



# Stage Management Guide

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This guide is intended to advise and explain the role of the stage management team within a theatre production. It is not a substitute for practical experience but hopefully this will encourage those interested to get involved and learn more.

The size of the stage management team will depend on the production. A show in the Arts Centre Theatre will have a very different stage management setup to one in the Chaplaincy. Within this guide we hope to explain the roles of the stage manager (SM), deputy stage manager (DSM), and assistant stage managers (ASM's.) On any production where there is a large stage management team it is essential that the stage manager has experience.

### ***The Stage Manager***

The stage manager should be the first into a venue and last out on all productions. They should be involved from early on in the production process so that they have a good working knowledge of the show before entering the production week. Essentially the stage manager looks after the stage during the show and controls the cast. Before the show they will ensure that the stage is set correctly and that all props and costumes are correctly placed backstage and that the cast are ready when required. During the show they will run the scene changes and ensure that everything and everyone is onstage at the correct time and in the right place. A stage manager will also be one of the key persons in the get-in for the show. Together with the technical manager for the show they will ensure that a suitable get-in schedule is drawn up and carried out. They will then run the technical rehearsal in conjunction with the technical manager (and the DSM if there is one.) For this reason a stage manager should at least have some basic technical knowledge and be aware of the plans for the show from a technical point of view. Depending on the size of the show, the stage manager may also have responsibility for set, properties, costumes and a team of assistants.

### ***Deputy Stage Manager***

Not all shows will have a DSM, only the more complicated technical ones require it. As with the stage manager the deputy stage manager should be involved from fairly early on in the production process, they especially need to be very familiar with the script along with any alterations that the director may have made. Essentially the DSM is in charge of running the show and must therefore be aware of all cues, be they scene changes, lighting changes, sound cues, fly cues or special effects. The DSM is in charge of the show, and each member of the show company must have faith in them to execute this. The DSM will be heavily involved in the technical rehearsal, calling the various cues and adjusting them if required. The DSM will be in constant communication with the various crew members via cans, and with the cast via the stage manager and director.

## ***Assistant Stage Manager***

Assistant stage managers will normally be recruited fairly late on in the production process, this will usually be done by the stage manager. The ASM's generally will be required in production week to carry out duties that the stage manager requires assistance with e.g. scene changes, set dressing. They will also be required with the resetting of the stage after the production run. The stage manager will organise the ASM's as required. It is strongly advised that the asm's remain the same for each performance.

## ***Working Backstage***

The Arts Centre is a professional venue and we will normally be performing alongside professional companies. Therefore we are expected to maintain professional standards while working in the backstage areas. All cast and crew should be aware of the need to remain quiet and sensible at all times. Backstage areas and dressing rooms should be kept tidy at all times and it is the responsibility of all persons to ensure this. The Stage Manager should make sure that all cast, crew and any band are made aware of the standards expected.

If you are using the dressing rooms in the arts centre then you should leave the dressing rooms locked when empty and ensure that the keys are left with the stage manager. Keys should be returned to the stage manager at the end of each show.

Calls made during the show by the DSM to backstage should be followed by all cast and crew.

Working backstage can be dangerous if due care is not taken. In the event of any accident a first aider should be called. In the Arts Centre there is always a duty first aider that can be called upon by contacting one of the technical staff or the operations assistants. It is also likely that one of the crew on hand may be trained in first aid. In the event of a very serious accident contact the emergency services direct and inform the University gatehouse of the situation.

All cast and crew should be aware of the emergency exits so that they can be used if required.

## ***Useful Resources***

This guide only scratches the surface of stage management and if you wish to learn more take a look at one of the following:

**Websites:**

[www.theatrecrafts.com](http://www.theatrecrafts.com)

**Books (Available from Tech Crew):**

- Stage Management and Theatre Administration by Terry Hawkins
- Essential Guide to Stage Management, Lighting and Sound (Essential Guides to the Performing Arts) by Scott Palmer
- Backstage Guide to Stage Management: Running a Show from First Rehearsal to Last Performance by Kelly Thomas
- Stage Management: A Practical Guide by Soozie Copley

For more information on these titles see [www.warwicktechcrew.co.uk](http://www.warwicktechcrew.co.uk)