Ohio University Theater Division
Actor’s Rule & Guidelines Handbook
2014
Part 1

Rules

These are the rules of the Theater Division and are to be respected by performance students in rehearsal and performance of all Theater Division supported productions. No rule can be changed without the express, written consent of the Director of the Theater Division.

It is the assumption of the Theater Division that as a member of the BFA or MFA Performance Program, you accept and agree to abide by the following:

AUDITIONS:
✓ All BFA and MFA performance students are required to audition at the General Auditions and Callbacks.
✓ All BFA and MFA performance students are required to attend callback auditions for any show they are called back for.
  ▪ It is the students’ responsibility to know when General Auditions and Callbacks are being held.
✓ If you have to miss any of the auditions (because of illness, a family emergency, or an observance of faith), you must make arrangements in advance to audition at another time.
✓ An up to date resume is required for General Auditions.
  ▪ If you don’t know what an acting resume looks like, the U/RTA website has a good example for young actors.
✓ A headshot is required for General Auditions.
  ▪ For freshman, sophomores, and juniors these needn’t be professional headshots, but should be a clear image that represents you well.
  ▪ Seniors and MFA’s should already have professional headshots or be saving for them.

REHEARSALS:
✓ Once cast, you are expected to be available for every scheduled rehearsal.
  ▪ Performance is curricular, and your attendance is required in the same way that it is required for your studio classes.
  ▪ If you have any conflicts, you must let the director (and stage management if they are already in place) know as soon as possible. Do not wait until the first day of rehearsals. Conflicts impact all scheduling.
✓ Cell phones must be turned off.
✓ Notify the Stage Manager as soon as possible if you are ill or unable to reach the theater or rehearsal on time.
✓ Turn in your bio on time.
✓ Costume and prop issues; speak to the Director, not the designer.
  ▪ The Director will effectively represent you.
✓ Check the production callboard, school mailbox and your personal OU email account at least once a day. (You're encouraged to check frequently, as you are responsible for what is posted.) Daily rehearsal reports and schedules will also be sent via email.
✓ Abide by all reasonable rules and regulations of the producer and all rules of the Ohio University Theater Division Actor’s Rule Handbook.

DEPUTY:
✓ At the Beginning of the first rehearsal, time must be set aside for the election of the Actor Deputy. This time must not exceed ½ hour. Actors and Stage Managers are the only people who should be present at this meeting. Stage Managers may take time to go over the rules of the Ohio University Theater Division Actor’s Rule Handbook at this time.
✓ Once an actor is elected to the job of Deputy, said actor is expected to become familiar with all rules listed in the Ohio University Theater Division Actor’s Rule Handbook.
✓ The Deputy shall then serve as liaison among all actors, stage managers and management. In addition, the Deputy has the duty to report any non-compliance with the rules of the Ohio University Theater Division Actor’s Rule Handbook regardless of whether a claim is filed. All incidents should be reported to the Production Stage Manager first. If the Deputy determines that the problem is not being adequately handled by the Production Stage Manager, the Deputy shall then, and only then, report the incident to the Production Coordinator, Dennis Delaney, who will in turn take appropriate action.

Production Coordinator: Dennis Delaney delaney@ohio.edu

WORK RULES:
✓ Program the Stage Management team’s cell phone numbers into your phone on the first day of rehearsal in case you need to contact them for any reason.
✓ There shall be one scheduled full day off from rehearsals each week. This day is to be Sunday. Any exceptions must be approved by the Director of the Theater Division.
✓ Rehearsal hours on weekdays (Monday through Friday) shall not exceed 4 hours a day including required breaks. This remains in effect until the final 5 days of rehearsal leading up to the first performance. Rehearsals are typically scheduled from 7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.
✓ The normal Saturday rehearsal is 5 hours, however it may be scheduled as a 7 out of 8 ½ hour day. The acting company may reduce the 1 ½ hour break period to 1 hour by a unanimous company vote.
✓ Regular rehearsals will end no later than 11:00 p.m.
✓ During tech week rehearsals may continue until midnight. The beginning of tech week is defined as the Friday prior to opening. (This day will end at 12:00 a.m.)
✓ The Saturday and Sunday of tech week may both be scheduled as 10 out of 12 hour rehearsal days.
Being on time for tech rehearsals is as important as being on time for all other rehearsals.

During tech rehearsals, please keep talking to a low volume and a minimum. Directors, Designers, and Stage Management are all working as quickly as possible and need to be able to concentrate to work.

During dress rehearsals, the actors will be given 15 minutes to get out of costume prior to the end of the call.

Days other than Saturday and Sunday of tech week may not exceed 5 hours.

The rehearsal schedule must be posted at least 12 hours in advance, or announced at the completion of each rehearsal.

There must be a 12-hour rest period between rehearsal calls.

With the exception of run-throughs, tech/dress rehearsals and previews, the ½ hour call will not take effect until opening night.

There is absolutely no leaving the theater once you are in costume or if you have tech gear on your person (body mics, for example).

