

Philcon 2025 Masquerade
Saturday, November 22, 2025

Here at Philcon, attendees and participants are encouraged to show their fellow fans their costumes on stage and, if they wish to do so, compete for awards from our judges. No experience is needed; we'll show you the ropes and help you on and off stage. There will be experienced judges to review entries on stage and, optionally, workmanship judging on the costumes' technical work. Registration is required to appear on stage.

We welcome original designs, historical designs, and media recreations/cosplay. All genres are absolutely welcome!

The following information is very important. Please read it carefully. The Philcon masquerade rules are similar to those of other masquerades; however, they may not be identical to them.

Entrant Registration

Registration forms are available on the website and can be submitted via email to the masquerade director prior to the convention. Forms will also be available on-site, at the masquerade table across from registration. Masquerade staff will be available from about 3:00 p.m. until about 8:30 p.m. on Friday and from about 10:00 a.m. until about 3:00 p.m. on Saturday.

ALL members of each entry must check in at the masquerade registration desk during those periods and each individual must sign a masquerade release form. Please do not forget to sign up for a rehearsal slot. Rehearsal is REQUIRED to go on stage.

Presentation

Green Room: Entrants will wait in the Masquerade Green Room in Crystal Ballroom 3 to go on stage. We expect to open the green room at 6:00 p.m. There will be a costume repair table available for entrants to use and light snacks and water. Please eat dinner before coming to the Green Room, we don't want you to faint from hunger or low blood sugar in there or on stage.

Please check in with the Green Room Manager as close to 6 as you can, but no later than 7:30. If you arrive later you will not be able to see the Workmanship Judge and, possibly, will be scratched from the performance list. You will be given your assigned den number and entry number. Introduce yourself to your Den Mom after checking in. If you need anything, let the Den Mom assigned to you know. The repair table is for last-minute repairs, not for building or completing a costume.

Your Den Mom will let you know when it's your turn to see the Workmanship Judge, if you choose to do so, when it's your turn for official photography, and will get you to the

stage when it is your turn. Please follow all instructions given by staff and keep in mind that once you have checked in, you must remain in the Green Room until show time, unless you need to use the restroom. As such, make sure you are fully in costume, with whatever make-up and hair styling finished, before arriving to the room. After appearing on stage, entrants are welcome to return to the green room to relax or to take a seat in the audience, if available. You may leave your belongings in the room until after judging is completed, a member of staff will remain present to watch the room.

KEEP IN MIND that only entrants and staff will be allowed into the Green Room due to space concerns. The only entrants that may be accompanied are those in the young fan division. All entrants (and young fan chaperons) will receive a ribbon to indicate that they have completed registration and are expected in the Green Room. This ribbon must be on your con badge which must be worn down to the room to check in. You will not be allowed into the Green Room without it.

Please note that due to the high prevalence of certain allergies the Green Room will be peanut and tree nut free. Keep this in mind if you plan to bring your own snacks.

On Stage: Back stage, there will be stage ninjas at the wings to help you up and down stairs and ramp, move props on and off stage, and catch you if you stumble. We need to know before, or at, rehearsal how much assistance you will need, especially if your vision is obscured by a mask or by not wearing your glasses, or if your costume limits your range of movement.

There also will be stage ninjas at the front and sides of the stage to try to stop you from stepping off the stage by mistake. If you hear someone shout "Stop!" during your presentation, do so; you are in immediate danger of falling off the stage! However, if you dance, run, hop, skip, or jump so fast that the catchers cannot stop you, you are responsible for your own safety.

The young fan entries will appear first during the masquerade and the judges will immediately make their decisions before the adult entries appear on stage.

Constraints on Presentations.

PG-13. The masquerade is PG-13; there are likely to be children in the audience. Flagrant nudity is not permitted; remember, "No costume is no costume."

Safety and Weapons. **Safety is our paramount concern.** There will be absolutely no flame, fires, sparks, or other possible ignition sources on stage. Other special effects must be clearly described to the Masquerade Director and to the stage manager and tech crew at the tech rehearsal in order for us to determine that they are (1) legal and (2) safe. Strobe lighting, for example, has the potential to be harmful to members of the audience. Smoke or fog machines could set off the fire alarms. Glitter and other fine materials can be slippery.

