

Stage Manager's Handbook



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Table of Contents

Introduction: The Stage manager as Communicator.....	5
Pre-Production and Auditions	
1. Meeting the Director.....	6
2. Meeting with Designers.....	7
3. Scheduling and Production Calendar	
4. Emerson Stage Equity Rules.....	9
5. Auditions, Callbacks and Casting.....	11
6. Stage Management Prep Period.....	13
7. Paperwork.....	14
The Rehearsal Process	
Stage Management Responsibilities	
1. Atmosphere.....	15
2. Weekly Production Meetings	
3. Communication with Departments	
Pre-Rehearsal Duties	
1. Taping the Rehearsal Room.....	16
2. Duties of the Stage Manager	
3. Duties of the Assistant Stage Manager (s)	
First Rehearsal	
1. Set-Up.....	17
2. Acting Company Arrival	
3. Voting	
4. Company Management	
5. Getting Started.....	18
6. Rehearsal Etiquette	
Rehearsal Period Responsibilities	
1. Stage Manager Paperwork.....	18
2. 1 st Assistant Stage Manager Paperwork	
3. 2nd Assistant Stage Manager Paperwork.....	19
4. Stage Manager Duties	
5. 1 st Assistant Stage Manager Duties	20
6. 2nd Assistant Stage Manager Duties	
Post-Rehearsal Duties	
1. Clean-Up	21
2. Post-Rehearsal Communication	
3. Lock-Up Procedures	
Pre-Tech and Tech	
Pre-Tech	
1. Signage.....	22
2. Call Board.....	23
3. Prop Presets	
4. Run Sheets	
5. Call the Crew	
6. Crew Assignments	
7. Crew Packets.....	24
8. Comm Plot	
9. Actor Care	
10. Walkie Talkie Sign In/Out.....	25
11. Spike Mark Map	
12. Valuable Bags	

13. Dressing Room Assignments & Labels.....	25
14. Locate Mop, Broom & Dustpan	
15. Tech Tables	
16. Restock Supplies	
17. Foam the Doors.....	26
18. Signing Out Keys	
19. Order of Fight Call	
20. Decide on Stage Management Calling Location	
21. Marley Procedures	
22. Cue/Run Lights.....	27
Top of Day: Level Set/Shift Rehearsal (Day Before Tech Weekend)	
1. Post Signage.....	27
2. Tape Out and Label Prop Tables	
3. Set Up Actor Care Tables	
4. Tape Out Egress	
5. Safety Taping	
6. Discuss Front of House Matters With Director	
Level Set/Shift Rehearsal (Day Before Tech Weekend)	
1. Teach the Crew to Sweep and Mop.....	28
2. Use Crew Members as Stand-Ins	
3. Sweep and Organize Backstage	
4. Tape Out Prop Storage and Pre-Sets	
5. Show Crew Prop Storage and Pre-Sets	
6. Assign Crew Members To Transition and Review Run Sheets	
7. Work Transitions	
Top of Day, Tech	
1. Sweep and Mop.....	28
2. Check Spikes/Charge Glow Tape	
3. Preset Props	
4. Restock Actor Care	
5. Check Sign In Sheet/Call Latecomers.....	29
6. Headset Check/God Mic Check/Walkie Check	
7. Check Masking	
8. Collect Valuable Bags	
9. Turn on Program Monitors	
Tech	
1. Updating Run Sheets Every Night.....	29
2. Write Cues In Prompt Book	
3. Finalize Entrance/Exit Plot	
4. Production Meetings at End of Night	
5. Confirm Lockdown of Theatre at End of Night	
Performance, Strike, and Post-Production Meeting	
Pre-Show	
1. Arriving and Unlocking.....	30
2. Stage Manager	
3. Assistant Stage Managers	
4. Calls, Warnings, Places.....	31
Performance	
1. Basic Procedure.....	31
2. Stage Manager	
3. ASMs.....	33
Post-Show	
1. Paging the Dressing Rooms.....	33
2. Returning Valuables	
3. Giving Notes to Cast	

4. Checking In With Staff.....	33
5. Preparing the Performance Report	
6. Clearing the Stage	
7. Dismissing the Crew	
8. Locking the Theatre.....	34
Strike	
1. All.....	34
2. Stage Manager	
3. Assistant Stage Manager	
4. 2 nd Assistant Stage Manager	
Emergency Situations.....	35
Post Production Meeting	

The Appendix

Introduction: The Stage Manager as Communicator

From: *The Stage Manager's Toolkit*
by Laurie Kinckman

One of the most important roles in any theatrical production is that of the stage manager. A clearinghouse for information, the stage manager is responsible for organizing rehearsals and running performances. The requirements for the job include confidence, strong organizational and management skills, understanding and compassion, a sense of humor, and the motivation to initiate tasks and follow them through to completion. The stage manager works as a team with the director, production manager, designers, technicians, and actors, facilitating a process in which creativity can flourish.

In less official terms, the stage manager might be thought of as the “air-traffic controller” of a theatrical production, coordinating the flow of information into and out of the theatre and guiding the participants to a finished product that reflects the artistic considerations of all.

The Art of Servant Leadership

"To lead the people, walk behind them."

---Lao Tzu, author of the *Tao Te Ching*

Pre-Production and Auditions

1. Meeting with Director

Communication is one of the most important skills in a stage manager's toolkit. The strength of theatre lies in communication between all departments and disciplines. The stage manager's responsibility is to ensure that communication and collaboration occurs on a regular basis throughout the process. This can be done by holding weekly production meetings as well as individual meetings with designers and directors to ensure the production is going in a unified direction all around.

It is important that the stage manager acts as a liaison between the creative and artistic teams as well as the administrative teams. Regardless of what may happen throughout the production, remain unbiased and never find yourself swaying to the favor of one side.

One of the most crucial meetings during the pre-production period for a stage manager is the meeting with the Director. The stage manager should read the script before meeting with the director. Then, make an appointment with the director to begin initial planning of the production and discussion of exactly what the director expects of the stage manager. Both of you should leave the meeting feeling confident and secure in moving forward with the production and working together. It is important to remember to always be yourself, because that is the person that the director will be working with every day for the next few weeks or months. Throughout the meeting with the director make sure you are attentive and **listening** to all the information that the director will be giving you regarding the production and the script. Let the director tell you about the script, their concept or vision, the time period etc. If they don't give a lot of information up front don't be afraid to ask questions. It is always better to ask questions early on, rather than assume what they might like or want and it be wrong. Avoid these unnecessary conflicts and **ask questions**.

Questions such as:

- Which version of the script are we using? Is there a different edition or version?
- What is the cast breakdown?
- How would they like breaks conducted? 10 minutes or 5 minutes?
- What is their policy for visitors and guests in the rehearsal room?
- How would they like the schedule to be done? Daily or Weekly?
- How would they like you to prompt lines?
- Are there going to be re-writes? How do they want you to go about re-writes?
- When would they like to have SM/Director "talking time"? After each rehearsal or before?
Establish a time when the two of you can talk privately each day so you can continue working on the same wavelength while not having to discuss questions or problems during rehearsal periods.
- How will the director use their assistant directors? Different directors use ADs differently.
- At the beginning of the rehearsal process, how long will actors remain at table reading and discussing?
- How soon would the director like to start blocking?
- Does the director want you to call places and formally begin each rehearsal and scene, or would he/she to ease from informal small-talk into the rehearsal work without abruptly shifting the mood?
- What level of rehearsal props/furniture does the director expect and at what point?
- Does the director want strict blocking kept from the outset or will there be a period of improvisation?
- Does the director wish you to call a reminder ten or fifteen minutes before a scheduled break?
- How would the director like to structure the basic rehearsal schedule and how should break up the script – by scene, page number, act?
- How soon does the director want actors off book? And should you correct them word-for-word or allow them to paraphrase at first if the scene is moving along?
- How much does the director want you to prod him/her to move on and stick to the scheduled work for the day? (This is a delicate and very important point that should be agreed upon in advance,

because there should be no sign of quarrel or disagreement between the director and stage manager in front of the cast.)

- Make it clear that the director needs to send any actors with scheduling problems to you even if they have gotten permission from the director.
- Does the director want his/her home or other phone number on the cast contact sheet?
- How do you they want auditions run? Callbacks?
- How do they want the table reading and work conducted?
- Any director personal likes? (Smoking policy, food, words to use etc...)
- How do they like their coffee?

Remember to always ask if the director needs you to do any research for rehearsal. If there is an AD and/or dramaturg make sure that the individual responsibilities are laid out and confirmed early on to avoid conflict later. Make sure that the director realizes that the stage manager should be informed of any script changes. The stage manager is going to be the person that will know if a script change or scene change is or isn't going to work, in regards to the script, blocking, and the safety of the company members.

When the meeting begins to come to an end, let the director know that you are there to make his/her life as easy as possible (and as the budget allows).

Make it clear to the director that you want all scheduling that involves the actors and the crew to go through the Stage Manager before being published or announced.

2. Meeting with Designers

Check in with the designers you will be working with and make sure to establish an open and easy channel of communication. You'll be working with these designers for a few months and you're going to spend tech with them so make sure you are on the same page.

When meeting with designers for the first time, you should discuss what they need from you and what you need from them to have a successful working relationship and to get the production open as smoothly as possible.

Make sure to ask for a ground plan from the scenic designer as soon as possible. The layout and spacing directly effects your rehearsal process, so it is important you know the space you will be working in and if any changes are made. Be aware of the dates and deadlines set by the Production Manager for preliminary and final designs.

Once they are available, it's nice to get a copy of costume renderings to post in the rehearsal room for the cast and director to reference.

