



# Tower Theatre

## NOTES FOR STAGE MANAGERS

These notes are designed to guide Stage Managers, especially those taking full stage management responsibility for the first time. You personally have the safety of all members of the cast and crew under your undisputed control on stage and also a measure of responsibility for the welfare of the audience, as the Front of House Managers and Stewards change nightly and so cannot be aware of every potential danger.

If you need help or advice please contact the Technical Co-ordinator for your show.

There are also sets of notes for Directors, Set Design, Lighting Design, and a series of Fire and Safety Notes. Downloadable copies of these are on the Tower web site. It may be wise to diplomatically ask your Director if they have a copy of (and read) the Director's notes. You might also like to read them so you are aware of what Directors should know about technical issues.

# TOWER THEATRE STAGE MANAGER'S NOTES

## January 2021

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## **BEFORE REHEARSALS START AND GENERAL NOTES**

### **Liaising with the Tower Office**

- It is most important to liaise with the Office well in advance if the set design requires removal of any seats in the auditorium - check with your Set Designer ASAP. Removal of seats requires agreement from the Artistic Director, as it will involve potential loss of ticket sales.
- Ensure the Office is notified of the audition dates, so rooms can be booked for them. Attend auditions. The Auditions Secretary will get the auditionees to fill out forms with their name, address and phone number and note if anyone has any dates when they are unavailable for rehearsals. S/he will give you the forms once completed. Auditionees will also be asked to indicate any other jobs they might be interested in doing on the production if they are not cast (i.e. ASM, Operating Lights, etc.)
- Either you or the Director should provide the Office with a Cast and Crew List, and send a copy to Laurence Tuerk to put on the Tower web site.
- Let the Office, cast and all crew know all rehearsal and performance dates and times. Rehearsal spaces will be allocated by the Office. If there is a day when the rehearsal rooms look particularly booked, discuss alternatives with the Director. Priority is given to shows in order of performance. Remember to notify the Office of cancelled rehearsals.
- There are 2 sets of Stage Manager's keys, allocated to the show in the theatre and the following show. These are issued to you by the office. These give you access to the Building, the auditorium, Props store and lower mezzanine tool store. Please return them to the office immediately after your show has finished.

### **Casting**

- When the Director has settled their casting be sure all cast know the date of the first read through, and all those who have not been cast are informed by the Director personally. Wherever possible, invite those not cast to work backstage (as they must have this time available or they couldn't have auditioned). Check with the Director that a few copies of the script are available at audition time - these can be used for the crew or sold to the cast later.

### **Budget Production Meeting**

- It is important that you have a meeting at least six weeks before your get-in. (The artistic/technical meetings with the show's individual designers occur throughout the rehearsal period.)
- The budget production meeting should take place after most of the design process is complete but before it is set in stone.
- The meeting should include the Director, yourself, the H&S Officer, the Set Designer, Lighting Designer, Costume Designer, Sound Designer, and a representative from the Artistic Team.
- The purpose of the meeting is to complete the –
  - Production Costs Estimates proforma and agree the specific budget for your show. This should be VAT inclusive. It will then be approved by the Financial Director and you are expected to stick to this budget. A completed copy should be given to the Office
  - Production Risk Assessment proforma
- Each designer should have an idea of the costs required for their aspect of the production.
- The Set Designer and Stage Manager are responsible for ensuring the set complies with Fire & Safety Regulations. If you think there could be an issue regarding the set design, contact the Tower Safety Officer as early as possible.
- If you need guns or gunshots as part of your show, then contact the Tower Safety Officer immediately.

## **REHEARSALS**

### **Rehearsal Schedule**

- At the first reading make sure all the cast have copies of the Rehearsal Schedule. This should have been decided in consultation with the Director. If there is a Prompt, make sure they have due warning as to when they are wanted in rehearsal.
- Rehearsal rooms must be left clear and tidy and with furniture arranged as you found it. These rooms are used for other purposes each day. All props and rehearsal furniture must be taken away, or stored neatly in a labelled box, at the end of each rehearsal.
- Prepare the Stage Manager's copy of the script (known as the "prompt copy") with all effects marked (this can be done using a photocopy of the script). During the rehearsal plot moves

(entrances, exits etc) and mark calls and cues etc. (this is important; if you have to miss a rehearsal for any reason somebody else may have to stand in at very short notice).

- It is recommended that you use the Stage Manager's Rehearsal Report (See Appendix), or something similar, to ensure cast and crew are kept informed of any information or changes that occur during each rehearsal, as not everyone will attend all rehearsals.

