

Anime California Masquerade Official Rules

Welcome to the Anime California Masquerade! We're excited you've chosen to take part in our show. Please read the following document and familiarize yourself with our rules.

Please remember, by respecting the rules and procedures of this competition, you help ensure that everyone receives equal and fair treatment. We want to give stage time to as many contestants as we can support, while attempting to provide a fair and safe environment in which to compete.

If you violate any of these rules, you will be disqualified and/or dropped from the competition.

Basic Information

The Anime California Masquerade is a skit and walk-on competition for showcasing costumes and acting talent, open to Cosplayers of all levels and abilities. Entries will be judged on their presentation and craftsmanship (optional) according to their level of experience.

For any questions, comments, issues, or problems, please contact the Masquerade Coordinator at masq@animecaliforniacon.com.

All contestants must comply with any directions provided to them by Anime California Masquerade Staff. Failing to cooperate with staff may result in disqualification.

Anime California is not responsible for any damage or loss to a prop or costume brought on-site.

Registration & Group Size

All contestants **must** possess an Anime California badge.

Registered Staff or Volunteer members of Anime California are not eligible for any awards and may only compete as Exhibition entries.

Groups may have up to 8 members, including both presenters and ninjas. Larger groups may be allowed on a case-by-case basis at the Coordinator's discretion.

Each presenter may only appear on stage in a single entry.

Only contestants appearing on stage (including presenters and ninjas) are allowed to be backstage. Contestants with large or unwieldy costumes are allowed to bring one (1) handler with them. Parents may accompany participants aged 14 and under.

All entries **must** turn in their paperwork, music, and documentation to the Masquerade staff before Saturday at 12 PM.

Content & Performance

All solo entries are granted **60 seconds** on stage. All entries with 2 or more participants are granted **2 minutes** on stage. You may use less time, but if you exceed the limit, you will be ineligible for any award. Additional time for large groups or Exhibition entries will be given on a case-by-case basis.

Costumes and content must be rated PG. Nudity and sexually explicit content is strictly unallowed. All costumes must be beach legal, and skits should not include overt sexuality or strong language. Entry content will be screened and inappropriate material will be grounds for disqualification and removal from the competition.

No live animals are allowed on stage or in the backstage area except for trained service animals.

No materials or effects that will leave a mess on stage, in the green room, or on another contestant's costume are allowed (this includes glitter, confetti, streamers, silly string, fake blood, etc).

No pyrotechnics or any other sorts of open flame are allowed.

All weapons must follow the convention's weapons policy. No real firearms or projectile weapons are allowed on stage. No metal blades are allowed, regardless of whether they are dull or live. Any functional bows must be unstrung.

Contestants may only enter or exit the stage at the designated locations. Jumping off or otherwise exiting the stage at any other location is not allowed.

All unusual parts of your skit (including planned falls, costume changes, empty stage time, or other special effects) must be reviewed by Masquerade staff before the show.

If your costume or prop has flashing lights, please notify the Coordinator in advance. A short warning will be read to the audience before your entry to protect those affected by flashing lights.

If you're going to have large props or plan to pre-set or leave things on stage, Anime California can provide you with ninjas. Anime California ninjas are NOT part of your skit and cannot participate other than setting things up and taking them away. If that's all you need a ninja to do, we highly prefer you to use our ninjas and not bring extra bodies just to bring a chair onstage. However, if you need a ninja for something more complex (such as assisting with quick changes or manipulating props during your performance), you must provide your own ninja. Our ninjas will also pick up things that are accidentally dropped, as well as assist contestants up and down the stage stairs.

For audio tracks, we accept only audio files in .mp3, .wav, or other audio format on USB drive (AKA thumb/flash drive). We DO NOT accept CDs, Audacity/Garageband projects, or movie files. Audio files must be under 10 MB. We cannot play or rip music off of phones or portable MP3 players. All audio files must be turned in by 12PM Saturday when registration closes.

You will not have access to a microphone. During presentations, the MC is the only person with a microphone. Spoken narrative should be pre-recorded or provided as a script for the MC. We recommend the free programs Audacity or Garageband for recording and mixing masquerade audio files.

Costumes & Craftsmanship Judging

Purchased “complete” and rented costumes may not be entered. Costumes that have been assembled (i.e. “closet cosplay”) or altered in a significant way may be entered. You may credit the maker of your costume if they have an Anime California badge, and they will be the recipient of any Craftsmanship awards.

