

Cosplay Rules

We request all attendees keep the following *costume policies* in mind, whether they plan to participate in the contest itself or not.

1. Be respectful of all attendees, costumed or otherwise. Wearing a costume does not equal consent, nor does it mean the individual wants to be heckled or harassed. Be polite and courteous, and please ask for permission before taking photos of those in costumes.
2. All weapons and props must be checked-in at The Bridge! Please be advised, whether it's a weapon or a large costume prop, our venue policy requires us to inspect and approve all large/obstructive props, or any potential weapons (fantasy or otherwise). Using props used in an offensive manner will get you booted from Next Level Expo. Live steel is not permitted.
3. Keep it kid-friendly! Costumes and conventions are a great escape, and we LOVE to see all of the fun and unique costumes and outfits you guys bring to the event. But please, keep it *family-friendly*.

Cosplay Contest Information

Registration for the costume competition will be from 10am to 3pm in Main Registration/Conference Room #1 (just up the hall from the main events!), as space permits. Once we reach maximum capacity for entrants, we will compose a waiting list of back-up contestants.

Schedule & Seating for Cosplay Entrants: The first several rows of the main-stage will be reserved for our cosplayers participating in the contest, so that they may spectate and participate with ease. *Upon registering, your NLX Staff members will instruct you on when and where to meet up to guarantee your spot in the Cosplay Contest, as well as how to report for both pre-judging and photo opportunities with our photographers.*

Cosplay Contest Information Panel: At 2:30 pm there will be a panel in the green room (in Programming 1) where we will briefly go over all of the information you will need for the contest, including information about stage movement and will answer any questions you may have. All entrants are strongly encouraged to attend this panel.

You may enter the Cosplay Contest as either Exhibition or Craftsmanship.

Exhibition: We offer the opportunity for entrants whose costume is less than 40% hand-made to walk the stage to compete for the awards of Best Exhibition and Runner-Up. When entered in Exhibition, you will not be pre-judged. Instead, judging

is based completely on your stage presence/performance, and how well you strut your stuff in character! If your costume is more than 40% hand-made, but you only wish to participate in Exhibition, you are welcome to do so. Exhibition entrants are not eligible for Best In Show.

Craftsmanship: We have 3 divisions for Craftsmanship judging. When signing up, please indicate the level you will be competing at. To enter Craftsmanship judging, it is required that you have made at least 40% of your cosplay. Pending judges' discretion, you may be moved up to a higher division. Craftsmanship entrants are encouraged to bring at least one hard copy reference image of the character, although this is not required. Work in progress & process photos are also highly appreciated!

All craftsmanship entrants will be assigned a judging time slot and will be given 3-5 minutes to talk with the judges about their costume, with judging time based on division. Craftsmanship entrants are required to be present in the green room 30 minutes before the contest is scheduled to begin. Craftsmanship pre-judging will be taking place in the green room. Craftsmanship entrants are advised to be in the green room 10 minutes prior to their scheduled judging time and may leave and re-enter the green room after their pre-judging is complete.

If your cosplay has already won a craftsmanship or division award at another contest, it is not eligible for Craftsmanship judging, but you are welcome to enter in Exhibition.

- **“Novice”** – This division is for newcomers to cosplay and/or contests that have not won any awards.
- **“Intermediate”** – This division is appropriate for entrants familiar with the cosplay/costuming scene, and may have won 1-3 awards at past contests.
- **“Master”** – This division is for entrants who have won more than 3 awards at past contests and/or are paid to create costumes (this includes freelance cosplay commissions).

Awards, in this context, include any and all levels of award – everything from Judge's Choice, Division Runner-Up, Best in Division, and higher are all considered awards and should be counted as such when determining your entry level.

Green Room: The green room is a space provided for Cosplay Contest entrants to prepare for the show. Anytime before/after your judging time, you are welcome and encouraged to hang out in the green room with your fellow contest entrants.

Entrants are welcome to be in the green room while waiting for the contest to start and are required to gather in the green room at least 30 minutes prior to stage time.

Entrants are welcome to leave bags/belongings in the green room (or the adjacent storage/locked room) during the contest.

Please be respectful of others and maintain a reasonable volume. Some people get stage-fright, or simply need peace and quiet to concentrate and relax before going on stage.

Specific Audio, Visual, or Stage-Assistant Requests: Are you wanting to play a certain song, dim the lights, or need a stage-hand to assist with props for your stage performance? When you register, **let us know how we can help** and we'll do our best to accommodate your needs. For music requests, please bring or have quick access to the song or audio clip for our AV team.

Stage Guidelines:

Both Exhibition and Craftsmanship entrants are allotted roughly 30 seconds on stage. Unless you are presenting a skit, it is suggested that you use this time to display 3 poses.

Skits are allotted 2 minutes. Information on entering/exiting the stage will be discussed during the Cosplay Contest Information Panel.

Please refrain from bringing anything *messy* on stage, such as anything food or beverage. (Unfortunately, that does include anything confetti or glitter-related!)

No political or religious statements are permitted during your stage performance. Anyone who violates this may be disqualified from the competition.

Awards: After the Cosplay Contest, judges will announce all categories of winners and invite them to the stage to receive their prizes and commemorative photographs.