### Notes on blocking

- "Blocking" is what takes place in the first few rehearsals. The Director instructs the actor where they should walk, stand or sit during each scene of the play and the Stage Manager jots each of these movements down in pencil on the script. It must be in pencil because these moves are likely to change quite a few times as you go along. Some basic signs used for blocking are:
  - SL = stage left
  - SR = stage right
  - CS = centre stage
  - US = upstage
  - DS = down stage
  - ↑ = stands
  - ↓ = sits
  - → = crosses, goes to
  - nt = enters
  - xt = exits
- So use the initial of the character's name and the movement i.e. for character name Tony:  
T → chair SL = Tony moves to chair stage left. Use your own symbols for other notes you make.

### Props

The Tower has a diverse collection of props, stored by type. These are stored in rooms at the bottom of the stairs to the Basement, in the Lobby between Wardrobe and the Penny Tuerk room, under the floor and on the walls of the Penny Tuerk room and in a room accessed through RR3. The keypad code and key to one of the rooms is available from the Office. A list of what is stored in each location can be found on each door. Working weapons/blanks are kept in a safe in the Office. CDs enabling you to print historically accurate documents, forms, photos, packaging labels etc. are also kept here.

- Draw up a props list in consultation with the Director and Set Designer before rehearsals start and begin to resource and organise them (if necessary appoint a props ASM).
- Items can be borrowed in consultation with the Props Manager, who can also advise on making and adapting props. Please make a careful note of what you have borrowed and where you found it so it can be returned to the correct location when the show finishes.
- You will need working props early on in the rehearsal process - these can be rough approximations. It is advisable to restrict use of final props until the last weeks of rehearsal and the performance run to avoid damage or loss.
- If you are having difficulty finding a prop, you can put a notice in "Noises Off", which goes out to most Tower members, to ask them to look out for it. The Office can advise on how to do this. When sourcing props, a photo is a good way for the Director to see/approve an item before any expense is incurred. Try not to borrow expensive, breakable or irreplaceable items from the cast/crew.
- The final props should be checked (for being in good working order) and assembled for the Director's and Set Designer's approval at least a few weeks prior to the get-in. (except any hires which, from an economy point of view, should only be hired to arrive just before the get-in).
- At the Get-out please ensure you return all props in a clean condition to the exact location you found them (especially important if the items borrowed are part of a set e.g. glasses, crockery, cutlery) and notify the Props Manager of any items which have been lost, damaged or permanently adapted/altered.
- You should also notify the Props Manager of any newly acquired or created props which might be useful for other shows and leave those items on the left-hand shelves just inside the entrance of Room B05 for the Props Manager to decide whether to keep them and where they should be stored permanently.
- Do not dump unusable, dirty or unsorted items in any of the props storage areas after your show.

### Smoking on stage

This is permitted as long as it is required for the artistic integrity of the production, and subject to the following:

- The final decision is up to the local licensing authority (usually the council)

- Smoking is not permitted backstage or in the rehearsal room.
- Cigarettes must not be smoked anywhere other than on the stage, and must be extinguished immediately on leaving the stage.

#### Using Herbal Cigarettes

- Although these work well on stage visually, the smell of the smoke lingers and this smell can be off-putting and distracting for audiences in smaller venues. Using E-Cigarettes
- Be aware, some E-Cigarettes give out clouds of white vapour, which is not realistic. As the cigarettes are longer than traditional cigarettes, they may not fit into standard prop cigarette packets. Brands such as nu-cig have a glowing red light when the actor is activating the cigarette.
- It's obviously also important that non-nicotine versions are used, for the safety of the actors. If you intend to re-use e-cigarettes between different actors, ensure that they are sanitised (cleaned) appropriately.

\*Warning signs should be clearly displayed at the entrance to the auditorium\*

Source: Theatrecrafts.com

#### **As rehearsals progress**

- Monitor the progress of costumes, props, sound and lights during the rehearsal period.
- Please ensure the Sound Designer informs the office if any music is being used during the action of the show (i.e. performed or heard by the characters in the play). They do not need to let the office know if only recorded music is used between scenes and during audience entrances and exits, as we already hold a licence for that.
- Invite Lighting, Set, Costume and Sound Designers to rehearsals as appropriate.
- ASMs should attend rehearsals in the last few weeks before the show opens. Please ensure Lighting and Sound Operators are aware they should attend full-runs before the get-in, the get-in, Tech and Dress.
- In liaison with the Director, provide and send information for the programme to the Marketing Team (Programme Coordinator). The programme should include -
  - A list of cast, all technical crew members, and everyone who has worked on the set-up.
  - Any special credits (e.g. items on loan).
  - The length of the show, intervals, and descriptions of the settings for various acts.
 All spellings should be checked (especially names). You will be given a proof a few days before the programme goes to the printers. At this stage you can add set-builders.
- If you require large pieces of furniture, set, etc. collected, transportation needs to be arranged with the Set Designer in advance of the get-in.
- Your cast and crew may be asked by the Marketing Team to help distribute leaflets for the show. Be co-operative in organising this.
- You will need to send out the "H&S Get-in Run Strike" form to all cast and crew about a week before the get-in. This details essential information and timings for all concerned and everyone should reply to you saying they have read/understood the contents.

