

Consumer Attendance Verification Scheme (AVS)

The purpose of this system is to deliver a highly cost effective attendance verification scheme that provides exhibitors with the confidence that members published attendance figures are accurate and true.

Audit Requirements

- A condition of AEO membership is that all members must undertake an independent attendance audit on all shows that exceed 2000 sqm of net stand space sold for which they retain majority ownership.
- This verification scheme provides a cost effective alternative to the current audit scheme providers.
- **You do not** have to use this verification scheme you may, if you wish, continue to use the existing AEO approved audit scheme providers.

Principle

- Organisers are not obliged to publish attendance figures, however if they do so they must be accurate.
- The verification of attendance will be established on an system-based verification scheme. The system-based scheme will comprise;
 - i) 'Box office companies' audited annually
 - ii) Organisers will submit 'attendance figure' for verification
 - iii) Random spot checks of attendance figures of x number of shows will be undertaken each year
- The AVS will verify the claimed number of individual attendees, no matter their reason for attendance.
- The attached 'attendance grid' is to be used when submitting and publishing AEO verified attendance data.
- The verification of attendance data will be outsourced to a third party company.

System

- The organiser must submit attendance figure/grid to the verifier within 21 working days from the end of the show.
- If attendance figure/grid is not submitted within 21 days, a fine of £100 will be imposed on the organiser.
- If the attendance figure/grid is not submitted within 35 days the organiser will be referred to the AEO membership/audit committee who will decide what sanctions should be enforced. Sanctions will not be applicable to shows that occurred between January 2011 and April 2011.
- The verifier will annually 'system check' box office companies.
- The verifier will spot check 'x' number of shows per year, verifying their attendance claim.

Verification Checks

Paid attendance

- Visitors must have paid a minimum 25% of the highest price advertised, if visitors pay less, then they must be claimed as complimentary and the complimentary verification checks will apply.
- Different ticket types must be used to reflect different ticket prices (unless a bar code system is used).

Onsite ticket sales

- Those visitors who purchase their entrance tickets at the exhibition.
- Organisers will keep a record of the number, price and type of ticket sold.
- Organisers will keep a record, for each day of the show, for each cashier, a cash sheet recording and reconciling the cash and vouchers collected against the number and type of tickets issued. This sheet must be available for audit.
- A record of money banked for each day of the show must be available for audit.
- The verifier will reconcile the claimed counted paid attendance against ticket money banked for the show in the organisers bank records.

Vouchers – onsite

- Visitors must surrender the voucher when purchasing the ticket.
- Vouchers must be separated by type and counted into daily bundles. These vouchers must be stored and retained in their counted bundles with a note indicating the number of vouchers in the bundle, these bundled vouchers must be made available for audit.
- Vouchers must have a single value (i.e. can't be worth £5 to one and £10 to another) unless it is a family voucher.

Advanced ticket sales

- Those visitors who purchased their entrance tickets in advance of the exhibition and visit the show.
- An advanced sales sheet must be completed and must record the number and type of advanced tickets issued, the name of the ticket outlet and the total value of tickets sold. This advanced ticket sales sheet must be available for audit.

Advanced ticket sales – Bar coded tickets

- If a bar code system is employed, the badge must be swiped on entrance to the show and a list of these attendees must be available for audit. The attendance list should include the ticket price, number of tickets purchased, name, address, telephone number and email address of the lead booker and/or individual who purchased the ticket, as a minimum only attendees/lead booker whose details enable the auditor to contact them to verify attendance is acceptable. This attendance list must be made available for audit.

Advanced ticket sales – Printed tickets

- The purchased ticket must be surrendered to gain access to the show and the organiser must collect and retain the whole of the ticket or the stub of the ticket. These tickets must be made available for audit.
- The price of the ticket should be printed on the section of the ticket the organiser collects and retains.
- Advanced tickets must be separated by type and counted into daily bundles. These tickets must be stored and retained in their counted bundles with a note indicating the number of tickets in the bundle for audit.

Advanced ticket sales – Season tickets

- Attendees who gain entrance to the show after having purchased a season ticket, may be included as paid attendance on each day they attend the show, provided that the organiser can prove attendance on each day. The fact that an attendee has bought a five day season ticket doesn't allow them to be automatically claimed as attending for five days.

Advanced ticket sales – Bulk sales

- The purchased bulk ticket must be surrendered to gain access to the show and the organiser must collect and retain the whole of the ticket or the stub of the ticket. These tickets must be made available for audit.
- Bulk sales, being multiple tickets sold to a single party for redistribution to attendees, must be sold in advance of the show.
- Bulk ticket sales must be different from other ticket types and be separated by type and counted into daily bundles. These vouchers must be stored and retained in their counted bundles with a note indicating number of vouchers in the bundle for audit (unless a barcode system is employed).
- For each bulk sale the organiser must retain a copy of the invoice or bulk sale agreement or credit card receipt. This must detail price paid and number of tickets.
- The above stated bulk ticket sales records must be made available for audit.

Advanced ticket sales – Bank statement reconciliation

- The verifier will reconcile the claimed counted paid attendance against the advanced ticket money banked for the show in the organisers bank records.

Complimentary attendance

- Visitors who enter the show free of charge.
- Where complimentary attendance to the exhibition exceeds 40% of the total attendance an attendance list containing the names and contact details of all claimed attendees must be submitted to the verifier.
- From the provided list of attendees a duplication test will be undertaken to check there are no duplicated attendees.
- A statistically valid sample of attendees will be contacted and asked to confirm their attendance to the show.

Complimentary attendance – Bar coded tickets

- If a bar code system is employed, the badge must be swiped on entrance to the show and a list of these attendees must be available for audit. The attendance list should include name, address, telephone number and email address of the 'lead' complimentary visitor who attended the show. As a minimum the organiser must provide sufficient contact details for at least one 'lead' complimentary attendee in each visiting group to allow them to verify attendance.

Complimentary attendance – Printed tickets

- The attendee must surrender the ticket to gain access to the show.
- Tickets must make the provision to capture the name and address of attendees.
- Tickets must be retained and stored separately from other ticket types in counted daily bundles, the number of tickets should be noted in each bundle.
- The above stated complimentary ticket bundles must be made available for audit.
- Exhibitor personnel, organiser staff, press etc will be counted as complimentary attendees and will have to meet the above criteria.

Records

- Records must be kept for a minimum of six months after the show unless otherwise instructed by the AVS administrator.

Complaints

- Member organisers may 'raise a complaint' against a fellow member should they believe their attendance claim to be incorrect.
- A complaint must be made within six months from the end of the show.
- The member organiser raising the complaint will pay a fee of £2000.
- The verifier will check the attendance figures of the show on which the complaint has been made.
- Should the complaint be upheld, the organiser of the inaccurate attendance claim will be fined £3000 and the complainant will receive a £2000 refund.
- If the complaint is not upheld the member who raised the complaint will forfeit their £2000 fee.
- The AEO membership/audit committee will decide if any further sanctions should be imposed including mailing exhibitors advising of the error and issuing a correction.

Fee Structure

- For every show that is within the AVS scheme a £200 fee will be charged.
- For any fee that is 30 days overdue a late payment fee of £100 will be charged.
- For any fee that is 60 days overdue a late payment fee of £200 will be charged.
- For any fee that is not paid within 90 days, the organiser will be referred to the AEO membership/audit committee who will decide what sanctions should be enforced.
- If attendance figure/grid is not submitted within 21 days, a fine of £100 will be imposed on the organiser.