

Central Alberta Theatre

Position Description

Studio Theatre Stage Manager

Summary Version

[The Studio Theatre Stage Manager's Role](#)

The Stage Manager (SM) for a Studio Theatre production by CAT is a key position for ensuring a successful production. The SM's overall purpose is to work directly with the director, cast, backstage crew and the Production Manager to move a production from preparation to wrap up.

[Reporting](#)

SMs take direction from the director during the post-production and rehearsal period of a production and from the Production Manager or Vice President – Productions as appropriate and as detailed in this document.

[Etiquette](#)

Stage managers commit to behavioural etiquette throughout their time with the production in order to show respect to their craft, the director, actors, the play, the production team, their audience, and CAT. A Stage Manager is kind, polite, respectful, firm and calm, and is encouraging to actors, crew, techs, and staff. They have stamina and a sense of humour, and can adapt to the production needs of each production.

Overall

- I shall respect the play and the playwright, remembering that "A work of art is not a work of art until it is finished"
- I shall inspire the public to respect me and my craft through graciousness in accepting both praise and constructive criticism
- I shall never lose my enthusiasm for the theatre because of disappointment or failure, for they are the lessons by which I learn
- I shall direct my efforts in such a manner that when I leave the theatre it will stand as a greater institution for my having laboured there

- I shall look upon the production as a collective effort demanding my utmost cooperation. Hence, I will forgo the gratification of ego for the demands of the play
- I will **always** treat everyone who is a part of the production with respect and dignity (i.e. the backstage crew, director, actors, production manager, Vice President – Productions, designers, technicians, etc.)
- I will not mistreat or put unnecessary strain on the actors because it can lead to miscommunication, hurt feelings, tension, broken trust and anxiety. I do not want this to happen
- I will not arrive for rehearsals or performances under the influence of any drugs or substances for this will automatically remove me from the production

During the Rehearsal Period

- I will leave personal problems outside the rehearsal room
- I will be patient and avoid temperamental outbursts, for they create tension and serve no useful purpose

Duties

Ongoing

- Become familiar with the written board-approved policies and procedures as they relate to CAT productions and follow them
- Share the vision and mission of CAT

Preparation Before the Rehearsal Period Starts

- Become familiar with CAT's board-approved artistic and operational policies as they pertain to live theatre in this venue and abide by them
- As soon as you are recruited, obtain a copy of the script from the Production Manager. See **Note A** for more detail on the number of scripts you may decide to use during the production.
- The Vice President – Productions will ensure you receive from the director a write up that contains the director's vision and message for the production, a rehearsal schedule, and that you receive from the Production Manager a production schedule
- In conjunction with the Volunteer Manager, begin recruiting your backstage crew. The Production Manager will assist you with this if you encounter problems.

- Alert the Production Manager and Vice President – Productions immediately to any major changes you or the director are considering to the script (i.e. changes to the text, male role turning into a female role, etc.) so that a proper approval request can be submitted. **There is no guarantee that changes will be approved by the publisher and/or playwright.**
- Attend the first production meeting, scheduled by the Production Manager, prior to the first rehearsal of each production. At this meeting the director will share his/her vision and message with the Production Manager, the VP productions, the VP Marketing & Communications, and the production heads (Stage Manager, Set Designer, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Set Decorator, Head of Props, Head of Costumes, Head of Painting). At this time the director will also discuss design elements, expectations and timelines as outlined in the production schedule circulated in July. The Production Manager will circulate a budget for discussion. The VP Productions will explain CATena and the expectations of presenting a finished piece.
- Get any keys and access cards/security alarm codes you'll need for CAT Studios' rehearsal spaces and areas from the director, including training on their use if needed. Complete instructions for keys and access cards/security alarm codes are found in the written policies Section 6.
- Get to know the venue well enough to ensure smooth operation of the production and to ensure the safety of the cast, crew and audience
- Obtain the contact list/roster of the entire production team and the cast from the Assistant Producer
- Read the script several times, making notes on set, costume and makeup changes, especially those that happen back stage, and on the required props and their movement.
- Meet with the set designer to determine the set layout
- Meet with set decorator and props person to secure rehearsal furniture and rehearsal props
- If there are special costume requirements, ask the costume head to have rehearsal versions, if possible, ready for rehearsals

The Rehearsal Period

- Attend all rehearsals(or arrange for the Assistant Stage Manager or mentor Stage Manager to attend instead)
- Be in regular contact with the Production Manager during the rehearsal period regarding the status/progress of the production heads and their

duties and attend production meetings called by the Production Manager

- Attend any production meetings scheduled by the Production Manager
- In conjunction with the Volunteer Manager, recruit and schedule backstage crew for the needed backstage positions for the run (the Production Manager will assist you if you run into problems)
- Work with costumes head and director to determine which nights to have an early rehearsal call for costume parade, if needed
- Decide whether crew rehearsals will be needed, separate from the acting rehearsals, to rehearse changing scenes or props, and schedule those. Whenever possible, schedule the entire backstage crew to attend two run-through rehearsals with the actors before moving to the venue