3. Scheduling and Production Calendars

In theatre, time is of the utmost importance and it is very crucial that a stage manager respect the time needed by all designers and directors to accommodate them and their visions; but, to also to remind them of the limited time they have to complete those creative visions. There should be a mutual respect for time throughout the company.

a. Rehearsal Schedule

The stage manager is responsible for scheduling rehearsals for the company. To ensure that you are not scheduling actors, crew, and stage management into overtime; ALWAYS have someone (such as both the Head of Stage and Production Management and the Production Manager) check your schedule before you distribute it. Also, when forming a calendar, look ahead and see if your production is influenced by Daylight Savings Time or any holidays and keep those in mind when scheduling rehearsals. Also, by this stage you should have met with your director and gone over their schedule and discussed the best method of creating a schedule. Some directors prefer to work out the complete schedule in advance and others prefer to work out the schedule week-by-week. It is important that the

Stage Manager determines which method is preferable and issues all subsequent schedules accordingly.

b. The Production Schedule

Make the schedule as detailed as possible and both email it out to production mailing lists and post a hard copy on the callboard. A detailed schedule should be created for production week as well; make sure this schedule gets e-mailed to all members of the design team and production crew. It is also helpful to have a monthly calendar created that encompasses the entire production schedule. You should always be able to know by looking at the schedule and notes if you are falling behind or ahead in each department. Make sure everyone is aware of their deadlines, delivery dates, tech dates, and performance dates. The production schedule should have the time needed for load in (sets and lights) noted, as well as final dress. And most importantly make sure your production schedule follows Emerson Stage Equity rules. Familiarize yourself with these rules prior to diving into creating the production schedule.

Things to keep in mind when making a production calendar:

**These are not set in stone rules; but they are what Emerson Stage abides by.*

- Obtain the Production Meeting Schedule from the Production Manager
- Production Run Crew typically starts the Thursday before the week of tech. Coordinate the dates and times of your crew contact with the Head of Stage and Production Management.
- Typically the Friday before the week of opening should be a Level Set/Shift Rehearsal.
- The two days following this Level Set/Shift Rehearsal should be Tech 10 out of 12 days (11 1/2).
- Following your 10/12 should be Tech Dress Rehearsals. Costumes and full make-up are implemented on a show by show basis on different days in the tech process.
- The final dress rehearsal is typically when a photographer is present and video archival footage is filmed. Arrange this with the Assistant to the General Manager.
- Thursday night is usually the Opening Night, followed by a Friday evening performance, a Saturday matinee and evening performance, and ending with a Sunday matinee that is followed by Strike.

Keep all schedules and calendars consistent with your headers and footers. Your show's paperwork should be easily recognizable against other productions happening at the same time. Your formatting is what sets your show apart from others. Keep in mind that the faculty and many of the design/technology students are working on many shows at a time. E-mail subject lines should also include which show you are referring to. The tiny details in your work ethic can go along way to make another person's job easier.

**See Diagrams for Formatting and examples of a Production Calendar Template and a Daily Call Sheet Template.*

For Emerson Stage and all performance spaces run by the Office of the Arts, all members of the production team must vacate the building at 11:00pm. Give yourself some leeway and schedule rehearsals until 10:30pm, allowing your team and other designers time to talk, clean up, and reset for the next day.

The Paramount Studios have extended hours and close at 11:45pm. Again give yourself and your team time to clean up and restore your studio to the proper state at the end of the night. It is not the studio desk assistant's job to clean up after your rehearsal.

4. Emerson Stage Equity Rules

The following are very important Emerson Stage Equity Rules that should be followed when forming a production calendar and rehearsal schedule. For more information, please see the Emerson Stage Equity Handbook.

Section 11 (Pages 6-9 Emerson Stage Equity Handbook)

11. REHEARSAL, PERFORMANCE, AND OTHER WORK RELATED RULES.

(A) Work Week and Work Day.

- (1) A week shall mean from and including Monday to and through Sunday.
- (2)
 - (a) During non performance weeks, the total work week shall not exceed thirty (30) hours, of which no more than twenty-seven (27) hours shall be allotted to rehearsal.
 - (b) In the seven (7) days prior to the first paid public performance, the total work week shall not exceed forty (40) hours. The forty (40) hour work week shall fall either in the last full week of rehearsal or the week of the first paid public performance, but not both.
 - (c) During combined rehearsal and performance weeks, the total work week, including but not limited to performances, rehearsals, costume calls, photographs, understudy rehearsals, and brush-up rehearsals, shall not exceed forty (40) hours. (Not subject to strike hours. See rule 16.).
- (3) Except for days when there are early student performances, the span of the work day shall not exceed twelve (12) consecutive hours.

(B) Performances.

- (1) There shall be no more than six (6) performances in any week. Notice of the regular performance schedule and any additional performances known by the Theatre shall be posted at the Theatre's announced auditions.
- (2)
 - (a) The Actor shall be notified of any change of the performance schedule at least two (2) weeks in advance, except in an emergency when a shorter notice period agreed to by a majority of the cast shall be permitted.
- (3) There shall be no more than two (2) performances in any day nor more than five (5) performances in any three (3) day period. The total number of hours worked on a two (2) performance day, including half-hour, shall not exceed nine (9) hours.
- (4) Notwithstanding the above, if the Actor is performing solely in local tours in any week, ten (10) performances may be given. Each such performance must be limited to a maximum on one and one-half (1 1/2) hours.

(C) Rehearsals.

- (1) On non-performance days, rehearsal shall not exceed seven (7) out of eight (8) consecutive hours. The Company shall receive no less than twelve (12) hours' notice of the span of each rehearsal day.
- (2) On one-performance days,
 - (a) if the performance is three and one-half (3 1/2) hours or less (including half-hour), rehearsal shall not exceed two (2) consecutive hours;
 - (b) if the performance is over three and one-half (3 1/2) hours (including half-hour), rehearsal shall not exceed one and one-half (1 1/2) consecutive hours;
 - (c) if the performance is over four (4) hours (including half-hour), rehearsal shall not exceed 1 consecutive hour.

- (3) A six-hour rehearsal block may be utilized provided the following conditions have been met: (a) Provided there has been a 3/4 majority secret ballot vote by the cast at the first rehearsal, the Theatre may schedule one 6-hour rehearsal day on either Saturday or Sunday and may add two additional hours in one-hour segments for photo and/or costume calls. There shall be one hour meal break between rehearsal and the photo/costume call unless the actor requests no break be given. (b) Within the six hour rehearsal block, regular Equity breaks shall occur every 55 or 80 minutes as indicated below in Rule E (2) below. (c) In addition to the secret ballot majority vote as mentioned above, approval to rehearse a straight six hour block must be obtained 48 hours in advance for each six-hour rehearsal from the Director of Production, based upon space availability.
- (4) (a) On a non-performance day during the seven (7) day period prior to the first paid public performance of a production, the Theatre may schedule two (2) days of rehearsal of ten (10) out of eleven and a half (11.5) consecutive hours for each production.
- (b) In no instance shall there be more than two (2) days of rehearsal of ten (10) out of eleven and a half (11.5) consecutive hours in any work week.
- (c) The schedule permitted in paragraphs (a) and (b) above shall fall within the maximum work week of forty (40) hours where permitted (see paragraph (A)(2) above). The Company shall receive no less than twelve (12) hours' notice of the span of each rehearsal day.
- (d) During tech, rehearsals must be consecutive except for a break of one (1) hour after five (5) consecutive hours of work. This break shall be reduced (or eliminated on a five and one-half (5 1/2) hour rehearsal day when permitted under paragraph (E) below.

(D) Costume Calls, Photographs and Publicity.

- (1) In addition to rehearsal time, but within the maximum hours of the work week as outlined in paragraph (A) (2) above, the Theatre may schedule a combined total of no more than six (6) hours for costume and/or photo calls per production.
- (2) Costume calls must be calculated in segments of no less than one-half (1/2) hour.

(E) Breaks, Rest Periods, Days Off.

- (1) There shall be a break of no less than one (1) hour after five (5) consecutive hours of work, except during tech when the break shall be no less than one and a half hours. (1.5)
- (2) Except during run-throughs and dress rehearsals, there shall be a break of five (5) minutes after no more than fifty-five (55) minutes of rehearsal or ten (10) minutes after no more than eighty (80) minutes of rehearsal for each member of the company. During non-stop run-throughs, there shall be a break of not less than ten (10) minutes at the intermission point (s).
- (3) (a) There shall be no less than a twelve (12) hour rest period between the end of employment on one (1) day and the beginning of employment on the next day (see Rule 15 (C) (4) for Stage Manager's Breaks).
- (b) Except as provided in paragraph (a) above, there shall be an eleven and a half (11.5) hour rest period between the end of employment on the day preceding the first ten out of twelve technical rehearsal. (not including the day off)
- (4) There shall be a one and one-half (1 1/2) hour rest period exclusive of half-hour, between performances. The Theatre may reduce this period to not less than one (1) hour inclusive of half-hour, provided both performances are of the same play and provided a hot or cold meal is served

to the cast at Emerson Stage's expense. The rest period shall be computed from the time the meal is delivered.

- (5) (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) below, there shall be two (2) scheduled full days off each week free of rehearsals and/or performances. A full day shall be twenty-four (24) hours in addition to the regular rest period required at the end of each working day. (c) Of the two (2) full days off one must occur on a weekday and one on a Saturday or Sunday except for the week prior to opening.
- (b) In the last nine (9) days of technical rehearsals, performances, and strike, there will be no days off.
- (c) There shall be no call of any kind after the evening performance on a day immediately preceding the day off.

Please respect Emerson Stage Policy; the knowledge of these rules will aid you in creating schedules for professional companies and help you in learning Equity Rules.

5. Auditions, Callbacks, and Casting

a. Auditions

A few weeks before auditions, the Head of Stage and Production Management will post a sign-up sheet outside of her door where stage managers can sign up to run auditions according to their availability. Please note at Auditions and Callbacks, there will often be more than one stage management team working together because Emerson Stage usually casts 2-3 shows at a time. It is up to the teams but typically at least one person from each team is represented each night.

