

California State University, Chico  
Theatre Department

# Stage Manager Handbook

Originally compiled as a part of THEA 399 Advanced Stage Management Seminar,  
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## **Sample Forms on CD**

Rehearsal Schedule	Production Calendar	Personal Info
Production Meeting Notes	Rehearsal Report	Program Template
Performance Report	Sign-In Sheets	Actor / Character
Call Sheets	Line Note Forms	Actor / Scene
Cueing Notation styles	Tracking Sheets	Master Checklist
Props Tracking	Accident Report	

# Master Task List

The following is a master list of tasks, documents, and materials you will need to be responsible for during the course of your show. More things may appear, but this will get you started in the right direction.

## PRE-AUDITION

- Research the show
- Update SM Kit
- Get key access
- Build Prompt Book
  - Binder
  - Tabs
    - Rehearsal script
    - Performance script
    - Reports
    - Contact sheets
    - Schedules
    - Emergency tab
- Talk with Director
  - Clear first day discussion
  - Code of Conduct for production and university
  - Late policy? (2 free if you call)
  - Want choreography blocking notation?
  - Breaks?
  - Rehearsal schedule
  - What do you need for auditions / callbacks?
  - Music player at every rehearsal?
  - Scores? Checked out?
  - Orchestra / playback?

## PRE-REHEARSAL

- Make 1st day discussion list
  - My phone number
  - Call if you are late, concerns, etc.
  - Always available
  - Respect time:
    - strict highlighter
    - Tell me before going to bathroom, getting water, etc.
    - Check out with me
  - No gum
  - Close toed shoes
  - Calls will be posted on callboard / e-mail
  - Sign student agreements
  - Personal Info Surveys
  - Hand out contact sheets
  - Hand out scripts
- Paperwork:
  - ASM responsibilities / checklists
  - Rehearsal schedule w/off-book date
  - Master calendar w/ tech deadlines, production meetings
  - Character / Scene breakdown
  - Show order
  - Code of Conduct

- Emergency contact info sheet
- Line notes
- Rehearsal report layout
- Performance report layout
- Prop / Sound / Light pre-cue sheet
- Actor / Scene breakdown
- Ground plan for Book
  - Blocking key
- Cast list
- Contact sheet (public *and* private)
- Sign in sheet
- Actor / ASM packets:
  - Contact sheet
  - Schedules
  - Student agreements
  - Emergency info survey
- Enter e-mails in computer
- Enter numbers in phone
- Meet with ASMs
  - Responsibilities
- Post on board:
  - Show order
  - Actor / Scene breakdown
  - Cast list
  - Sign -In sheet
  - Rehearsal calendar
  - Call times
- Tape floor

### **REHEARSAL**

- 1st day discussion
- Trading off ASMs?
- Keep rehearsal time
- Highlight late actors
- Send out rehearsal reports
- Post rehearsal reports
- Breaks
- Take notes for future production meetings
- Prop tracking
- Time run
- Schedule fittings

### **PRE-TECH**

- God mic
- Calling from where?
- Paperwork:
  - Shift plot charts
  - Costume plot
  - Preset checklists
  - Tech / Perf sign in sheets
  - ASM checklists
  - SM checklists
  - Write program
- Meet with tech:
  - Headset protocol
  - Dress code

**TECH WEEK**

- Develop HM notes
- Late seating
- Total time
- Time per act
- Intermission time
- Effects? Haze, strobe, loud sound effects
- Actors through lobby?
- Talk with actors
- Introduce crews
- ASMs first, I'm busy
- Actors Go /Hold
- Patience, please
- Get a program

**SHOW RUN**

- Performance Reports
- Sign in sheets
- Track expendables

**POST SHOW**

- Strike list (optional)
- SM Book clean up
- Final Space Walk Through

## Director / Stage Manager Relationship

### Questions to ask your Director

Every director will have a different idea of your job as the stage manager. Often, other department stage managers or even other faculty can tell you what to expect when working with different directors. One of the quickest ways to find out what they expect from you (and to set forth your position in the process) is to have a preliminary, informal meeting before rehearsals or auditions begin—think coffee shop-type meeting. The following is a list of questions you may want to ask your director, though bear in mind that each show will have its own quirks and you can and *should* change this list as necessary.

- What is the best way for me to contact you? Phone, email, texting?
- Have you had any design meetings? If so, are there any overarching design elements you'd like to share?
- Will we have a live orchestra, or playback?
- How large of a cast are you looking for? Do you plan to double?
- What time frame do you want for rehearsals? Include beginning date and time slot.
- How do you like to run rehearsals? Formatted, accomplishing each task listed for that day, or do you prefer a more organic schedule / improv / games?
- Is there any equipment you will need for callbacks or rehearsals (CD player, piano, props, etc.)?
- Do you want me to handle breaks, or would you prefer to call them when you hit a good stopping point? Do you prefer 5 minute breaks more often, 10 minute breaks less often, or something else? Normally our policy is a 10 minute break every 2 hours. No more than 4 – 5 hours straight without a diner break.
- Do you need me to check out scripts / scores?
- Are there any technically difficult situations in the show that I need to be aware of (hangings, explosions, gunfights, the apocalypse)?
- What exactly do you expect from me?

This is also the appropriate time to clear any discussion you plan to have on the first day of rehearsal with actors such as tardiness, dress code, food policy, paperwork, etc.

As your first contact with the Director in the context of the show, this meeting should serve to define your relationship. Some directors will want creative input from stage managers in blocking, design, or even casting choices. Some will not. Issues such as these will be handled as they arise, though it is usually safer to assume directors expect only logistic input from you until asked otherwise.

You need to feel free to express to the Director if you are not comfortable doing any task that is asked of you. If you have any question, first discuss the issue with the Director. If you still feel uncomfortable about the situation, talk to your Technical Director. Allow the problem to be resolved at a faculty level.

## Production Meeting Dos and Don'ts

### Production Meeting Dos:

It is a bit scary going into your first production meeting and although it gets easier, it still causes stress for even the most experienced Stage Manager. Even if you have a few production meetings under your belt it may prove useful to scan this list and make sure you're covering your bases.

### Scheduling:

Most of the time, it will be the stage manager's responsibility to schedule production meetings. This can be very challenging in an academic environment. To avoid having to sift through each person's individual schedule use an online scheduling tool, like [www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com), to make the job easier.

### Who do you invite to the production meetings?:

The Director, all designers and their assistants, props master, dramaturge, and any other person requested by the Director or designers.

### The Basics:

- Prior to formal production meetings, the Director and designers often have ad hoc design meetings, you may or may not be invited to those. It is a good idea to attend if you are asked to, but leave the comments to the designers and directors. You usually do not need to take notes at these meetings.
- Reserving the room: Usually we meet in PAC 261 or PAC 108. 261 is a classroom so you will need to check the class schedule. Contact the HFA Production Manager to reserve either room. Go ahead and book that room for all of your production meetings.
- READ THE WHOLE PLAY before you start anything. Do not show up to the first meeting without knowing what you're headed into.
- Make sure you have the script on you!
- Have plenty of pens, pencils, paper, and whatever other office supplies you may need to take notes.
- Arrive before anyone and be the last to leave, you don't want to miss anything!
- Production Meetings are yours to run. Keep the others on task and the meeting moving forward.
- Don't get side tracked on discussions that can be more effectively discussed in smaller groups. Suggest one-on-one meetings between designers if there is too much for them to discuss during the meeting.
- Begin with the Director and go around the room one by one from designer to designer.

### Other Considerations:

- Never assume everyone got your e-mail about the time and place of the production meeting. If you don't get an e-mail back, try to casually bring it up in passing so you can remind them or alert them to the time and place.
- The designers and director will not see eye to eye about everything. They may even bicker about things. Don't let this overwhelm you and don't try to control it.
- The best thing to remember about your job at production meetings is **YOU ARE THE TIME KEEPER**. Keep the director and designers focused and on task. It's quite easy to get distracted in this environment. We always need to get a lot done in that hour.

### **Production Meeting Don'ts:**

It can be very easy to get distracted at a production meeting. Try to remember the purpose of the meeting and your job as the Stage Manager.

