

East Central College Theatre
STAGE MANAGER
JOB DESCRIPTION & DUTIES

THE STAGE MANAGER'S ROLE

The Stage Manager (SM) is key to creating an efficient and positive a production. Your ability to successfully lead and work with the company, although at times possibly stressful, will be of utmost importance. Your overall purpose is to work directly with the director, cast and production people to move a show from inception to closing. Aside from the obvious technical aspects of the positions, in many cases you will be involved in that call on human relations skills and diplomacy.

WHO MAKES A GOOD STAGE MANAGER?

- Someone who is organized.
- Someone who knows their theatre building.
- Someone who knows how to solve problems.
- Someone who has a basic understanding of all the technical demands of a production: lights, sound, props, set changes, make-up changes, and special effects.
- Someone with a firm, kind, polite, respectful, and calm manner who can encourage and lead a large number of people to achieve a high standard of backstage discipline.
- Someone with stamina and a sense of humor.

PREPARATION (3 WEEKS BEFORE REHEARSALS):

- Get to know the building. A large part of your job description is the safety of the cast, the crew and the audience.
- Know location of fire extinguishers and how they operate.
- Check that all fire exits are clearly marked.
- Make notes of potential safety problems. Pass on concerns to the appropriate person.
- Check the backstage first aid kit and note any missing supplies.
- Read job description for production positions.
- Become familiar with the basic operation of the following (ask the TD for training):
 - Operation of main curtain.
 - Where to turn on work lights, running lights, house lights, rehearsal lights, the stage lighting console.
 - The sound system.
 - Fly and grid system, masking
- Make arrangements to be trained as necessary. When in doubt, stop and ask for help.
- Check the SM box for flashlights and batteries and all needed equipment.

Production Schedule/Timeline

Assist with arranging a meeting with the entire production staff to create a production schedule, in which each person's tasks and deadlines are listed. Make sure that copies of the finished schedule are widely distributed.

The schedule includes all rehearsals, tech week, opening night, performances and final strike, as well as key events such as completion of costumes, sets, lighting setup, etc.

In addition:

- Work one tech rehearsal (usually on a Saturday morning) for checking light and sound cues and levels.
- You may, depending on the complexity of the production, have to call a few rehearsals of just your crew to rehearse changing scenes or props. These changes have to be orchestrated so that they will be smooth, swift, and economical.
- If there are any problems with lights, sound, props, make-up/hair or costumes, refer it to the Technical Director

Prepare your script for the run of the play. This will be separate from the rehearsal script.

- Photocopy each page of the script, and paste onto one side (only) of an 8.5 x 11" piece of card stock, and punch for inserting into a 3-ring binder.
- Arrange pages in a 3-ring binder so that the script is on the right side, and the blank side on the left, when the book is opened. The blank page will have all cues written on it, and any additional notes, as needed. You may also want to color code them.

REHEARSALS:

Encourage respect. Set a good example for everyone by being supportive to all.

Cast and Crew

- If the Technical Director has not given you a list, collect phone numbers and or e-mails from all actors and crew.
- Arrive at least ½ hour before call time. The SM is always first to arrive for each rehearsal and last to leave..
- Arrange set furniture for the scene.
- Help arrange props on and off stage.
- Call actors who are late.
- Record all blocking in pencil - you may need to erase later.
- Time each rehearsal. It's good to break every 90 minutes or so.
- Find out what's planned for the next night's rehearsal, so you know which scene to set up before leaving.
- Leave notes for crew heads of changes or that may have taken place when they haven't been at rehearsal.
- Close down all lights.
- Make sure that you are the last person to leave the theatre

TWO WEEKS BEFORE PREVIEW:

Continue to build morale of cast and crew. Help foster a good team spirit.

- Set up a table in the house with the help of the Theatre Manager. The Assistant Stage Manager remains backstage.
- Help Set up work lights for props and quick costume changes backstage.
- Help Tape down all extension cords (run overhead whenever possible.)
- Help Apply glow tape where needed.
- Remind all running crew, lights, sound, props, makeup, hair, special effects, set decoration, costume designer and dressers and ASM to be at all rehearsals from now on.
- Start timing each act.
- During the technical rehearsals, all cues are numbered and recorded by the SM. The lighting and sound people may also record these numbers (lighting and sound cues are numbered separately).
 - Sound cues are labeled SQ
 - Lighting cues are labeled LX
 - Special effects can be labeled SPE
 - Each may be given a color code.
 - Each cue is called approximately a ½ page before they happen and are called on “Stand By.” When the cue starts, you say “Go!”
 - For your information, the house lights, (although done manually) the pre-set lights, & the pre-show music may also be numbered and included in your cue book. Blackouts are also numbered.
- Stay organized and the next two weeks will go smoothly.

TWO NIGHTS BEFORE OPENING:

Stay focused and supportive to the whole production team.

- Make sure that the backstage area is tidy, swept and damp-mopped.
- The stage must be swept and damp-mopped every night by you and or the ASM.
- Inform cast and crew where they are not allowed to go during the run. They should be limited to backstage and dressing rooms.
- All crew must wear black, and good, sturdy quiet shoes.
- Inform the house manager about any special exits or entrances from the foyer.
- Inform house managers about when to seat latecomers.
- Do a last walk-through of the entire building. Ropes tidy? Carpets stapled down? Lighting instruments all safety chained? Fire exits clear inside and out?

DURING THE RUN:

You are the one responsible for everything and everyone to be ready and to maintain the director's intentions.

- Have a secure place for show members to place valuables.
- Be there 1½ hours before curtain or earlier depending on the complexity of the show.
- Inform house people before each performance about special procedures.

- Inform actors about checking props before house is open - usually ½ hour before curtain.
- Check that lights and sound crew have done their sound and lighting checks, and they are ready to go to first cue before the house opens.
- Check that special effects are ready to go.
- Check that all masking and set pieces are in the correct place and that all props are in their correct places. If not, respectfully ask props to remedy.
- Inform house manager that you will tell them when to open the house.
- No "visitors" are allowed in backstage area or in the booth. If someone should enter, introduce yourself and ask them if you can help them. If not, explain why it is important for them not to be where they are. For example, "I'm sorry, but safety [or fire] regulations do not permit backstage visitors, but we will be happy to relay a message, or deliver flowers to the dressing rooms."
- Give actors and crew a 30-minute call, a 15-minute call and a "5 minutes to curtain" or "Places!". Ask actors to respond to your calls, so you know you've been heard.
- At five minutes to curtain, the ASM will alert audience by lights or sound. Ask ASM to inform you when the house doors are closed.
- Start on Time: If you always start late, your audience will always be late.
- Sometimes the House Manager will ask you to hold the curtain. Give them a couple of minutes to seat people - it is less disruptive than seating them during the show.
- Any damage to set pieces or props must be repaired before you leave the theatre.

AFTER THE RUN:

- Be there for the strike (dismantling of the set and return of reusable items as appropriate).
- All stage areas should be cleaned, set pieces put in storage areas, stage swept, damp-mopped and painted back to black.
- Light and sound booth must be cleaned, as well as dressing rooms, bathrooms and lobby.
- Check with the Technical Director to make sure all tasks are completed before closing the facility.