1. Setup

- a. The stage management team should arrive at the audition space, usually in one of the Paramount Studios, one hour prior to the first audition time. Be sure to bring the audition box, camera and printer, and audition binders.
- b. Go to the studio desk assistant on duty and have the auditioning room(s) unlocked (make sure that there is a piano and bench if necessary). Usually one of the rooms will be used as a "prep room" for the auditioners and whichever room is bigger will be the room where the actual auditions take place.
- c. Make sure the studio lights are on and are clean. If there is anything disconcerting about the space, let the studio desk assistant know.
- d. In the auditioning room, set up tables and chairs for the director and anyone else who will be watching the auditions. The tables and chairs should be located on a rack in the studio; if not, let the studio assistant know that you need some.
- e. Outside of the auditioning room, setup the sign-in table for the stage management team to be stationed at. On/around the table should be all of the items from the audition box.
- f. Once the director(s) arrive, the stage management team should check-in with them to make sure all their needs are met and that they are ready to begin the auditioning process.

2. During Auditions

The roles of each of the stage managers during auditions often differs depending upon the team, but assuming that there are four stage managers (one SM, one 1st ASM and two 2nd ASMs) the following process has been known to work well in the past:

SM: Once the directors are ready, the first person may audition. It is the job of the SM to keep track of who is currently auditioning, who is next, and who has completed their audition. For each auditionee, the SM will get the actors' paperwork from the 1st ASM and escort them into the audition room. Once in the room the SM distributes the actors' paperwork to the directors, introduces them to the panel and then leaves to meet the next actor. They should keep time for the actors inside the audition room; each audition lasts five minutes. As soon as the auditionee leaves the room and once the directors indicate that they are ready, you can send in the next person. Periodically check-in with the other stage managers so that everyone knows if they are on schedule and communicate this information to the actors waiting.

1st ASM: As the auditionees arrive, the 1st ASM will greet them and highlight their name on the sign-up sheet. They should collect their headshot and resume (if they have them) for the directors and have them fill out an audition sheet. After the 2nd ASM has printed their photo, staple the photo to their headshot, resume and audition sheet. Help the SM keep track of who is currently auditioning, who is next, and who has completed their audition. Before each actor enters the audition room, hand the SM the actor's paperwork. In order to stay on schedule, if an actor has not shown up five minutes before their audition, give them a call and make sure that they are on their way. In the case that an actor is late, you can squeeze them in if there is an opening, but it is not your fault if they missed their audition slot. If you are running early, you can try to call the auditionees to see if they can come in earlier, but they are not obligated to do so. If you are running ahead of schedule, this is usually a great opportunity to squeeze in those on the waitlist. Before doing either of those things, always check in with the SM to make sure that the director is okay with it.

2nd ASM: After the 1st ASM has signed in each auditionee, the 2nd ASM should take the actor's picture using the camera. After the picture has been taken, the photo should be printed out on photo paper (follow the instructions found in the Master Audition Forms and Printer Instructions binder) and given to the 1st ASM. If there is more than one 2nd ASM, one can monitor the halls and keep them quiet and if necessary stand wherever they are needed in order to direct auditionees to the correct location.

3. Cleanup

Once auditions are over, put away all tables and chairs and let the studio assistant know that you are leaving. Put all of the materials back in the audition box and bring them back to the Production Office, or in the show locker on the 5th floor of Tufts.

b. Callbacks

1. Prior to Callbacks

The SM will meet with the director(s) after auditions and discuss how they want this process to be done. Every situation will differ, but in general, the following process has proven to be successful:

-Using the actors' contact information, the stage management team will contact the actors that the director(s) would like to see again and make sure to tell them which part they are being called back for, what they should prepare and where/when the callbacks will take place. The SM should work out any possible schedule conflicts with the actors called.

-The SM should obtain sides and/or songs from the director(s) and work with their team to scan and send copies to the actors. Make a few copies to keep on hand for the callbacks just in case.

-Stage management should post actors' names, callback time and location on the Call Board on the 6th floor Tuft.

2) Setup

The callback setup should be similar to the setup process of the first audition, but will differ in a few ways.

- The stage management team should arrive at the callback space one hour prior to the first audition time. This time, the stage management team will only need to bring the audition box this time. The SM team should also bring extra copies of sides/music for actors to use, if needed.

Setup the studio spaces the same way that was done for auditions.

3) During Callbacks

Follow the same guidelines that were presented in the "During auditions" section. Because the actors' paperwork has already been filled out and stapled, you can disregard those instructions for the callbacks.

4) Cleanup

See previous "Cleanup" section.

-The SM will collect all of the auditioning packets from the director(s) unless the director(s) would like to hold on to them to make some final decisions.

c. Casting

Casting is done by the Director(s) of each show. General Management and Company Management will arrange a casting meeting in which all of the directors, music directors and stage managers (but not ASMS) discuss which actors they would like to cast. The stage manager should make sure to bring the audition binder to this meeting.

Once the cast list is finalized and the director gives the SM the list, stage management will post the list on the Callboard on the 6th floor of the Tuft building for the actors to reference. The SM should include the following information on the cast lists:

- Actors must initial the cast list to acknowledge that they have accepted this role.
- Actors must not change their appearance (i.e. hair color, length, etc.) without consulting the Director(s) and Costume Designer.
- Any holidays that will occur during the rehearsal process that may conflict with the actors' schedule

The SM should then email a copy of the cast list to the entire creative and administrative team and update their contact sheet accordingly.

6. Stage Management Prep Period

Before rehearsals start, it is helpful for the entire Stage Management team to get together to prep materials for the production period. This can be done in a single day or spread out over a period of time.

- Work on paperwork together
- Check out Large Stage Management Kit and double check the inventory inside the kit. A list of supplies can be found with Production Management.
- Make actor packets and wallet cards.
 - Actor packets should include: cast list, contact sheet, production calendar, an emergency contact form, a wallet card, as well as any paperwork needed from the Costume Shop.
- Sign out and check contents of Emerson Stage First Aid Kits.
 - Kits can be found in the cabinet in the 6th Floor Production Office, the sign out form is located on the inside of the cabinet door. The inventory list can be found on the inside of the individual kit lids.
- Get the combination for your show locker.
 - There is a locker on the 5th floor reserved for each show. This can be used to store any rehearsal supplies or any other items that you do not wish to carry around during the day.

- Learn your show copy code.
 - If you don't already know it, use this time to familiarize yourself with the copier machine in the Production Office. Copy Codes can be found on the front desk, under the plastic protector or in a binder labeled "Front Desk Handbook" in the Production Office.
 - Some teams also find it helpful to create a small business card with information on it for your Stage Management Team only. Include your show copy code, the paramount copy machine code (located on 4th Floor Office), your show locker code and any other vital information that is difficult to memorize.
- Hang out and get to know each other better.

7. Paperwork

The prep period can be a great time to get any paperwork done. Each member of the stage management team has specific documents that are their job to create. By working together in the same location, it is a great time to get feedback from your team as well as check and proofread each other's work. The stage manager will create a pre-production list, which will assign in detail the paperwork responsible by each team member. While not the rule, here are some examples of what each team member may be expected to do.

Stage Management Paperwork

- Distribution Lists (distros)
- Rehearsal Report Template
- Performance Report Template
- Contact Sheet
- Rehearsal Calendar
- Daily Call Template
- Blocking Pages
- Cast Lists

1st Assistant SM Paperwork

- Scene Breakdown
- Props List
- Rehearsal Run Sheet
- Birthday List
- Props Tracking Pages
- Run Sheet Template
- Emergency Contact Info

2nd Assistant SM Paperwork

- Entrance/Exit Plot
- Line Notes Template
- Master Script
- Script Change Log
- Signage: Rehearsal In Progress
- Quick Change Plot Template

The Rehearsal Process

Stage Management Responsibilities

1. Atmosphere

As a stage manager, the atmosphere throughout the process is your responsibility. You must create a calm, safe environment to allow the cast, director, and designers to explore without unnecessary fear where communication is encouraged. To create this, mutual respect is necessary. This respect must be manifested in everything a stage manager does. A stage manager's dedication manifests in many ways, including remaining alert throughout rehearsal and staying on task especially while using laptops. This helps to instill confidence in the stage manager. It is vital to stay on top of everything as best you can to create a rapport with all of the collaborators and instill confidence of your abilities in those who work with you. Remaining calm, collected, and communicable is essential for your role.

2. Weekly Production Meetings

Production management is incredibly valuable in weekly production meetings. Production Managers are an amazing asset and must be kept up to speed on all developments with the scenic, costumes, lighting, sound, and props departments as well as pertinent developments in the rehearsal room. Be sure to communicate effectively and often with your Production Manager.

3. Communication With Departments

Communication is vital to stage managing. You should make a point to have check in's as often as you believe is necessary but at least weekly to create rapport and disseminate information.

a. Scenic Check Ins

- Make sure blocking development that is pertinent to the design such as which way the door open are observed during rehearsals.

b. Costumes Check Ins

- Communicate about necessary rehearsal pieces.
- Be sure to distinguish between rehearsal pieces and show pieces when bringing them into rehearsals.
- While scheduling, remember to include fittings.

c. Lighting

- Alert them to pertinent blocking and any effects that are mentioned in rehearsal.

d. Sound

- Alert them to any effects or thoughts decided upon in rehearsals.

e. Props

- Communicate about necessary rehearsal props.
- Be sure to distinguish rehearsal props from show props when bringing them into rehearsals.
- Meet the props master when they drop off props to ascertain each prop's purpose and check in.
- Typically the 1st ASM is the designated props liaison of the stage management team.

Pre-Rehearsal Duties

Prior to the first rehearsal, there are many duties that the Stage Management team must perform, including the following.

1. Taping the Rehearsal Room

To tape out the rehearsal room, there are several supplies that are required. These include:

- Ground plans (provided from either your Technical Director or Scenic Designer)
- Scale rule
- Pencils and erasers
- Tape measures
- Multiple colors of spike tape

Once you have all of your supplies, you must carefully read the ground plans with your scale rule to determine the placement of the elements that you must tape. The first step is to find the center line and plaster line in the rehearsal room. Find center and plaster in the rehearsal room by measuring the dimensions of the room, and boxing out the playing space. From the intersection of the center line and plaster line, you will be able to plot the rest of the elements using points on the floor. Plot points by using a graph method. Use your plaster line as the x-axis and your center line as the y-axis. Measure with the scale rule the distance each important point is from plaster and center. Use your spike tape to place “L”s and “X”s to mark out points on the floor.

