

West Texas A&M University
Department of Art, Theatre & Dance
WT Theatre
Stage Manager's Handbook

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WT Theatre Stage Manager's Objective Statement

To successfully communicate between all entities of the production and facilitate the goals of the director. In fulfilling these duties they must remain un-biased.

1. Stage Manager in the Theatre Program at WTAMU

The position of the Stage Manager for a theatre production is to be held by a currently enrolled student in the Theatre Program of WTAMU.

Stage Managers will be assigned prior to auditions.

One Assistant Stage Manager will be assigned to plays.

Two Assistant Stage Managers will be assigned to Musicals.

The Stage Manager is not an Assistant Director. The Stage Manager is an organizer/manager/secretary that is the retainer of all information pertaining to a particular production in which they are assigned.

The Stage Manager will attend and moderate all Production Meetings for the production in which they are assigned. This involvement will allow the Stage Manager to stay informed of all areas of the production. Production Meetings are held once a week. The Stage Manager will communicate the date, time and place of Production Meetings to all Production Team members.

Communication is very important during the process of producing a play, musical or dance concert. To that end, the Stage Manager is responsible for keeping the lines of communication open between ALL members of the production team. This is achieved through daily contact with each member of the production team and sharing with them any information that they may need to successfully complete their responsibilities to the production.

The Production Team may include some or all of the following:

Director	Prop Designer
Asst. Director	Technical Director
Stage Manager	Cast
Asst. Stage Managers	Running Crew
Scenic Designer	Musical Director
Lighting Designer	Choreographer
Costume Designer	House Manager
Sound Designer	

Communication with the production team can be made in person, in writing, by email or by phone. Each Stage Manager must find the best way to communicate daily with each member of the Production Team.

The Call Board in the Production Hallway across from the Green Room is the primary location for written communication. All information on the Call Board should be printed and organized. Always include your contact information as well as the time and date the information was placed on the Call Board. If it is necessary to know that someone has read the information posted, include their name and ask them to place their initials beside their name.

Politeness in all communication with the Production Team is important. The Stage Manager will always communicate with the heavy use of "please" and "thank you".

2. Preproduction

The Stage Manager will meet with the director of the production as early as possible. The Stage Manager will be available early on to aid the director in organizing and announcing all the events of the production. They will be available to: produce forms, contact company members, set up meetings, make copies or do anything that will relieve the director of routine tasks.

The Stage Manager will discuss with the director how scripts will be given to the cast. If photocopies are required, he/she will provide personal copies in three ring binders. If rented copies are to be used, company members will sign out a numbered copy and will understand that the copy will be returned clean or pay a fine.

The Stage Manager will assemble two binders for the production in which they are assigned. These binders are intended to be the one location for all information pertaining to a production. They will be neat and organized. Keep in mind the Stage Manager will turn over to the theatre program after the production closes, a copy of these binders for archive purpose only. The Stage Manager should keep original documents for their own professional purpose. Assistant Stage Manager may create and keep a version of these binders for themselves.

The Stage Manager's binders will consist of a Production Binder and a Running Binder. Each binder will include a copy of the script. The copy will take the form of one page of the published script photocopied onto the center of one side of an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper. One copy of this script will be placed in the Production Binder and one copy in the Running Binder. This method will allow blocking notes & technical notes to be recorded around the outside of the text. A third copy will be kept separate in case new copies are required.

The Stage Manager's Production Binder will include a Contact Sheet. The Contact Sheet is a list of the telephone numbers and email addresses of the following: Production Team and Emergency Personnel.

The Stage Manager's Production Binder will include each of the following:

- Production Analysis
- Character & Scene Breakdown
- Audition Forms
- Cast List
- musical scores/scripts lists
- Company Contract
- Company Contract signature pages
- Rehearsal Schedule
- Production Calendar
- Media Release Forms
- Theatre Emergency Policy
- Contact Sheet
- Rehearsal Reports
- Performance Reports
- Production Meeting Reports
- Floor Plans
- Shift Plots
- Fly Cues
- Hanging Schedule
- Light Plot
- Magic Sheet
- Light Cues
- Sound Cues
- Prop Lists
- Preset Lists
- Costume Plot

as well as any other information relating to the production.

The Stage Manager's Running Binder is made up primarily of the Calling Script.

3. Auditions

Work with the director, musical director & choreographer to organize the audition process.

Work with the director and create an audition announcement with production information included and an audition form.