#### The Basics:

- Don't show up late or leave early.
- Don't chime in or try to add your two cents. No matter how good an idea may sound in your head it doesn't matter. **YOU ARE NOT A DESIGNER OR THE DIRECTOR**. You are the secretary; you take notes and keep the designers and director on task, that's it.
- Don't bring too much stuff to these meetings. Have your book, the script, a few extra supplies, and *maybe* a beverage.
- Do not bring up issues you have first. Let everyone talk first. Often the issue you have will be resolved in these conversations. If there is time, work things out, otherwise, plan for additional meetings with specific designers to work things out.

#### At CSU, Chico:

- If you do have a meeting at a café or restaurant, do not order an alcoholic drink, even if the designers and directors do. It might be alright some places but at CSU, Chico, you are a student no matter what.

## Auditions & Callbacks

As a Stage Manager, your responsibilities begin during department auditions the first week of class. This is something you will work together with the other two stage managers for that semester.

Either the Production Manager (Mike Johnson) or the Technical Director (Dan Schindler) will e-mail all of you with times and dates that you will be needed.

As a general rule, plan on being there Monday - Thursday evening the first week of school.

### **Pre-Audition:**

Get paperwork from Theatre Department Office

In the box you will find:

Audition Forms

Copies of Audition Schedule for each director, plus 2 extra

Pens

Evaluation Binders (Spring Auditions Only)

Time left sign (may also be in SM Office)

Paperclips

Harlen Adams Set Up:

Raise Fire Curtain

Lower Grand Curtain

Set up 20 chairs behind the curtain

Piano DSR on apron w/ two chairs

Chair DSL

Green Room Set Up:

Grab a table and set up your paperwork

### **Running Auditions**

Each of you will run a separate part of the auditions. The most important thing to remember is to stay on time and keep communicating with the Directors. If they need a break, take a break, if they want to continue, have people ready to go. Do not make them wait.

Usually there are three stage managers present at auditions.

One of you will need to be in the house timing. Auditionees have 3 minutes. At 2:30 raise "30 seconds." At 3:00 say "Thank you." This person will also be in charge of taking paperwork from green room to directors out in the house.

One of you will serve as a runner between the green room and backstage. You need to make sure that auditionees are sitting in their chairs, in order, and remain quiet throughout the hour.

One of you will need to remain in the green room at all times greeting people and watching peoples' belongings. Auditionees each need to fill out an audition form. Make sure they have filled in both sides and they have filled in the pieces they are performing. They may also attach a resume if they have brought one with them.

Five minutes before the hour, collect any remaining audition forms and organize them in the order which people are auditioning in. (Follow the order on the Audition Schedule). The stage manager timing in the house will need to come get these forms and take them to the Directors. Note if there are any order changes or no shows. Note any additional auditionees who may not be on the original schedule, but do not add anyone unless there are open slots.

Line everyone up in order and explain the audition procedure. Then have the stage manager lead everyone backstage to begin auditions.

As auditionees return to the green room, ask them to please gather their belongings and retire so that the next group can get ready. Note: this is the first time many people have seen each other since the previous semester and they want to hang out and catch up, get them out of the green room ASAP. This is not a time to socialize.

Rinse and repeat until the final hour.

### **Audition Procedures**

The first auditionee, if needed, may go and talk to the accompanist about a cue line, then take center stage. The second will take a seat next to the accompanist and explain anything if needed. As the first auditioned finishes, the second will take center stage and the next person will take a seat with the accompanist. This will continue until all are finished.

Please enter SR and exit SL. There is a chair SL if they wish to use it, please return it after they are done.

Auditionees must remain in their order seated backstage until everyone in their group is finished.

They will have 3 minutes to audition, at 2:30 the stage manager sitting in the house will raise a warning sign, tell them not to stop, this is simply a warning. At 3:00 the SM will say "Thank you", and they may leave the stage.

They will announce their audition: Name and Number at the beginning and end. This may change depending on who is department chair, double check first.

### **Call Backs**

Your responsibilities during call backs vary greatly depending on the Director. Always check with them the night before and see what they would like from you. Keep in contact with the other stage managers and keep track of time. Many times actors are called back for more than

one show at the same time, and you must coordinate with the other stage managers to ensure the actor attends both callbacks.

You will need: a clear stage, rehearsal lighting, a table, and a couple of chairs for you and the Director.

Your responsibilities may include: handing out scripts, fetching people from the hallways, keeping track of who has read for what part, cleaning up at the end of the night.

### **Things to keep in mind**

**Smile!** This is a stressful time for actors, greet them and ask them how their summer/holidays were. Try to be as helpful as you can. Many of them will be very nervous, this may be their first time or their 20<sup>th</sup>, regardless, smile as much as you can.

Greet the first time freshmen. You are probably the first person they will meet in the department. For many of them Monday night auditions is the first time they will meet their peers. Answer questions they may have, **do not** talk about the Directors, instead talk about classes, learn a little about the shows, and talk to them about that. Talk to them about the general workings of the department.

Department Policies are posted throughout the greenroom. Make sure people have read this at least once before checking the box.

Check in with your director before you leave for the night. They may or may not need anything from you in the morning.

Lock up the audition stuff in the SM office.

**Remember:** As a stage manager, you are privy to information that is confidential. Under no circumstances should you discuss anything your director talks about during call backs or auditions.

## Rehearsal Practices

The very first rehearsal can be scary; you're meeting your cast and introducing yourself as the Stage Manager, as well as paperwork and a read through to deal with.

Some ways to make the first rehearsal go smooth for you and the cast

- Have all the paperwork needed neatly stacked to easily pass out.
- For this first meeting with the cast, you should have them fill out the following:
  - Schedule and contact information
  - Student Code of Conduct form
  - Costume measurements signup sheet —talk to costume shop about fitting and measurement protocols.
  - Emergency Contact sheet
  - Additional production forms as requested
- Have a pile of pens or pencils in the middle of the table for cast members
- Greet your cast and introduce yourself confidently
- Keep the cast on track by moving onto the next part of the rehearsal quickly
- Introductions, Paperwork, Passing out of Scripts, Read through is the usual order for a first rehearsal
- Often, during the first few rehearsals there is often a designer's presentation to introduce the cast to the world of the play that they are creating.

### **Also keep in mind:**

This is the first time your cast is meeting you, be kind but be in charge, take control if talking off subject gets to be too much or if a certain aspect of the rehearsal is taking far longer than needed due to goofing off.

## Running a Rehearsal

### Notes on preparedness:

It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to be prepared. Get a good night's sleep, eat before you go to rehearsal, and bring snacks. Aside from preparing yourself for rehearsal you must also have a set plan for the rehearsal itself.

- Always arrive at least 10 minutes before your crew/cast/ASMs. It is ideal to be 15-30 minutes early.
- Check out keys first thing and begin to prep the space: turn on lights, raise the fire curtain, unlock/ gaff doors, set up any tables or chairs you or the Director may need first.
- Take a moment to be alone in the space or the SM office (Stage Manager's Office), to center yourself and mentally prepare for the rehearsal ahead. If you have time, help your ASMs with their pre-rehearsal set-up.
- Make sure you have any and all paperwork required for the night.
- It never hurts to check your e-mail one last time before you go to rehearsal.
- Plan for someone, either you or one of your ASMs, to check the call sheet periodically to make sure people are on time and working.
- If people have missed their call time, highlight their name, and give them a phone call to see when they expect to arrive.
- Begin rehearsal at the time you say it starts. If you say rehearsal starts at 6:30, start at 6:30, even if the Director is late.
- Keep track of time; know when to call breaks and when to end breaks. If you know your director needs to go over time or is taking time to finish a scene plan for that and call break early or prepare to adjust for a later break. More times than not its good to break early if not on time. The longer you wait the more tired the cast and crew get.
  - Generally we try to take a 10 minute break every two hours and a (1) hour meal break after no more than (5) hours.
- Keep the energy flowing and focused, if the Director or cast start to get off task, gently remind them where they are in the rehearsal process and what still needs to get accomplished that night.
- At the end of rehearsal you are the last to leave; lock/ ungaff all doors, lower the fire curtain, if you have one in your theater, turn off all lights, and try to leave the space as you found it. Don't forget to check in your keys!

- Don't forget to send out the Rehearsal Report while all of the notes are fresh in your mind. You may not be in at 8 am the next day, but the shops will open then and will be looking for your notes.
- Just because you are the last to leave a space doesn't mean you should leave alone. Make sure you have someone to lock up and walk you to your car or home. There are a lot of late nights for the stage manager and you don't want to get caught alone in the dark of night. Call Campus Police for an escort if it's really late and you're alone, after all, it's their job to serve and protect. Also, make sure your cast and crew use the Buddy System; it's not something you can force them into but make mention and try to get them to be safe as well.