There are several difficult situations that you may encounter, including circles, stairs, and elevations. For circles, find the center point of the circular element that you must tape, and then place several points around the circumference of the circle by finding the radius (the distance from the center point to the circumference ring). Then, do your best to lay spike tape in a line from point to point around the circumference of the circle. It is also helpful to use a piece of string and chalk to roughly draw the circle. Then lay down your tape over the chalk line. For stairs, mark out boxes where the stair units will be, making an individual box for each step. Be sure to tape out the elevation of each step in the stair unit. For elevations, use spike tape to mark the number of inches the unit is from the deck. This information will be provided on the ground plans.

Templates for each studio by scale can be found in the Production Office. Use the template to lay over your ground plan. It helps figure out how your ground plan will best fit in the studio.

2. Duties of the Stage Manager

Throughout the entire production process, the Stage Manager is responsible to check the show mailbox, located in the 6th floor production office, daily for new paperwork or forms from Designers or Shops. The Stage Manager is also responsible to create the Daily Call for each rehearsal after consulting with the Director about the schedule for each day.

3. Duties of the Assistant Stage Manager(s)

The following are samples of some of the ASM's general responsibilities; the team's Stage Manager will determine specific duties.

The Assistant Stage Manager(s) are often responsible for script changes. ASMs must type, print, and distribute new pages of the script when changes are made. Each change to the script must be documented and filed. Be sure to save old version in case the Director or Playwright decides to go back to a previous version.

Assistant Stage Managers are also often responsible for rehearsal Scenic Elements, Props, and Costume Pieces. The team should recreate the Scenic Design on the floor with tape, and provide tables, chairs, cubes, mats, and flip forms to serve as rehearsal Scenic Elements. ASMs should arrange for the delivery of Rehearsal Props to rehearsal when they are needed (typically this is the 1st ASM as the props liaison). ASMs should pick up Rehearsal Costume Pieces from the Costume Shop prior to rehearsal (typically this is the 2nd ASM as the costumes liaison).

Assistant Stage Managers are generally responsible to maintain the Call Board, located in the 6th floor lobby of the Tufts Building. The 2nd ASM should print and post the Daily Call each day, check the Call Board for vandalism,

and print and post updated Production Calendars and other information.

Assistant Stage Managers are also responsible to set up the rehearsal room. Each rehearsal room must have at least two tables (one for the Director and one for Stage Management). Be sure to have the Stage Manager's Kit, the First Aid Kit, pencils and pens, tissues, hand sanitizer, and tape at the table for convenient access.

First Rehearsal

1. Set-Up

The stage management team should start to form their daily routine of setting up the rehearsal space on the first day of rehearsal. The setting of the room will change based on the production you are working on depending of the needs of the show, director, and stage manager. The room should have a large table set up in the center for a first read through with the acting company. On the director and stage management tables, a 2nd ASM should always leave copies of the daily call and rehearsal report from the previous evening for reference.

The first rehearsal is usually the most widely attended rehearsal day by the rest of the company, and as such there should be plenty of tables and extra chairs around for designers and staff to watch. This is because it the first time for designers and staff to see the actors read their roles. During this read through, the stage manager typically reads the stage directions.

2. Acting Company Arrival

Have actor packets ready for all the cast members upon their arrival. These should include: contact sheet, production calendar, wallet card, emergency medical form, scene breakdown (if necessary), cast list, talent release form, 2 copies of the contract, and a costume scheduling form. It is the stage managers job to talk the actors through the actor packets. For example, it will be important to inform the actors of any odd dates that there may be rehearsal. The actors must fill out the emergency medical form (including allergies & any health issues), talent release form, costume scheduling form, and return one copy of the contract. Stage Management should be sure to make a copy of the costume scheduling forms before they are turned it into the costume shop for their own reference. In addition, an assistant stage manager should take the emergency medical forms and make a chart with everyone's medical information and allergies for the stage manager's book.

3. Voting

There are two important things to vote on with the actors for Emerson Stage. At the time of the voting, please politely ask your director, assistant directors, all designers, and anyone else who is not apart of Emerson Stage Equity to leave the room. The company deputy should be determined through a series of nominations and popular vote by the company. The deputy responsibilities are located the Emerson Stage Deputy Packet which you should present the actor upon election. A deputy is there to make sure that the company is being treated fairly by the director and stage management staff according to the Emerson Stage Rulebook.

The second vote is for or against the six hour rehearsal rule. In the actor packets, there should be a slip that says, "I vote in favor of the six hour rehearsal rule," that includes a check box of yes or no. The clear explanation of what the company is voting upon is the stage managers job. The rule in a nutshell means that the company can rehearsal for six hours straight without a dinner/lunch break. In this case, the span of the rehearsal day will be shorter, as a straight six counts as an eight hour rehearsal day.

4. Company Management

The company manager should be introduced to the cast at the first rehearsal. At this time, they will speak about reserving comp tickets, social media marketing (use the Emerson Stage hashtag on Twitter & follow us on Facebook), and ask for bios for the program. It is important that Stage Management gives the original signed contracts to company management after they are turned in. It is their job (and not the stage managers') to file these contracts and turn them in to general management. The process in which contracts are signed and handled are dealt with on a show by show basis. Some shows have contracts signed upon being cast while others are still signed at the first rehearsal.

5. Getting Started

To make everyone feel comfortable it is important for everyone to introduce themselves by name and position on the show. This facilitates the start of the full company's interaction. At this point, the director will want to elaborate on the concept of the play to the actors. It is important to schedule time for this, as it is the first opportunity the director will have to speak to the full cast. In many cases, design presentations come next (if not the stage manager should schedule them for another rehearsal day). The departments that will want to present are scenic, costume, sometimes lighting, sometimes sound and props. It is up to the designer if they will be presenting or not. Stage Management should help to accommodate all the needs of the designers for this day. For example, a scenic model should be elevated and have a clip light so that the entire company can see. On another note, costumes may need help carrying their boards of costume sketches. Sometimes during the first rehearsal, the dramaturg will have information or packets for the actors. Dramaturgs have information on location, setting, historical background, and almost anything you need to find out about the text of the play. It is important to speak with the production team and help in anyway you can.

The first read through typically follows company business. As the stage manager generally reads the stage directions, it is important for an assistant to be timing each scenes or page of text. At the end of the night they should type that up and send it to the stage manager. This is helpful to start acquiring run times and quick-change times early on in the process. The stage manager should also be aware if the director announces any new ideas or there is something that is being added to make sure it ends up in the rehearsal report.

6. Rehearsal Etiquette

Remember that the rehearsal room is a professional atmosphere. Keep in mind that your presence in the room is being observed by the directing team and acting company; they will feed off of your energy. Remain alert and ready for anything that may come up. Keep use of cell phones in the room for rehearsal purposes only and laptops for paperwork only. Facebook, twitter, tumblr and other social media forms should not be used in the room. Remember to sit up straight in your chair, it helps keep you awake and you look ready for action!

Rehearsal Period Responsibilities

Stage Manager Paperwork

1. Rehearsal Reports - Rehearsal Reports keep everyone in communication about what is going on in rehearsal especially for the members of the production team who are not in the rehearsal room every night. Any notes for Scenic, Costumes, Lighting, Sound, Props, Dramaturgy, Company Management or in General should be noted within the rehearsal report. Each night, the report should be sent out as early as possible so that the designers and technicians can see it by the next morning so that anything in the report that needs to get done for the next night's rehearsal can happen.
2. Daily Calls - The Daily Call is to be sent out to the actors after every rehearsal at least 12 hours before their next call to let them know if they are called for rehearsal that day or not. Typically it is the 2nd Assistants who update the call board every morning with the new Daily Call. If you are not the one doing it check it every once in a while to make sure its being done.
3. Blocking Pages - Before the rehearsal process starts, the Stage Manager should create Blocking Pages with one to three mini ground plans on them and blank space in order to draw and notate each actors' blocking. It is a matter of preference whether or not you want to add extra pages to your script or copy the blocking pages into the script itself. It's easier to add or remove blocking pages if they are separate from the script but it makes the script longer in number of pages.

1st Assistant Stage Manager Paperwork

1. Scenic Piece Change Plot/Shift Plot - Once the Scenic piece list has been compiled and finalized between Stage Management, the Director and the Set Designer you can create a Scenic Piece Change Plot. It should list all of the scenic pieces that move, diagrams and traffic patterns for scene changes. This will help give you a visual representation on paper of what the scene changes will look like as you are choreographing them during rehearsal in order to help create the Master Run Sheet.

2. Props Preset Sheet - Once the Props list has been compiled and finalized between Stage Management, the Director and the Props Master you can create a Props Preset Sheet. It should list each location of where props are preset as well as the prop, act, scene and page number of when its used in the show and a check box in order to check it off when you are presetting. If there are a lot of onstage prop presets that need documenting, do so with pictures of diagrams which correspond to each check box list.
3. Master Run Sheet - Throughout the rehearsal process you will want to start creating a Run Sheet that will evolve into the Master Run Sheet which will document everyone's track in the show involving Preshow and Post show duties, Prop Handoffs, and Set Changes as well as anything else that has to get done during the course of the show.