Before the first rehearsal:

- Gather and store in the props box all rehearsal props, and gather all rehearsal furniture
- Prepare the Rehearsal Script to record blocking and to prompt the actors until they're off-book
- Contact the Construction Head or set designer to see if a set maquette can be available for the first rehearsal

On the day of the first rehearsal

- Arrive at least ½ hour before call time to arrange rehearsal furniture, set up props, set up beverages, food for cast if applicable, table and chairs for director and yourself (production table)
- At the start of the rehearsal give any announcements and distribute any information/handouts needed

During rehearsals

- Help maintain quiet and order (e.g. cellphones turned off)
- If an actor is late, ask the director if you should call
- Call cues to begin the action (lights, sound) and read aloud any needed stage directions such as audio cues
- Record blocking in pencil as decided by the director
- Give lines/prompt actors as requested by the director
- Record running time of each scene when asked to by director or when needed for set changes, etc. Towards the end of the rehearsal period, start timing each act to inform director.
- Time and coordinate breaks for cast if needed

- As needed, coordinate the sign-up of costume fittings for cast
- Lay out all the scene changes that backstage crew need to fulfill
- Prepare Stage Managers rehearsal reports for use by the Production Manager

At end of each rehearsal

- Assist director with notes for cast as required
- Ask the director if there is any production element they need before the upcoming rehearsal and follow up with the Production Manager to secure where appropriate
- Make sure the rehearsal space is left clean and neat
- Make sure all props are stored securely and out of the way
- Turn off lights in the rehearsal space and in the areas of the building that were used
- Make sure you are the last person to leave the building before you set the alarm and lock the main door

At the End of the Rehearsal Period

- Pull rehearsal props and furniture in conjunction with the set decorator and props person
- Ensure production props, set decorations are packed and ready for the load-in.
- Make sure the rehearsal space is left neat and clean for the next production cast & crew

During Tech Week

- Respect crew members/actors that are focusing on the needs of the production (i.e. avoid interrupting actors if they are rehearsing lines, stay out of the way of working crew members that are setting up furniture and/or props, etc.)
- Make sure the backstage area is set up
- Schedule extra backstage crew rehearsals to practice scene/set changes if needed, and be in charge of those (if time will be tight at dry tech or tech dress rehearsals)
- Ensure glow and spike tape is applied where needed
- Create pre-show, set change, intermission and post-show props checklists for backstage crew, one sheet for each run of the production

- Ensure you have accurate and complete contact information for all tech and backstage crew scheduled during the run
- Under the supervision of the Production Manager, Technical Director or the Vice President – Productions, run the cue-to-cue tech rehearsal and prepare the Call Script

During the Run

The Stage Manager is responsible for everything and everyone being ready, and for maintaining the director's intentions. The SM is also responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all involved.

Etiquette

- I will leave personal problems outside the theatre
- I will respect the audience regardless of size or station
- I shall strive to never miss carrying out my duties for each performance
- I will observe backstage courtesy and shall conduct myself in strict compliance with rules of the theatre in which I work

Duties

- Determine and communicate the call time for each run
- Be at the venue at call time or earlier each run
- Be in charge of pre-show, set change, intermission and post-show backstage procedures regarding props, set pieces and costume pieces
- Ensure that sound and light techs, and special effects, have done their checks at least ½ hour before show time
- Make sure actors have checked that their props are in place before start of each show
- Make sure actors and backstage crew are following backstage etiquette procedure. Discuss major violations with those involved
- Ensure no unauthorized people are in the backstage area or in the sound and light booth
- Give actors and crew a 30-minute call, a 15-minute call and a 5-minute call
- Alert the audience at the 5-minute call by ensuring the house lights are flickered or dimmed
- Ensure that shows start on time.
- Record and address when possible concerns/problems identified by front-of-house coordinator

- Alert crew heads to any repairs needed to props, set pieces or the set itself
- Lock valuable props in the props box or in the Bkl room at the end of each show
- Ensure the actors are maintaining the director's intentions for the show. Discuss with actors if there are significant variations from the director's intent
- If changes need to be made to the production when at the venue because of safety concerns, you and the Production Manager are both authorized to make these changes
- Ensure all props are clean and dishes sanitized ahead of each show to prevent "cross contamination" between actors
- If anyone is injured during a rehearsal or performance provide the necessary first aid (stop the bleeding). If an emergency medical situation occurs, call 911 and request ambulance service. After the emergency has been handled follow the incident reporting procedure in policies Section 6

After the Run

- Be there for the strike to coordinate with props, costumes, makeup, set decorator to ensure items are either taken back to their places in CAT Studios or are picked up by their owners
- Assist the strike crew if needed
- Ensure backstage area is left clean and neat
- Be part of the load-out procedure
- Return any keys/access codes for the rehearsal space/building. Instructions for doing that are found in the written policies Section 6.
- Participate in the post-production meeting/procedure chaired by the Vice President of Productions

