

PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE
EISSEY CAMPUS THEATRE USHER MANUAL

VOLUNTEER PHONE LINE: 207-5903 (direct line available 24 hours a day)

Day of show leave messages at 561-207-5905

Yvette Furst, Volunteer Coordinator: 622-4793 (home – do not leave messages)

As a volunteer usher you:

Agree to follow the supervision of the House Manager on duty at all times

Agree to abide by all the policies and procedures as outlined in this manual

Agree to dress in the appropriate attire at all events

Agree to perform all the duties of your assigned position

Agree to stand for periods of time and walk stairs

Agree to put the comfort and safety of the patrons above all personal concerns

The theatre views volunteer ushers as unpaid staff members. We encourage you to view yourselves in this same manner and treat your time here as professionally as you would if you were being paid for the job.

You represent the theatre and the college at all times while you are ushering...please act accordingly.

DRESS CODE:

Men: black slacks, white shirt, and a tie, white or black jacket/sweater (optional)

SOLID COLORS ONLY! SHOES: black close-toed shoes only, black socks

Women: black skirt or slacks (no capri pants or tights), white blouse, white or black jacket/sweater

(optional) **SOLID COLORS ONLY! SHOES:** black close-toed shoes only, black socks or hose only

Any accessories like scarves must be in either solid black or white, no patterns

Name Tags: You will be provided with a nametag by the college.

Flashlights: Provided for Portal Ushers

USHER SIGN UP:

The theatre's Calendar of Events can be found on-line at www.eisseycampustheatre.org and click on Calendar of Events. Ushers' Performance Sign-up Book is kept in the usher room – AU 103 – off the main lobby. *PLEASE SIGN UP FOR AT LEAST ONE PERFORMANCE A MONTH. If you do not usher for six months straight, you will be placed on the inactive list.*

You may sign up for performances two ways:

1. By stopping by the theatre administrative offices Mon. through Fri. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. – enter through the Ticket Office on the first floor.
2. At the time you are ushering for future performances.

Sign-up sheets are put out on the first business day of the month (Monday – Friday, non-holiday) for the next month. See list of sign-up dates in the usher room for specific days and times.

- ❖ **When you sign up for a performance you are committed to be there** – you *must* call or stop by to cancel yourself off a show...you will NOT receive a reminder call. We will ONLY call you if a show cancels...Please do not come to a show you are not signed up to work.
- ❖ **If you sign the Waiting List for a show we WILL call you if an opening occurs** – do not come unless you are called
- ❖ **Do not sign up in a blank spot for a show if there are names on the waiting list** – they have priority – add your name at the bottom of the waiting list
- ❖ **Do not sign up for special shows** unless you are on the approved list
- ❖ **Do not make any changes to the line-ups** on the clipboard unless you tell someone on staff

CANCELING A SHOW YOU HAVE SIGNED UP FOR:

IMPORTANT... If you are unable to usher for the performance you have signed up for...

More than a week before the event: Call the volunteer line (561-207-5903) and leave a message or stop by and erase your name off the list. Those on the waiting list, if available, will be called.

Within a week of the event: Find a substitute for yourself off the usher phone list provided in the usher room. If you are unable to locate a substitute leave a message on 561-207-5903.

If you must cancel day of the performance due to an emergency, please call 561-207-5905. If you do not show (and do not call ahead or get a substitute) for a performance that you are signed up to usher it will be marked on your time card and you will not be eligible to usher for special shows for six months.

ATTENDANCE:

Only those ushers who have signed up for a performance may work. Off-duty ushers must have a ticket to attend the performance.

GUESTS:

Please do not bring any family or friends with you when you come to work at a performance unless they are a trained Eissey Campus Theatre usher who is scheduled to work.

PARKING:

Please park on the east side **ONLY** as far towards the back of the theatre (near the loading dock) as you can. Do not park near the front entrance at any time...those parking spaces are for our patrons.

ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING:

Ushers are to enter through the front east entrance on the north side of the building - either up the front stairs or via the elevator.

CHECK-IN PROCEDURE:

1. Arrive at the theatre at the time designated on the sign-up sheet.
2. Check in at the Usher room off the lobby (AU 103). **Sign-in the time on the clipboard.**
3. Time Card (in box): write the date you are ushering and if it is double or triple points
4. Put on a name tag and take a flashlight (if applicable) – *write down the flashlight number on sheet*
5. The House Manager will conduct a **mandatory** usher meeting approximately 60 minutes prior to curtain. You must attend this meeting.
6. Ushers are to assist in stuffing programs (if applicable) per House Manager's instructions.

After the event is over, and the House Manager has excused you to go home, please return the flashlight, check it in and sign-out.

