

2012 Information and Guidelines

We have developed these guidelines through our years of working at the Fringe. We firmly believe that following them will make your lives easier, your shows better, and your experience more rewarding.

Safety

- Please do not wear flip-flops. Actors barefoot on stage must have shoes easily available in the wings. Other than during a performance, actors should always be shod.
- There are no open flames nor smoking, nor flash pots or theatrical explosives as per rules by the Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade and our venues.
- Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade is the ruling body during the Fringe; their rules we never break, as they have the authority to shut us down. This would make us instantly unpopular with all of the other groups.
- For everyone's safety in the theatre, please no running, jumping, climbing, or throwing of any sort, unless and only when it's part of the blocking for the show -- and please show it to us first.
- Please inform a member of our crew if anyone in your traveling party has a health concern, such as diabetes or asthma, which may manifest itself during your time in the theatre.
- (Church Hill and Church Hill Studio only) Two members of your party will be required to serve as fire marshals for the entirety of the performance. These people cannot have any other job during the performance. (This is a fabulous job for chaperones and parents!)

Scenery/Props

- Storage is limited at all of the venues. We will do our best, but please consider the up to nine other schools in your venue when planning your scenery and props.
- **DO NOT SHIP YOUR SET!!!** You can mail/UPS/FedEx smaller packages, but let us repeat: **DO NOT SHIP YOUR SET.** Seriously. It will cause only pain and suffering in the long run.
- There is no disposal on-site. If you build/buy things while in-country, please also make a plan for disposing of them which involves neither leaving them for us to sort out nor finding a local dumpster. The former makes us grumpy, and the latter does not exist.
- All venues will have stock platforms that you may share for a small storage and transport fee. See your venue specs for further information.
- If we rent or purchase items for you, they will be waiting at the venue. All other scenery, costumes, and props are entirely your responsibility to transport.
- Transporting fake weapons is usually not a problem, but please contact us if you have any questions or feelings of foreboding.
- All large pieces of fabric, especially hanging drops, must be fireproofed. Many fabrics are inherently flame retardant, but those that aren't must be treated. Please get a certificate of flame resistance from your local fire department. Costumes do not need to be fireproofed, unless they will come near lighting instruments.
- Our venues do not allow for anything to be screwed into or otherwise attached to the stage floors due to damage concerns.

Lighting/Electricity

- As a reminder, electrical current in the UK is 240v, so do not assume you're your US-bought electrical equipment will work. Contact us if you have any questions about conversion. Many modern electronic devices such as computers, digital projectors, and iPods will convert automatically. Contact us if you have any questions regarding electrical compatibility.
- On a related note, we ask that no one plugs anything in for the first time in the theatre without a member of our staff present.
- In order to expedite the light cuing process, create a lighting cue sheet with your cues in order, what they look like (use the magic sheet from your venue), and their duration. Writing light cues out of a script takes valuable time.
- Make sure that your light board operator has the know-how and authority to make decisions about lighting looks.
- Every venue will have a few specials that you can focus for your show. These will need to be focused before every show as part of your load-in. Refer to your specific venue specs for more details about number and placement of specials, and what size color and template to use for each.

Sound

- Many of the venues house an upright piano that can be used for a minimal tuning fee. Others will require that you rent an electronic keyboard if you need a piano. Acoustic pianos cannot be rented. Please check your venue specs for details.
- If you choose to rent wireless microphones (either lavs or hand-held), you will need to provide your own batteries. The mics take two (2) AA size batteries. To be safe, you should bring enough to have a fresh set at your tech and each performance (five sets total per mic). Batteries are much cheaper in the US than in the UK.
- Wireless lavs require a designated wrangler to check them in and out from our tech staff.
- Please do not rent microphones if you are not accustomed to using them in your own venue.
- Please do not rent wireless microphones for any venue other than Church Hill Main. Trust us.

FX/computers

- Fog machines will not be allowed in some venues. Please check your tech specs for details. Fog machines will require testing at your tech rehearsal.
- Digital projection works well in many venues and different situations. Projector rental, however, is extremely expensive. Consider bringing a projector from your school or sharing with another AHSTF school. Contact us if you would like to know who else is using projections or if you're willing to share your projection equipment.
- There is a fly system at Church Hill Theatre. It is a dead-hung hemp system, for which we have very strict safety rules. We expect students to make safety calls before moving pipes, and respond to safety calls with "thank you." Flies may not move while a show is in progress. Students may not be within a 10' radius of the pipe while it is in motion. No other venue has a fly system.

