

A Checklist of Tasks

_____ Script - Your first responsibility upon receiving a stage managing assignment is to obtain a copy of the script. Usually you can get a copy from the director or from the stage management advisor.

_____ Calendar - You will also want a copy of the production calendar. You can obtain this from the Technical Director or SM adviser.

_____ Keys - See the SM advisor for your keys.

_____ Prompt Book - The prompt book will be your daily guide to the production. All paperwork concerning the production should be kept here. The prompt book holds all blocking notes, cueing, and paperwork for your production. Many versions of prompt books exist and you should use what seems most comfortable to you. Separate pages for blocking that can be removed once we get into technical rehearsals are suggested with a reduced ground plan on each page. Another option is to copy a separate script that will be used for cues.

Assist the director in getting ready for auditions:

_____ Copy audition forms.

_____ Ready scripts.

_____ Ask the director how they would like to run auditions

_____ Post any audition notices from the director.

Create preliminary lists (tables or databases)

_____ Preliminary prop list (per text, not the back of the script)

_____ Preliminary light cue list.

_____ Preliminary costume prop list.

_____ Preliminary sound list.

_____ Preliminary rehearsal prop list.

_____ Distribute your lists to the appropriate people.

Begin the contact sheet.

_____ Create a contact list using names, duties, or character, and phone numbers. Addresses are not necessary. This will not be able to be completed until after auditions.

Prepare the call board for information that will be posted throughout the production process including:

_____ The Contact Sheet

_____ Rehearsal Calls

_____ Costume Fittings

_____ Rehearsal Reports

_____ Performance Reports

_____ Any and all correspondence to the cast and crew.

Before the first rehearsal:

- _____ Using the audition forms of the performers cast, type up a list of conflicts for yourself and the director. Give all audition forms to the production manager when finished.
- _____ Check to see that the stage has been set up for read thru.
- _____ Get Publicity Data/Bio Sheets from the Publicity Assistant and prepare any other paperwork and/or scripts for the cast.
- _____ Check with the scenic, lighting and costume designer to see if they will be in attendance at the first read-thru.
- _____ Tape/paint out the ground plan before the first blocking rehearsal.
- _____ Gather any rehearsal furniture needed for blocking rehearsal. Check with designer for assistance.
- _____ Compile a list of necessary rehearsal props.
- _____ Discuss with director about the dates props will be needed.
- _____ Check with designer and pull rehearsal props.
- _____ Schedule once a week meetings with the stage manager adviser.

The Rehearsal Process:

Preparation before Rehearsal - Opening Procedures:

- _____ Arrive ½ hour before rehearsals begin.
- _____ Unlock the theater.
- _____ Turn on all work lights and house lights.
- _____ Get out rehearsal properties.
- _____ Make sure all furniture is in place.
- _____ Check to see that all actors have arrived and call any late comers.
- _____ Have rehearsal buzzers, bells, or phones ready as necessary.
- _____ Time all rehearsals.

During the Rehearsal:

- _____ Call lights, begins scene, etc.
- _____ Take copious blocking notes.
- _____ Take notes on any technical requests or needs from the director.
- _____ Fill out daily rehearsal report.
- _____ Be ready for the next scene so time is not wasted.
- _____ Prompt for lines. Be sure to wait until actors call for "Line!" Never prompt just because an actor has paused.
- _____ Keep an eye on rehearsal running time and inform director as necessary to keep rehearsals on schedule.
- _____ Spike all set pieces.

After the rehearsal - Closing Procedures:

- _____ Make sure to show all notes on rehearsal report to director at the end of each evening.
- _____ Lock up all properties in prop cabinet.
- _____ Place ghost light on stage.

- _____ Turn out theatre work lights and house lights.
 - _____ Lock all theater doors.
 - _____ Check back doors of shop.
 - _____ Post rehearsal report on call board.
 - _____ Be sure costume shop and dressing rooms are locked. Turn off all lights including bathrooms.
- Start all over tomorrow.

List revisions:

Lists will change almost daily, especially the prop list. It is very important that you keep organized and on top of the current needs of the production. Whenever something new is added (or cut) during rehearsal, include these on the evening's rehearsal report under the correct heading. Keep your lists current and reprint them for the designers periodically (about once a week for the prop list, less often for the others - discuss with designers their needs.) Each time you print a new list, include a "date revised" on it so you and the designers know which list is current. Star new items and note at the bottom what was cut since the last list. Be very detailed on your prop list - note which items will be consumed (eaten, torn up, etc.) each night, and any other important characteristics.

Production Meetings:

The stage manager should run all production meetings and keep those in attendance on task and productive so valuable time is not wasted. Start with the director and their questions and work through in the following order: Director, Scenic Director, Costume Designer, Lighting Designer, Technical Director, Publicity (if in attendance). Take notes on the production meeting form, Xerox the notes for all in attendance and place in mailboxes or on call board. You may choose to take short hand notes and re-copy them later. Just be sure everyone can read your handwriting. Be precise; sloppy note taking leads to mistakes and misunderstandings.

Run Crew Meeting:

- _____ Obtain a final crew list from the technical director.
- _____ Contact all crew members to remind them of the meeting that takes place the Monday 2 weeks before Tech Week.
- _____ Before the meeting, discuss with the TD any special issues that the crew needs to be informed of.
- _____ Run the crew meeting. Hand out and discuss "Crew Guidelines Sheet" and any issues unique to the production.