## Running a Technical Rehearsal

### So... you get to run a tech rehearsal:

Many stage managers look forward to running tech and feel it is the best part in the rehearsal process. It is a magical time when all the things you've been hearing about in production meetings come alive and you are in charge of executing it. It can be incredibly stressful if you've never done it before. Here are some ways to help tech go a little smoother.

### Things to keep in mind

- Things will go wrong during tech and that is what it is for. You must remember that on opening night, the show will have an audience and it will go on. Even if tech is a rough process and you have some loose ends all the way up to the end— somehow everything will fall into place. Focus, concentrate and keep working.
- Before you begin tech, look over your theatre's space to make sure conditions are safe backstage.
  - Have blue lights ready to go backstage and a couple extras to place as needed.
  - Make sure glow tape is handy backstage.
  - Give your ASM's flashlights with blue gels if they don't have them.
  - Inspect for sharp corners on moving pieces, move stage weights out of pathways, put rug runners over electric cables, and look out for other possible hazards.
  - Inform the appropriate designer or technician of any potential hazards you notice.
- Try to prep as much as possible before you go into tech. During rehearsal and production meetings you should constantly be making mental notes of the things you will have to deal with during tech. Compile your run sheet during the rehearsal process so you don't have to worry about it during tech week.
- Although you may get tired and run down, try to maintain a positive attitude. A stressed out stage manager only makes people nervous and doesn't solve any problems. Stay calm and remain in control.
- Don't be afraid to hand over control of backstage. Although you must always know what is going on backstage, this is your time to focus on learning the rhythm of the show and let your ASM's gain the experience of running backstage. They should know the show just as well as you do by now and if you trust them, they will serve as your eyes and ears backstage.
- Be nice to yourself. Give yourself a special treat during tech week. Keep small snacks around to keep everyone's energy up and to keep people from getting cranky. Be careful about candy, the sugar gets you going, but can also lead to a nasty crash an hour later.
- Have fun! We do this job because we love it. So, enjoy the fact that you are contributing to something wonderful. Enjoy calling the cues and learning a whole new aspect of the show.

## Performances

### Running in performance mode:

Once you enter performance mode, your job as a stage manager is to maintain the cue timing, placement, pace, and precision that was established during the technical rehearsals. You do need to keep your eyes open for disasters and be prepared to react.

Things to keep in mind

- Pre-curtain, intermission, and post-production checklists are the most important aspects of your job while in production mode.
- Even if you've called the show perfect every time, it is still important to review your cues before each show.
- Keep up good communication with your ASMs to keep a pulse on the backstage area.
- Be nice to the house managers, it's in your favor to be on their good side.
- Don't forget to email the Performance Report at the end of the night.

## Things to know about Front Of House

1. House Management is provided by Chico Performances and scheduled by them.
2. Get to know their name before the performance and be friendly with them because they are there to help you as well.
3. Let them know if there is late seating and, if there is, when is a good time to let people in and what door.
4. Make sure the walkie-talkies are charged before the performance. Note to yourself to make sure the walkie-talkie is turned down a little more during a performance so that if it accidentally goes off it is not heard in the audience. Get extra batteries for the walkies.
5. Let them know if there is going to be an intermission and if special effects are being used, such as fog and haze.

## **Assistant Stage Manager Duties**

### **Pre-Rehearsal Process**

1. Check with Stage Manager to see what is expected of you
2. Get script and read it

### **First Rehearsal**

1. Help Stage Manager with anything that needs to be distributed and collected

### **Before Rehearsal Process**

1. Check in with Stage Manager/ Sign In
2. Sweep and Mop Stage
3. Check Rehearsal Furniture
  - Place in spots for top of rehearsal
4. Check in Rehearsal Props
  - Place in spots for top of rehearsal
5. Check and make sure actors are there and signed in
6. Check with Stage Manager to see if anything needs to be done for that particular rehearsal

### **During Rehearsal**

1. Help with scene changes
  - Moving furniture for actors
2. Sit and pay attention to what is happening
  - Get to know the show you are working on
3. Line Notes
  - When actors are off book give record line notes
4. Be on book for actors when they forget a line
5. Prop Tracking
  - Track where and when props enter and exit and by who uses them
6. Furniture Tracking
  - Track if furniture is moved

### **After Rehearsal**

1. Strike Rehearsal Furniture
  - Put back to storage place
2. Strike Rehearsal Props
  - Make sure every prop is put back in prop box, no matter if it was used or not

### **Pre -Technical Rehearsal**

1. Check with Stage Manager to see what certain duties will be

### **Before Technical Rehearsals**

1. Sweep and Mop Stage
2. Glow tape and light dark areas
  - Make sure any part that an actor walks off stage is well lit for safety
3. Check with your specific crew members to make sure they all know what to do
  - Give them assignments
  - Show them what needs to be done
4. Place Prop tables
  - Make sure it is well lit
  - Cover it with brown paper
5. Check out Props
  - Make sure all props are there
  - Place on prop tables and draw a box around it
  - Show crew members all of this
6. Check Furniture
  - Show crew members the furniture being used during what scenes
  - Place furniture in correct place for top of show
  - Use spike tape to mark placement as needed

### **During Technical Rehearsal**

1. Help make the process run as smoothly as possible

### **After Technical Rehearsal**

1. Strike all furniture to the shop
2. Strike all props to prop box
  - Check all props and furniture back in
  - If anything is missing, damaged, or low (like expendable food props) inform the Stage Manager.

### **During Run of Show**

1. Follow the same guidelines as Technical Rehearsal Process

### **Close of Show**

1. Help strike the set
2. Help stage manager organize what needs to be done

*\*All of this process will differ based on location, type of show, stage manager, and the number of assistant stage managers.*

## Emergency Protocols

### Train Up:

Emergencies take many forms. The most common, however, are medical. Training in basic first aid will only make you more valuable as a stage manager. Cuts, bumps, bruises, and sprains happen everyday—particularly in rehearsals with movement or dance emphasis. In order to deal with these small incidents and more, you should invest in Basic First Aid, CPR, and/or AED certification. Places you can go to get that training:

- American Red Cross
- Online courses
  - [www.cprclass.org](http://www.cprclass.org)
  - [www.redcrossonlinetraining.org](http://www.redcrossonlinetraining.org)
  - [www.icpri.com](http://www.icpri.com)

It is worth noting that some internships or jobs may provide training to you at no cost.

Chico State offers Blood-borne Pathogen training —good to know if you find yourself in the middle of a show with a full house and blood on the stage. Someone needs to be trained in how to clean up the blood quickly and carefully in order to get the show rolling again.

Before beginning rehearsals, make sure you *and* your ASMs know where to find and how to use:

- All First Aid kits (backstage, booth, scene shop, your kit)
- Fire Extinguishers
- AED (Artificial External Defibrillator)
- Blood-borne Pathogen kits (backstage or SM office though often migratory)
- Emergency paperwork (incident reports, emergency contact information, etc.)

**Tip:** Keep Jolly Ranchers or other hard sugar candies for people with low blood sugar.

**Before delving any deeper into this topic, recognize that at CSU, Chico we are not allowed to provide any medical care unless it is a life-threatening situation. Nor are we allowed to hand out any type of medication—over-the-counter or otherwise.**

**Important note:** When on the CSU, Chico campus, if an ambulance is needed, call Campus Police (1-530-898-5555). The ambulance will arrive much faster than calling 9-1-1, and Campus Police will send someone to help your situation in the meantime.

## **The Emergency Tab:**

Devote a tab in your production book to emergencies. Include a current listing of emergency numbers and locations, emergency house announcements, accident report forms (from HFA Production Manager), and medical information on all cast and crew involved in the production. Medical information is completely voluntary, but may be a part of the first rehearsal paperwork for the cast and should include allergies, past injuries, medical conditions, and current medications. It may also be useful to know medical insurance carriers and policy numbers in addition to emergency contacts both in Chico and elsewhere.

