



## Conference Tips - Contracts and Mutual Agreements

Venues have a variety of names for what is essentially a performance contract between the venue and the organisation (client) holding an event. The contract spells out the terms and conditions under which your booking is accepted and what penalties if any apply if your event varies to the agreed dates and delegate numbers as specified in the contract.

The purpose of the contract is two fold - firstly it confirms the specifics of your booking in regard to arrival / departure, delegate numbers, food and beverage requirements, accommodation rooms, conference requirements and charges that apply to the provision of these services. Secondly the contract asks that you in fact turn up on the day and know what the costs will be and ensures your chosen venue is all set to go when you arrive.

When you receive your contract it is essential that you read it carefully and fully understand its content before you sign it. Normally to secure your booking you will need to pay the nominated deposit and return a signed copy of the contract. The deposit required will vary from venue to venue ranging up from 25% to some requiring 100% payment before your arrival. It is important to be aware of the critical variation/ cancellation notification periods.

Most contracts have wash down or release dates 90/60/30 days prior to arrival for contracted accommodation rooms. This may allow you to release back to the venue accommodation rooms not required without penalty. Late cancellation can be an issue for venues as they can find it difficult to replace lost revenue with new business on short notice and therefore rely on their cancellation fees to maintain room revenue.

Cancellation fees are normally applied when the contracted dates and/or delegate numbers are not met. A change of dates is usually viewed as a cancellation of the first date and a new booking for the new date and a new contract issued.

In certain circumstances terms and conditions can be varied before signing the contract and is generally done to meet specific needs and to the benefit of both parties. The contract/mutual agreement between you and the venue places a responsibility on your chosen venue to hold the conference space and accommodation rooms etc for your group and for you to arrive on the right day with the agreed numbers. A win/win agreement for both parties with no hidden surprises.