

**Appendix K:**  
**House Management Checklist**  
*Organization and Communication Are Key*

General

- Working closely with the Stage Manager and the Faculty/Staff member, the House Manager manages all areas of customer service before, during, and after performances.
- Responsibilities include training ushers, opening and closing the house, familiarity with emergency procedures, professional appearance of the facility, and enforcement of house rules.

Final Dress Rehearsals

- Attend a final dress rehearsal and note content issues (including language, alcohol, violence, romantic situations, etc.).
- Note the length of the first half of the show (should there be an intermission).
- Note the entire length of the show.

Pre-Performance

- Dress professionally (Gentlemen: dress pants, shirts, and ties; Ladies: dresses, skirts and blouses, or dress pants and blouses).
- Arrive approximately one and a half hours prior to curtain.
- Alert the stage manager that you have arrived.
- Retrieve and wear gold "House Management" badge. Have the "Usher" badges ready to pass out to the House Crew as they arrive.
- Insure that all exterior doors and the doors into the auditorium are closed but unlocked.
- Inspect the lobby and auditorium for trash, crooked or misplaced chairs, old programs, etc. Clean and straighten as necessary.
- Review emergency procedures and check to make sure exit aisles are clear.
  - o Know your plan in the event of bad weather and how you will communicate that to the patrons (enlist faculty help if necessary).
  - o Know your plan in the event of a house disruption (enlist faculty help if necessary).
  - o Know your plan in the event of fire.
- Know where you will seat handicapped patrons and how you will help them to their seat/location.
- Check to see that the box office staff have everything they need:
  - o Programs,
  - o Tickets (if used),
  - o Change provided in a metal lock box (provided by faculty),
  - o Reservation sheets (provided by faculty),
  - o Pens & highlighters.
- The Box Office Crew should arrive one hour prior to curtain; supervise their arrival by checking to see:
  - o Are they dressed professionally?
  - o Are they wearing the gold "Box Office Manager" badges?
  - o Is one of them willing to sit outside the theatre in the lobby during the performance to help deal with latecomers or those who exit the performance? (If not, you must.)
  - o Do they have a plan in place to secure the money, programs, and paperwork at the start of the show?
- For shows in the Recital Hall or in the Black Box Theatre, count out the number of programs needed for the performance based upon the seat count. These often serve as tickets in an effort to save money. The Box Office Manager may help you with this or you may choose to delegate it entirely to him or her.
- Ushers should arrive one hour prior to curtain; supervise their arrival by checking to see:
  - o Are they dressed professionally?
  - o Are they wearing the gold "Usher" badges?
  - o Is one of them willing to sit inside the theatre during the performance to help with patron issues? (If not, you must.)
- Make sure the ushers understand that their primary responsibilities are:

- Greeting patrons and making them feel welcome,
- Checking to make sure patrons have a ticket (program) prior to entering the space,
- Encouraging patrons to sit away from the aisles to allow for late seating,
- ❑ Double check to make sure lobby display is in perfect working order, including all instructional signs, posters, and design displays.
- ❑ Through the Director and the Stage Manager, know whether or not this particular show allows for:
  - Late seating:
    - If allowed, have a plan for ushers to guide late arrivals swiftly to their seats to minimize disturbances.
    - If not allowed, have a plan for encouraging patrons to attend on another night OR to be seated at intermission (if one is scheduled).
  - Re-entry for those who exit during the performance:
    - If allowed, have a plan for their safe return to their seat,
    - If not allowed, have a plan for reseating at intermission or an apology ready that emphasizes their safety as a priority.
  - Food or drink in the house:
    - If allowed, have a plan for clean-up. Patrons will often not pick up after themselves.
    - If not allowed, encourage patrons to finish their food or drink in the lobby prior to entering or re-entering the theatre. Do not delay the continuation of a show if possible.
  - Babies or children under the age of five:
    - If allowed, encourage them to sit on the aisles (regardless of arrival time) and give them permission to exit freely if the child becomes a disruption to patrons around them.
    - If not allowed, please politely explain why (loud sound effects, music, screaming, violence, etc.) and politely remain firm that they will not be admitted. Signs should be posted reemphasizing the production's particular stance on infants and toddlers. If necessary, use a faculty or staff member to back you up or speak for you.
- ❑ Greet patrons as they enter the lobby area.
  - Answer any questions they may have about the length of the show or content issues.
- ❑ Make sure the auditorium doors are closed until both you and the Stage Manager agree together that the house is ready for opening.
  - The auditorium is traditionally opened thirty (30) minutes prior to curtain.
  - An emergency technical situation may preempt this normal time.
  - If there is an emergency technical situation behind the scenes, communicate to the patrons that there is a delay opening the house and thank them for their patience.
- ❑ Make sure ushers are in place to receive patrons and then open the house doors.
- ❑ Announce loudly that "The house is now open for seating."
- ❑ Supervise the seating of patrons from inside the house, make sure particular care is given to handicapped and elderly patrons.
- ❑ Along with the ushers, encourage patrons to sit away from the aisles (if you know the show is sold out and the house will be filled to capacity) to allow for latecomers.
- ❑ Count the empty seats or the patrons (whichever is fewer). Double check the house count to make sure the final count matches the paperwork of the Box Office. Have the final count written down by the Box Office Manager on his or her paperwork and circled so that it is easy for faculty to find.
- ❑ Once the house is filled and the show ready to begin, close the doors to the lobby.
- ❑ Turn out all lights in the vestibules (little rooms between the lobby and house) and lobby.
- ❑ The show will not begin until you communicate to the Stage Manager that the house is closed and ready for performance:
  - If the house is sold out (full) and completely settled, start the show on time.
  - Holding a show for approximately 2-5 minutes is normal if there are empty seats.
  - Do your best to close the house and start the show no later than five minutes past the scheduled curtain time.
  - If there is an emergency situation (such as inclement weather) that has slowed or delayed patrons' arrival, please communicate this to the Stage Manager and then to the seated patrons explaining why you are holding the house longer than the usual five minutes.

- Did you signal the Stage Manager it was okay to start the show?
- Does the Box Office staff have a plan in place to secure the money, programs, and paperwork?
- At this time, you can release the ushers (after collecting their gold name tags!) to see the show or leave. Remember that if one is not sitting in on the show as an usher, that you must.

#### During the Show

- Either you or one member of your Ushering staff must remain inside the auditorium during the run of the show to help with any patron issues that may arise.
- Either you or one member of your Box Office staff must remain in the lobby during the run of the show to deal with latecomers or those who exit the house.
- If a group is scheduled to set up and sell concessions at intermission, make sure they know where to set up when they arrive.

#### At Intermission

- Open and brace all doors from the house into the lobby.
- Turn on all lobby and vestibule lights.
- Start timing the intermission (most intermissions are usually 15 minutes long).
- When it is time to reseat the patrons (usually three minutes prior to the restart of the show), blink the lobby lights and announce that the show will resume in three minutes.
- Repeat the blinking of the lobby lights and the announcement with one-minute left.
- Ensure all patrons are safely returned to their seats or encourage them to take them immediately.
- Close all doors to the house.
- Turn off all lights in the lobby/vestibule areas.
- Resume your post either in the auditorium or outside in the lobby.

#### At the End of the Performance

- Open and brace all doors from the house into the lobby.
- Turn on all lobby and vestibule lights.
- Thank patrons for coming as they exit.
- Use what Box Office or Ushering staff you have left to help you clean the house or clean it yourself.
- Ensure that all gold badges are returned, with the paperwork, extra programs, and money, are secured by the faculty/staff member.
- Dismiss any leftover box office staff or ushers.

#### Strike

- The Technical Director will organize and supervise the strike.
- Clean up all lobby and house areas.
- Recycle what papers and displays you can.
- Fold table cloths and return to the main office.
- Strike tables and chairs and return them to storage.
- Help with the strike of the house chairs (Black Box) if necessary.
- Participate as required in other areas of strike.
- You cannot leave until you are dismissed by the Stage Manager.