## **Have a Plan:**

Have a plan in case the worst should happen. What would you do if 35 minutes into the first act on opening night, a performer danced right off the edge of the stage and into the pit? Have a general outline of what needs to be done if an emergency occurred. It may include some or all of the following:

- Turn on all lights, including the house
- Provide care to the injured
- Call Campus Police, explain
  - What happened
  - Where you are
  - If you need an ambulance
- Send someone to meet the medics and usher them in
- Pull medical information about the victim from your emergency tab in your book
- Make an announcement if the show will be held
- Bring in the main drape, so as not to panic the watching audience
- Call the Production Manager
- Call the Technical Director

**Tip:** Put Campus Police on your speed dial (1-530-898-5555).

Do not hesitate to use ASMs, crew members, faculty, or performers to assist. These people can retrieve the nearest first aid kit, AED machine, call Campus Police or faculty, meet medics, or make announcements. When making an announcement in an emergency situation, remember to remain calm and speak slowly. Repeat yourself if necessary. Only hand off this duty if there is no one else qualified to provide care to the victim and your trust the person making the announcement to remain calm.

**Tip:** Ask for a god mic prior to opening night in case you need to make an announcement.

Once a show opens, a house manager will be present at all performances. They are trained to handle emergencies in the house. They are also great resources if you need help with an emergency onstage. For instance, if you need to take an early intermission, or are waiting for Campus Police to turn off fire alarms, refer audience members to the House Manager for assistance.

In case of fire, your first duty is to get everyone out of the building, then

- Drop the fire curtain
- Call Campus Police

Laxson and Adams have pre-recorded messages telling everyone to leave the building, that broadcast automatically if fire alarms are tripped. Have a message prepared in case you suspect a fire, or the alarms do not go off. Walk the building until (1) you know everyone is out and safe, or (2) conditions become unsafe for you to remain inside.

Note that if fire alarms sound, they cannot be turned off until the fire department has walked through the building and turned them off.

**Important Note:** Fog and haze effects can and may set off fire alarms. Talk with your Production Manager and/or Technical Director to make sure all fire alarm settings are calibrated correctly. If the alarm goes off due to smoke/fog, call the Campus Police immediately and inform them of such so that they can stop a call out from the fire department.

Above all, remain calm. Cast, crew, and audience will feed off of whatever energy you express. If you panic, they will panic. If you run, they will run. Speak slowly and calmly. Delegate. And remember, your job is to facilitate safety, but you should never put yourself in a dangerous position to do so.

### **Emergency Numbers**

CSUC campus police:	(530) 898 – 5555
Off-campus emergency:	911
Non-emergency police:	(530) 897 – 4911
CSUC health center:	(530) 898 – 5241

### Emergency Room

Enloe Hospital 1531 Esplanade (530) 332 - 7300	24 hours (daily)
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### Walk In Clinics

Enloe Prompt Care 560 Cohasset Rd (530) 332 – 4111	10a.m. – 9:30p.m. Daily
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Convenient Care Walk in medical center: 670 Rio Lindo Ave #300 (530) 342-2273	8a.m. – 6p.m. (M-F) 9a.m. – 1p.m. (S/S)
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Immediate Care Medical 376 Vallombrosa Ave (530) 891 – 1676	7a.m. – 11p.m. (daily)
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## Compiling Program Information

At CSU, Chico the stage managers compile the program information. There is a standardized form on the SM computer and with the sample documents included with this handbook. Find out what the publicity deadlines are for program printing from the Theatre Office or the HFA Publicity Office.

So, where do you start?

1. Begin with the standard blank information form included with this handbook. Past season's program copies are also kept on the SM office computer. Simply follow the format and fill in the appropriate information for your show. If you cannot find one or there is a change in format, contact the Production Manager. You may include the following:
  - Title of the show
  - Playwright and lyricist
  - Date of the run and location
  - Positions and names for all direction, design, and production staff
  - Character and actor names, note stage names
  - Special honors, such as dance captain
  - Orchestra members and conductor
  - Length of intermission, or "There will be no intermission"
  - Setting location and/or date
  - Synopsis of scenes and musical numbers. Usually you can take this directly from the script.
  - Company that owns the rights to the show
2. Contact the Costume Shop supervisor, Scene Shop foreman, Lighting Designer, and Production Manager for lists of carpenters, stitchers, and electricians. Ask the costume designer if they have chosen a wardrobe and/or makeup supervisor.
3. Print off the pages with cast names and take them to rehearsal. Have each cast member check the spelling of his or her name and initial next to it when finished. Make any corrections to the document.
4. Email the program to the Director, design team, and production staff, including the department chair. Have everyone check their job titles and name spellings. Make any corrections.
5. The Director may want to add a note about the production, or ask that the cast be listed in a certain way (order of appearance, alphabetically, etc.) **Tip:** In preliminary versions, it is usually safe to list the cast in the order posted during casting.
6. When all staff has approved the final version, e-mail the .doc to the publicist for School of the Arts, Joe DiMaggio.

Typically, a final version is due to Joe DiMaggio by the Thursday prior to opening night. For large spring musicals in Laxson, the due date may be pushed up to two weeks earlier. Please double check the submission dates for the program with the publicist.

## Photo Calls

### **Best practices for Photo Call:**

Meet with you Director to set a list of shots that they would like for the show. Normally there are 12 – 20 shots.

E-mail the designers with this list and see if there are any additional shots they would like to request.

Some ways to run photo call with a list of scenes:

- Make sure you have announced the night of photo call to all cast AND crew
- Have the list of shots with both ASMs and with the wardrobe crew/scene shift crew
- It is usually, but not always, best to work backwards from the curtain call.
- Give one ASM the duty of calling out which scene we are moving to and making sure actors are in proper position. If the shot is being taken during action, give them a line on which to start.
- Have your second ASM backstage with crew and controlling who is changing what at each moment to get the set into the proper scene.
- You will be in the booth so make sure you have your headset on and can communicate easily with your ASMs

### **What happens if...**

...There is no shot list? No problem, as long as your Director is present make sure your ASM in the audience is next to the Director and can easily get which scene, make sure your ASM has a script on them to make it easier. With no pre-determined list communication between your ASM, Director and yourself is much more important to make it smooth, so keep your headset on loud and clear.

## Things to know about the Adams Theatre

- Make sure that the space is reserved for rehearsals and performances through our Production Manager (Mike Johnson). All of our performance spaces are used by multiple groups.
- The star (\*) key should get you in the back doors.
- The A75 key gets you into the Booth.
- The shop key gets you into the Spiral Staircase.
- The A49 key gets you into the SM office and the costume shop.
- The tool cage is a small bronze master lock
- The headset box Off DSL opens with a shiny silver colored “MASTER” brand tiny key.
- Lower the fire curtain and turn on the House Mercury Vapors at the end of the night for the night custodians.
- Introduce yourself and get to know the University custodian—they make your life neater.
- There are 2 fire extinguishers, one USL by the big shop doors and one USR by the back entrance.
- Make sure to lock both sets of doors in the back entrance, those closest to onstage as well as those in the hall.
- Turn off all lights at the end of the night but leave the Fluorescent DSR ON. Its switch is on the panel DSR. It’s the one under the Red Flap.
- The first set of lights to turn on and the last to turn off at night are the ones just to the right when you first walk in the back entrance. They light up the spiral staircase and should give you enough light to get to the DSR panel.
- Turn on the Stage Work Lights as well as the Stage Left Work Lights for rehearsal. Their respective switches are on the DSR Panel and are marked as such. Also, turn on the large scoop work lights for front light. The switch is located near the door leading to the Greenroom.
- You may have to move the Smart Cart out of the way of the audience during rehearsal, just push it as far House left as you can and make sure to push it back at the end of rehearsal so the Production Manager (Mike Johnson) won’t get any nasty e-mails.

- It may be in your best interest to get the lectern key from the Shop Supervisor (Pete Austin) before the run of your show in case Facilities Management forgets to move it before the performance at night.
- Before you leave for the night, make sure that you check the outer side doors, the door from the lobby, and all of the shop doors. It is always better to lock up everything you can think of. Usually if people need to be in the building after you lock up, they have a set of keys. You need to cover all of your security bases.

## **Basic Lighting Information For The Adams Theatre**

### **For rehearsals:**

There is a large lighting control panel above the SM desk stage right.

- You will need to turn on the work lights on this panel.
- You will need to flip on the switch by the door leading to the Green room. This turns on the incandescent scoop lights in the house.
- The mercury-vapor lights should already be on, if not turn these on as well. These lights stay on all night for safety.

### **For Technical Rehearsals:**

The lighting designer and master electrician will set up the light board down in the theatre and work from within the space. The lighting designer will show your light board op how to use the board, how to power up and down, how to do Channel check, and how to run the show.