If your entry includes displaying a weapon, the Masquerade Director must clear it ahead of time to ascertain that it will not harm other entrants, the judges, or the audience. No sharp edges or points will be permitted. Weapons that shoot or eject projectiles will not be permitted. If you intend to point a weapon at other members of your entry or at the judges or audience, you must demonstrate in advance to the Masquerade Director that the weapon DOES NOT WORK.

Weapons permitted in the masquerade that otherwise are not permitted at the con must be carried into and from the green room in secure wrappings and be peace bonded.

Finally, entrants may not throw anything at the audience or judges.

Presentation Time Limit. Each entry is limited to one minute (60 seconds) on stage. After one minute, your lights and sound will fade or we may use a large hook to remove you. Entries with three or more participants are asked to discuss their presentation plans with the Masquerade Director in advance. Remember, your goal is to show off your costume, taking too long on stage can ruin an otherwise good presentation. Your presentation should be no longer than sufficient time for the judges and audience to see your whole costume. Keeping this in mind, if your presentation includes a large group, the Masquerade Director may allow you a small amount of extra time.

Audio. Music and/or narration or dialog as part of your presentation must be pre-recorded (except for a script to be read by the MC). Please provide your audio as a file on a USB drive or email it to masquerade2025@philcon.org. Files should be in WAV or high bitrate MP3. We cannot accept any other form of audio. Sound must be turned in at the masquerade registration desk as early as possible so that the tech crew can program the show. The file should contain only the music and/or speech you want played and NOTHING ELSE. We strongly recommend that you bring several copies of your recording, to provide a back-up should one fail. Label your recordings with the entry title and your name. If you have provided a USB, it will be available to pick up at the masquerade table on Sunday for a brief time, along with award certificates for the winners.

There will be **NO** microphones available to entrants; the only person permitted to speak from the stage is the MC. The MC will be happy to work with you in reading a short script or to interact with you during your presentation; remember, however, that you have only one minute on stage. Please provide your script in black double-spaced type on white paper using at least 18-point letters in a plain and easy-to-read font. Put the title of your entry and your name at the top of the script.

Other Constraints. Entrants may not use substances, including make-up or costume elements, that could turn rancid or be smeared on or stain other costumes. All parts of your costumes must leave with you.

We discourage use of radio controlled or other wireless devices as part of an entry. We do not know what sort of interference will exist in the hall during the show. It would be unfortunate to base your entry on something that doesn't work when you are on stage.

Each person may appear in only one entry. If you have more than one entry, you must find other Philcon members to present the other one(s).

Never Surprise the Crew! Entrants should surprise the audience and the judges. Never surprise the crew! No exceptions to the "never surprise the crew" rule will be permitted and entrants who attempt to do so will be disqualified.

Masquerade Orientation and Tech Rehearsal

All entrants must take part in a tech rehearsal on stage on Saturday before the masquerade. This is mandatory. It's an opportunity for the stage manager and the tech crew to work with you to assure that sound and lighting support your presentation and for you to get familiar with the stage. Entrants do not need to wear costumes for the tech rehearsal; however, you should wear the shoes you will use for your presentation and any parts of your costume that will impede your movement or vision. Please bring a part of the costume that represents its dominant color(s) for a lighting check. Entrants will choose their rehearsal slots at the masquerade registration desk, on a first-come-first-served basis. Rehearsal will take place from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Full blackout will not be available due to emergency lighting in the room, but it can be made dim.

There will also be a workshop in main tent on Saturday morning for those new to the masquerade or who just want an opportunity to ask the Masquerade Director and Tech Director questions.

Categories and Skill Divisions

The masquerade will use two entry categories, *Re-creation* and *Original Design*, and the four skill divisions recommended by the International Costumers' Guild: *Young Fan*, *Novice*, *Journeyman*, and *Craftsman/Master*.

Entry Categories

Re-creation costumes are duplicates or design adaptations of the published work of someone other than the contestant. Their design is copied from a film, TV show, live production, comic, art, or other medium. Anime cosplay falls into this category.

