendees must pay the standard fees to attend. There is no "partial" pass to the event, nor can Birka staff be expected to check for partial passes to the event.

Can I apply online?

Yes! We accept only online applications.

When can I apply?

We will open the online system for applications on September 1st, 2016. All applications will receive a computer generated email confirmation of receipt. Please keep this email, as it will have your confirmation number in case we need to look it up later. Applications will close on October 1st, 2016. After that date, please contact the Merchant Coordinator to submit your application.

What is a Primary Merchant?

Each merchant must have a primary merchant, who is the legal representative for that booth. They will need to sign the merchant agreement, will be responsible for all staff, and assume all liability and responsibility for items sold by the merchant. This person will also be the primary point of contact for the coordinator.

What if I have a special request?

There will be a section on the application labeled for special requests. Anything not covered in the rest of the application should be put there, such as "I want the same space as last year" or "I would like to be next to a wall."

We will weigh these requests and attempt to help as much as we can. The earlier a merchant informs us, the more likely we are to accommodate them.

When will I know if I have space?

Beginning on or around October 20th, the Merchant Coordinator will send notification emails to every merchant who has sent in an application. This email will state whether they have received the spaces they requested, but will not contain information about the map or layout. None of those details can be finalized until all merchant payments are in.

What if I didn't get the spaces I want?

The limit on number of tables per merchant is 5. No merchant will get more. No amount of cajoling, whining, or appealing to "higher powers" will change this rule.

If we have a question that needs to be answered (whether you can accept less tables, etc) we will contact you with the question, and let you know once we have received an answer and processed the application.

If we run out of space, as we have in the past, we will set up a Waiting List. We will keep all merchants updated on the state of the Waiting List and notify them as soon as possible if they get spaces. Spaces may become available as late as the day of. Certain spaces are always going to be requested and pursued, and we must honor a merchant's seniority in their spot. Please be gracious and understanding of the other merchants involved, too.

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Questions leading up to Birka 2017?

How are decisions made about who will get spaces?

Several factors determine space allocation.

1. We jury according to the majority of a merchant's merchandise. This is done via the explanation you have given on your application. Please keep this in mind when describing your wares. We have declined to give spaces to merchants who had only non-period goods, or described their goods in a way which did not help the process. It is probably **not** a good idea to use humor or sarcasm when describing your wares.

2. We will **consider** a merchant's activity level within the SCA. While we welcome non-participant merchants, we do exist primarily for our members, and therefore being a member will influence our decision. This is naturally contingent on point 1.

3. We will also consider a merchant's history with us. Being a Merchant with us in past years does not guarantee anything, but we will take the relationship into consideration. We will do our best to include merchants with a strong history and involvement in Stonemarche events.

Who makes that decision?

All decisions regarding merchant applications are reviewed by a committee made up of the the Autocrat, Merchant Coordinator, the local Seneschal, and the Baron and Baroness. This ensures that no single person's bias will decide a merchant's space allocation.

Will there be people there to help me unload? What about hand carts for me to use?

No. All merchants must bring their own workforce.

Hand carts are extremely limited and owned by the hotel. Be aware that there is no preferential use of them for merchants, and none may be free. Bringing your own would be safest.

When is the deadline for payments?

ALL merchant payments and primary merchant registration must be postmarked by November 30st, 2016. If a merchant does not make this deadline, their space will be forfeited and offered to someone on the wait list. We regret that we must be uncompromising on this, but too many people have abused our flexibility in recent years.

A payment which does not clear (a bounced check) will forfeit the merchant's space.

NOTE: As with all other merchant deadlines, this is a month earlier than previous years. This is in an effort to get merchants their completed Expo map.

Can I share my space with another merchant?

You may choose to. However, you must list all the goods you and your sublet merchant will be carrying in your initial application. Two merchants combined on one application will still only receive 5 spaces total.

What sort of wares should I bring?

Birka is an event focused on medieval reenactment in the Society for Creative Anachronism. As such, we will allocate spaces to give priority to those who have medieval, thematic, and appropriate wares.

We have received many inquiries from vendors from steampunk, new age, pagan, and fantasy roleplaying games. While many of our participants also enjoy those pastimes, we will give priority to merchants who have medieval, cultural, or SCA life based goods.

Is there anything I cannot sell?

We require that your merchandise be historically appropriate or contribute to the atmosphere of the event in some way. Our agreement with the site specifically forbids any presence of gasoline, kerosine, acetylene, propane, or other flammable liquids. You may not have them on the premises.

The site retains the right to refuse entry to or remove explicit or objectionable displays which would impair the standards of their establishment. We have never run into this situation. Let's keep it that way.

If you will be selling weapons, real or costume, you are responsible for compliance with all local, state, and federal ordinances. In addition to those, we request that no weapons of any kind be sold to a minor without the parent's presence and consent.

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Questions leading up to Birka 2017? (cont)

Can I demonstrate incense, candles, perfume, and similar items?

Fire regulations do not permit the use or demonstration of any incense, candles, or other combustible products within the building. In addition, we request that you exercise courtesy in demonstrating any product which may affect your neighbors. You may play music at a quiet to reasonable volume, unless your neighbors request that you stop. Please honor that request with no begrudging. If you sell scented products, whose use does not involve fire, please keep them covered except for offering potential customers brief samples. There are many people who are extremely sensitive to scents, and we would prefer not to drive off customers or staff.