2nd Assistant Stage Manager Paperwork

1. Costume Quick Change Plot - After the SM team has received the Costume Plot from the Costume Designer, you can go about creating a Costume Quick Change Plot. It should list any quick changes that are made by the actors during the course of the show as well as amount of time they will have for the change, location of each quick change and a basic outline of what the actor is changing out of and into.
2. Entrance/Exit Plot - An En/Ex plot is used to notate every En or Ex onto or off of the stage by any character or actor within the show. En/Ex plots are especially important when figuring out the amount of time between Exs and Ens for costume changes. Also, when choreographing scene changes and creating the Master Run Sheet it can be used to help track actors, scenic pieces, costumes and props during the show. Each line in an En/Ex plot should include act, scene, page, character, whether its an En or Ex, the location of the En or Ex, any notes and if its an Ex the next En the character will be making plus the time they have between their Ex and next En. In the notes column you can divide it up into Costumes and Props if you want to be more specific about exactly what they will be wearing and carrying when entering or exiting.
3. Line Note Form – This form includes space for the act, scene and page, the line that was wrong and then boxes for called line, dropped word, dropped line, switched word or switched line. There are multiple ways to describe how a line has been miss said so the descriptions above can be moved around or replaced depending on the show.
4. Script Change Form - The 2nd ASM who is assigned to giving Lines and Line Notes will also be assigned to script changes. The number of script changes in a show varies greatly depending on if you are doing a new play or an old classic. Make sure to have a script change form to document any changed lines so that when new pages are typed up and given out there can be a record of it. This form is especially important on new works (such as our annual NewFest production) as the script changes very frequently.

Stage Manager Duties

1. Taking Down Blocking
Blocking notes are an important part of the rehearsal process because they are a record of all of the actors' movement on stage. As you go through rehearsal, notate in short hand the movements of the actors such as entrances and exits, crosses and locations.
2. Taking Down Notes for the Rehearsal Report
In order to facilitate taking Report notes during rehearsal, it can help to use a log form so that you can not only take notes that will go into the report that everyone gets but you'll also have your own notes that you will take for yourself that might not end up in the report. It's important to write down everything, you never want to begin writing your report and have forgotten half of what happened that day.
3. Breaks
As members of Emerson Stage Equity we have specific rules for how often the company is required to take a break, which are listed below. When creating your schedule take into consideration these breaks and plan accordingly.
 - 5 minute break after 55 minutes of work
 - 10 minute break after 1 hour & 20 minutes of work

4. Deal with Rehearsals Space/Time Changes
We are lucky to have first priority in booking studio space to rehearse in being apart of Emerson Stage but we must go through the proper channels in order to change or cancel rehearsals. Please see section 6 for more information about Office of the Arts procedures.
5. Scheduling
Rehearsal and Tech Schedules should be created in conjunction with the Production Supervisor and Production Manager. The Stage Manager is not responsible for load-in schedules.

1st Assistant Stage Manager Duties

1. Road Box Organization
It is extremely important to keep your road box organized from the start of rehearsals all the way through strike. As you go through rehearsal you will start to accumulate more and more stuff, from kits to drawings to props to costume pieces. The easiest way to stay organized is to make sure that everything you get has a place in the road box. When you go to pack it up every night everything goes back in its place and you will be able to tell when something is missing.
2. Road Box Keys
As the 1st ASM you may potentially responsible for the key to the road box. Put the key on your wallet or home set of keys, you never leave home without those things so you won't leave home without your Road Box key either!

2nd Assistant Stage Manger Duties

1. Line Notes
An important job of the 2nd is to be on book. Being on book requires you to focus on the script to make sure that you are ready to jump in if an actor calls line. A great skill to develop when on book is the ability to speak loudly and clearly. If you are constantly jumping in with their next line even if they haven't called for it, they could be taking a dramatic pause or get into the bad habit of expecting Stage Managers to anticipate their needs which is impossible to do consistently.
2. Fitting Forms (Printed on Colored Paper)
The costume designer will drop off Costume Fitting Forms in the production office show mailboxes. If your SM gives you one of these forms you must get the actors to sign off on the times that they have been assigned for Costume or Make-up fittings. Have them to initial next to their name if they are available for the time. If they are not, let the SM know so that they can follow up with the Costume or Make-up designer. Finally, make a copy of the completely filled out form with any changes that have been agreed upon to give to the SM for their binder.

Post- Rehearsal Duties

1. **Clean-Up**
All members of the Stage Management team should assist with clean up. Clean up includes breaking down any equipment, storing equipment, storing rehearsal props and costumes, sweeping and mopping if necessary.
2. **Post-Rehearsal Communication**
After each rehearsal, the Stage Manager should meet with the Director to check in about how rehearsal went, take any final notes, and finalize the Daily Call for the next rehearsal. The Stage Manager should then email the Daily Call to the company and the Rehearsal Report to the production team. The Daily Call must be sent out at least 12 hours prior to the next rehearsal. The Assistant Stage Manager(s) should print and post the Daily Call. The Assistant Stage Manager(s) should print and file the Rehearsal Report with the Stage Manager. This all depends on your particular Stage Manager and if they would like it filed within their production book. The Stage Management team should then follow up on all rehearsal notes via email, and phone and personal visit if necessary.
3. **Lock-Up Procedures**
After rehearsal, it is important to know the lock-up procedures for each of the rehearsal spaces that Emerson Stage utilizes. To lock up a studio on the 3rd or 4th floor of the Paramount, simply turn off the lights, close the door, and notify the Studio Assistant on duty that you are finished. The Studio Assistant will lock the room. To lock up any of the theaters notify the Office of the Arts staff member on duty. Always be sure that the rehearsal room is clean, everything is put away, and the lights are off.

Pre-Tech and Tech Pre-Tech

1. Signage

No matter what space your production is in, stage management will need to place various types of signage around the space. These are intended to direct production staff/crew members and cast members as though they have never been in the space before. This includes:

- a. **Dressing Room**
Usually placed on the front door of the room, this sign can have all of the actor's names who are in the dressing room. This is particularly important if you are dividing actors between the star dressing rooms and the large ensemble dressing rooms.
- b. **Directional Signage**
This is extremely important when dealing with spaces such as the Paramount that have many doors and stairways. These signs must clearly state where the stage, dressing rooms, green room, wardrobe room, hair and make-up, stage door, house, pass door, SM office and technical booth are located. Emerson Stage owns yellow laminated directional signs with velcro arrows to use for this purpose. Emerson Stage directional signage is located in the Production Office on the 6th floor of the Tufte building.
 - To Dressing Room
 - To Stage
 - Do Not Use Elevator During Performance
 - No Exit
 - Technical Booth
 - Crossover
- c. **Room Labels**
 - Green Room
 - Hair/Make-up
 - Stage Management Office
 - Wardrobe
 - Trap
 - Pit
- d. **Running Order**
A helpful tool for the green room and backstage is a running order list. This list contains each scene number and who is in it. On many occasions, the cast and director have a nickname for a scene that acts as a reference point. They may be included as titles so the cast can easily recognize which scene is which.
- e. **Elevator (Do Not Use)**
This sign should specify what times and dates the elevator should not stop at the particular floors being used by a production. These times include performance times and last runs.
- f. **Roadbox Signs**
This sign should be placed on the roadbox as a friendly reminder that the roadbox belongs to a certain show and who to contact with questions. It may also be specified if there are fragile props inside and to please not touch the roadbox.

2. Call Board (Theater)

The callboard should be for official business only. The Stage Manager can set up a different area for that sort of thing, but the callboard should be clean, concise and official. Items found on the callboard include:

- a. Cast Sign In- (make sure there are spaces to sign in after breaks on 10/12 days)
- b. Crew Sign In
- c. Headers for each document
- d. Tech Schedule
- e. Equity Rulebook (If AEA)
- f. Any permits (Haze, Fire, etc.)
- g. Pen (Attached by string)
- h. Notices of photographers and/or recording

3. Prop Presets

Props are very rarely stored in the locations that they need to be for the top of the show. Props tracking is extremely useful in determining where the preset location is for each individual prop, but it is necessary to create paperwork that clearly denotes exactly where these places are, making it easier for the crew to set for the top of the show and for stage management to check that everything is set for places.

Preparing props presets includes lists of what items need to be present at each different location, taping out and labeling backstage prop tables or road boxes, and drawings or photos of any onstage presets. Being certain that these things are ready to go for tech will help to ensure that props tracking does not go wrong due to items not being in their correct starting position.

4. Run Sheets

Run Sheets are assembled during the pre-tech process and detail what technical jobs crew members need to complete through the course of a run. This can include handing off props, assisting with costume changes, fly rail duties, scenic transitions, and any other specialized task your show may include. Important information to include on a run sheet is:

- Act/Scene
- Crew Member
- Type of assignment (Hand off, Receive, etc.)
- Location to enter
- If they are moving scenery or props: From where to where?

5. Call the Crew

Stage management should call the crew one week before their first official start day. Within the phone message, you should explain that their crew assignment starts in one week. You should tell them where to meet and to be on time. Make sure you have them call or text you back to confirm they have received your message. Also, email every crew member as well with this information. This confirms that you have their correct e-mail address and will not run into any further communication issues.

6. Crew Assignments

a. Crew Positions

Crew members will have multiple responsibilities on a show. Their first assignment is what position they will be fulfilling during the show itself. This can include Deck, Wardrobe, Spot Operators, Board Operators, Fly Rail, Pit, or Trap (these positions vary depending on the production). It is helpful to ask crew members during the crew calls what jobs they may wish to perform in order to get a clearer idea of what they are interested in. It is also important to wait until after you have met the crew to assign them positions. This way assignments can be made based on personalities and capabilities instead of guesswork. Depending on the team you may be able to create a draft of your crew assignments before meeting them.

b. Pre/Post Show Duties

Crew members will also be assigned Pre and Post Show Duties. Pre-Show duties can include sweeping, mopping, props preset, scenic preset and costume preset. These tasks all vary depending on the production. Post-Show Duties, completed after a run (either in tech or a performance), include striking props, resetting scenic pieces, and other general maintenance of the show.

7. Crew Packets

a. Crew Letter

The Crew letter should include every bit of information about the crew assignment they are about to start. Being on time, signing in, not using electronics, when to start wearing blacks are just a few of the rules and regulations that should be on there.

b. Wallet Cards

These can be the same wallet cards for actors, so make extra in pre production!

c. Emergency Contact Forms

Again, this can be in the same format as for actors, but make sure you get everything from your crew.

d. Tech Schedule

A copy of the Tech Schedule should be included in order for the crew to know their call times. Make sure you make it clear that you, the 1st ASM and crew head, can call them earlier or later if necessary.