#### **Crewing the show**

- Organise crewing for the show by liaising with the show's Technical Coordinator. It is your responsibility to crew your own backstage crew, but you can ask the Coordinator to let you have names of people who might be interested. We have an extensive database from which we can provide lists of people for various jobs. Often you will be given details of new members who would like to work on the show – please do try to get them on board as this is the way we develop new talent.
- It is the Set Designer's responsibility to organise help for the get-in, set construction and strike, but contact them to make sure this is happening. Ask your Lighting Designer whether they need you to organise people to help with rigging on the get-in (The Technical Coordinator can provide a list of riggers if necessary).

#### **GETTING INTO THE THEATRE**

- It is essential to have worked out in advance, with your Set Designer, Lighting Designer and Director, a schedule for the get-in and tech rehearsals.
- The cast and crew are ALL expected to help at the get-in unless the Set Designer and Stage Manager agree with the Director that they are not needed.
- The Lighting Designer will usually come in before the Set Designer on the get-in so as to rig the onstage lights whilst the stage area is free.

- The van bringing the set from the Arches usually arrives around 10.00am. (Van hire is through XIX Logistics. Vans for the season are provisionally booked by the Tech Team and each show's Set Designer confirms the time it is needed. When shows are back-to-back, the incoming show unloads their set and then the previous show loads their set and returns to the Arches)
- After that the Set Designer should be in charge of the stage, and your cast, crew, and assorted helpers should be available. Make sure everyone has something to do, be it helping unload the van, set construction, helping the Lighting Designer rig, sorting gels, bringing costume and props upstairs, or even making cups of tea.
- Hard hats are available and should be worn. All ladders should be footed.
- Nothing should be able to drop on, or otherwise injure anyone, particularly a member of the audience.
- Ensure cast and crew take great care when taking food or hot drinks into the auditorium, especially on the carpeted areas. Any spillages should be promptly wiped up.
- If cast have food and/or drinks in the Dressing Room, care must be taken to protect the costumes and all rubbish put in bins provided.
- No alcohol is allowed in the auditorium or Dressing Room.
- Check when the photographer will be in and make sure that the set is complete by then (usually at the dress rehearsal). Make sure all the cast remain in costume after the run as the photographer may require posed photos.
- If strobe lighting is to be used the audience must be informed before entering the auditorium. There is a noticeboard beside the Box Office for this sort of information.

### **IN PERFORMANCE**

- From the end of the final dress rehearsal you are in sole charge. You have the authority to ask anyone to leave the auditorium, lighting box and dressing room area. This includes the Director, Set Designer and any visitors. No one is allowed on stage or in the Lighting/Sound Box without your express permission (excluding the Tower's Safety Officer and Company Officers acting in that capacity).
- In the Lighting/Sound box, there is a switch on the far left-hand side marked "Power for Desks". This should be switched on; the stage camera will then come on and the Dressing Room/SM room monitors can be switched on.
- During the running of the show the Stage Manager liaises with the crew and sees that all props are checked before curtain up. The floor of the stage should be swept before each performance and furniture should be checked to ensure it is all on its mark. A check list of jobs and props is recommended.
- It is illegal to have any alcoholic drinks backstage, in the dressing rooms and in the Lighting/Sound box when the public are on the premises (this is a contravention of the Health & Safety Regulations and also Fire regulations). There should be no drinks near lighting/sound equipment at any time because spillages could damage the equipment. Provide coffee/tea if necessary backstage. Make sure the cast/crew are aware of this and be alert during the run.
- A Sign-in sheet of cast and crew names should be put up on the backstage noticeboard; make sure people know that they are to tick their name off on arrival. Check everyone is in by the half which is 35 minutes before "curtain-up". It may be necessary to give cast an earlier call time particularly if they have a lot of make-up to do. In this case the call time should be explained to the cast before the technical rehearsal and also made clear on the sign in sheet.
- If the cast want to warm-up on stage make sure they leave the stage clear by 20 minutes before "curtain-up" at the latest.
- To prevent anything valuable belonging to cast/crew being lost, recommend that they do not bring valuables in but, if this is unavoidable, there is a security box in the Dressing Room. The key is on the Stage Manager's set and the box would be locked/unlocked at times agreed by you.
- Stage Managers, ASMs, and anyone else named on the fire duty notice must NOT leave the backstage area during the performance unless absolutely necessary and informing someone if they do.