Are we allowed to sell food?

Per our agreement with the site, we are not allowed to sell "immediate consumption" foods, and we are expected to support the hotel's food services.

If you need food for your own booth, by all means, but any food items for sale should be packaged for travel, and previously okayed with staff.

I'm from Canada - do I need to get a US money order ahead of time?

Due to the work and high bank fees in handling payments in foreign currencies, we frequently make exceptions on requiring advance payment if you are from Canada. Please speak to the Coordinator to ask for an exception. We will not accept CA currency onsite.

When can I set up?

We will open merchant check-in at 3 pm Friday afternoon. Before that time, you may not unload to the Expo. After you have gotten your event token, you will be allowed to begin setting up.

Can I arrive and set up Saturday?

The Expo center will open at 7 am on Saturday morning. Please do not arrive and attempt to set up before that.

Is there a loading dock I can use?

There are three locations you can use to load in, depending on where you park. If you are in the Expo Center, and you do not have an oversized vehicle, you can use the loading dock in the parking garage. If you have a large vehicle, you will need to use the loading dock to the left and below the garage doors, outside the parking structure. There is a separate loading dock you may use on that side of the building, accessible near the large vehicle parking.

Where can I park? Is it free for merchants?

There is a parking garage attached to the Expo Center. We have negotiated a validated parking rate with the hotel. To use this, you will need to bring your parking pass to be validated at check-in.

What is the height clearance on the parking garage?

The garage clearance is 7'. If your vehicle is taller than that, you must use the lot for oversize vehicles. Your vehicle must also fit into one standard parking space, so vehicles with trailers or long rear ends must also use the oversize parking area.

My vehicle is too big. Where else can I park?

You should use the oversize parking lot if you have any concerns about the height of your vehicle. We will keep a list of vehicles parking there, and if we run out of space, we will check the list and have other vehicles removed.

How soon can I see the Expo map?

Our goal is to have the map available to the merchants by late December. Our primary hurdle to this is merchant payments. If there is a delay, then most assuredly, there are many merchants who have stalled the payment process.

Please exercise patience in waiting for the map. We must get all entry confirmations and funds before the map may be finalized. If it is late, it is because we are still waiting on payment from one of your fellows.

Merchant Coordinator Urgent
Contact Information
(781)254-5384

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Questions the day of the event?

I forgot to preregister a person staffing my booth! What do I do?

You may register another person at the door, but they will have to wait in line and sign a waiver at the event.

I want other tables in the same island. Can I move?

No. Merchants are placed by seniority, space considerations, and safety. Please stay in the spaces and tables you are assigned.

Who do I contact during the event if a problem arises?

You may contact the merchant coordinator by either asking at the check-in desk for her to be reached, or by going to one of the assistant coordinators at their booths. Their booths will be marked with a (color to be decided) bicycle flag visible high above the booth.

I'm running late!

Call the Merchant Coordinator using the Urgent phone contact number on the lower right of this page. Let the Coordinator know that you will be late but will be attending.

Failing to show up with no call to the coordinator may weigh heavily on future considerations for table space.

I left something in the Expo overnight, and I need it!

Contact the Merchant Coordinator via the phone number provided below. Do not attempt to get into the Expo Center on your own, or to ask the hotel staff. They are legally bound to keep everyone out of the center until the Coordinator arrives in the morning to open the room.

What time are we packing up?

The Expo Center must be cleared of all belongings and event attendees (merchants, staff, and otherwise) by 11 pm. There are no exceptions. We are followed by another event which is immediately set up for the next day.

Can I leave early Saturday?

While we cannot make anyone stay, we would remind merchants that your load-out may impact others. It may lead customers to believe that the Expo is closing, impacting sales for other merchants. It may cause traffic flow issues in the halls and in the Expo. If you must leave early or arrive late, please do so quietly and courteously.

MERCHANT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY:

3:00 PM - Merchant Load-in/Registration

7:00 PM - Expo OPEN to customers.

11:00 PM - Expo CLOSED.

SATURDAY:

8:00 AM - Expo open to Merchants

9:00 AM - Expo OPEN to event

8:00 PM - Expo is closed; breakdown time!

11:00 PM - **ALL MERCHANTS and ALL BELONGINGS MUST BE OUT OF THE EXPO CENTER.**

Payments to:

SCA INC. Barony of Stonemarche

Mail to:

Lady Tegwen ferch Cydifor
46 Henniker St
Hillsborough, NH 03244

Absolutely no payments via signature confirmation/registered/certified postage.

Do you need to reach event staff?

Merchant Coordinator:

Maggie Faid (Lady Tegwen)
birka.merchants@gmail.com

Assistant Merchant Coordinator:

Leslie Birt (Lady Alexandra)
aunty.ember.3@gmail.com

Merchant Coordinator Urgent
Contact Information
(781)254-5384

Tables and chairs will be packed and removed by staff.

ALL MERCHANTS MUST PACK UP AND VACATE THE EXPO CENTER BY 11:00 PM SATURDAY NIGHT OF THE EVENT.