
HPBA SUITCASING & OUTBOARDING POLICY

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA), with approval from its Board of Directors, has established this **Suitcasing & Outboarding Policy** for the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Expo (HPBExpo). This policy is intended to protect the investment of official exhibitors and sponsors, support a fair and competitive marketplace environment, and maintain the integrity and value of HPBExpo as the industry's premier business-to-business marketplace.

HPBExpo is a professional trade event. Access is limited to properly registered attendees, exhibitors, sponsors, and approved participants in accordance with HPBExpo registration requirements.

This policy is enforced by a Suitcasing Prevention Team consisting of HPBA Show Management and its authorized representatives, including event security and designated enforcement personnel.

1. PURPOSE AND INTENT

HPBExpo exists to provide a focused marketplace where exhibitors and sponsors engage qualified buyers, distributors, installers, and industry professionals.

Unauthorized solicitation or off-platform business activity undermines the value of participation for exhibitors and sponsors who invest significant resources to participate in the event.

This policy ensures a level, professional, and well-managed environment for all participants.

2. DEFINITIONS

Suitcasing

Suitcasing occurs when an individual or entity that is not an official exhibitor or sponsor solicits sales, business opportunities, or promotes products or services in any HPBExpo official space or affiliated venue without authorization.

This includes activities in the exhibit hall, meeting rooms, session spaces, registration areas, or any official HPBExpo event locations.

Outboarding

Outboarding refers to events, meetings, receptions, demonstrations, or similar activities that:

- occur during HPBExpo official dates, and
- are designed to engage HPBExpo attendees for commercial purposes, and
- are not part of the official HPBExpo program or approved sponsorship/exhibitor activity.

Outboarding includes events held in hotels, hospitality suites, restaurants, or other venues when those events are intended to draw attendees away from HPBExpo programming or the exhibit hall.

Covered Entities

Covered Entities include manufacturers, suppliers, and business service providers, whether HPBA members or non-members.

3. ELIGIBILITY AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

HPBExpo is a qualified trade event. Attendance is limited to individuals who register under approved attendee categories as determined by HPBA Show Management. Qualified attendee categories include:

- Retailers
- Service Professionals (installers, maintenance providers, chimney sweeps)
- Distributors
- Builders and Landscapers
- Independent Sales Representatives (as defined below)
- Non-Profit Organizations and Approved Industry Guests (by invitation or approval of Show Management)

***Independent Sales Representatives** must represent one or more manufacturers exhibiting at HPBExpo and must disclose all represented manufacturers during registration.*

Covered Entities (Manufacturers, Suppliers, Business Service Providers)

Covered Entities may attend HPBExpo only through one of the following:

- Exhibiting as an official HPBExpo exhibitor; or
- Participating as an official HPBExpo sponsor

Covered Entities are not eligible to register under attendee categories, including but not limited to retailer, service professional, distributor, builder, landscaper, independent sales representative, or non-profit organization classifications.

Any Covered Entity that registers under an ineligible category, provides false or misleading registration information, or otherwise misrepresents their business classification will be considered to have invalid registration and may be denied access or removed from the event without refund. HPBA Show Management reserves the right to verify registration information and make final determinations regarding eligibility.

4. BADGE USE AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

HPBExpo badges are issued for individual use only and are non-transferable.

Providing false information during registration, sharing badges, or using another individual's badge is strictly prohibited.

HPBA Show Management reserves the right to revoke credentials and deny entry without refund if registration information is found to be inaccurate or misleading.

5. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

The following activities are not permitted at HPBExpo and may result in enforcement action:

- Soliciting business, promoting products or services, or distributing marketing materials by non-exhibiting or non-sponsoring Covered Entities in any official HPBExpo space
- Conducting sales activities outside of an official exhibit space or approved sponsorship activation
- Misrepresenting company type, role, or affiliation during registration or onsite participation
- Transferring, lending, or misusing HPBExpo credentials or badges
- Organizing or promoting unauthorized events intended to bypass official exhibitor or sponsor participation

6. ANCILLARY EVENTS & OUTBOARDING PROHIBITION

HPBA recognizes that networking events and hospitality functions are a valuable part of trade show participation. To ensure coordination and protect the integrity of HPBExpo, all such activities are subject to the following:

All events, meetings, receptions, or similar gatherings taking place within the host city (or surrounding metropolitan area) during HPBExpo official dates must be submitted in advance for approval by HPBA Show Management, regardless of the time of day.

Approval is primarily intended to provide visibility into activities occurring in connection with HPBExpo. However, events that conflict with official HPBExpo programming or exhibit hours may be denied or required to be rescheduled.

Non-exhibiting and non-sponsoring manufacturers, suppliers, and business service providers may not host or conduct events intended to engage HPBExpo attendees. Such activity constitutes outboarding and is strictly prohibited.

All event requests must be submitted through the [Ancillary Event Request process](#). Additional guidelines may apply.

7. ENFORCEMENT AND ONSITE RESPONSE

HPBA Show Management reserves the right to monitor, investigate, and respond to any suspected violations of this policy. Enforcement actions may be taken by a Suitcasing Prevention Team consisting of Show Management personnel, authorized representatives, or event security.

If a violation is confirmed or reasonably determined, HPBA may take one or more of the following actions:

- Verbal or written warning
- Immediate removal from HPBExpo premises
- Revocation of registration credentials without refund
- Loss of eligibility to participate in future HPBA events
- Other actions deemed appropriate based on the nature and severity of the violation

Where appropriate, HPBA may involve event security or law enforcement to ensure safety and compliance with event rules.

8. REPORTING CONCERNS & VIOLATIONS

HPBA encourages exhibitors, attendees, and sponsors to report any suspected violations of this policy.

- Before HPBExpo: expo@hpba.org
- During HPBExpo: Registration Desk
- At any time by completion of the Violation Form at hpbexpo.com/suitcasing-outboarding-policy

Reports will be reviewed and investigated by Show Management or designated personnel. HPBA will make reasonable efforts to handle all reports confidentially.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERMS

By registering for, attending, exhibiting at, or sponsoring HPBExpo, all participants acknowledge and agree to comply with this Suitcasing & Outboarding Policy as a condition of participation.