8. Comm Plot to Production Sound Engineer & Master Electrician

A Comm Plot is shorthand for a Communication Plot. This document details where the stage management would like their means of visual and vocal communication set up backstage. This includes:

1. Headsets (Wired & Wireless)
2. Handsets (for Sound and Pit/Musician Area)
3. Running Lights
4. Little Lites
5. Cameras
6. God Mic
7. Stage Management Console

To create a Comm Plot, first find a digital groundplan of the theatre where your production has been staged. These are frequently available through the production office on the computer's desktop. If you cannot find a groundplan of the whole theatre, a groundplan of the stage will do. In order to communicate the different needs of a production, symbols are used to symbolize each element. For example, a purple triangle could represent a wired headset. Simply place a purple triangle anywhere on the stage where a wired headset is required. Follow the same format for all other elements.

Be sure to notate the specific needs of each department. This includes handsets (phone receivers instead of traditional headsets) for the Sound tech table and for the musician area. Also included in this is any video equipment being used in the show. The SM will likely want a shot of the stage, a shot of the conductor and an infrared for blackouts. The conductor will want a shot of the stage for the pit. And the cast will need a shot of the conductor visible to them (this typically means a television hanging on a house rail).

9. Actor Care

Actor care tables should be set up where most convenient backstage. Whether in the wings or in the backstage cross over, these need to be specifically pointed out to company members, so that they always know where they can find such items. It is important to always be sure these tables are restocked and ready to go prior to each rehearsal/performance. Actor care tables can include the following items:

- a. Water jugs/ pitchers
- b. Cups
- c. Sharpie for writing names
- d. Cough Drops
- e. Tissues
- f. Band Aids
- g. Mints
- h. Small garbage can
- i. Bobby Pins

10. Walkie Talkie Sign In/Out

Discuss with your PSE the procedure for storage and walkie usage. The walkies need to be locked and charged at the end of every night. This procedure will differ from theater to theater. For example, a more convenient location in the black box may be the stage management office, therefore it'd be stage management's responsibility to collect and charge the walkies. Regardless, the PSE and stage management should be in contact about the correct procedure.

11. Spike Mark Map

It is important to tape out the performance space exactly the same way as the rehearsal space, so as not to confuse the company members despite the new location. Spike mark maps are also vitally important to make before a ground cloth is put down or the floor is painted, to ensure that spikes are returned to their original location. Making a spike mark map involves doing a rough sketch of the space and documenting the coordinates of each spike based on the center and plaster lines, and also recording the size and shape (an X, a corner, etc) the spike is, what color tape is to be used, and what the spike mark designates.

12. Valuable Bags

Because dressing rooms are not locked during performances Stage Management needs to collect and lock actors' valuables if the actor so desires. Each actor should receive a bag labeled with their name big enough to store wallets, phones, iPods, keys etc. Make sure the bags are labeled in a way that they can be re-used by the next show. These bags should be passed out when the actors are placed in their dressing rooms. At 15 minutes to top of show an ASM can collect valuables. They should go directly from the actor, to the ASM and then to the locked location. Directly after the show, the ASM should unlock the items and deliver them directly to the actors.

13. Dressing Room Assignments & Labels

Stage Management should coordinate with wardrobe for dressing room assignments. The dressing rooms are separated by gender and can be separated further by role. Wardrobe should decide what is most convenient with them. Each actor can have a name tag at their dressing room spot along with their wardrobe items. Stage Management should provide the labels. Coordinate with Wardrobe and double check to make sure their department is set before the first day actors are in the space.

14. Locate Mop, Broom & Dustpan

To further prepare for the forthcoming tech process, it is always a good idea to locate the mop, broom and dustpan that you will be using to clean the space. If your particular set involves carpeting, then it is important that vacuuming is part of your preshow cleaning. This will help to eliminate any dirt or dust from clinging to any props or costumes as they drag along the ground. The Emerson Stage vacuum is currently being stored in 609.

15. Tech Tables

Tech tables are provided by Office of the Arts. Based on the Stage Manager's Comm Plot, the Electricians, Sound Engineers and Production will assemble the tech tables. It is important that each tech tables includes a Little Lite and a power strip. Please note that locations for tech tables are dependant on available power supply. You should discuss your layout with the electricians before you establish who should be sitting in which row. It is important to consult each department about the tech table location preferences. Tech tables should be provided for the following departments:

- a. Stage Management
- b. Lighting
- c. Sound
- d. Production Management
- e. Director
- f. Projections (if applicable)

16. Restock Supplies (First Aid, Office)

Make sure the first aid kit has been entirely refilled. It can be catered to your specific show. If it is a physical piece, it may be wise to pack more ice packs etc. Regardless, there will be no time to run for supplies during tech and it is better to be prepared!

17. Foam the Doors

In order to decrease the amount of sound backstage, you can foam the stage doors so that they do not bang as they are being opened and closed. Gaff tape also is a great way to do this. Make sure you remove the foam or tape **every single night**. This affects OA's security with locking up all of the spaces. Check with the OA Supervisor on duty to see their preferences on this. Each space has different needs depending on the production.

18. Signing Out Keys

Keys for the theatres and the various spaces associated (Dressing Rooms, Green Room, etc) can be signed out through Office of the Arts. If your show is rehearsing in one of the OA spaces, send a request e-mail to the Production Manager of Emerson Stage and they will coordinate the process with the Office of the Arts. In the Paramount and Majestic, individual keys can be signed out by technicians during tech to work in the Front of House.

Important Note: In order for spot operators to access the spot locations in the Paramount, one of the crew members will need to sign out a key as well as a tap card in their own name.

19. Order of Fight Call

During rehearsals, the stage management should compile a list of all combat sequences, lifts, etc. The SM should then sit down with the fight captain and/or fight choreographer to see which need to be run during fight call. Depending on the amount and complexity of the fight choreography in a production, the SM and fight choreographer may decide that not all of the pieces of combat need to be run during fight call. However, this decision should not be made by the SM alone; but rather, the SM needs to consult the fight choreographer and captain. The SM can then create a fight call order based on actor, set pieces needed, location, props, and difficulty. A fight call routine must be made to run the call efficiently and in a timely manner. If there is a sense of routine, the actors/crew will always be prepared and know what is next. The fight call order should also consider the weapons needed and the unlocking procedure for each. There should be a routine in place for returning weapons to their locking storage area as though it is during the performance

20. Decide on Stage Management Calling Location

The SM's calling location varies by theatre based on available room.

- a. Semel – Booth
- b. Greene – Backstage Right
- c. Majestic – Based on show; Can be backstage or Front of House
- d. Black Box – Booth
- e. Paramount – Based on show; Can be backstage, in Booth, or in House Location

Just as with tech tables, it is the responsibility of the PSE and the sound team to set up the SM's call desk, while it is up to the Electricians team to supply it with power. With this in mind, it is important that the SM specify exactly where they would like the call desk to be located and how monitors and such should be arranged. This information should be given to the PSE and ME teams as soon as possible, so that they can set it up when convenient for them, rather than waiting on the SM and it becoming a hassle. The easier we can make their lives, the less stress will be in the room.

21. Marley Procedures

Marley is a type of flooring, made of a heavy duty and slip resistant material; it is commonly used for dance. The Paramount Studios 3 and 4 currently are outfitted with a Marley Dance Floor. XDance is the primary production of each season that will use a Marley floor, but various other productions may choose to as well. When using Marley it is important to make sure that it is being used properly. Here are some key rules when using Marley:

- a. No shoes to be worn on it; socks or barefeet only. FOH should station someone to stop patrons from walking across the front edge prior to performances.
- b. Sweep and mop thoroughly prior to anyone working on it; it should be damp mopped a second time after warm-ups and prior to house opening on performance nights.
- c. Spike tape should be used sparingly, if at all, to avoid a sticky residue from remaining on the Marley.
- d. Nothing should be placed or dragged along the Marley unless the bottoms are covered with socks or foam. This includes chairs, tables, ladders, etc.

22. Cue/Run Lights

- a. Cue Lights Before the first day of tech with the actors onstage, determine if you will need to use cue lights. If so, decide where they need to be located and let your ME know in plenty of time so they can run power to them.
- b. Run Lights See how dark the backstage area is when the theater is in show mode. Make sure to do this before actors begin onstage. Decide what type of light is best to use that will allow for the smallest amount of light leaking onto the stage. Clip lights and LED rope lights are often used. It can be beneficial to walk around the space with your ME and decide how much light and what type of light will be needed in each location.

Top of Day Level Set/Shift Rehearsal (Day Before Tech Weekend)

It is important to complete these tasks at the start of Level Set, so that it is sure to be done prior to the company coming in the following day. Run crew can be given jobs and help to complete these tasks, but be sure that stage management does a final check to be sure that everything has been done correctly and in its entirety.

1. Post Signage

2. Tape Out and Label Prop Tables and Road Boxes

The prop tables should have a marked out position for each item with the description written on the tape. The positions should be marked using white gaff. The same should be done for the inside of the road boxes. This way, the crew will be able to do more without having to ask the ASM. It is also more apparent when an item is missing, the ASM will notice right away. It is also important for the props to be in the same exact place for each performances so the actors know where to find them.

3. Set Up Actor Care Tables

4. Tape Out Egress

Based on Boston fire codes, there must be four feet of straight egress backstage. If your production is tight on backstage space, be sure to tape out four feet backstage and in crossover spaces.

5. Safety Taping

Backstage areas can be quite dangerous with all the props and scenic pieces acting as tripping hazards. This is why it is vitally important to safety tape backstage as soon as you can before actors arrive. This includes:

- a. Glow - Glow tape should be used to distinguish floor edges, steps, and platforms. It is also important to place small dots onstage so actors are aware of steps, corners of furniture and spike marks in blackouts. Glow can also be used on lighting instruments and booms that may be in actor pathways.
- b. Gaff - White Gaff tape should be used to tape down cables, create pathways for egress, directional arrows along pathways, and sightlines. It can also be used to give a more pronounced outline along platforms and steps backstage.
- c. Foam/Carpeting - Foam is used on doors backstage to alleviate noise. It can also be used on low hanging beams or architectural parts of a theatre where actors or crew members could bump their heads. Carpeting is used to cover cables running backstage or an uneven floor.