Rentals

- Whatever we rent for you will be waiting at your venue for your tech.

- We will do our best to rent you whatever you ask for. Keep in mind the exchange rate, and that some things can get lost in translation. The more specific you can be, the better your chance of getting exactly what you want. Include pictures, if you can.
- Schools that share equipment will also share the cost of that equipment. However, due to potential bookkeeping nightmares, we ask that you agree to pay the entire cost of whatever equipment you choose to rent. As of July 1, we will be billed by vendors. **You may add rental items after July 15, but you may no longer remove them.** We can give you estimates of shared costs before then, but we require that you agree to full cost because, honestly, we don't have enough time to call everyone who's sharing something every time someone changes their mind.
- Do not assume that you will find chairs, tables, or any other furniture at your venue, although if there are, you are welcome to borrow that which interferes with neither basic operations of the venue nor other productions. We will try to provide props tables and some costume/backstage seating area if and when possible. Please refer to your venue specific tech specs for further information.

Sample Costs of common items (based on 2010 rates not including tax and subject to change)

****If you have specific questions PLEASE ask****

- Wireless lavalier microphones (EACH) - £120 (GBP)
- PZM floor microphone (EACH) - £40 (GBP) – Set of 3 sufficient for Church Hill Main
- Followspot - £100 (GBP)
- Guitar amp - £200 (GBP)
- Electric keyboard - £300-£500 (depending on features required)
- Bentwood chair (EACH) - £15
- Digital projector – starts at £400 – We suggest you bring your own as you will have worked with it before and during festival the hire is somewhat exorbitant.

Crew

- You are responsible for providing your crew. If you want lights, you need a light board operator. The same goes for follow-spots, curtains, orchestras, etc. Our staff provides training to your crew, but we cannot serve in their place. In some venues, a light board operator can also run the sound board, but this is not possible in all venues. Please consult with Scott if you're considering doubling a member of your tech staff.
- For safety reasons, we ask that you assign four (4) people to move our larger platforms, that you assign five (5) people to work the fly system at Church Hill (two on the ground and three in the air), and you have four (4) people designated to sweep at the end of your load-out. These people can have many other tasks during load-in and load-out, but it will be good to know who they are before going into your tech rehearsal.

Running your show (run time, crew, load-in/strike)

- **The running time for your show may be no longer than ninety (90) minutes. There are no exceptions.** This gives you fifteen (15) minutes to load-in and fifteen (15) minutes to load-out. Any less time for load-in and load-out has proven unsafe.

- Load-in and load-out should be as carefully planned and choreographed as the rest of the show. Practice before you come in strange environments with narrow stairways to give your students experience with different locations. Assign student leaders to help figure out problems as they arise. Call in sick on day of a load-in practice and have another teacher or parent hide two items. The more empowered your students, the less stressed you will be.

A couple of notes about Tech Rehearsal

- At the directors' meeting, your tech team will explain where outside your performance space they will meet you. **Never enter a building for your tech or performances without being met by a member of our staff.**
- We ask that you keep track of your time while you're in the space. Designate someone to keep time and make time calls every fifteen minutes during tech rehearsal.
- You should only wear your costumes to tech if they are large, flowing, or have some component which might affect your movement or safety – this includes footwear (i.e. roller-skates, platform heels, etc). There is no costume storage on site, so you should come to your performances in costume.
- While you have a two-hour block of time for tech, not all of that time will be entirely yours. Our team takes about five (5) minutes at the beginning of the rehearsal for a short orientation speech and tour of the building. At this point we also ask the director and the technical director (if there is one) what they hope to accomplish during their time. We also reserve the last fifteen (15) minutes of the rehearsal to run through the load-out procedure and explain returning the space to the neutral setting. This will be true for every group, as the neutral setting is essential for maintaining the overlapping use of space.
- We will ask that you provide four people to sweep the stage at the end of your load-out. Sweeping happens last, and takes about two minutes, so your sweepers can do other things for load-out as well. ☺

OUR BEST ADVICE

Good Fringe shows are performance driven. They rely upon actors and their craft rather than on special effects. They tend to travel light without lots of sets and props. The leaders delegate, so everyone shares the responsibility, rather than one person having all the answers. They are tightly choreographed, with every part of the show, from load-in to load-out, carefully planned. They realize that Fringe audiences rely heavily on schedules, and they begin and end on time. They realize that unknowns are inevitable, and they remain flexible and resourceful. They also know that cool heads and good humor will get them through the challenges and allow them to enjoy their experience.