## THE STAGE MANAGER'S PERFORMANCE TIMELINE

Here is a basic procedure to follow -

From 6.30

- Check that all cast and crew have arrived and signed in on the notice board.
- Allow lights and sound to complete any checks (perhaps including a blackout check to make sure all working lights are off.) Make sure you have turned off *all* working lights before you open the house.
- The Front of House Manager will seek you out around 6.30pm (Or 1.00pm for matinees). You will need to give them their headset.
- Do a 2-way radio check with FoH Manager and lighting/sound to ensure they are all working. Use Channel 2 and make sure the headset plug is pushed firmly into the receiver. If you are getting crackling, pull out the plug and reinsert. The volume control only adjusts what you hear, not the loudness of your microphone. If the other end says you are too soft, speak closer to the microphone.
- Explain to the FOH Manager –
  - How you want the opening of the house and interval to run
  - The time you want the doors to open and that you will let them know when you have called beginners so they can then start FOH calls in the bar.
  - The latecomers' policy for your show. (Most shows allow latecomers to be slipped in at any time after the start of the show, some may require them to be held until after a particular point in the play. This will have been decided by the director).
  - If the actors are using the auditorium doors as an entrance/exit and coming through the bar during the show.

Between 7:15 and 7:30

- Let lights and sound know they should be in the pre-show state (i.e. is there any music playing?)
- If any cast members need to be on stage and visible to the audience they need to take their positions before the house opens – usually 15 minutes before the performance starts. All other actors who are required at the start of the show will take their positions at the beginners call.
- Let the FOH Manager know that they can open the house. (FOH Managers generally expect to open the house at 7:15 but should be aware they do not open the auditorium to the audience until you give clearance). Ask the FoH Manager to inform you of audience numbers.
- Announce to the cast that the house is open (so that no one wanders onto the set)
- Ensure that your beginners are in the wings waiting and prepared
- At 2 minutes speak to Front of House Manager to check all the audience is now in the auditorium. (The same procedure should be followed for "curtain up" at the end of the interval), which bells they have called in the bar and if they are waiting for latecomers/stragglers.
- The FOH Manager will inform you, and the lighting/sound box, via the 2-way radio as they send the second Steward up. When you receive this information put Sound and LX on standby to start the show.
- Sound or LX (or onstage cast) usually take their cue to start the show from the Steward closing the auditorium door and sitting down, and s/he will inform you of this via the 2-way radio. Give the go-ahead to start.
- Warn the FOH Manager 5 minutes before the interval and end of the show so they can be prepared to open the downstairs doors.

7:30pm show:

The half	35 minutes before the start of the show. i.e. 6.55pm
The quarter	20 minutes before the start of the show. i.e. 6.10pm
The five	10 minutes before the start of the show. i.e. 6.20pm
Beginners	5 minutes before the start of the show. i.e. 6.25pm

3.00pm show:

The half	35 minutes before the start of the show. i.e. 2.25pm.
The quarter	20 minutes before the start of the show. i.e. 2.40pm
The five	10 minutes before the start of the show. i.e. 2.50pm
Beginners	5 minutes before the start of the show. i.e. 2.55pm

### Holding a show

- Occasionally you will need to delay allowing the audience into the auditorium. (E.g. because a cast member or Sound or LX person is late, or there is a technical issue on stage). If there is a delay, announce it so that everyone is aware of the situation.
- Liaise with the FOH Manager as they will need to keep the audience informed. You may have to open the auditorium even though someone has not arrived as the bar can become uncomfortably full. Check the FOH Manager knows to warn the audience that the show will be late starting.
- It is up to you to decide whether to hold the show or start it e.g. if there are a lot of latecomers.
- Keep the backstage calls as normal but also update the cast on when you expect the show to actually start. **You cannot start a show unless all cast and crew are present.**

### The Interval

- Unless specifically agreed with the Director the interval lasts 15 minutes.
- The actors will receive a beginners' call 10 minutes after the first half came down.
- At this point, tell the FOH Manager they have 5 minutes before the show restarts. The FOH Manager will then begin the bar calls, telling you if there are stragglers etc.
- The system for starting the second half of the show is usually a repeat of the start of the show. If anything is different, explain this to the FOH Manager when issuing the headset. Again, when the FOH Manager tells you they are about to send the Steward up, you to give Sound or LX their standby for starting the show.