Prepare in advance the rehearsal space for audition space after verifying the director's needs. Place a table outside the audition space to sign-in performers and hand out forms.

Keep to the schedule set by the director for the audition. Inform performers of any time limits set by the director for the auditions. If required, provide an ASM to time auditions for the director.

Complete a Rehearsal Report for auditions and callbacks.

4. Rehearsals

Discuss with the director what they want to accomplish at each rehearsal and prepare for it in advance.

Post for the cast any information they need to know prior to arriving to the first rehearsal.

During the first rehearsal the director may choose to do one or more of the following, but not limited to:

- introduce cast, designers, guests
- read through
- table work
- design presentations

Be prepared to handout, explain & collect Media Release Forms and Company Contract.

Collect contact information from all cast members.

Collect any personal and medical information that is appropriate.

Arrive 30 minutes early for rehearsals and be prepared.

Unlock the space and turn on the lights.

Prepare the space for rehearsal in advance of the Call Time, as per the director's needs.

Post a Sign-In Sheet before actors arrive for each rehearsal, removing it at the Call Time.

Have actors ready to start on time.

Any actor not present or that has not contacted the Stage Manager by the Call Time, the Stage Manager will make the phone calls necessary to locate and find out why the actor is not present. The absence of any actor will be communicated to the director as soon as possible in case a change in rehearsal plans is necessary.

Each rehearsal begins with a Stage Manager lead time of announcements and information about the plan for rehearsal or upcoming schedule.

Keep actors focused on the rehearsal and know the location of all actors called for each rehearsal.

The Stage Manager will stay in close proximity to the director during rehearsal and keep production notes as stated by the director for other Production Team members.

Complete a Rehearsal Report for each rehearsal and email the Rehearsal Report to all Production Team members as soon as rehearsal is over.

Create a Rehearsal Report. This report will include the following:

- Date and location of the rehearsal

Time of Call

- Actual start time

- Ending time

- Number of breaks and their duration

- Names of actors called

- Names of actors late or absent

What section of the script was rehearsed or the type of rehearsal

Any questions or comments for the Production Team

Date, time and place of next rehearsal

Any upcoming events

Names of Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Managers

Contact information

As early as possible in the rehearsal schedule, secure rehearsal props for the actors.

An Assistant Stage Manager will be in charge of props during rehearsals.

Record all blocking of all the actors in the Blocking Script in pencil. Keep up with changes to the Blocking Script if the blocking changes.

Blocking Script will have a Key to identify symbols and abbreviations.

In Rehearsals where the cast is "Off Book", the Stage Manager or Assistant Stage Manager will be "On Book" and available to prompt the cast as they ask for it by saying "Line".

Line Notes will be kept and distributed after each rehearsal by the Stage Manager or the Assistant Stage Manager once the cast is off book.

Post the next Call on the Call Board before leaving the theatre.

Call will include:

- Time of Call

- Location of Call

- Persons Called

- Section of script to be rehearsed (if applicable)

- Date/time of posting

At the conclusion of rehearsals store props, turn off the lights, place Ghost Light and lock up all the doors.

5. Paper Tech

At WT, Paper Tech will be held on the Wednesday prior to Cue-to-Cue Technical. Those required to attend: Director, Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Manager, Light Designer, Sound Designer, Set Designer and Assistant Designers.

The purpose of Paper Tech is to record all the technical cues in the Calling Script required to call the performance. This may included but is not limited to:

- light cues
- sound cues
- followspot cues
- flyrail cues
- deck cues
- special effect cues

6. Cue-to-Cue Technical Rehearsals

The Stage Manager will arrive at the Theatre 30 minutes BEFORE the Cast & Crew

Perform all Pre-Show Check Lists before Cue-to-Cue Rehearsal.

During Cue-to-Cue Rehearsal, with the cast and crew present, using Clear-Com and cue lights, if appropriate, the Stage Manager will call all technical cues to the light and sound board operators, follow spot operators, stagehands, flyrail and any other cast or crew member as necessary. Rehearsing each technical cue one at a time until the technical crew is able to perform the cue to the satisfaction of the Director and Designers, skipping all dialogue not involved with a technical cue.

Following are examples of the "Standard Style" of calling technical cues to the crew during a production by the Stage Manager. Variations on the "Standard Style" will occur as circumstances change for different productions.

SM: "Standby, Light Cue 1."

Crew: "Lights Standing"

SM: "Light 1, GO."

SM: "Standby, Sound Cue 2."

Crew: "Sound Standing "

SM: "Sound 2, GO."