### **Running the show:**

- Check in with your light board op and your master electrician.
- Make sure Channel check is completed and there are no problems. If anything needs to be fixed, keep updated on the progress of the work to ensure the house will be clear on time to open.

### **In the booth:**

To the left of the light board you will find a small light control box that operates: backstage work lights, house lights, mercury-vapor lights, and the booth lights.

### **The Light Board:**

The board op is responsible for the following:

Step 1; Remove Cover, don't lose this, as you will have to replace it at the end of every night.

Step 2: Power Switch is located on the back of the board, right of the center of the board.

Step 3: Bring grand master fader up to 100%

## **Channel Check**

This will be done by the light board op and the master electrician but-

In case you need to check a Channel:

Press: CHANNEL/ number (X)/AT/FULL/ENTER

To move from Channel to Channel:

Press: NEXT or BACK

**If you have any questions, call your Lighting Designer or the Master Electrician**

## **Basic Sound Procedures for Adams Theatre**

### **Some things to know:**

- You should receive something similar to this for every show you do as each show changes equipment and needs
- That procedures list should be provided by the Sound Designer – or by the Technical Director if there is not a designer assigned to the show
- You should also get a basic cue list during paper tech or tech depending on the process
- All operators are trained to check in with the SM at the top of the night and the end of rehearsal / performance
- Operators will need to borrow your keys to access the various booths and rooms for turn-on
- SFX refers to the main software we are currently using to run the productions – this might change in time.
- Amps are always LAST THING ON – FIRST THING OFF!!! Just a basic rule of thumb to protect equipment.
- Everything changes per show so do not be alarmed if things are different from one production to the next!
- If you are at all nervous about sound have either your TD or faculty advisor or designer walk you through the system so you are clear about what the basic procedures are – better safe than sorry!

### **Basic Turn On**

#### Power up system

- Turn on main power – switch on right-hand side of table opposite Clear-Com
- Turn on computer
  - User name: Sound
  - Password: Sound123
  - Use local domain
- Allow computer to cycle completely through before opening SFX (main program used for running sound although could be different!)
- Mixer should be on with main power switch as well as CD player above board

- If there is a house mix (would be a separate board in the center of the house) or wireless mics you will need to turn all this on at this point – location depends on show specific install
- Turn on amplifiers – Give about 5 seconds between each – Amps located on lower right side of sound station
  - Make sure you turn on all the amps in the rack, including Booth and House Highs / House Lows
  - There may be other amps located in the booth or on SL in the audio closet depending on the show – these would power any speakers onstage or in the booth windows which are show specific installs
- Test and deliver various mics to relevant people
  - If we are doing a show with wireless there should be at least one if not two people assigned to this...
- Open SFX – It will automatically open into the last workspace used which should be the show
- If not the show files are typically located on the desktop in the show folder
- Check speakers – You can do this by running a long cue (typically preshow music) and then pulling faders down and checking each individually
- Restore all faders to top of show positions and stop all cues until ready to go with show

## Turn Off

If in show mode, Finish last cue in SFX – should run out naturally – Hit stop ONLY if audience is clear from house

Power down system:

- Turn off Amps in Wismer first and lock that booth up
- Turn off the Mixer in Wismer (switch at right-hand side of station)
- Proceed to stage level and turn off amps onstage if necessary
- Collect any mics or equipment as needed
- Power down in booth – **Amps first!**
- Switch off mixer
- Switch of FX rack
- Exit SFX and turn off computer

Make sure headsets are switched off and put into storage

## Headsets

- Headset base station is located in booth. Make sure that all three units are turned on.
- You should have (5) wireless units, wired headsets with boxes, and XLR cable in the black storage cabinet in the booth.
- Batteries for the wireless headsets for both spaces are stored in the SM office in the charger. At the end of the night please make sure you return them to the charger.

- Headsets are typically set up by TD or Sound Designer / Engineer in tech and then moved and maintained by operators
- Please note any problems with headsets in rehearsal / performance reports and mark the problem set clearly for maintenance

### **Monitor Feed**

This should be set-up by the TD or Sound Designer/Engineer. It is run from a mic in the 1<sup>st</sup> AP back to the board in the Adams booth then patched using the small patch bay at the left-hand side of the sound station – This patch goes into the Wismer booth

Monitor feed is located in the Wismer booth

Need to turn on board – switch is at left-hand side by computer base station

Amp for Green Room and Dressing Room is labeled and is at the lower right-hand corner of the sound desk – make sure that is on

Make sure feed from board is sent to those outs – Faders are typically on the left-hand side of the board and should be labeled

There is a volume control on the speaker in the green room – make sure that is up as well as all the other pieces

## Things to know about the Wismer Theatre

- Make sure that the space is reserved for rehearsals and performances through our Production Manager (Mike Johnson). All of our performance spaces are used by multiple groups.
- The light switches to the theatre are located by each entrance and usually on the right hand side.
- The door from the green room onto stage needs to be locked every night no matter if you used it or not.
- Turn off all lights at the end of rehearsal. If a light is burned out, note it in the rehearsal report so it can be replaced.
- The booth has two entrances, one is the door next to PAC 133 (the PM's office), and the second entrance is on the second floor, PAC 255. The entrance next to PAC 133 is a very steep ladder that has a light switch at both doors.
- During a performance make sure all of the performance doors are unlocked and have tape or towels placed over them to not make noise.
- The hallway doors need to be closed during a performance as well as the hallway lights.
- During matinee performances, light blocks have been built to cut the light from the windows into the outer hallway. Make sure they are in place or contact the Technical Director if they are not.
- The dressing rooms are down stairs in the basement and inform the cast that the elevator is not the best way back and forth from the dressing room due to the fact that it breaks down. Have them use the stairs on the west side of the building to access the basement.

### **Basic Lighting Information for Wismer**

#### **Things you must know about lighting in the Wismer Theatre**

##### **For rehearsals:**

The fluorescents will work just fine.

There is a light switch by all 5 doors in the theatre, either to the left or the right on the nearest wall.

As long you have light to see clearly around the room, ensure that actors and staff are able to move around the space safely and everyone can read their scripts your job in lighting is done!

### **For Technical Rehearsals:**

The lighting designer and the master electrician will set up the light board down in the theatre and work from within the space.

The lighting designer will show your light board op how to use the board, how to power up and down, how to do Channel check, and how to run the show.

### **Running the show:**

Check in with your light board op and your master electrician.

Make sure Channel check is completed and there are no problems. If anything needs to be fixed, keep updated on the progress of the work to ensure the house will be clear on time to open.

### **The Light Board:**

The light board op is responsible for the following:

Step 1; Remove Cover, don't lose this, as you will have to replace it at the end of every night.

Step 2: Power Switch is located on the back of the board, right of the center of the board.

Step 3: Bring grand master fader up to 100%

### **Channel Check**

This will be done by the light board op and the master electrician but-

In case you need to check a Channel:

Press: CHANNEL/ number (X)/AT/FULL/ENTER

To move from Channel to Channel:

Press: NEXT or BACK

**If you have any questions, call your Lighting Designer or the Master Electrician**

## **Basic Sound Procedures for Wismer Theatre**

### **Some things to know:**

- You should receive something similar to this for every show you do as each show changes equipment and needs
- That procedures list should be provided by the Sound Designer – or by the Technical Director if there is not a designer assigned to the show
- You should also get a basic cue list during paper tech or tech depending on the process
- All operators are trained to check in with the SM at the top of the night and the end of rehearsal / performance
- Operators will need to borrow your keys to access the various booths and rooms for turn-on
- SFX refers to the main software we are currently using to run the productions – this might change in time...
- Amps are always the LAST THING ON – FIRST THING OFF! Just a basic rule of thumb to protect equipment.
- Everything changes per show so do not be alarmed if things are different from one production to the next!

- If you are at all nervous about sound have either your TD or faculty advisor or designer walk you through the system so you are clear about what the basic procedures are—better safe than sorry!

