METROCON Build Book Guide 2026

What is a build book?

Think of the build book as an extension of your in-person judging. It is another opportunity to showcase parts of your cosplay and give highlights of the crafting process. It is not meant to be a step-by-step written tutorial of how you crafted your costume.

Why is it Important?

A build book is important as it helps the judges have a better understanding of your costume and prop crafting process. In person judging is limited in time so a build book also assists the judges in remembering your costume and crafting process during award deliberation. There might even be small details you missed talking about during the in person judging or that are hidden by other parts that can be showcased in your build book.

How long should a build book be?

METROCON rules require individual build books to be 15 pages or less (not counting the cover page) and 20 pages or less for groups. You want to be clear and concise and incorporate photos of those crafting aspects that you want the judges to know about. Please do ensure that the pictures you are including in the build book are clear and of a good size so that judges can clearly see and appreciate your progress. Think of the pages as snapshots that give an insight into your crafting process.

What should be included in a build book?

At a minimum you should include:

- References – Remember to include a front, back, and side view of your costume design when possible.
- Breakdown of parts & skills utilized with clear and well-lit photos of your build process.
- Front and Back picture of contestant (or model) wearing the finished costume – can be up to 90% finished at the time of build book submission.

What can I use to create a build book?

There is no one set way to create your build book. You are free to use any software you have at your disposal (for example Word, Power Point, Canva, InDesign, to name a few). We do require that you convert your final build book into a PDF when submitting for judging.

METROCON Build Book Requirements

- Must be 15 pages or less for individuals and 20 pages or less for groups.
- Must include several pictures of costume creator participating in the build being entered. Examples of these pictures include but are not limited to: photos of you or your model having the costume fitted (this can also be a mirror selfie) or photos of you working on a specific part of your costume (e.g. crafting armor, painting, wig, styling, sewing, etc.)
- Images should be clear and well lit.
- Must be submitted as a **PDF** to cosplay@metroconventions.com by **11:59PM** on **Sunday July 19, 2026.**

- PDFs can not exceed **5MB** in size.
- PDF Build Book must use proper file naming convention or risk disqualification from the competition: **stagename.buildbook.championship26 or stagename.buildbook.craftsmanship26**
- Build Book Cover Page must include all of the following:
    - Name of Contest (Metrocon Craftsmanship Contest or Metro Cosplay Championship)
    - Year (2026)
    - Competition Level (Novice, Journeyman, or Master)
    - Character(s) Name and Series
    - Legal Name (as submitted in application) & Stage Name (name you would like us to use for introductions)
    - Reference Image of your character
    - Last Page must be a front and back image of your completed costume (We understand there might be last minute details and fixes, but pictured costume should be at a minimum 90% complete)

Example Outline of a Build Book

Page 1 – Cover Page: This follows the requirements listed above.

Pages 2 through pages 14

- **Patterning**: In this section you can include photos of your patterning and brief descriptions of the process. You want to answer questions the judges might have such as:
    - Did you craft your own pattern? Did you use an existing pattern?
    - Did you modify a pattern, and how was that done?
    - Did you create mock ups to test the fit?

- **Sewing Details:** In this section you can include pictures and brief explanation of techniques you utilized in your build. Some examples include but are not limited to:
    - Type of fabric and notions used and why you chose them.
    - Specific hand stitching techniques used.
    - How the fabric edges were finished or hemmed.
    - Explain why the part was constructed a certain way.
    - Explain whether the fabric was modified by either fabric, paint, and/or heat transfers.
    - Explain embellishments added such as beading, gem stones, lace, etc.

- **Embroidery:** Some examples include but are not limited to:
    - Was embroidery done by hand or machine?
    - Did you buy an embroidery pattern or did you digitize it using a specific software?

- **Armor Making:** Some examples include but are not limited to:
    - Did you pattern your armor or did you use an existing pattern?
    - What materials did you use to create armor?
    - What materials and techniques did you use to paint the armor?

    - How does the armor attach?

- **Prop Making:** Some examples include but are not limited to:
    - What materials were used?
    - For 3D printed parts, did you model the image or did you buy it?
    - Did you model and cast the gems?

- **Wig Styling:** Some examples include but are not limited to:
    - Did you cut and style the wig?
    - Did you dye the wig?
    - What techniques did you use to create the design?

- **Make Up:** Some examples include but are not limited to:
    - What did you use to paint your body?
    - What techniques were utilized?
    - How did you achieve the scar shape?
    - How did you achieve the tattoo showing across your arm?

Page 15 – Front and Back Pictures of Final (or 90% finished costume)