



## **GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENT HEADS of FRONT OF HOUSE**

Thank you for volunteering to head up the Front of House Department. Your main responsibilities are to make every guest feel welcome and to provide for the comfort and safety of the audience. Front of House volunteers are the first people that our patrons meet when they come to a play or other Theatre event. You create the first impression with your friendliness and efficiency.

Do not underestimate the importance of your job.

## **THREE WEEKS BEFORE OPENING**

1. Contact people on the list of current volunteers (in separate document).
2. Prepare schedule – normally three people per performance. For popular shows, four may be required for some performances, especially Thursdays.
3. Obtain production door code from show producer.

## **ONE - TWO WEEKS BEFORE**

1. Ensure that there are two large laminated posters for the sandwich board. (Use only sticky tac or masking tape on the back of the posters.)
2. Check Front of House drawer in filing cabinet in the office for:
  - Concession Price Lists (three)
  - Quick Checklists (one per performance) – photocopy more if needed
  - Seating Chart (one for each Thursday)
  - Opening Night Invitations (two)
3. Contact Treasurer for current safe code. Check the Concession float and that the Askews' card is in the float bag.
4. Email schedule to all volunteers. Include contact information. Encourage people to find someone to switch with if they are unable to be at their scheduled performance and only contact you if they can't find anyone. Tell them to arrive 75 minutes before curtain. Invite them to the Dress Rehearsal.

## **ONE - TWO DAYS BEFORE**

1. Purchase needed supplies – napkins, plastic glasses (9oz for juice, 7oz or Dixie Cups for water jug), teas, cream, milk, juice, sugar, cookies (from Askews).
2. Check coffee supplies and water jugs (purchased by the Building Manager).
3. Tidy inside the booth, including emptying the fridge of unnecessary items.
4. Clear pathway through Scene Shop for patrons with mobility problems.
5. Post Price Lists.
6. Check with Stage Manager about the length of each act. Post this information inside the booth for volunteers. Stage Manager will also tell you how far in advance of curtain the House doors will be opened.
7. Find out from person in charge of sponsorships which performances have Bronze level sponsors – individual performance sponsors. Post before each performance.
8. Find out from person in charge of programmes how they will be delivered.

## ON PERFORMANCE DAYS

1. If possible, put the sandwich board on the sidewalk at the corner of Hudson and Shuswap (outside the Blue Canoe) on the morning of each performance.
2. Arrive at the Theatre at least 75 min before curtain. (Doors open one hour before.) On 'Pay What You Can' Thursday, arrive at least 90 min before curtain.
3. Move sandwich board from corner of Hudson and Shuswap and place outside Theatre door.
4. FOH volunteer coats etc. should be put upstairs in the office.
5. Put on VOLUNTEER tag.
6. Fill coffee carafes with hot water to warm them. Boil kettle for tea.
7. Get concession float from safe and organize in drawer.
8. Have one pot of regular and one of decaf ready to go if someone requests it before the show. (Don't run it through until someone asks.) Pour into warmed silver carafes when ready. Put out milk, cream, sugar and spoons, teas, cookies.
9. Mix up two kinds of juice.
10. Put out one of each kind of pop for people to see the choices.
11. If necessary tidy up Green Room, House, check bathrooms, including paper towel, toilet paper. All extras are under the sink in the Women's washroom. Sweep outside if necessary – broom in Scene Shop.
12. Check programmes (may need to be folded).
13. One hour before curtain, unlock both sets of front doors (including brass bolts) and the side door to the alley (fire regulations).
14. Check with Box Office personnel to find out how tickets are being handled for this show. (They may be scanned at the box office, or at the top of the stairs. You may or may not be asked to rip tickets as patrons enter.)
15. One volunteer should greet people at the door as they arrive, indicate where to buy tickets, when House doors open and hand them a programme.
16. Make sure patrons know that they are allowed to take bottled water into the House, but no coffee or juice.
17. When House doors open, one volunteer greets people at the main doors, one sells refreshments, stands at the top of the stairs, helping people locate their seat. (On evenings when a large audience is expected, one more might be

needed.) This person also ensures that no food or drink other than water is taken into the House.

18. On 'Pay What You Can' Thursday, have a jar or basket for donations on the new Ticket Kiosk and use the double rolls of tickets (under the counter in the booth) to give each person a double ticket. One of the double tickets is taken as they go into the House.
19. On 'Pay What You Can' Thursday, patrons should start lining up on the right hand stairs, with the lineup snaking through the Green Room. This helps keep the entrance way and the outside doors clear.
20. Patrons with mobility issues can be taken through the Scene Shop to avoid the stairs. Those in wheelchairs must enter through the alley door. One volunteer goes outside to meet patron while another opens the door from the inside. Two chairs need to be removed from the front row – Row B, to accommodate one wheelchair. The chairs can be stacked in the Scene Shop. It is best to seat wheelchair patrons and those going through the Scene Shop before opening the House doors if possible.
21. Open the House doors when Stage Manager or Lighting Operator gives the word, usually about 20-30 minutes before curtain. Never open the doors before the word is given.
22. Start ushering people in at the 5-minute buzzer. Check the washrooms and the street for latecomers. Everyone needs to be in the House as soon as the 2-minute buzzer sounds.
23. At curtain time, let the lighting technician know when everyone is seated. (Give the "thumbs up" to the window in the House.)
24. One person goes into the House (with a flashlight from under the ticket booth counter), sits on the stool inside the door for the whole performance. One stays in the Foyer. The others can watch the show if they wish, provided there are empty seats.
25. The volunteer in the House is responsible for the audience, ensuring that anyone who comes late or has to leave, does so as quietly as possible. Latecomers must sit or wait at the back until an appropriate break in the play. If their seats are in the middle of a row or near the front, it's best if they sit at the back till the intermission, as it's too disruptive to the audience and the actors to seat them during the performance.
26. The person in the Foyer escorts any latecomers up the stairs quietly, handing them over to the person in the House. This person also ensures that the noise level in the lobby is kept very low.

27. Turn off stair and entranceway lights as House doors are closed.
28. Prepare coffee and boil kettle for tea about 10 minutes before the end of Act One.
29. At intermission, open House doors, turn on the lights over the stairs and in the Green Room. Serve refreshments as quickly and efficiently as possible.
30. One volunteer stands at the top of the stairs as people go in for the second act, making sure no one enters with food or drinks.
31. After the second act starts, only two volunteers need to stay – one in the House and one in the foyer. The person in the foyer counts the concession money, washes the dishes - rinsing them in the sink first and putting them in the sanitizer (instructions on the sanitizer door) – and tidies up the kitchen and Green Room.
32. After the show, empty garbage cans if necessary, including in bathrooms. If there is a full bag of garbage, put it in the dumpster in the alley. (Key is hanging up to the right of the ticket booth.) Or bags can be put temporarily by the back door of the Scene Shop.
33. Check House, collecting programmes etc. Return all seats to upright position.
34. Note any supplies that are getting low.
35. Put envelope with concession money and float in the safe. If smaller denominations are needed for the float, take some bills with you to the bank the next day for change and return the money to the safe.
36. Bring in the sandwich board.
37. Flush the urinals!
38. Remove VOLUNTEER tags.
39. If you are the last to leave, turn off all lights except the one in front of the ticket booth and the stair light up to the office. Ensure the side door is locked and lock the front doors as you are leaving including engaging the brass bars. Do this even if there are still people backstage.