## **Basic Turn On**

### Power up system

- Turn on main power – switch on left-hand side of the table
- Turn on computer
  - User name: Sound
  - Password: Sound123
  - Use local domain
- Allow computer to cycle completely through before opening SFX (main program used for running sound although could be different!)
- Mixer should be on with main power switch as well as CD 1 and 2 player above board
- If there is a house mix (would be a separate board in the center of the house) or wireless mics you will need to turn all this on at this point – location depends on show specific install
- Turn on amplifiers – Give about 5 seconds between each – Amps located on lower left side of sound station
  - Make sure you turn on all the amps in the rack,
  - There may be other amps for speakers onstage or other locations which are show specific installs
- Test and deliver various mics to relevant people
  - If we are doing a show with wireless there should be at least one if not two people assigned to this...
- Open SFX – It will automatically open into the last workspace used which should be the show
- If not the show files are typically located on the desktop in the show folder
- Check speakers – You can do this by running a long cue (typically preshow music) and then pulling faders down and checking each individually
- Restore all faders to top of show positions and stop all cues until ready to go with show

## **Turn Off**

If in show mode, Finish last cue in SFX – should run out naturally – Hit stop ONLY if audience is clear from house

### Power down system:

- Turn off Amps first – don't forget any onstage
- Turn off the Mixer (switch at right-hand side of station)
- Collect any mics or equipment as needed
- Exit SFX and turn off computer

Make sure headsets are switched off and put into storage

### **Headsets**

- Headset base station is located in booth. Make sure that all three units are turned on.
- You should have (5) wireless units, wired headsets with boxes, and XLR cable in the black storage cabinet in the booth.
- Batteries for the wireless headsets for both spaces are stored in the SM office in the charger. At the end of the night please make sure you return them to the charger.
- Headsets are typically set up by TD or Sound Designer / Engineer in tech and then moved and maintained by operators
- Please note any problems with headsets in rehearsal / performance reports and mark the problem set clearly for maintenance

### **Monitor Feed**

This should be set-up by the TD or Sound Designer/Engineer. It is run from a mic in the cluster of speakers at center – this is then patched into the board and run to appropriate locations.

Monitor feed is located in the Wismer booth

Amp for Green Room and Dressing Room is labeled and is at the lower right-hand corner of the sound desk – make sure that it is on

Make sure feed from board is sent to those outs – Faders are typically on the left-hand side of the board and should be labeled

## Things to know about Laxson Auditorium

The most important thing to do when working in Laxson is to befriend the Technical Director, Steve Ellis and the Assistant TD, Ron Barker. For the most part, if you are in the building so is he. He a great resource and knows just about everything about Laxson. Here are some other things you need to know.

- Plan to have an initial meeting with Steve to discuss the normal opening and shut down procedures of the building a few days before you actually begin rehearsing there.
- Laxson usually holds for five minutes before beginning the performance. Expect this to happen for CSU, Chico Theatre Department productions as well.
- The stage lights are located on the SR side of the proscenium backstage. The ghost light will most likely be on, but bring a flashlight when walking to the other side. To turn on the lights you must first turn the key and then push one of the buttons. The specifics about which button to push is located on a sheet of paper above the buttons.
- Plan to bring your own glow tape, spike tape, gaff tape, or any other expendable supplies over from the PAC.
- Your SM position for the run of shows is the audience left corner of the balcony. It is strange at first to call cues from the audience. Remember to keep your voice down. If you do, audience members will hardly pay attention to you. However, you will always have an elderly patron who asks what you do and they will be very excited to hear that you're the one that makes everything go.
- You must take out the trash in the building every night on the weekends. This includes after strike. If you do not ants will become a serious problem in the building. The dumpster can be found by going into the hallway USR. Turn left and exit out the doors, the dumpster will be out next to Ayres.
- Laxson is the one performance space that we don't rehearse in. This means your taping for rehearsals must be very accurate and you must make sure that actors are aware of obstacles such as the pit.
- Have Steve walk you through the lock up routine. There are more doors than you think that you are in charge of locking up every night.
- The fire curtain should be lowered every night. It is located SL behind the proscenium.
- Backstage space is limited for scenery, props, & quick changes. This is okay; it encourages you to get creative.

- There is no food or drink allowed either on stage or in the dressing room, with the exception of water in a sealable container. Food and sugary drinks draw ants into the building.
- It is your responsibility to make sure that the dressing rooms and associated spaces are clean before you leave the space after strike.

## Printing & Copying

Printing and copying can be a sticky topic because it often requires the use of department materials and staff by students. If you ever have any questions, contact your Technical Director (Dan Schindler). Here are some basic guidelines.

- If you only need a small number of copies, use the printer in the SM office. This is for production copying only. There is a limited amount of ink and paper for this printer so please be prudent. If you need more ink or paper contact the TD.
- If you need to make a large amount of copies, say you need a couple extra copies of scripts, drop the script off to the departmental secretary. They will have our student assistant make the appropriate copies. Do this well in advance so that it can be planned into their workday.
- If you need to print a large number of copies of non-copyright material. You can either prepare a .PDF or a single printed copy of what you need and University Printing Services can do it. Drop the material or disk off at the office and ask the departmental secretary what you need to fill out to send it over the printing services. Again—this takes several days, so think in advance.
- University Printing Services will not copy copyright materials, though at times we need them, so we must do them in the theatre department office.
- If you need a high quality color print. E-mail what you need to the TD.

### Printing Don't

- Don't wait until the last minute. Try to anticipate when you will need to have copies at least two days in advance.
- Don't be short or rude with the departmental office staff. They are there to help, but last minute demands do not create much good will.
- Don't make any copies with your own money or personal computer/paper/ink!
- There is no such thing as a "Printing Emergency"

## Stage Manager Office

The room next to the prop shop is the Stage Manager Office. It is for use by HFA stage managers only. This includes anyone hired by HFA or the School of the Arts to stage manage events. You have access to the Internet and a place to store all of the important files you need for your show.

The A49 key opens this room.

This is your office to do your SM work, store personal belongings, and have private meetings with cast, crew, or faculty, and generally hide out if you need a quiet, private place to be. Treat it respectfully, keep it clean and feel free to add whatever touches you would like to make it more “homey”—you will be spending a lot of time there so make it as comfortable as possible. There aren’t a lot of perks to the job of SM, but this is one of them, you have your own office.

## SM Kit Basics

### **The Stage Management Kit:**

Your stage management kit comes in handy more often than one might think. There is an HFA Stage Management Kit available for your use if you do not want to build your own. See either the Theatre Department TD (Dan Schindler) or the HFA Production Manager (Mike Johnson) if you want to use it.

Many of our student stage choose to build their own that they can take with them when they leave. However, maintaining your kit can get expensive and overwhelming when you first start building it. So a good way to begin building your kit is to just get the basic things needed.

Ten things to have in your SM Kit:

- Small First Aid Kit (but use the first aid supplies provided in the scene shop first)
- Flash Light
- Stop Watch
- Pencil, highlighter, pen
- Kleenex
- Breath mints
- Feminine products
- 5 dollars (emergency food money for yourself)
- Hand sanitizer
- Hair tie, bobby pins, head band
- Spike and Gaff tape
- Batteries
- Safety pins – multiple sizes

**How to keep the cost down:**

A good way to keep your kit maintained inexpensively is to use resources the department provides. Only use your First aid kit out of absolute necessity, instead use the kit in the scene shop. Also, use the travel bins at Target and Wal-Mart to keep the cost of small things like hand sanitizer and Kleenex down. Borrow the spike and gaff tape from the scene shop during the rehearsal and run, with permission, of course.

Other costs of Stage Management are printing costs and cost of tabs for cue calling. Some of these are unavoidable. However, if you use them cautiously you can save some money; asking to print things from Dan or Mike, use the printer provided in the SM office, or invest in a laser printer to keep ink cost down and print from home are good ways to save.

## Internet Resources

### Stage Managers Union (AEA)



<http://www.actorsequity.org/>

### Scheduling:

- Doodle is a free online scheduling platform that allows your production team to post their available times for meetings in a clean graphic format so you can see which times are available and which are not. A lot easier than sifting through everyone's schedules and transferring them into an Excel file.

**Doodle**<sup>®</sup>

[www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com)

### Rehearsal Playback

- Often you will want to playback sound cues or music during rehearsal. You can simplify the process by loading all of those cues onto your laptop. Below a couple of free playback programs that work well in the rehearsal process and allow you to keep all of those cues organized and at hand.

QLAB (Mac Based)

<http://figure53.com/qlab/>

Multi-Play (PC Based)

<http://multiplay.com>

### PDF Creator

- Not everyone on the production team will have the same software you do. To make things simple you can send everything out as a PDF. The reader is free and the CutePDF program is also free. It does not have the bells and whistles of Adobe Acrobat, but is a very serviceable and free substitute for our purposes.