BREAKS:

There shall be a recess of one and one-half hours after a period of not more than five consecutive hours of rehearsal and/or performance combined. In addition, there shall be a break of five minutes after each 55 minutes of rehearsal or ten minutes after each 80 minutes of rehearsal. These break requirements are also applicable during technical rehearsals. This rule shall remain in effect through the Sunday night tech/dress rehearsal.

If the break between performances and ½ hour call is less than 1 ½ hours, a meal will be provided by the Director of the Theater Division/Producer.

COSTUME AND MAKE-UP DUTIES:

As soon as a show has been cast, the actor shall be available to have their measurements taken in the costume shop. This will occur prior to the beginning of rehearsals. Once the rehearsal period has started, the actor may be called for up to 5 hours of costume calls during non-rehearsal time. Any additional time needed must be scheduled during rehearsal hours.

An actor may not be called for costume fittings during the semester prior to a production’s rehearsal period unless the Producer has determined special circumstances necessitating such fittings. The Producer must notify the actor in writing of such a special circumstance prior to any scheduling by the costume shop.

If an actor feels uncomfortable with a costume piece for any reason the actor may talk to the director about that concern. If said actor does not receive satisfaction, the actor may follow the steps prescribed under the heading of deputy.

Please bathe or shower and wear deodorant before putting on a costume.

Actors must wear their complete costume throughout the performance, including curtain call.

Kneepads, protective clothing, and special rehearsal garments will be furnished by the costume shop when necessary for rehearsals and performances.
✓ It is the costume shop’s responsibility to place the complete costume in the actor’s dressing room prior to hour call. Actors are then responsible for returning the costume to a hanger after rehearsal or performance.
✓ All repairs, stains, or problems needing attention are to be written on a repair sheet provided by the costume shop.
✓ Actors may not use the dressing room as a warm-up space. No singing, stretching, vocalization, or gratuitous nudity is allowed in the dressing rooms. Also, no radios, TVs, audible technology, etc… are allowed in the dressing rooms.
✓ No part of the costume is allowed to be taken off theater premises without the designer’s or the costumer’s approval.
✓ Laundry will be done as necessary but at least twice a week.
✓ Clothing touching skin parts (undergarments, tights, socks, etc.) will be laundered nightly.
✓ No eating, drinking or smoking is allowed while the actor is in costume or in the dressing rooms. Only closed lid containers of water are the exception.
✓ Clean all of your personal belongings out of the dressing rooms after the final performance. Items left behind will be thrown away.

FITTINGS:
✓ Fittings will be scheduled by the Stage Manager in cooperation with the costume shop. (Costume fittings will be requested - including times - by the Costume Designer through the Stage Manager.)
✓ Actors will be informed of any costume fittings at least 12 hours in advance. It should be remembered that a costume fitting is as important as a rehearsal, and that the same procedures should be followed.
  ▪ Actors are expected to be on time for all costume fittings.
  ▪ Actors must have bathed or showered on the day of their fitting.
  ▪ Undergarments must be worn to all fittings.
  ▪ No cell phones during fittings.
  ▪ A missed fitting will lower the acting practicum grade by half a letter. A second missed fitting will result in an additional full letter reduction and program probation.
  ▪ Two late arrivals to fittings will lower the acting practicum grade by half a letter.
  ▪ If you have a work schedule that changes from week to week, you will be expected to communicate your schedule every week (via email) to the Costume Shop Manager. The Costume Shop Manager’s contact information will be on your contact sheet.
  ▪ If a fitting is already scheduled, and a conflict comes up for you, you will be expected to contact the Costume Shop Manager (via both email and phone) to let them know and to reschedule the fitting.
  ▪ Keep the phone number of the Costume Shop Manager in your phone at all times.
  ▪ Do not consider the Stage Manager your ‘go-between’ for changes – there is a loss of time and it creates a gap in communication.
The actor may not be required to change the color of their hair unless agreed to in writing no later than the end of the first week of rehearsal. The Theater Division shall pay for the expense of changing the color professionally and for its upkeep and restoration to original color at the end of the run.

The actor may not be required to cut or change the style of hair unless agreed to in writing by end of the first week of rehearsal. The Theater Division will pay for haircut and maintenance during the run of the show. Once cast, the actor may not change hairstyles without the permission of the Director and the Costume Designer.

NUDITY:
- No actor, regardless of gender, shall be asked to appear topless, bottomless, or otherwise nude unless agreed to in writing prior to end of the first week of rehearsal.

MAKE-UP:
- The actor must provide all conventional make-up. This does not include extensive non-traditional character make-up required by the Costume Designer or Director.

PERFORMANCE:
- On performance days, if you experience any emergency, you must call the stage managers cell phone.
- Check your props before half hour.
- Be on time for fight/dance calls.
- Be ready when ‘places’ is called.
- Hang up your own costumes.
- All stage violence and physical contact with another actor has to be thoroughly rehearsed and never improvised.
- Always sign-in before a performance.
- No running in the theater, backstage or otherwise.
- There is always a brush up line-through on the second Tuesday of the run (if it is a two week run).
- Maintain performances as directed.
- Properly care for costumes, including no unauthorized changes.
- Properly care for props, including no unauthorized changes.
- Wear and use electronic equipment when required by the production.
- Respect the physical property of the production and the theater.