6. Discuss Front of House Matters With Director

This includes when they would prefer late seating to occur and whether they have any specific seats they would like reserved through the run. The late seating might be by your own discretion based on actor safety. This is especially true in the Semel where the vomms are used frequently by actors as entrance points. To avoid collision with audience members, make sure you establish late seating with your House Manager.

Level Set/Shift Rehearsal (Day Before Tech Weekend)

This is the opportunity to organize, clean and assign duties for actual tech rehearsals. Each dry tech is different per a production's needs and a stage manager's schedule. Here are some tasks that should be done this day.

1. Teach the Crew to Sweep and Mop

2. Use Crew Members As Stand-Ins

The lighting team may ask for bodies to stand in for actors so they can judge how the lighting will work. Keep extra crew members in the house and use them for this purpose.

3. Sweep and Organize Backstage

This is a great time to organize where scenic pieces will be stored backstage. Remember to tape out locations on the floor with white gaff and label everything.

4. Tape Out Prop Tables and Road Boxes

5. Show Crew Prop Storage and Pre-Sets

This will be your time with the crew to prep them for the week to come. Use it to show them the proper way to set the stage and where to place props when struck.

6. Assign Crew Members To Transitions and Review Run Sheets

Plan out your transitions and talk through the steps with your crew so they will need less direction during tech. Assign crew members to as much as possible while maintaining the flow of the transition. The director will also have suggestions/opinions on how they would like the transition to look from the audience's point of view.

7. Work Transitions

If there is a lull during the dry tech when lighting is not using the stage, it could be a good time to work the transition. Try it going slowly at first and then increase the speed until everyone is working in real time. Reassign tasks as needed to create a smooth transition.

The SM will start from the top of the show with the designers and run through the whole thing. As this goes the SM will write cues in the book, and coordinate any cues backstage with the ASMs.

Top of Day, Tech

1. Sweep and Mop

Make sure the crew does this as soon as possible, while staying out of the way of anyone there for work calls. Remember to consult with the Paint Charge about how wet the mop should be in order to prevent affecting the paint. Remember, never use soap when mopping!

2. Check Spikes/Charge Glow Tape

Have a crew member use the Spike Mark Map to confirm that no spikes have been lifted during the work calls or during the previous technical rehearsal. If spikes have come up, re-spike the object.

3. Preset Props

The assigned crew members should use the Props Preset sheet to set props for that evening's rehearsal. Remember to inform them where this rehearsal will be picking up from, since many technical rehearsals start halfway through the play.

4. Restock Actor Care

During tech it is sometimes helpful to put two run crew members in charge of maintaining the Actor Care Table throughout the tech process.

5. Check Sign In Sheet/Call Latecomers

Sign-in sheets should be checked promptly at half hour for actors. ASMs should call any cast members who are late and ask them how long it will take them to arrive at the theatre. Have a contingency plan ready if an actor is stuck in traffic or has an emergency.

6. Headset Check/God Mic Check/Walkie Check

In order to effectively check the comm. system, place two crew members on headset check at the top of preset. One crew member will be stationed at the SM console listening with their headset as the other crew member moves around to each headset location. At each location the crew member should speak into the headset to make sure the SM can clearly hear without interference. They must go around to each wired location and also check all wireless headsets.

7. Check Masking

Double-check to make sure all soft goods are in their place.

8. Collect Valuable Bags

This should be done at 15 minutes before the start of the day. Once you start collecting valuables, you should consistently do it for the rest of tech and performances. Also, returning the valuables should be the first thing someone does at the end of the day.

9. Turn on Program Monitors

Work with OA at the beginning of the tech process to ensure that the program monitors are working. This will allow actors to hear what is going on onstage in the dressing rooms. At the beginning of each tech day make sure the program monitors are turned on inside the Dressing Rooms, Green Rooms, and Stage Management Office.

Tech

Tech is the time to really whip a show into shape. It is where most things will get changed and the most vigilance is required. At this point, stage management's job is tying up loose ends from rehearsals and solving the challenges of being in the actual performance space. In order to make sure tech runs smoothly, there are a few pointers for staying on top of paperwork and organization for this time period.

1. Updating Run Sheets Every Night

It's important to check in with crew members nightly and to constantly take notes so run sheets can be updated nightly. By the time the show opens your run sheets need to have every detail of the backstage running of a show meticulously detailed.

2. Write Cues In Prompt Book

One of the single most important things a stage manager is doing during tech is recording the lighting, sound, automation, projection, and deck cues into their prompt book. Make sure you have all the cues written down and that you understand what every cue does so that it is easier for you to call.

3. Finalize Entrance/Exit Plot

Be sure to send the most updated copy to the Costume Supervisor so they will be aware of any quick changes.

4. Finalize Quick Change Plot

Work with Costume Supervisor to time out and fine tune any quick changes that must happen.

5. Production Meetings at End of Night

Production Meetings should include the entire production team. Make sure to stop rehearsal with enough time to have a production meeting. For example, if you have to exit the building at 11p, the actors should be released at 10:30p.

6. Confirm Lockdown of the Theatre At End of Night

It is always handy to produce your own Lockdown Checklist of all doors that need to be locked and all technical elements that need to be shut down before the SM team can leave each night.

Performances, Strike, and Post Production Meeting

Pre-Show

The duties of the stage manager and the assistant stage managers on the day of, but prior to the opening of, a performance are essential in having a smoothly running show. First and foremost, it is important to remember that in order to be completely prepared for the show, the stage managers need to arrive a certain amount of time earlier than everyone else – just like they do for everything. On the night of a show, the pre-show duties usually begin about 2 hours before “places” are called.

1. Arriving and Unlocking

1. The stage manager should always try to arrive first so that they can be there as everybody else comes in. If the show begins at 8:00pm, stage management should arrive between 5:45-6:00pm.
2. Unlock everything. Depending on what theater you’re in, this includes areas such as the theater, technical booth, and hallway doors.

2. Stage Manager

1. The stage manager should check in with everybody to make sure there are no questions or concerns about the show – and to sincerely make sure everybody is doing well and ready to go. This includes: your ASMs, House Management, the Cast/Company, and the Office of the Arts supervisor for the night, and the Conductor.
2. While you’re waiting to start, review your script and go over your cues. You can never know your show too well. When you have a few minutes, it always helps to look over your notes from the previous night and be sure that if there were flukes or changes that you fix them in your script and review them before you start.
3. Check your headset and your console. The ASMs will likely do a headset check, but you should double check that your headset works and that your monitors and other technical equipment on your console is completely functioning.
4. When it is time to call places, the stage manager gives the warnings to one of your ASMs and they go to the dressing rooms and announce to the cast how long they have until they should be at places for the top of the show. You should give warnings at 30 minutes (half-hour), 15 minutes, 10 minutes, 5 minutes, and call “Places” at 2 minutes ahead of time – just to be sure that you are really ready on the dot.

3. Assistant Stage Managers

1. Checking In
 - a. The main job of the 1st ASM during the Pre-Show period of time is to preset and prep the stage, backstage, and the crew to be ready to start. Depending on how complicated your preset is, you should arrive 2 hours before “places” are called. This gives you 1 ½ hours to preset before the house is opened. No matter when you arrive, most importantly you should arrive at least 15-20 minutes before your crew arrives.
 - a. Unlock the roadbox(es). And check that all other doors are unlocked.
2. Crew
 - a. A few minutes before the crew’s call time comes, you should check their sign-in sheet and call any of them who are running late. Once they are all there, brief them with any questions, concerns, or notes you have for them and then begin preset (your 2nd ASMs should be with you during this time)
 - b. Check that everyone is wearing blacks.
 - c. Dismiss everyone from the crew room to do their preshow duties.
3. Actors
 - a. Check sign-in sheet for actors (as if you were taking attendance). Actors who have not arrived within about five minutes after their call time should be called on the phone.
 - i. Take valuables bags from actors and put them in a safe place (the roadbox, the office, or a cabinet with a lock).

4. Preset

- a. You should have a clipboard with a Preset Checklist and a Run Sheet. Most everything, should be done by the crew member and 2nd ASMs, while you oversee everything and be there to assist when necessary.
- b. Preset the props and set pieces for the top of the show. This includes props onstage, on the prop tables backstage, and personal props that go to the actors (either set them backstage or give them to the actor – whatever was previously decided).
- c. Test props/sets/flies. Be sure to test set pieces that move, flies that go in and out, and props that have to ‘work’ (ex: practicals, cameras, cigarettes, etc). This should all be done by crew members, but you and the 2nd ASMs should oversee this. The 1st ASM should take care of firearms.
- d. On Stage
 1. Clean the stage. The entire stage, the wings, and backstage areas should be swept and mopped. This should be done by crew members.
 2. Check the spike marks onstage. Make sure they are secure and not coming off. If you have glow tape anywhere, check that as well.
- b. Backstage
 1. Headset/Monitors check. One person should sit on the stage manager’s headset and another person should go to each of the others and test them to make sure they’re working. Then go around and check audio/visual monitors.
 2. First Aid. Keep a filled first aid kit on each side of the stage (or wherever depending on the show). If anything is used from the first aid kit, it should be refilled so that you are always fully equipped for each show.
 3. Tell the stage manager when you are done presetting (or at least when you are done presetting onstage) so that they can let the house manager know when they can open the house.

4. Calls, Warnings, Places

- a. Once you have preset and the house is open, you will have a half-hour before the show begins. You can use this time to go over your run sheet, check in with the ASMs and the crew, check in with the cast, and get yourself ready.
- b. The stage manager will give warnings at 30, 15, 10, and 5 minutes.
- c. At no less than 10 minutes, tell all crew members to get into their places and be ready to start.
- d. Once places are officially called, have your headset on, keep the cast and crew quiet, and get ready to start the show.