Since the judges may not be familiar with your source material, re-creation entries require documentation in the form of at least one image of the work that you copied or adapted. This must be turned in with your registration forms. Please do not submit original images, books, etc as we cannot guarantee that it will be returned to you.

Original Design costumes are works that are designed by the entrant, even if it is inspired by an SF, fantasy, myth, or other source. Even if from a book, if the designer had no visual reference, then it counts as original.

Skill Divisions

Skill divisions protect new costumers from having to compete with experienced costumers, they exist merely to promote fairness. Outside of any single competition, division ranking is meaningless.

Philcon's skill divisions are as follows:

- *Craftsman/Master*: Any entrant may compete in the Craftsman/Master division.
- *Journeyman*: Professional costumers may not compete in the Journeyman division. An entrant who has competed and won in the Master or Craftsman division at an international competition (Worldcon, Animé North, or Costume-Con masquerade), Philcon, or another regional convention may not compete in the Journeyman division. An entrant who has won "Best in Show" or "Best Journeyman" at an international competition, Philcon, or another regional convention may not compete in the Journeyman division. An entrant who has won more than three major awards in the Journeyman division in international competition or at Philcon may not compete in the Journeyman division. Anyone else may compete in the Journeyman division.
- *Novice*: Professional costumers may not compete in the Novice division. An entrant who has competed and won in any division other than Novice at an international competition, Philcon, or another regional convention may not compete in the Novice division. An entrant who has won "Best in Show" or "Best Novice" at an international competition, Philcon, or another regional convention may not compete in the Novice division. An entrant who has won any major award in the Novice division at an international competition, Philcon, or another regional convention is encouraged to enter in the Journeyman division.
- *Young Fan*: An entrant who is under 13 years of age on the day of the masquerade (i.e., born after November 22, 2012) and who is not part of an adult entry may enter the Young Fan division. This division is for costumes designed and/or made by the young fan, either in their entirety or with assistance from adults. A child wearing a costume designed and built entirely by an adult should be entered either in the adult's appropriate skill division or Not in Competition. A young fan may choose to enter one of the adult categories.

Group entries must compete at the level of the group's most experienced member.

Any entrant may choose to compete in a division that expects higher skill levels. If in doubt about which division to enter, consult the Masquerade Director.

Judging

The judges will consider both entry categories and skill divisions in making their awards. The Philcon masquerade's philosophy is "excellence deserves award"; there are no predetermined minimum or maximum number of awards the judges may make.

Presentation Judging. The judges will be seated at the front of the audience watching the entries as they present their costumes. They will look at the costumes themselves, as well as how they work with the movement, music, and/or script. If you do not wish to be judged, you may enter "not in competition".

Workmanship Judging. This judging will occur in the green room before the actual show to evaluate the details and work quality on the full costumes or parts of costumes. This judging is completely optional. Please let the judge know what you are most proud of in your costume and about how you made it. If the entry is re-creation, please provide your documentation if you have not already. There will be limited time to review your work, so keep the documentation brief.

We recommend that, if in doubt, go to workmanship judging; even if you're not impressed by it. The workmanship judge's decisions are entirely separate presentation judges.

Awards. Awards will be presented when the judges have reached their decisions, this may take some time. If you're competing, we urge you to stay in the area and be prepared to be called back on stage for an award. Awards will be announced by skill division and will include both awards for stage appearance and workmanship.

Photography

Fan Photography: During the show, members of the audience may take photos from their seats, WITHOUT FLASH. As you exit the stage, there may be a separate "fan photo" area in the hall or lobby. Your participation in these photos is strictly optional.

For the safety of those on stage, use of flash photography from the audience during the show is strictly prohibited. The Masquerade Director will stop the show and have the house lights turned on until those using flash have been ejected from the ballroom.

Tips for a Successful Masquerade

Before the show, rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.

Remember, this is a costume show, not a talent competition. Never bore the audience.

Don't forget to enjoy yourself. Have fun!

We look forward to seeing you at the Philcon masquerade.