### After the show

- Remind the cast and crew of their call time for the next performance.
- Ensure all 2-way radios are returned, switched off and put in the docking station in the Stage Manager's room to charge. This should be left switched on. There are sterile wipes on the shelf to clean the earpieces.

## THE STRIKE

### Prior to the strike

- As Stage Manager, you are the person responsible for leaving the theatre clear, tidy, clean and ready for the next production.
- If you have borrowed or hired furniture, it is your show's responsibility to return it, so don't forget to make arrangements for this. The safety of all furniture and properties used are your responsibility: to keep our goodwill we must return all borrowed and hired items to their rightful owners in good condition and as soon as possible. Liase with the Set Designer to ensure this happens.
- Usually most of the strike will happen after the last performance. There is usually a van on Sunday morning to return flats and furniture to the Arches, so you will need to arrange for people to be around the following morning too. Warn the cast about this well in advance so they keep the time free.
- Before the strike, talk to the Lighting, Sound and Set Designers to ensure they have liaised with the incoming show to establish if anything needs to be left up or on stage to reuse. Designers generally come in to help on the strike, but this is not guaranteed.
- Write a list allocating tasks to members of the cast, crew and the Director (do not include lighting and sound crew who have separate responsibilities). Broadly speaking the areas are set, lights, sound, props, wardrobe and cleaning the dressing room and Stage Manager's room.
- Put a list on the board in the dressing room on the day of the final performance and tell each cast member what you have assigned them. Obviously, give the more technical and difficult tasks to people who are capable of doing them; cast who are not good on lifting or heavy work clean the dressing rooms or help wardrobe. ALL cast and crew must help with the strike.
- Before starting the strike, druggets should be put over the first 2 rows of seats to protect them. There are 6 of these, kept in a box in the lower mezz.
- Black rubbish bags should be taken down the back stairs to the large bin in the car park. The key for this is hanging on the right-hand side door frame. Recycling bags should go outside at the front of the building, in front of the door that does not open (I.e. not the fire exit).

### The Strike

- You may wish to begin the strike as soon as the audience is clear. It is traditional to allow the cast half an hour in the bar before they help with the strike. Tell them at what time they must come back and send someone to round them up if they are tardy. This includes the Director.



- No one, Director included, has any authority over the strike (except the Technical Management Team or specifically authorised deputy) above your instructions and those of the Set Designer who should share the responsibility for the strike with you. (Lighting and Sound Designers should supervise their equipment strikes)
- Remind all cast and crew that they are not insured in case of accident unless they are Company or "Friends" members. Although other people are legally covered the insurance company will probably plead "own negligence" except in very rare cases.
- Do not allow friends of the cast who have no experience at Tower strikes to help. They mean well, but can be more hazard than help.
- Some flats go into the Lower mezzanine, lights, sound and blacks belong on the Upper mezzanine. All other set items are returned to the Arches, broken up and disposed of, or passed on to the next show (The Set Designers should have already liaised about this).
- All backstage areas should be cleared out, cleaned, the rubbish bagged up and the shelves tidied. The fridge should be emptied; any food or other perishable items left over must be disposed of or given away.
- The Stage Manager should sort out the props, returning any borrowed props to their rightful owners. Replace anything that has been borrowed and broken out of the production budget.
- Costumes should be cleared from the dressing rooms, preferably via hangers and taken wherever the Costume Designer has specified.
- The lighting/sound control position must be left clean at the end of the strike (this should be done by the Lighting and Sound Operators).
- Sweep the stage. The floor will need to be repainted back to black if it has been painted another colour for your show; liaise with the Set Designer as to who will do this.
- Return your set of SM keys to the Tower office as soon as possible.

### **ENTERING / EXITING THE BUILDING**

The intruder alarm is set by the last person to leave the building and disarmed by the first person entering the building.

#### **Entering**

- Have the front door key and the current entry code ready.
- Open the door as usual – you will hear a loud entry tone.
- Move swiftly to the small cream and grey box, near the swing door at the top of the steps, marked Texecom. It has a bright green LED display.
- Pull down the flap and enter the code you will have been given by the office. Each button should cause a beep. The alarm should now stop.

