

VSS STEAMPUNK MARKETS

TRADERS' ETIQUETTE

Steampunk has one fundamental rule – be nice to one another. This is especially important where trading is concerned. Steampunk traders are potentially competing for money from buyers. This can easily lead to upset and unpleasantness so sticking to these guidelines on how to be nice is essential. So much so that breaches of them will unfortunately mean that you are not invited back to trade at a VSS Market. In extreme cases you may be asked to leave immediately. Sadly we must point out that this is within our terms and conditions of booking and you are not entitled to any refund.

Arriving: It is important that you aim to arrive at the correct time. It may not be possible to allow you to set up if you arrive too late. Of course we cannot always avoid delays and problems. Make sure you inform the market officers if you are having travel problems and they may be able to make arrangements for you. If you cannot attend at all then a simple phone call will help alleviate any concerns.

Setting up: Make sure you check in with the appointed market officers when you arrive and before you start to set up. There is always the chance of last minute changes etc and it is a real pain when traders set up in the wrong place. If you arrive early, before the market officers please be patient and wait.

Loading and unloading: Access is often a problem. It is very inconsiderate to leave your vehicle near the doors when you are not actually loading or unloading. Unload from your vehicle fully then move it away from the doors before you set up. When leaving pack everything down so it is ready to go before you move your vehicle closer to the door. Move it as soon as you are packed.

It is important that you do not block access with boxes of stock etc. You should unload into your stall space not the walkways between stalls. When you are packing try to stick within your space too.

Security: When you check in you are usually given a wristband. This identifies you as a trader. Wear it for the duration of the market. People without wristbands are not ordinarily permitted in market spaces during set up. This is for your protection since it is at this time that theft is most likely to happen. If you see someone without a wristband then ask them to leave until the market opens and if necessary contact one of the organisers.

Space: Stick to your space. Do not assume you can expand into “gaps” around you. This expansion inevitably impacts upon other traders. It may also break the terms of agreements with venues or their health and safety policies. If there is a gap and you would like to expand ask the market officers first.

Furniture: Where there is furniture for you to use make sure you share and don't take too many items. This impacts on other people.

Notices and signs: You are welcome to put up signs advertising your business in your own booked space. Banners etc are a great idea. However you should not put up signs directing people to your stall in other places around the market. This is very rude and aggressive and upsets other traders.

Promoting other events: It is very bad manners to advertise other events without gaining consent first. Please ask. It is unusual that a request is denied but politeness is a winner.

Interrupting: When nearby traders are speaking to customers it can be very tempting to join the conversation. You should be careful not to do so unless you are sure you are not interrupting. It is extremely bad form to suggest you may have an alternative product which may be of interest to the customer until they move on to look at your stall.

Obstructions: During the course of trading avoid blocking the front of stalls (especially other people's). If you are standing chatting to friends then find a space to do this. You should not set up chairs out in front of your stall or in the walkways between stalls.

Stall sharing: The VSS runs curated markets. That means we select traders carefully to give everyone a fair chance of making sales and making money. Our markets are also usually subsidised in price to help you have a more profitable experience. Stall sharing (booking one stall and sharing it with another trader who puts their own stock on sale on your stall whether they are there or not) is extremely bad manners, negates the whole point of curated markets and is therefore expressly prohibited. If you wish to carry lines from another trader you must negotiate this before you are offered a space to trade.

The Law: You have a legal responsibility to make sure that your goods are of merchantable quality and are fit for purpose. You must comply with all trading and business regulations. You must be able to give receipts and your address and contact details. You should be aware of and stick to specific regulations that may have an effect upon your business e.g. The VCRA and regulations on the sale of knives and blades, licensing laws and food hygiene and trading laws. You should have both public liability insurance and product liability insurance.

Conclusion: Be considerate when you are trading. This usually means that people will watch your stall for you when you want to pop to the loo and will let you know if they see a shoplifter. It also means you have a more enjoyable weekend. Where money is involved then tensions can increase. It can be distressing to see someone else making sales when yours are slow etc. It is essential that you stick to these etiquette guidelines since they serve to avoid tensions and make the weekend a much more pleasant experience for everyone.

Traders tips: *Stay friendly and smile lots. Chat and be pleasant rather than trying to sell. The sales will happen. If you sit behind your stall and glare at people then you won't make sales. Stand up to deal with customers, make eye contact and smile.*