

THE MANUAL ON STAY TO PLAY POLICY AND THE ELITE SHOWCASE HOUSING WEBSITE

What is Stay to Play and why are teams required to use the housing service on the showcase website?

When Elite College Showcases are set at Heritage Yards in Plano, it means the City of Plano Parks and Recreation Department has suspended local league play for that weekend and the league games must be made up at another day and time. In return for displacing local residents from their softball fields, the city requires that Elite Showcase make their best efforts to guide teams and their families to Plano hotels. That way, Plano is more likely to gain the economic benefit of visitor spending. If you stay in a Plano hotel, we know you are more likely to eat and shop in Plano.

Teams that need hotel rooms are required by Elite to stay in approved hotels on the housing website and can be dismissed without refund from the showcase by Elite if they choose to circumvent the housing system to house their teams in unapproved hotels.

What's in it for the City of Plano and what's in it for the Elite Showcase participants?

Plano Parks and Rec professionals work year-round so the fields at Heritage Yards are in the best possible condition for the Elite College Showcases. Additionally, the Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau provides complimentary housing services for Elite College Showcase with the express purpose of placing as many visitors as possible in Plano hotels. This practice ensures that the City of Plano enjoys the benefit of the economic impact of this large tournament group. The economic impact, in turn, supplies the leverage needed to pre-empt local league play for three Elite College Showcases each year.

The Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau ensures the availability, convenience and reliability of the hotels in the showcase block. Competitive room rates and large blocks of rooms are basic youth sport requirements, but lots of double-bedded rooms, quick hot breakfasts and on-site laundry facilities are also priorities. And most importantly for showcase participants, all Plano hotels are within ten miles and fifteen minutes from Heritage Yards softball complex.

When is the housing service available for each showcase and how will we know about it?

The housing website will be live starting at least 3 months prior to the showcase weekend and will accept reservations until the cut-off date, which is two weeks before the showcase start date.

When a team registers for the showcase and is accepted or pending acceptance into the showcase, your team contact will receive a phone call from the Housing Coordinator and an email packet with a Welcome Letter, a One-Page FAQ and this four-page manual on how to use the housing system. Team contacts or team travel coordinators are urged to forward this packet to all team members, their parents and request their current contact information for the team roster.

What is the "cut-off date" and when is it?

Two weeks before the showcase will be the "cut-off date" and the website will no longer be available to initiate room reservations. Reservations at the approved hotels must be made by contacting the group sales person at each hotel.

After the cut-off date, the housing website will only show the list of approved hotels, the room rates and the hotel Group Sales Contact information. It will also say if any particular hotels are sold out. Contact the hotel Group Sales Person directly for reservations. The hotels are responsible for entering the reservations on the website after the cut-off date.

The hotels block many rooms for this large showcase group. A cut-off date, usually two to three weeks out, allows them to return rooms to inventory so they are not left with a hotel full of empty rooms, if their hotel is not sufficiently booked by showcase teams.

How can I make a room reservation after the cut-off date?

After the cut-off date, you must contact the hotels Group Sales Person directly to make reservations. Hotel information can be viewed on the housing website, but it will not function as a reservation system any longer. By this date, most of the double rooms are already booked, but if you call the Housing Coordinator at 972-941-5866, she can guide you by letting you know which hotels are most likely to have double rooms or a configuration of rooms that will suit your group.

How is the “cut-off date” different from the hotel cancellation policy?

The “cut-off date” refers only to the availability of the housing website. After the cut-off date, all new reservations must be made through each hotel’s Group Sales Manager. This contact information is available on the housing website at all times.

The hotels are allowed to set their own cancellation policy for large groups. The cancellation policy for groups will be different from their individual room cancellation policy and is published on the housing website under each hotel. This is the date by which group cancellations must be made to avoid being charged for the first night’s stay. Some hotels have their cancellation date set at a week or ten days and some have it set at 72-hours.

The cancellation policy allows the hotels to confirm that the credit card is a good one, so that they have some recourse when teams don’t show up to claim their rooms for the weekend. This gives the hotel time to call the guest and get the correct credit card information. There are many credit card numbers that have been written down wrong or have expired by the time a hotel is ready to charge for a hotel room that was reserved one to two months in advance.

It is very important that each responsible parent is aware of the hotel cancellation policy, since they are most likely to know the health and mind-set of their child and if there is a chance they will need to cancel their room.

Why is first night’s stay charged in advance?

Charging one night’s stay in advance, allows the hotels to confirm that the credit card is a good one, so that they have some recourse when teams don’t show up to claim their rooms for the weekend. This gives the hotel time to call the guest and get the correct credit card information if necessary. There are many credit card numbers that have been written down wrong or have expired by the time a hotel is ready to charge for a hotel room that was reserved one to two months in advance.

Can I make reservations at more than one hotel?

The short answer is NO. But if a team can’t get all the rooms they need at one hotel and need rooms at a second hotel, then it is okay. If the housing website shows that the same person has made group reservations at multiple hotels, we will call you to check on it. This practice takes rooms out of inventory that may be needed by another team.

Can I reserve rooms for the whole team at one time?

A maximum of ten rooms can be reserved in each block, but the team travel coordinator can return to the system and reserve a second group of rooms if ten rooms are not enough.