Final/Revised Technical List:

- _____ Compile final properties list and distribute as necessary. This should happen the day after the "Prop Add Deadline."
- _____ Create final sound effects list. Distribute as necessary.
- _____ Attend "Prop Review," "Light Preview," and "Sound Preview" with director and designers (if they are scheduled). Take notes as you can but this is NOT the time to book your cues.

Before technical rehearsals begin (3-4 days):

_____ Go over prop lists with designer so you are sure of each and every property in the show.

_____ Set up prop tables SL and SR, cover with kraft paper, and layout all props with name and character designation.

_____ Be sure you understand how all scene changes work.

_____ Post show running order backstage, in greenroom and dressing rooms.

_____ Ready your crew assignment sheets/cards and know where every crew person will be and what they will be doing. Some of this may have to be worked out with the technical director and designer. More of these decisions may be made at paper tech the Friday before first tech.

_____ Post a tech week schedule on the call board and hand a copy to each performer.

_____ Be sure you understand all emergency procedures.

_____ Create a "Sign-in Sheet" and post it on the green room door.

_____ Figure out where and how many headsets will be needed.

_____ Figure out where quick change areas will be needed.

_____ Glow tape any areas where difficult exits or changes are anticipated.

_____ Place cues in your prompt book (booking cues).

You should have received a Cue Synopsis from the lighting designer, sound designer, and any special effects designers involved with the production 2-3 days before paper tech. Use these as guides to begin booking your cues. Paper tech will answer any questions you may have about how and when cues need to be called.

Paper Tech:

Paper tech happens the Friday before tech week. All production staff and backstage crew heads if they are available are required to attend. We "walk" through the entire show synchronizing all cues and their placement. This is the time to be sure that sound cue 2 happens with or before light cue 12.

Dry Tech:

A dry tech may be scheduled the Saturday before the first tech rehearsal. No performers are called for this rehearsal. All crew members and designers are required to attend. Typically the TD and designers run this first crew rehearsal. Running assignments are made here and crews are trained for their specific assignments. Scene changes can be run here and complicated ones rehearsed as needed. Change problems can be worked out without the actors having to sit and wait.

Tech Rehearsal:

The technical rehearsal is a beast unto itself. Now the operations and technical responsibilities are in your hands. The design staff will work with you especially at first tech, but you are expected to keep things on schedule and moving. You must remain professional and pleasant at all times, even through a very long rehearsal. Many times the technical staff will just keep going at tech rehearsals. Watch that the crew and performers don't get overworked in long stretches. If you think we need a break, talk to the designer or TD. They are always a good idea.

_____ Make sure everyone involved with the production gathers in the house before the rehearsal begins. This is the time for announcements and introductions. Many of the crew and

cast have probably never met. Once announcements are complete and the staff has given you the okay, call "5 minutes please" and the evening will be underway.

_____ Call "Places Please" and check that headsets are working and everyone can hear and communicate with you.

_____ Check with light board operator to see if they have control of the house lights and that the work lights are off.

_____ Take a deep breath and call your first cue of the evening. Take the rehearsal one cue at a time. Stop when necessary as requested by either the director, designers, TD, or yourself. The stage manager should be the only one to halt the performance.

- -When the performance needs to be stopped you should call out "Stop Please"
- -Discuss with those appropriate what needs to happen and from where you will pick-up the rehearsal.
- -Always let the performers on stage know as soon as possible where they will be re-starting form. Don't leave them figuratively in the dark.
- -Never leave a stage in black, someone could get hurt. Always restore to a cue with light as soon as possible. If you must go to a blackout inform those on stage and off "Stage is going to black" before you turn out the lights.
- -When everyone is ready to go on headset call "Begin please" to the performers and they will start as they are ready. They may need a moment to compose themselves.

This process will carry on throughout the evening. Don't rely on someone else to stop you. If you wish to back up and take a cue or a series of cues again feel free to stop and do so.

At the end of the evening the director may wish to meet with performers. You should meet with the technical staff first for notes then join the performers. At times you will be pulled in both directions, but during the tech week, you need to be with the technical staff first. Be sure to check with all designers and the director as to their wishes for the next night.

Check with crew members on problems and concerns. They are your link to a smooth performance. Treat them with respect and appreciation and they will enjoy their job. If you ever have any problems that you feel uncomfortable with involving a crew member or a performer inform the stage manager adviser immediately.

The performance belongs to you. The responsibility for the production is squarely in your hands. Arrive every night with nothing but the production on your mind. You, above all, need to check your life at the door so the performance can go as smoothly as possible.

_____ Follow the Stage Manager's Checklist for each performance.

_____ Synchronize a procedure with the house manager.

_____ Check for any repairs or touch-ups needed.

_____ Make sure performers have no problems.

_____ Check with house manager each performance. See if there is anything you can do to facilitate the process with the front of house staff.

_____ Double and triple check the stage, the house, backstage, and the dressing rooms every night. You can never be "too sure."

_____ Keep a running inventory of any consumables for the show. This includes food, liquids, papers, notes, envelopes, etc., and inform the correct people before things run out.

Enjoy this process and the show. While the amount of work will never seem less than a mountain, the rewards of completing a production are great. Mistakes will happen, that is the nature of live performance. Don't be too hard on those who make the mistakes, even if it is you; take the time to correct them.

After the Production Run:

_____ Fill out a SM Crew Evaluation Sheet. This is done to let the faculty know who actually worked on the show and how you felt they performed their duties.

_____ RELAX!!!!