Cute PDF Creator

<http://www.cutepdf.com/>

Adobe PDF Reader

<http://www.adobe.com/products/reader/>

## Words of Wisdom

**These are words of wisdom from previous CSU, Chico Stage Managers – so take these with a grain of salt – some things repeat so focus on those, and discover your own ways to make this crazy job do-able!**

“The following advice may go against many of the things we learn from our teachers. But remember that each stage manager develops his/her own style. Some feel the need to keep distant from their cast and peers to avoid confusions and favoritism during stressful times, others feel that it is through the bonds you develop with your cast and crew that you will be truly successful.”

1. Get to know your show. You will be doing it for a while.
2. Delegate—you have ASM's for a reason. Try to not do everything yourself.
- 3 EAT. Very important. Try and make it well balanced meals to keep up your energy.
4. SLEEP. You need to be well rested and not falling asleep in rehearsal.
5. Know your cast. If something is going wrong make sure you know so that you may understand how rehearsal may go. Don't give friend advice on anything until out of the rehearsal mode.
6. Know what kind of paper work is comfortable for you.
7. Take time for yourself where you are not doing anything. Some suggestions are go for a walk or just go sit outside if its good weather. Try and get out of the building.
8. Find the balance between school work and SM work. You are here to learn.
9. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Going to a fellow SM is a good way or go to a reliable instructor outside of the show conditions.
10. Make sure that your personal emotions are not showed. If you are having a bad day, don't let it be known.

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1. Learn to delegate. You cannot, and should not, do everything all the time. ASMs, crew, and even faculty will help if you ask nicely.
  2. Very, very few situations arise in our shows that are cause for hurried panic. In most emergencies you can steal 30 seconds to think through your options and possible solutions. Don't feel like you have to have the answer right now. Slow down and think through before you make any decisions.
  3. Keep food in the Smoffice! The tech week stress and starvation diet is not a healthy way of losing weight.
  4. Know when to shut up and take it. You will be blamed for things completely out of your control, or situations you were not even aware of. Develop a sense for when you need to call people out on their mistakes versus when you need to just shut up and take it—for the sake of everyone else's sanity.
  5. You ain't nobody's mama. Your most minimal goal is to get a show up and on it's feet without killing anyone. Don't waste excess time babying actors or crew with personal problems, family emergencies, or stalkers. You are not a therapist. Make sure everyone is safe and sane - and move on.

6. Everyone in the room will mirror the energy you put forth. You panic, they panic. You yell, they yell. Even if you pick up your pace walking across the stage, others will start getting nervous. Even if you think you may have just lit a car on fire - don't let it show. The last thing you ever want is a room full of nervous and panicked theatre people.

7. Stay out of the drama. As SM, you have a certain amount of authority over other students. If you get wrapped up in their drama and personal issues, (1) you will no longer be neutral, and (2) they will lose respect for your authority. Staying out may even mean that as a show starts rolling toward tech, you step out of their social scene. Do what you need to do to maintain your position, distance from personal situations, and keep the show on the up-and-up. In this industry, every relationship is a business relationship.

8. It's okay to walk away. It's okay to go for a walk. It's okay to go outside. In fact, it's okay to go home and go to bed instead of writing the report. An exhausted and cranky SM is next to worthless. Learn to take care of your personal needs in balance with the show.

9. Make friends outside of theatre —or at least outside of this department.

9.5. A good therapist might not be a bad idea—I'm not joking.

10. As much as we complain, it really isn't that bad. You know it's true.

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1. Get to know Mike Johnson and Keely Leonard. They will be the two people who will remain impartial throughout the semester and they are always available to answer questions. You need to get much paperwork from Keely and Mike is the go to man for many things in the department. They are your friends.

2. Don't be afraid to cry. Close the door, walk away, but don't be afraid to cry.

3. Eat. Protein is your friend. It keeps you awake. It keeps you happy.

4. Find a good vice (or a hobby). Times may get tough, actually they probably will get tough, but knowing there's something waiting for you at home, (like chocolate) makes the whole day much easier

5. Leave work at school. Get your paperwork done after rehearsals. Get to school early to get work done. But don't take it home. Don't let it follow you. Don't keep it in your head.

6. Trust the people you work with. Trust your ASM's, trust your cast, trust the Director, trust the designers. Keep a running list of all the things that come up that you think won't be handled. But trust that others will do their job.

7. Smile. It feels good. Others will smile back. And no matter how you may feel before, after a good honest smile you will feel better.

8. Get to know your cast, learn about their families, learn about how busy they are, know what outside influences they have in their lives. This will be a great help when things get rough. You will have an idea of their workload, their stress level, their woes and worries and will be able to provide a sincere and caring ear. This also makes it easier to know when they are simply crying for attention.

9. Be everyone's friend equally. It is a misconception that friendship will lead to biased choices, but as your friend they too will learn to appreciate how much work you do for the show and will appreciate you more.

10. Find your own way of making rehearsals an enjoyable experience for everyone. If a positive tone is set from the first rehearsal, it will be very easy to keep company morale up.

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1. Don't let school get in the way of stage managing and don't let stage managing get in the way of school. Try to find balance between the two.
2. Find someone outside of your production and maybe even outside the dept. to cry to. We all have our breaking point and when that happens you don't want it to be in front of your cast/ crew/ director/etc.
3. Utilize the knowledge of the other stage managers. Don't drive them crazy with questions but know that chances are, whatever is happening to you has happened to them. and for the most part they are willing and able to help.
4. Get your program done early. Even if you just have a rough draft, get the copy off the SM office computer, fill in the blanks and then add or delete or change as necessary when the time comes. if your show is not the first of the season, make the program part of your preproduction stuff.
5. Eat sleep and be merry for tomorrow we call the show.  
Don't let the show get in the way of taking care of yourself. the last thing you want is to let your gaurd down and get sick during a production because you forgot to take care of yourself.
6. Make "me" time. Find a way to reward and/ or pamper yourself throughout production; a favorite candy, sleeping in on your day off, working out, whatever makes you feel your best. Don't stop taking care of yourself. In the end, you'll feel better about yourself and the show will still happen even if you got the performance report out later than usual.
7. Make friends with whoever is working in the office. You will need so many things from them, you don't want to be on their bad side or her impartial side. Go now, introduce yourself! it will pay off later.
8. Don't sweat the small stuff, don't freak out and remember, you're just a student like everyone else.
9. Remember that being an SM means you ride a strange line between faculty and student. You can still get in trouble and be the one to blame like a student but your level of professionalism must be on par with the Director and designers.
10. Remember that even without you this show will go on. There will be times when your flying high on power and the next minute the whole thing is out of your control. You may be the steering wheel of the car but without the rest of the car your kind of useless.

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1. **TAKE TIME FOR YOU**- believe it or not, but you do need to make time for you, take 30 minutes a day or take a full day on Saturday to do something you find fun or relaxing, read a book for fun or kill off robots on X-box, whatever you choose you need to do it because it makes you relaxed.
  2. Remember that one thing wrong does not mean the destruction of the show or the world, so keep calm.
  3. **EAT**- take time to go get an actual meal, or bring one and warm it up and eat on a break, but do not try to get away with snacking occasionally, take the little time you need to eat an actual meal.
  4. **Sleep**- It always seems that Stage Managers never sleep, it's necessary to sleep. School does come first- if your sleep deprived you won't learn and you won't be very useful in rehearsal.
  5. **DON'T RELY ON ENERGY DRINKS**- caffeine and sugar is not a good substitution to not sleep- choose eating protein and save the energy drinks for tech week.
  6. Knowing what is going on in the cast is a good way to gauge how a rehearsal is going to go; ears open, mouth closed.
  7. Asking for help is not a big deal, but going to fellow experienced SMs first is the best course of action when you are not sure what to do in a situation.

# California State University, Chico Stage Manager Handbook

## Appendices

### Section I – Technical Rehearsal Definitions

## Technical Rehearsal Definitions

### ***Paper Tech***

#### Definition:

The production team members all sit down around one table and talk through the cues associated with the show (lights, sound, scenic shifts, prop placement). This can take place during the day so that rehearsal time is not lost. The stage manager records all of these preliminary cues in their SM book in preparation for the technical rehearsal.

#### Primary focus:

Recording of cues and discussion of the flow of the show, timing, etc. in the SM's promptbook.

