



MARCH 18-21
NEW ORLEANS

HPBA SUITCASING & OUTBOARDING POLICY

With full support from the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association Board of Directors, HPBA has adopted a formal policy forbidding suitcasing and outboarding at the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Expo (HPBExpo) to protect the investment of HPBExpo exhibitors and sponsors, as well as the overall integrity of the show. HPBExpo is the premier live industry marketplace for hearth, outdoor living, and barbecue products.

This policy safeguards the investment of HPBExpo exhibitors and sponsors and supports their success at the event. Accordingly, the **HPBA Suitcasing & Outboarding Policy** is strictly enforced with the help of onsite security, the Suitcasing Prevention Team, HPBA board members, staff, fellow exhibitors, and attendees.

Companies offering products or business services that engage in suitcasing or outboarding gain unethical access to show attendees. These actions reduce the audience available to legitimate exhibitors and sponsors, both in size and quality. HPBExpo exhibitors and sponsors have invested money and resources to participate ethically in the show.

HPBA prohibits solicitation, “suitcasing,” or “outboarding” by suppliers, manufacturers, or business service providers (including members and non-members) who attempt to conduct business at or in conjunction with HPBExpo without an HPBExpo exhibit or HPBExpo sponsorship.

Unethical Badge Sharing: It is unethical to register or provide a badge to anyone *other than* your company personnel or their immediate family members. Violation of this policy will result in penalty fees equal to the estimated revenue loss, as determined by HPBA Show Management.

WHAT ARE SUITCASING & OUTBOARDING?

“Suitcasing” and “outboarding” are unethical practices in which suppliers, manufacturers, or business service providers (including members and non-members) attempt to conduct, promote, or transact business at or in conjunction with HPBExpo without purchasing an official exhibit space or sponsorship package.

Suitcasing refers to non-exhibiting and non-sponsoring companies, stakeholders, or individuals who attend HPBExpo as attendees and solicit business in the trade show aisles, other exhibitors’ booths, session rooms, hotel lobbies, or any nearby or shared spaces.

Outboarding refers to non-exhibiting and non-sponsoring entities that host meetings, events, product showcases, or similar gatherings outside of the exhibit hall—such as in hospitality suites, restaurants, or public venues near HPBExpo—and invite registered attendees to leave the show to attend these unofficial events.

In summary, companies and individuals engaging in these unethical practices exploit the centralized audience of HPBExpo while avoiding the costs and responsibilities borne by official exhibitors and sponsors. These parasitic activities undermine the success of the event and the investments made by legitimate participants

SUITCASING & OUTBOARDING EXAMPLES

Show Management recognizes that violations may include commercial activity conducted in hotel guest rooms, hospitality suites, restaurants, clubs, or other places of assembly. For the purposes of this policy, violations can occur in venues outside the exhibit hall and beyond official HPBExpo program-related events.

Any hospitality suite, reception, training, or event planned in connection with HPBExpo, whether on or near official event dates, must be disclosed to and approved in writing by Show Management in advance. To request approval, please complete and submit the [Ancillary Event Request Form](#).

[SUBMIT YOUR EVENT FOR APPROVAL](#)

ATTENDEE POLICY

To qualify as an HPBExpo attendee, individuals must represent a buying entity such as retailer, dealer, chimney sweep, installer/maintenance provider, distributor, independent sales representative, or nonprofit organization. Independent manufacturer sales representatives must not represent non-exhibiting manufacturers or their products and must register under an exhibiting company or specify their represented manufacturer(s) during the registration process.

All suppliers, manufacturers, and business service providers (including members and non-members) are eligible to participate only as exhibitors or sponsors and must obtain exhibitor or sponsor badges. Suppliers, manufacturers, and business service providers are not eligible to register for attendee badges.

Please note: All registered attendees are welcome at HPBExpo; however, any attendee observed soliciting business in aisles, public spaces, or another company's booth will be asked to leave immediately.

The following activities are strictly prohibited:

- Individuals representing non-exhibiting companies may not conduct sales activities in any official event spaces (e.g., breakout session rooms, show floor, common space) or surrounding public hotel areas, including lobbies and restaurants.
- Displaying or advertising products or services outside of an official exhibit space within the Expo.
- Altering official HPBExpo badges, lending badges, or registering individuals under false pretenses (e.g., as company representatives) to obtain complimentary or discounted registration.

- Using deceptive or false registration credentials or employing unethical methods to gather information or gain a competitive advantage over a competitor.

These activities may result in the expulsion of the individual from current and future HPBExpo events. HPBA requests that attendees refrain from engaging with individuals participating in suitcasing or outboarding activities.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

If you suspect a violation of the HPBExpo policy regarding suitcasing or outboarding, please report it promptly. All complaints will be handled confidentially.

- **Before the Show:** If you believe there is a potential risk of suitcasing or outboarding activity, contact Show Management in advance by emailing expo@hpba.org.
- **Onsite:** If you suspect or observe potential suitcasing or outboarding during the event, notify a representative at the HPBExpo registration desk immediately. A member of Show Management will be dispatched to investigate the situation.

[SUBMIT VIOLATION TO MANAGEMENT](#)

WHAT SHOW MANAGEMENT WILL DO

The Suitcasing Prevention Team

To help enforce HPBExpo's Suitcasing & Outboarding Policy, Show Management has established a dedicated Suitcasing Prevention Team. This team includes industry leaders, trained volunteers, and security personnel and will be active throughout the duration of the Expo. The team will promptly investigate and respond to all reported violations.

Responsibilities of the Suitcasing Prevention Team include:

- Reviewing complaints related to suitcasing and outboarding.
- Taking appropriate action, including removing violators from the show floor.
- Issuing penalties for confirmed violations, up to and including suspension from future participation.

If a complaint is determined to be valid, the individual or company involved may be subject to the penalties outlined below.

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION

- Immediate removal from the premises.
- Involvement of security and/or law enforcement, if necessary.
- Banning repeat offenders from future HPBA events.
- Monetary fines or other penalties as determined by HPBA Show Management.