To make reservations on the Elite showcase housing website, the team travel administrator will need the following:

- A complete and accurate team title, including age group. Ex: "Houston Hotshots Blue, 16U."
- A complete and accurate team roster
- Complete and accurate contact information for the party responsible for paying for each room: name, address, phone number, email address.
- Complete and accurate contact information for the responsible parent: name, address, phone number, email address.
- A complete rooming list, including who is staying in each room.
- A credit card number for all rooms to be reserved.

A credit card is required in order to reserve a hotel room or a group of hotel rooms. There is no way around this requirement. Additionally, the team travel administrator should advise all parents that the first night's room rate will be charged one to two weeks ahead of the showcase. Each hotel has its own group cancellation policy and each hotel policy is different, so make sure all team members and parents are aware of the group cancellation policy for your hotel!

Once room blocks are reserved for a group, individual team members should be responsible for arranging for payment directly with the hotels, so that the team coordinator is not saddled with paying for the whole team. And finally, please note that payment for first night's stay will be charged well in advance of the showcase start date.

How do I find the tournament housing website for each different showcase?

On the Elite College Showcase website, www.eliteshowcase.com, click on "HOTELS" in the ribbon which is half way down the navigation menu on the left side of the site. Then scan down and you will find three different links, one for each Plano showcase.

How can I expect the process to work when I make reservations on the housing website?

It is just like any other online hotel reservation system, except that if a team travel coordinator is reserving a room block for a whole team, each room must have at least one player assigned to it and a credit card to guarantee payment. Room assignments and the rooming list can be adjusted with the hotel group sales person as the showcase nears.

Once a team travel coordinator completes team reservations on the housing website, an email will automatically be sent to them with a "transaction number" that identifies the reservation. This transaction number allows them to immediately return to the website to make any changes, but this is not the hotel confirmation number.

Each room reservation will subsequently be assigned a reservation confirmation number by the selected hotel. This usually takes one to three days. If the hotel is negligent in responding and assigning the confirmation number, the team travel coordinator should contact the Housing Coordinator, Anastasia Hoosman, by phone at 972-941-5866 or by email at Anastasia@plano.gov.

Why do I get two "confirmation numbers" for my reservations?

The first number assigned to you by the housing system website is a "transaction number". This is simply for initial organization purposes and is automatically assigned by the housing website software.

The second number will be assigned to each room reservation by the Group Sales Person at the hotel. It is the typical "confirmation number" that one receives upon making a reservation directly with a hotel. Once you receive it, each confirmation number should be forwarded to the person(s) paying for the room. It is their responsibility to call the hotel and give their credit card information for the stay, otherwise the team travel coordinator will be charged for the room according to the cancellation policy for the hotel.

How can the team travel coordinator protect themselves from charges other than their own?

Once the team travel coordinator receives the room confirmation numbers from the hotel, he/she should contact the team parents and make sure they understand they must call the hotel directly to give their own credit card number for their child's room. All the housing information and documents should be forwarded to the players and parents.

Team travel coordinators should contact the group sales person at the hotel frequently and find out which rooms have not been claimed so he/she can get after those parents. Giving the parents a cancellation date several days before the actual hotel cancellation date will give team travel coordinators time to cancel the room if a player's parent doesn't take responsibility for it. The group sales person can help keep track of this and will appreciate the communication. Call them early and often until all the team rooms are taken care of.

Team travel coordinators should make sure team parents understand that he/she is on the hook for their child's room. Cancelling a player's room one time can make a big impression on the rest of the team. We can always find a room in Plano for a player whose room has been cancelled, but it may not be at the same hotel as the rest of the team and they may have to pay more. Most families will learn from this experience and next time, they will call the hotel more promptly with their billing information.

Why is it so hard to get double-bedded rooms?

Out of the 34 hotels in Plano, only about 20 hotels regularly participate in Showcase housing. Less than half the rooms are double-bedded rooms in these hotels. Teams that plan ahead by making an early commitment to their annual schedule tend to register first and gain early access to the double rooms that are available.

Once most of the double rooms are booked, team coordinators might get help by calling the Housing Coordinator (972-941-5866) and asking which hotels have the rooms they need.

What if I have problems with or complaints about the hotel where my team or their friends and families are staying?

We realize you are restricted to their hotels we offer and it is important that our hotels adhere to the strictest standards in hospitality. They sign a contract committing to give you good service!

Please call the Housing Coordinator or the Sport Sales Manager immediately, if you feel something is just not right and you cannot get satisfaction from the hotel staff on duty. It is important that we receive complaints in a timely manner so we can address them immediately.

Housing Coordinator, Anastasa Hoosman, Anastasia@plano.gov, 972-941-5866.

Sport Sales Manager, Cissy Aberg, cissya@plano.gov, 972-941-5849.

The City of Plano has a curfew for persons under 18-years of age!

We strongly suggest that each team have their own behavior policy and curfew in place.

The City of Plano has a curfew ordinance that applies to persons 17-and-under. After 11pm weeknights and 12am weekend nights, persons under 18-years of age cannot be out and about except with a responsible parent or except in case of emergency.

If the hotel is not enforcing the curfew and you are not getting the good night's sleep you are paying for, we want to know!