#### **Leaving**

- Make sure all windows are shut, heating/air con is switched off and all lights are off.
- Make sure that all external doors are locked – there are 6:
  - Door at the top of the fire escape from the auditorium
  - Back door of the Smith studio
  - Back gate
  - Door outside Meeting room
  - Penny Tuerk Room (RR 2) (exit to stairwell)
  - Door near Rehearsal Room 3 (exit to stairwell)
- Before setting the alarm ensure that you are the last person to leave the building.
- Go to the Texecom console as above and type in the same code. You should get a message saying "do you want to arm system" at which point you press the "yes" button (bottom left). There will be an exit tone.
- Leave the building and shut the door – listen until you hear the exit tone cease after a few seconds.
- Lock the door with the front door key. YOU MUST apply a small amount of pressure to the door to ensure it is fitting snugly into the door frame for the lock to properly engage. Either push lightly on the door or apply a little pressure around the area where the keyhole is located. You will know that this is enough pressure because the key will turn easily in the lock.
- DO NOT leave the building unlocked especially if the alarm has failed to set. (Occasionally you get a message because a door has been left open; it will tell you it's number and the location of that detector can be read from the list on the metal box to the left of the console. If, when you have closed the door, the system will still not let you set it, you will have to press "No" to the question above and leave the premises unalarmed.

- In the event that the alarm has failed to set, and you have therefore left the building unalarmed, you must notify the Tower Theatre Office as soon as possible by emailing them: [info@towertheatre.org](mailto:info@towertheatre.org)

## **BUDGETING**

The budget for each show is discussed and agreed at the Production Meeting. The team (Director, Designers, and Stage Manager etc.) set their priorities and jointly agree priorities, so money is spent wisely and to maximum effect; balancing creativity and reasonable expenditure. There is no “fixed” budget; the Financial Director and Artistic Director will then agree, or not, this budget.

If you can share the cost of something with another show, it can be split between 2 budgets.

### **What to put in the budget**

For hired items, don't forget the cost of delivery and collection if you are unable to do this yourselves.

On some shows, you may need to consider the cost of

- Hire of scripts, scores or band parts
- Musicians' expenses
- Special effects (pyrotechnics etc.)
- Lighting/Sound hire

The following items are either charged to the overall Tower funds or will have already been taken into account by the Artistic Team

- Play royalties and Performing Right Fees
- Replacement lamps for stage lighting
- Basic publicity and Programmes

### **Stage Manager's expenses**

All incidental expenses must be receipted and, at the end of the production, collated, listed in detail on a Claims form (these are kept in the Office) then passed to the Office for authorisation.

- All receipts should be numbered on the accounts with corresponding numbers on the receipts themselves.

The following items cannot be claimed for

- Scripts
- Haircuts
- Personal travel expenses
- Teas (food, coffee etc) other than where required as a prop - the cast and crew must pay for these themselves.
- Clothing - unless Wardrobe has specifically authorised a member of the cast to purchase an item of clothing, the costs are not recoverable. Cast members are expected to supply their own tights, knickers, hairpieces, hairnets, modern accessories, etc.
- If in doubt as to whether an item is recoverable, check first with the Tower office.

## **FIRE AND SAFETY**

The Council checks on the safety of the building and its equipment, not individual productions - the responsibility for Risk Assessment and complying with regulations is solely down to us.

- All theatre equipment must be used in a way that does not endanger the health and safety of any person. On seeing a safety hazard or potential safety hazard it is the duty of anybody using the theatre to take appropriate action to make the equipment safe.
- After taking such action, the details should be reported to the Stage Manager and, if electrical equipment is involved, to the lighting crew.
- If it is not possible to rectify any hazard at once, it must be reported immediately to the Stage Manager and, if members of the public are present, to the Front of House Manager.
- Action must then be taken by the Stage Manager or Front of House Manager to keep people clear of the hazard, and they should contact a member of the theatre competent to make the equipment safe.
- The safety of the audience, cast and crew must always be considered to be of the utmost importance.
- The Tower Theatre's Health & Safety Officer can give advice on any safety related issue

## **Basic Principles**

- The safety of the audience, cast and crew must always be the primary consideration
- Common sense and forethought are our best fire prevention.
- In case of emergency, there should be clear gangways for any member of the audience cast or crew to make a rapid escape from wherever they happen to be.
- Do not ever wedge open Fire Doors, they are there for a purpose.
- Never block fire exits or access to fire extinguishers.
- Any potential obstructions backstage should be painted white or white reflective tape should be used. Minimum exit clearances must be maintained. You may not place anything in the fire lane (even temporarily).
- Corridors must be kept clear.
- Litter should be kept to a minimum and in metal bins.
- Use of naked flame on stage is discouraged except where essential to the artistic integrity of the production. The Stage Manager is responsible for lighting/extinguishing props if lit off-stage. If lit by cast on stage, the action must be rehearsed and appropriate means of elimination of flame readily available – i.e. fire extinguisher/sand bucket.
- Due to the law prohibiting public smoking, shows that contain lit cigarettes require agreement from the Local Council. Cigarettes and matches being used on stage require ashtrays with sand or KY jelly or wet cotton wool (remember to re-wet it each night). Cigarettes must not be smoked anywhere other than on the stage, and must be extinguished immediately on leaving the stage.