Recognizing possible rough spots to work during subsequent technical rehearsals.

#### Goal:

The production team should leave this meeting with all cues recorded in the SM's notebook and have talked through all transitions. This includes lights, sound, costume changes, scenery shifts, and special FX.

#### Production team members present:

Director, Stage Manager, Technical Director, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Scenic Designer, Costume Designer.\*

#### Preparation:

It is expected that all members present will have discussed independently with the Director their thoughts on the general flow of the show, its pace, rhythm, etc. and that the placement and discussion of the cues should reflect this.

- The SM should come with a clean copy of the script and the implements for recording all of the notations from the meeting.
- The SM should prepare a detailed props list delineated by prop location (SR, SL, or on stage) and actor association. This is to be given to the Props Master and Scenic Designer.

#### Time:

2 – 5 Hours (Very dependent on the show)

#### \*Special Note

Not all designers may be required to be at a Paper Tech. For example: If the set is a single location with no change or costumes only change at intermission, it is a waste of the designers' time to attend this meeting so long as there is a clear understanding of the designs and intent amongst the group. The people attending will be determined during the final production meeting. The largest part of the work during Paper Tech generally falls to the Director, Lighting Designer, and Stage Manager.

## **Dry Tech (Level Set)**

### Definition:

A technical rehearsal—without actors— is where the production team works through the timing and placement of each cue for the show. This is the first time that the lighting, sound, and props crews will learn to do their jobs. Props will set up their tables and storage places and learn the placement of all on stage properties. Sound and Lighting will learn the boards. This is also the first opportunity that the SM will practice calling the cues for the show. The first hour of this rehearsal will be for crew instruction. Often the props and scenery crews will be released after they learn their jobs. Lighting and Sound crews will remain to assist the designers in setting and adjusting cues.

### Primary focus:

Confirm placement and timing of all cues recorded in the SM's notebook. Set lighting and sound levels, as well as timing. Allow props and scenery crews to become familiar with their responsibilities. Work through all cues until everyone is satisfied with the look and feel of each.

### Goal:

Lighting and sound set levels and timing. A good understanding is achieved amongst the crew as to what each of their specific jobs entails and questions answered. All cues written down with timing and levels recorded.

### Production team members present:

Director, Stage Manager, Technical Director, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Scenic Designer, ASMs, Lighting & Sound Board Ops and Props and Scenery for the first part of the rehearsal, or until they are not needed and may be released.

### Preparation:

- The TD will ensure that the production table and intercom system is set up before the start of the rehearsal.
- Stage Management will provide props lists and scenery shift lists to the crew heads to be posted backstage.
- Basic instruction will be given to lighting and soundboard operators and any scenery shifters.
- All light cues pre-programmed into the board (General looks for scenes)
- All sound materials edited. Set up mics as necessary
- Light check will be completed before rehearsal.

### Time:

4-5 Hours

### \*Special Note: see next page

Prior to Dry Tech the Lighting and Sound Designers may meet independently with the Director to look and listen to cues for the show. This is called a Level Set or Levels. The Stage Manager is sometimes invited to these sessions as well.

## ***Cue to Cue***

### Definition:

This is the first rehearsal where the actors and technical crews will be working together. We will run through the show from cue to cue skipping all sections in between the cues. The SM is in charge of calling all starts and stops to the action. Please funnel all requests through the ASMs to lessen the confusion of multiple voices.

### Primary focus:

The integration of actors and technical crews and confirmation of cue timing and levels set during the previous rehearsal.

### Goal:

Run all cues with actors at show pace in the entire show, excluding the sections in between. Develop movement patterns backstage that facilitate a quick, efficient, and safe environment for shows conditions.

### Production team members present:

Director, Stage Manager, Technical Director, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Scenic Designer, all technical crews except Costumes, all actors.

### Preparation:

- The SM will have a sign-in board set up. Each actor and stage crewmember listed will sign-in upon arriving prior to each remaining rehearsal and performance.
- Designers and crew heads will have gone over any changes or notes with their crew and assistants.
- Light check completed
- Sound check completed
- All properties laid out and checked

### Time:

4-5 Hours

## ***Full Run-Through***

### Definition:

This is the first full run of the show from beginning to end with all props, lights, sound, and scenery. No costumes.

### Primary focus:

Run the entire show with as few stops as possible to get the feeling of pace and flow. Adjust cue placement, timing, and levels as needed. Stop and re-run scenes as necessary.

### Goal:

To run the entire show with all technical elements excepting costumes. Improve the flow and timing of the production.

### Production team members present:

Director, Stage Manager, Technical Director, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Scenic Designer, all technical crews except Costumes, all actors.

### Preparation:

- Same as previous
- Actors will check placement of all props they will use during the show.

### Post-Rehearsal

- Director, SM, TD, all Designers & Crew Heads will meet directly after rehearsal, prior to actor notes, to go over questions/concerns from the evening.

### Time:

4-5 Hours

## ***First Dress***

### Definition:

This is the first rehearsal which we see costumes under lights and in context of the rest of the technical & design elements. All design elements should be complete and present. No make up during this rehearsal. This is also when the wardrobe crews will learn their jobs. Anticipate the first 1/2-hour to be used for crew orientation and costume placement backstage.

### Primary focus:

Costume & costume crew issues. Stop action as necessary to deal with these concerns. Scenic, lighting, and sound issues should be noted, but we should not attempt to stop the show and run them unless a catastrophe occurs.

### Goal:

Integrate all costumes and costume changes into the matrix of the show. Iron out any rough areas. Develop traffic patterns between all actors and crews backstage.

### Production team members present:

Director, Stage Manager, Technical Director, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Scenic Designer, Costume Designer, all technical crews, all actors.

### Preparation:

- Same as previous

### Post-Rehearsal

- Director, SM, TD, all Designers & Crew Heads will meet directly after rehearsal— prior to actor notes—to go over questions/concerns from the evening.

### Time:

4-5 Hours

## ***Second Dress***

### Definition:

The second chance to view the entirety of the show with all design elements running at show pace. Full costumes and make up.

### Primary focus:

Evaluate changes related to Costumes & costume crew issues. All attempts should be made to not stop the show.

### Goal:

Run the entire show under show conditions. No stopping

### Production team members present:

Director, Stage Manager, Technical Director, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Scenic Designer, Costume Designer, all technical crews, all actors.

### Preparation:

- TD will break down the production table and move all operations to the control booth.
- Any design element not complete and in place **WILL BE CUT** at this time.
- Crews will be in dressed in blacks

### Post-Rehearsal

- Director, SM, TD, all Designers & Crew Heads will meet directly after rehearsal— prior to actor notes— to go over questions/concerns from the evening.

### Time:

3-4 Hours

## ***Final Dress***

### Definition:

Complete show conditions. Everything should be as it will be on opening night. The Director may choose to have this as an invited dress or preview night.

### Primary focus:

Run the show as if it were opening night.

### Goal:

Run the entire show, on time, no stops, at full speed.

### Production team members present:

Director, Stage Manager, Technical Dir. Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Scenic Designer, Costume Designer, all technical crews, all actors, House Manager, and Ushers.

### Preparation:

- Same as previous for tech crews
- No actors on stage after “House Open” time
- Com system/Walkies set up for House Managers

### Post-Rehearsal

- Director, SM, TD, all Designers & Crew Heads will meet directly after rehearsal— prior to actor notes— to go over questions/concerns from the evening.

### Time:

2-3 Hours

## ***Sample Technical Calendar***

Opening Night, Oct. 26

Final Dress, Oct. 25

2<sup>nd</sup>. Dress, Oct. 24

1<sup>st</sup>. Dress, Oct. 23

Full Run-Through, Oct. 22 (Evening)

Cue to Cue, Oct. 22(Morning)

Dry Tech, Oct. 21

Paper Tech, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>

Lighting Hang & Focus, Oct. 18 – 19

Move into performance space, Oct. 10

Scenery Painted, Oct. 20

Scenery Construction Completed, Oct. 17

Final Day to Add Props, Oct. 14

Shop Build Begins, Sept. 20

Drawings to Shop, Sept. 13 \*

Design Finalized, Sept. 6

Production Meeting Dates (Every 2 weeks at a common time)

Directors Notes (Two Weeks prior to the first production meeting)

\*A detailed punch list of what is to be constructed by specific dates will be generated from this set of drawings.