USHERING ASSIGNMENTS:

The location you are assigned when you check in may change depending on the needs of the show. No location is guaranteed for any usher. *The House Manager makes all final decisions on where ushers are placed based on need.*

STAYING FOR THE PERFORMANCE:

Ushers, ticket takers and directionals are required to remain throughout the entire performance to assist patrons during intermission and after the show in exiting the building. *Any variation must be approved by the House Manager.*

VOLUNTEER SEATING:

Seating for ushers is possible when seats are available **but not until 5-10 minutes after the show begins.** *Please sit only on the ends of the aisle by your door. Do not cross over patrons to get to an empty seat - do not ask patrons to move. You must sit where you can see and get to the portal door that you are assigned to manage.*

DURING THE PERFORMANCE:

Portal ushers are to **get up** from their seat and using their flashlight (*pointed to the ground at all times*), assist patrons in leaving and entering the seating area during the performance. Be sure to catch the doors when they close so they do not slam and disturb the performance. *All ushers, ticket takers and directionals are to be at their post during intermission and after the show.*

LATECOMERS:

- will be seated at the discretion of the House Manager and then **only between numbers** for most shows
- the House Manager or ticket taker will bring a late patron to your door – the patron remains standing with you just inside the door until a break in the performance when you may seat them.
- if a patron's seats are not available or are in the middle of the house, the patron is to be seated in the best available seats. They may move to their assigned seats at intermission.

WHEELCHAIR:

House Manager will have information on wheelchair patrons and where they are seated. Please make every effort to assist our handicapped patrons as quickly and easily as possible.

HEARING ENHANCEMENT SYSTEM:

A limited number of hearing enhancement devices are available at no charge to our patrons. See the House Manager to obtain one. Driver License or Credit Card required to use a device

STROLLERS, WALKERS AND WHEELCHAIRS:

All strollers, canes, walkers, wheelchairs, etc. must be placed so as not to block any exit doors from the seating area or the building. Either behind Row L or in the side lobby against the wall...never in the way of exiting the building or in front of Row A.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

- do not smoke, eat, drink or chew gum while on duty.
- do not purchase items at the concession stand.
- be helpful, courteous and flexible at all times – do not argue with patrons – if there is a problem, get the house manager and he/she will resolve the issue
- if you must leave your position for any reason, please ask another volunteer to cover
- you are not to interact with the performers or the people presenting the show, nor are you to go backstage at any time. If you have a concern, please speak with the House Manager
- receptions and vendor giveaways in the lobby are for the patrons – not the ushers. Please do not take anything unless it is offered to you – please do not ask.

NOTE: There is no food or drink allowed in the theatre seating area except water. No smoking allowed anywhere in the building. Smoking urns are located outside doors on all sides of the building.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY:

- DO NOT leave or move an injured person
- have the closest usher notify the House Manager **immediately**. He/she will call security and/or determine if EMS is needed
- NO NOT attempt CPR or administer first aid of any kind unless you are qualified
- a certified defibrillator (AED) is available in the lobby by the orchestra right ticket taker stand. You are responsible only for knowing where it is located.

EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

- When the fire alarm sounds all patrons are to exit the building in an orderly fashion using the side doors in the orchestra or the balcony. Ushers are to exit with the last patron in their area and assist in moving patrons to the far side of the parking lots to await further instructions from the emergency staff. All ushers are to stay until the incident is over and patrons either return to the theatre or leave the property.

DO NOT panic. Stay calm; assuring the patrons that there is plenty of time.

See page six for further evacuation usher responsibilities.

TICKET DISCOUNTS:

All volunteers are eligible to receive the college discount on tickets – check our website

www.eisseycampustheatre.org for those shows that offer discounts. Please identify yourself to the ticket office staff as a volunteer when purchasing tickets.

ASSIGNMENTS:

HOUSE MANAGER: Jim Phillips, Pat Marks or Mary Ann Wilber

- paid college staff members who are responsible for all ushers
- checks with the Ticket Office to see if there are any wheelchair patrons for that performance. If there are the Portal Usher nearest to the entrance for the wheelchair will be notified.
- has house seats to be used for any seating problems
- makes sure programs are prepared for distribution
- handles any seating problems that the ushers can't handle
- seats latecomers
- sets off the chime when the house is open for seating and unlocks the side glass doors for patrons to enter
- signals the house by flashing the lights in the lobby five (5) minutes before curtain and before the end of intermission
- coordinates with Stage Manager to start show and when late seating will occur

USHER POSITIONS:

PORTAL USHER:

- one usher is stationed at each portal, one or two on each side of the balcony (if available)
- be at your assigned portal immediately following usher meeting, during intermission and after the show to assist patrons in seating and exiting – WATCH THE LEVELS!
- *do not open your portal door until the House Manager instructs you to do so or you hear the chimes.* Leave the portal doors open after the performance
- hand out programs and direct patrons to their assigned seat...please, always share programs as needed with other ushers. Extra programs (if available) will be on the shelves in the side lobbies.
- all patrons are required to sit in their assigned seat. Any seating change requests must be made at the ticket office. Refer all seating problems to the House Manager
- stand at your portal door (inside) 5-10 minutes after the performance begins for latecomers – for most event seat latecomers only between numbers during the applause. After 10 minutes you may take an available seat on the end of the row only and in sight of your portal door so you can get up and assist patrons.
- **during the performance when a patron leaves or enters– get up, use your flashlight to assist the patron. Open and close the exit door for the patron so it does not slam.**
- **KEEP FLASHLIGHT POINTED TO THE GROUND AT ALL TIMES!**
- **SIDE GLASS DOORS:** when the seating area of the house is opened to patrons the side glass doors will be opened for entry. For most shows a ticket taker will be assigned to each door, however, on occasion the usher stationed at Row A-B-C on orchestra right may have to take the ticket stubs from patrons entering through that door.
Patrons arriving *before* the side doors are officially opened may be let into the building but cannot enter the seating area. The side glass doors will be locked 10 minutes after curtain and all other latecomers then must enter through the front doors.
- **BALCONY SIDE DOORS:** The double green exit doors on either side of the balcony may be used for exiting. At matinee performances they should not be used except at the end of the performance unless there is an evacuation.

TICKET TAKER:

- one stationed at each of the four entrances to the seating area
- checks to be sure patron is at correct performance and correct event
- takes ticket stubs, places in ticket stand bag
- be at your station immediately following the usher meeting, remain until at least 15 minutes after the curtain goes up and then leave only when the House Manager releases you
- assist with seating latecomers per the House Manager's direction
- return to your position at intermission to watch for food and after the show to say good night to patrons

GREETER/DIRECTIONALS:

- two in lobby stationed by the front doors, to give general directions & answer questions
- may be asked to assist in taking tickets when there are large houses
- all directionals are to be in place immediately following the usher meeting and return to their positions at intermission and after the performance.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Ushers – While we realize that you cannot be in several places at once, please use this as a guide as to what needs to be done during an evacuation and use your best judgment. Each situation will be unique depending on the number and age of the patrons attending the event.

- a. Evacuate all patrons to the side parking lots - move them to the far side of the lot away from the building and the main entrances so that emergency units have access to the building. Watch the grassy area between the parked cars so patrons do not trip as they move to the far side of the parking lot.
- b. Wheelchair patrons may be exited to the landings off the side lobbies. Emergency crews will come for them at those locations. An usher should remain with any wheelchair patron until assistance comes.
- c. Be animated and be sure to emphasize that patrons are to move **AWAY** from the building.
- d. Interior doors to seating area will shut automatically (magnets will not work). Help hold the doors for patrons as they exit.
- e. Help hold the exterior glass doors open for patrons to exit.
- f. **Ticket takers and directionals** seated in the house should help wherever they are needed
- g. **Ushers are to remain until the entire incident is over and has been resolved.**

ORCHESTRA LEVEL (right and left):

Ushers on Rows A – G (lower 3 doors): Direct patrons to exit out the lower glass doors in the side lobby. Assist any wheelchair patrons seated in Row A. Follow out with the last patron.

Ushers in Rows H – L (upper 3 doors): Direct patrons to exit out the upper glass doors in the side lobby and down the exterior stairs. Follow out with last patron. Assist any wheelchair patrons in Row L to the elevator in the lobby (it will run). If there are problems with the elevator – exit wheelchairs to the first landing on the exterior side stairs and alert the emergency crews that they need assistance.

IMPORTANT: ushers located at Row F/G and Row H/I on either side should help direct patrons to go either down or up to exit depending on the size of the house.

Handicapped patrons: If you are unable to get a handicapped patron out on the ground level bring them to the landings on the side exterior stairs outside Row L and wait for assistance from the emergency personnel. You may also use the elevator if appropriate.

BALCONY (right and left):

Ticket takers: Lead the back two rows of patrons out to the lobby, **DOWN THE STAIRS** and out the main front doors. Instruct them to go to side parking areas with other patrons. Follow out with the last patron in your area.

Ushers: Send Rows AA - CC down and out the green exterior doors to the exterior stairs. Hold the doors open and instruct them to go all the way to the bottom of the stairs and move to the side parking areas with other patrons. Follow out with the last patron.

ELEVATOR: May be used only to assist disabled patrons and no others. Do not use if fire or smoke is located near elevator. One usher to accompany patrons to the 1st floor and then exit with patrons out the front through the box office. Go to east side lot.