## **Fire Drills**

- It is a legal requirement that someone filling the role of Fire Officer is present in the wings with an extinguisher nearby at all times. This is usually the Stage Manager or someone they have designated.
- A Fire Drill Notice should be posted in a prominent place on the backstage notice board (A blank form is in the Appendix). Anyone named on this notice must be in the building for the duration of the performance. Remember there is no point in allocating fire drill jobs to people in the lighting/sound box as they are too far from backstage.
- Familiarise them, and yourself, with the CO2 and water fire extinguishers on stage and backstage and how to use them. There is a fire blanket in the Stage Manager's Room.
- Before a dress rehearsal the Stage Manager should talk through a fire drill with those people named on the drill notice, making certain they are all aware of their specific duties. This drill should then be practised before the show opens.
- When carrying out the fire drill, make sure everyone knows what task they have to do in the event of a fire. Remind everyone that in the event of a fire you say there has been an "INCIDENT". NEVER use the word "FIRE", especially publicly, as this tends to create panic.
- As Stage Manager you are responsible for the stage and backstage area in the event of a fire during the run. Front of House are responsible for the audience.
- The Fire Drill practice note should be kept by you and, at the end of the run, should be left for the Tower Safety Officer in the Tower Office.
- Consult with the Tower's Safety Officer well in advance so that the appropriate licences may be obtained where necessary.

## **AFTER THE SHOW HAS ENDED**

It would be very helpful if you could email either the show's Technical Coordinator or the Technical Manager the following information –

- Name of the production
- Did new members working on the show have a positive experience; would they be willing to e.g. ASM again and/or do they have the interest/potential to become a Stage Manager?
- Were there any concerns regarding cast/crew members?
- Did you have any issues with e.g. equipment not working?

## TROUBLESHOOTING

### Who to ask ....

If you are working on a show, you will have been asked if you would like to be on the Tech WhatsApp group. If there is a problem, try sending a message to this group; there are representatives of all areas so someone will probably be able to help.

### Lights and monitors

- At the top of the Upper mezzanine stairs, turn sharp right. On the wall is a large metal box of trip switches. 3 on the lower right three are marked LEAVE ON – this is because they govern the workers and blue lights, the house lights and the mezzanine, so there can always be light when entering the auditorium.
- All the other trip switches are marked TURN OFF AT NIGHT – all other circuits could potentially have something plugged in that might constitute a fire risk. All these trip switches move to the left when tripped or switched off, and to the right to be switched on.
- Once this is done, all the power sockets in the upper mezzanine (for instance) will become live, including the one into which is plugged into the amplifier for the dressing-room sound relay. (The left-hand column of switches control the banks of dimmers to the left along the wall).

**PRODUCTION COSTS ESTIMATE FORM**

PRODUCTION:	
PRODUCTION MEETING DATE	
DIRECTOR	
STAGE MANAGER	
ARTISTIC TEAM REP	

	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
<b>Set Construction</b>	
Materials/Paint	
Furniture Hire	
Material Hire	
Transport Hire	
<b>Lighting/Video</b>	
Consumables	
Hire	
<b>Sound</b>	
Consumables	
Hire	
<b>Wardrobe</b>	
Materials	
Hire	
Cleaning	
<b>Music</b>	
Fees	
Hire	
<b>Stage Management</b>	
Props Purchase	
Props Hire	
<b>Sundries</b>	
Stage Management	
Show photos	
Additional publicity	
Rubbish removal	
Approved by:	
Date:	

## FIRE DRILL NOTICE

To be completed by the Stage Manager and posted on the backstage notice board for the entire run.  
Form to be filed in the Office Safety file after the last performance.