Performance

1. Basic Procedure

After technical rehearsals everything should be in place for a running a smooth show. However, this may not always happen. The stage manager, by creating a safe, collaborative environment a show can have a smooth and safe run. Unfortunately, sometimes accidents will occur and it is the responsibility of the state manager and the ASMs to communicate effectively to the cast, crew, and audience to alleviate emergency situations.

2. Stage Manager

- a. Calling Script / Cue Sheet - Put final touches on your calling script to create a clean, legible script. Anyone should be able to call a show from your calling script. Your script should include anything that will need to be cued, this will include lights, sound, SPFX, entrances, etc.
- b. Calling - To run a show you need to put together a calling script that has all of the LX, SD, SPFX, Fly, etc. cues in one script. To call a show effectively, one must have a calm voice and speak clearly and with certainty. By giving adequate time for warnings, standbys, and giving a clear “Go” there should be no confusion regarding placement of cues and the should execute smoothly.
 - i. Warning: Typically given about 1 min prior to the cue (about 1 to 1 ½ pages). The purpose is to allow the technician to get to their post and become focused for the cue. Warnings are used after a specific department as gone a significant amount of time without having to execute a cue.

- ii. Standby: Typically given about 10 seconds (a line or two) prior to the cue. This gives time for the technician to put their hands in position.
 - iii. GO: The execution of the cue. “GO” This should be calm, clear, and confident. ALWAYS, avoid saying, “go” over headset unless you are calling a cue.
 - c. Cue Lights - Used to cue actors to enter. They are also used to cue special effects and scene changes. On = Standby, OFF = GO.
 - d. Visual Cues - In times when cues lights are not possible, or when the stage management team is large enough, visual hand cues may be given by ASMs (cued by SM) to cue entrances, SPFX, etc. HAND UP = Standby, HAND DOWN = GO.
 - e. Pre-Show
 - i. Check Ins: Check in with the Office of Arts to make contact with your supervisor and sign out any necessary keys. Check in with your ASMs, cast, musical director and see if they express any concerns. Also, be to check with your electrician, engineer, and carpenter on call.
 - ii. Channel Checks/Sound Checks/Headset check/Safety Checks/Cue Lights: Be sure to make sure that all of these happening. Even do your own safety and headset check
 - iii. Fight Call/Vocal Warm Up: If either a fight call or vocal warm up, please plan for that, and put it before the half hour mark. Fight calls should be done at half speed and if the participants feel comfortable and safe, you can move onto doing it at full speed. It is very important that everyone feels comfortable. Vocal warm ups should take about 10 – 15 mins.
 - iv. House Manager: Make contact with your house manager at least ½ hour prior to when the house opens. At this time you should; introduce yourself, inform them of running times and intermissions, safety concerns regarding the set and the audience, and give them a walkie. At half hour, with concession of the cast and ASM, you can turn the house over to the house manager. You should give them the 15, 10, and 5 min call. Check in with them before the 5 min call to see if they anticipate the possibilities of holding for latecomers.
 - f. Emergencies
 - i. Emergency Backstage: By being in constant contact with the backstage ASMs you can be aware of a situation, while still calling a show. The SMs and ASMs should be aware of the location of all fire extinguishers and first aid kits.
 - ii. Emergency In House: Always have a house announce mic at your calling station. If often helpful in stressful situations, to have a house speech visible at the calling station. Below are examples of house announcements you may have to make to the audience during an emergency backstage or in the house.
 - 1. Tech problem:

“Ladies and Gentleman, may I have your attention please. We are currently experiencing some technical difficulties on stage. Please bear with us and the performance will continue shortly. Thank you for your patience.”
 - 2. Evacuation:

“ May I have your attention please? A situation that is not immediately threatening requires us to evacuate the building at this time. We ask that you please walk to the nearest exit. The front of house staff will be available to assist you and will direct you to a safe gathering point. Thank you for your cooperation.”
 - g. Late Seating Signals:

Give the house manager signals (via walkie) regarding places that are acceptable for late seating. This is particularly important in a black box or ¾ thrust theatre (Semel). These should be a part of your calling script.

3. The ASMS

- a. The ASMs should continue to be responsible for run sheets, the backstage area, following preset procedures, collecting valuables, and leading the crew. These responsibilities may vary by production.

Post-Show

Post show is the time following performance when you clear and reset the stage but there are a few other tasks that need to be completed before you head out for the night. After a long evening everyone is eager to leave as soon as possible but you want to make sure that all tasks are completed before returning for your next performance.

To ensure that all post show tasks are completed in a timely matter it is helpful to divide up responsibilities among your stage management team and run crew early on. The key is to have everyone doing something so that time is not wasted. Here is a breakdown of tasks that should be completed during post show.

1. **Paging The Dressing Rooms – Stage Manager:** Once the actors have cleared the stage, wait a few minutes and then page them in the dressing rooms to announce tomorrow's performance schedule. You'll want to mention their call time, the time of performance, and anything else they should be aware of (ie. if a talkback or photo call will be taking place following performance). Additionally, it's always a nice touch to congratulate them on another great show.
2. **Returning Valuables – ASM:** Retrieve the actors' valuable bags from wherever you chose to lock them and return them to the cast.
3. **Giving Notes To The Cast – Stage Manager -** If you have any notes for individual cast members stop by the dressing rooms to deliver them before they leave. These could include incorrect blocking, missed lines, or reacting on a cue too early or late. If the actor has left already, send them an email that night.
4. **Checking In With Staff – Stage Manager -** As the performance comes down, there are several people you will want to check in with as part of post show.
 - a. Production Sound Engineer (PSE): Notify your PSE that the show has ended via radio so he/she can come to the theatre and begin turning off the equipment.
 - b. House Manager: Ask the house manager for the house count and any front of house notes he/she may have. Front of house notes could include holding for late seating, difficult patrons, etc.
 - c. Wardrobe Supervisor: Ask the Wardrobe Supervisor if he/she has any notes from the performance. For instance, you'll want to know if any costumes ripped, any jewelry broke, or if any quick changes did not go smoothly.
 - d. Assistant Stage Manager: Ask your ASM if he/she has any notes from the performance that you may not be aware of. For instance, you'll want to know if any props were not set correctly or were misplaced, if any items broke backstage, or if there were any issues with crew members.
5. **Preparing The Performance Report – Stage Manager:** Once you have checked in with everyone, take any extra time you have while the run crew is cleaning up to type up your performance report. Your performance report is very similar to a rehearsal report but it includes the start and end times of each act, the house count, and notes for the designers pertaining to the performance.
6. **Clearing The Stage – ASMs and Run Crew:** While you're waiting for the house to clear, have the deck crew standing by to strike anything on stage. Once the house is clear, send your deck crew onstage to strike whatever they are assigned to.
7. **Dismissing The Crew – 1st ASM:** When everything has been put away and your crew has finished cleaning up gather all of your run crew members onstage to give them tomorrow's call time and release them for the night.

8. Locking Up The Theatre – ASMS: Check that the road box, dressing rooms, and all other doors are locked in the theatre

If your stage management team completes all of these tasks following each performance you will be sure to have an efficient post show!

Strike

The stage management team needs to check in with various departments to see what they will need to make the process happen in the best possible way. You should talk with the TD, props, ME, PSE, Wardrobe, and Production Supervisor to see if there is anything special that they will need from you so that things can be handled as effectively as possible. Remember to stay calm, composed and alert during strike.

The production staff will be doing a majority of the work for strike and the more you can do to assist them the easier smoother everything will go. The first thing you should do is give your deck crew a 5-10 minute break depending on how involved your show was as they have been working for a long time and have not had a break yet. Always know where the first aid kit, injuries are more likely to happen here than do to the work being done and that some people may not be as experienced doing certain tasks.

The actual strike itself, the most important thing is to make sure things are constantly happening and staying on track, but more importantly at the same time everyone is staying safe.

1. All

- a. Do not be afraid to lend a hand every now and then if it keeps the process continuing forward, but remember to make sure everything is being done safely and correctly

2. Stage Manager

- a. Clear out the calling station first, especially if it is on the deck because sound will want to get that taken care of first and out of the way of scenic.
- b. Collect the cast and have them clean the dressing rooms and help the wardrobe supervisor with that.
- c. Coordinate with Company Management to have the cast sign the show posters for everyone who gets should one, if they have not done so already.
- d. Finish/catch up on all relevant paperwork in the house as you supervise and makes sure everyone is safe.
- e. Release the cast once they are done with the dressing rooms, posters and other minor tasks
- f. At the end of the night make sure you lock up and return the keys to the space to OA

3. Assistant Stage Manager

- a. Empty your roadbox.
- b. Inventory the SM kit, making note of what needs to be replenished.
- c. Sign the roadbox, first aid kit, and SM kit back in.
- d. Work with props to make sure they get everything back.
- e. Stay in constant contact with the heads of every other department to see what they need to make the strike happen.
- f. Return your roadbox and keys.

4. 2nd Assistant Stage Manager

- a. Be patient and alert
- b. Ask questions if you are not sure what needs to happen
- c. Follow the instructions of the SM and 1st ASM.

Emergency Situations

In the event of an emergency situation the following steps should be followed:

1. Notify Public Safety/911 (if needed)
2. Perform First Aid (if needed AND someone is certified)
3. Notify the OA Supervisor on duty/Production Supervisor
4. Fill out an Accident report (Office of the Arts Staff should help guide you through this process)
5. Notify the Production Manager of Emerson Stage
6. Keep the injured person calm and in good spirits.

Post Production Meeting

1. The Stage Manager should send a reminder email letting the production team know when and where this meeting is. The Deputy is also invited to the post-production meeting if they wish to attend.
2. The Stage Manager should talk with the director to see if there is anything in particular they want to bring up at the beginning of the meeting.
3. The meetings work slightly differently than normal production meetings. Normally the Director will address the entire team as a whole, and then you will go around the table and see what everyone says about the process. Take notes for the meeting report.
4. Following the meeting compile all of your notes and insert them into your Production Meeting template, change the header to say Post Production Meeting, email it out to your production team distribution list and you are done with the meeting.