A costume may not be entered in competition if it has won "Best in Show" or "Best in Open/Master Division" at another competition. It may be entered as an Exhibition entry and will not be eligible for awards.

Large costumes are allowed, but please be aware of that you will be required to move through standard-size doors and walk up steps to get to the stage. If you think you will have difficulty getting on and off stage, please let the Coordinator know, and they will assign a staff member to assist you during the show. You may also bring one (1) handler backstage to assist you with your costume.

Craftsmanship judging is not required, but is encouraged. You may elect to have only a part of your costume judged, such as a prop or wig, and members of a group may be judged separately.

If you are entering a re-creation costume, bring documentation. Documentation should contain at least one picture of the character or prop you have recreated, and may also contain progress pictures, alternate angles, or screenshots from the source. Documentation should be printed, and should not exceed more than five pages. Do not bring digital copies of your documentation for display on a computer or mobile device. We cannot print your documentation for you.

While we will make an effort to return your documentation to you, we are not liable for any reference books or other valuable materials that are not picked up by the end of the convention.

If you think a personal or business relationship with a judge will make it difficult for the judge to be objective, please talk to the Coordinator. They will consult with the judging panel and come up with a reasonable course of action.

The decisions of the judges are final. The judges may choose not to award a Best in Show or Best in Division award, or any award in a division, if they feel that none of the costumes entered are deserving of such an award.

Time Commitment

Participating in a Masquerade requires time commitment both outside the show and at the con itself. Be prepared to devote the necessary time at-con to attending judging sessions, rehearsal, and pre-show meetings. You may need to miss panels or workshops in order to compete, but it’s all worth it in the end.

Each entry choosing to undergo craftsmanship judging will sign up for a judging timeslot. Slots are first come, first serve. Backstage judging will be granted on a case-by-case basis to large groups, groups with unwieldy costumes, or groups who cannot make earlier appointments due to extenuating circumstances. If you miss your judging timeslot without notifying us beforehand, your entry will be disqualified.

Tech rehearsal is **required** for all contestants. All members of your entry must attend. Costumes and props are not mandatory, though we recommend bringing all large props and backdrops on stage to practice with them. Each group is allowed 1 practice performance on stage.

Division Placement

Entries will be placed in the Novice, Journeyman, or Master Division. **A group entry will be placed in the division appropriate for its most experienced member.** Any questions about division placement should be brought to the Coordinator for discussion. These divisions are designed to promote fair competition among equals, and judging will be conducted amongst a division's members, not against all entries in the competition.

If you're not sure whether you should consider a past competition to be a major regional competition or a local competition, please ask the Coordinator. The size of the event and number of contestants in the competition will be considered. For example, San Diego Comic-Con, FanimeCon, and AnimeExpo are considered major competitions, while SacAnime, Anime Banzai, and Anime Los Angeles are considered local competitions.

For this competition, any person who made more than half of their annual income from costuming in any of the last 5 years qualifies as a "professional." Any competitor may enter in higher division than they are placed.

In the event that there are not enough participants in any single division, the Masquerade Coordinator will group the participants by division in the fairest way possible. (For example, if there is only one Journeyman-tier competitor, they will compete in the division best suited to their personal level of experience.)

Divisions:

Master:

- Any competitor may enter in the Master Division.

Journeyman:

- Professional costumers may not enter in the Journeyman Division.
- If you have won any award in the Open, Master, or other top-level division at a major regional competition, or at any previous Anime California, you may not enter in the Journeyman Division.

Novice

- Professional costumers may not enter in the Novice Division.
- If you have won any award at a major regional competition, you may not enter in the Novice Division.
- If you have won more than 3 awards in local competition, you may not enter in the Novice Division.

Exhibition:

- Any presenter may enter in the Exhibition Division.
- The Exhibition Division is a non-competing division. Exhibition entries are not judged for either Presentation or Craftsmanship, nor are they eligible for any award. They must still adhere to all rules listed above. Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis at the director's discretion.

Judges' Instructions:

- For each award granted, please identify the entry and the competitor being granted the award. For example:
 - You wish to give a child a presentation award for a costume made by an adult. Name the child.
 - You wish to give a Craftsmanship award to the person who did all the beading on a group entry. Name that person.
- At the award ceremony: start with a **short** spiel, then name the **Award**, then the **Winner**. As the winner(s) make their way to the stage, feel free to talk as much as you like about the excellence that merited the award.
- If you think a personal or business relationship with a contestant will make it difficult to be objective in your judging, please talk to both the director and your fellow judges about the problem, and we'll come up with a reasonable course of action.