SM: "Standby, Light Cue 14 & Sound Cue 3."

Crew: "Lights Standing "

Crew: "Sound Standing "

SM: "Light 14 & Sound 3, GO."

SM: "Standby, Light Cue 14,15, Sound 3 & Flyrail 9"

Crew: "Lights Standing "

Crew: "Sound Standing "

Crew: "Flyrail Standing "

SM: "Light 14, GO "

SM: "Sound 3, GO."

SM: "Light 15 & Flyrail 9, GO "

7. Dress Rehearsals and Performances.

Arrive at the Theatre 30 minutes BEFORE the Cast & Crew.

Prepare in advance the following,
Cast & Crew Sign-In Sheet
"Do Not Enter" signs
Cleaning Schedules
Performance Report form
Preshow & Postshow Lists
Shift Narrative for each crew member

Post a Sign-In Sheet for the Cast & Crew on the Call Board before the cast and crew arrive.
Remove Sign-In Sheet at the Call time and phone any Cast or Crew not signed in.

Call times will vary based on the needs of the director and the production.

Confirm that the Light Board operator upon arrival at the theatre performs a lighting check.
Confirm that the first light cue is on prior to the time the House would open. The House would open one half hour before Curtain.

The Assistant Stage Manager will also check and set all running lights.

Confirm that the Sound Board operator performs a sound check, mic check and has the first sound cue cued up, if appropriate. The Sound Operator should also check for the proper operation of the Clear-Com system and back stage monitors.

See that the Wardrobe Crew sets out all costumes and the dressing rooms are in proper order.

See that the Prop Crew or Assistant Stage Manager presets all props for the top of the show.
All food props should be ready and safely prepared.

See that the Stagehands preset all scenery for the top of the show.
They will also sweep and mop the stage prior to each Dress Rehearsal and performance.

See that the Flyrail Crew checks for the safety of all flying scenery and presets all rigging for the top of the show.

The Stage Manager will notify the cast and crew of the amount of time remaining before "House Open" and "Places" will be called. This will be announced in all normal areas of the theatre occupied by the cast & crew every 15 minutes for the first hour, then every 5 minutes for the last half hour before "Places" is called.

The Stage Manager will check the stage for safety and proper placement of all props, scenery and wardrobe before the House opens. If anything is in need of repair or replacement, the Stage Manager will take action necessary to retain the look and integrity of the production and provide a safe performing environment. The Stage Manager will check the stage again during intermission before starting the second act.

Communicate with the House Manager to open the House one half hour before curtain. An announcement will be made by the Stage Manager to the cast & crew when the House is open.

The Stage Manager will, after the final curtain call of each Dress Rehearsal and Performance thank the Crew on the headset for their work before they leave the headset system. The Stage Manager will also thank all other crew members not on the headset system at the end of the performance personally for their work. Any notes on the performance of the crew will be given by the Stage Manager in person with respect.

The Stage Manager will, after each dress rehearsal and performance see that the Prop Crew properly stores all props: clears the stage of props, stores food, locks up valuable props.

The Stage Manager will see that the Stage Crew properly resets all scenic units for top of next performance.

The Stage Manager will see that the Light Board Operator and Sound Operator properly shut down their systems and lock the booth. Special care is to be taken when moving fixtures are used.

The Stage Manager will see that the Costumes are properly stored, Dressing Rooms are cleaned, makeup lights out, all electrical makeup outlets are turned off.

The cast and crew will not be dismissed without the knowledge and approval of the Stage Manager.

The Stage Manager will see that all auditorium and stage lights are turned off and a Safety Light remains onstage.

The Stage Manager will see that all doors into the Theatre areas are closed and locked before leaving the building.

The Stage Manager will fill out a Performance Report for each performance and see a copy is emailed to the Production Team before leaving the theatre.

Post the next Call for Actors & Crew on the Call Board before leaving the theatre.

8. Strike

Work with the Technical Director to organize the strike of the production after the last performance.

The Stage Manager will post a Strike Call for immediately following the last performance.

Inform the Cast to clear all their personal belongings from the dressing rooms before attending strike.

The Stage Manager clear the Call Board of all postings from the production as well as removing all signs from doors that were placed there from the performances.

9. After It's All Over

When rented musical scripts are checked out to cast and production team, the Stage Manager will check all the scripts back in.

A copy of all archived information from the Stage Manager's Binders will be given to the Technical Director upon completion of the production for the permanent files.