Play:
Performance Dates:

Date of Cast/Crew Fire Drill	
Any issues and how they were dealt with	

In the event of fire during the performance, the following will carry out the duties indicated:

Dial 999 for fire brigade	
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Control exit of actors and crew from Dressing Rooms into street by emergency exit	STAGE MANAGER:
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Go to point of outbreak and deal with fire, using appliances available	
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Date of Council Fire Officer visit	
Council Fire Officer Recommendations	

Signed  STAGE MANAGER	
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# Stage Manager's Rehearsal Notes

<b>Production:</b>	Rehearsal Scheduled:
<b>Stage Manager:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
Attending:	
General:	
Stage Management:	
Props:	
Set Design:	
Costumes:	
Lighting:	
Sound/Music:	
Movement	
Administrative/Publicity:	
Next Rehearsal if different from scheduled:	



## HEALTH & SAFETY GET-IN ~ RUN ~ STRIKE

### Whenever you are in the building

If the fire alarm sounds please move toward your nearest exit. These are –

- SL. The door which leads to the dressing room and a staircase down to the rear of the building.
- SR. The main door to the auditorium and down the staircase, which will lead to an exit to Northwold Road.

All exits are clearly marked, and the assembly point is the paved space (with the brick tower) on the one-way system.

### During the Get-in and Strike

- Call time for the get-in is **xxxxx** (Build starts at **xxxx**)
- Hard hats are available in the Lower Mezzanine.
- Flats and other set items can be very heavy. If you are asked to lift something, please be aware of what you can comfortably carry; it is your responsibility to manage your own expectations. Do not attempt to hold too much weight on your own - seek help.
- Do not attempt to lift by bending forward. Keep your back straight, bend your hips/knees to squat down to pick up the object. Keep it close to your body and straighten your legs to lift. Avoid turning/twisting your body while lifting/holding a heavy object and never lift it above shoulder level.
- Please wear sensible footwear and clothes that you don't mind getting paint on.
- When working at height, ensure the ladder is fit for purpose (in a good state of repair and correctly assembled), use the correct method to ascend/descend and have someone footing it, if it is a single ladder.
- Items may be dropped to the floor from height, which could cause injury. Please listen out for a "heads" call and check you are not underneath someone working above.
- Please be aware of potential risks. There will be items on the floor which can be trip hazards, be sensible and vigilant about where you are walking and where you leave stuff.
- If you are asked to use a power tool please make sure you are aware of any potential risk to yourself or others. Only use tools that are fit for purpose and unplug them after use. If you are uncomfortable handling such equipment, please say so. If you are asked to handle chemicals (paint, flambar, etc.) treat them with respect. Do not use them for anything other than what they are designed for.
- There may be times during the day when the lights go out and the theatre will be in darkness. You will always be warned beforehand but please act sensibly and do not continue to work until a safe environment is restored.
- If you have any medical conditions that could be adversely affected by e.g. lifting or working at heights, please let the Stage Manager and Set Designer know.
- Please DO NOT eat in the auditorium or have hot drinks on the carpeted areas. Any spillages should be promptly wiped up - wherever you are, and rubbish must be put in bins provided.

### During the Run

- Depending on the time, the Office or Bar Manager will buzz you in to the building. Enter (and leave) through the bar. If the front door is locked when you arrive please **INSERT OWN ARRANGEMENTS E.G., use WhatsApp to contact us and we'll let you in. All cast should have the mobile number for \*\*\*\*;** (SM) Let them know immediately if you are delayed. If anyone is only in the second half and plans to arrive later each evening, enter the dressing rooms through back stairs.
- For fire regulation purposes, the cast, stage management, Lighting/Sound Ops, wardrobe and make-up artists (if applicable) must sign in when they arrive, from the Tech onwards, and twice on matinee days. The sheet will be **xxxxx**. This is mainly to allow the Stage Manager to know that the full company have arrived in time for the call but also form part of fire evacuation protocol as the Sign In sheet doubles as an evacuation roll call list in the event of a fire.
- Call time for the Dress Rehearsal is **6.00pm**
- Call time for performances is **one hour** before curtain-up; **6.30** for evening shows, and **2.00** for the matinee.
- Cast warm-up will be **45** minutes before curtain-up, and final props and lighting/sound checks etc. **30** minutes before curtain-up. Doors will open **15** minutes before curtain-up.



- If you have any medical condition that could need urgent treatment, please tell the SM in confidence so that they know what to do.
- There is a kettle and microwave in the Dressing room tearoom.
- Don't leave food lying around in the Dressing Room; put all rubbish in bins provided.

### **The Strike**

The crew will begin to clear the auditorium whilst the cast have a **20-minute** break - to have a drink and meet friends in the bar. After this, everyone helps take down the set, pack up costumes, props etc. Finally, the set should be taken downstairs to the Smith Studio ready to be loaded onto the van for the Arches on Sunday morning.

(No partying until the theatre is clear .....). Thanks!

Please ask if anything's unclear and/or contact Richard Pedersen H&S Officer  
[richardpedersen271@gmail.com](mailto:richardpedersen271@gmail.com)