TECHNOLOGY:
- Your OU email address is your professional contact for your term of residence in the BFA or MFA program and it must be checked once a day.
- Respond to emails from faculty, directors and the SM team as soon as you receive them. Respond to requests from Playwrights and Filmmakers as soon as you receive them.
✓ Cell phones and computers must be turned off in all professional environments, unless permission is given by the Director or SM.
✓ No cell phones back stage while on any run crew.
✓ No cell phones on in the booth.
✓ No cell phones on during costume fittings.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:
✓ After a show has begun rehearsal, no additional performances, outreach school sessions, or after-performance question-and-answer sessions at which the actor is required, may be added without the majority approval of the cast by secret vote.

PHOTO CALLS:
✓ The first official press photo shoot shall be held on Monday night prior to the first preview. There will be no stopping for photos at this shoot.
✓ Photo call may be scheduled for 1½ hours after the Thursday performance the second week of the run. All shots must be posted prior to ½ hour and handed out to all actors and tech crew on the night of the photo call. The shoot must end at midnight.
✓ If the Producer deems it necessary to add additional photo calls, the Producer must post a notice at least one week prior to the extra call and the reason for the additional call.
✓ Under no circumstances will an actor be asked to attend a photo call prior to any performance.

PROGRAM AND BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL:
✓ The actor shall cooperate with the publicity office in the preparation of the program, bio, and other promotional materials and provide information as requested.
✓ The actor will provide the publicity office with a typewritten biography, which follows professional standards.
✓ The actor shall have the right to review all biographical material for the program and related materials prior to printing.
✓ The Director of the Theater Division will have final approval of all bios prior to printing.

STAGE FIGHTING:
The ensuing regulations shall be followed whenever a production requires two or more actors to engage in stage fighting.
✓ The actor shall agree to participate in stage fighting.
✓ A qualified Fight Captain shall be assigned from within the company.
✓ All actors who participate in a fight shall run through the choreography before each performance. Any exception to this rule shall be at the discretion of the Fight Captain and Stage manager.
✓ No actor shall be required to perform any feat or act that places the actor in imminent danger, or is inherently dangerous.
✓ No actor shall be required to perform in a costume or upon a set that is inherently dangerous.

ILLNESS OR INJURY:
✓ Actors are responsible for safeguarding their own health. If an actor is ill or injured and has determined that he or she is unable to perform/rehearse, no pressure will be placed on an actor to perform.
✓ If an actor is too ill to attend classes then it will be assumed that he/she is too ill to attend rehearsal or perform on that day.
✓ Excessive illness may result in the replacement of an actor. Such a decision is at the discretion of the Director and the Director of the Theater Division.
✓ Familiarize yourself with the University Policy and Procedure Manual: Health, Transportation of Injured/Ill Persons Procedures which can be found at: http://www.ohio.edu/policy/index.html.

SECURITY:
✓ Actors are responsible for their own valuables. The Stage Manager will make provisions for holding valuables at the actor’s request but will not be legally responsible for them.
✓ No one is allowed backstage except the actors, assigned crew, theater staff and faculty, production designers and the director.
✓ At ½ hour call, no one is allowed in the dressing rooms except for actors and respective costume personnel.
✓ Familiarize yourself with the University Emergency Information Page. http://www.ohio.edu/emergency/ Your Stage Manager has a hard copy of this emergency policy in the prompt script. However, if you would like your own copy the following link is to a PDF of the emergency guide. www.ohio.edu/safetyandrisk/docs/Campus_Emergency_Guide.pdf

STRIKE:
✓ All members of the cast are required to participate in strike for four hours. The date of strike is listed on the production calendar. Strike assignments will be posted before the last performance. Actors will wear appropriate clothing to strike. This is clothing that can get dirty, and can be worked in comfortably. Actors will also wear closed toe shoes.
✓ Specific strike assignments will be given by the first day of tech.
✓ Pre-strike may be assigned on a case-by-case basis.

TERMINATION OR REPLACEMENT:
✓ No actor may be terminated except for “just cause”. Determining just cause and the notification of removal shall be the responsibility of the Director of the Theater Division.

✓ If the actor does not agree with dismissal, the actor will notify the deputy, who in turn will request a second decision from the Director of the Theater Division. This decision will not be made before a meeting is held with the actor, director, Director of the Theater Division, student’s advisor and any
representative that the Director of the Theater Division may invite. The decision resulting from this meeting is final.

✓ IT WILL BE THE POLICY OF THE THEATER DIVISION TO USE AN ACTORS’ EQUITY ASSOCIATION LORT RULE HANDBOOK AS A GUIDELINE FOR ANY DISPUTE THAT MAY ARISE THAT IS NOT COVERED IN THIS HANDBOOK.

Part 2

Guidelines

The following Guidelines outline behavior expected of the BFA and MFA performance students. Please read carefully.

AUDITIONS:
✓ Dress appropriately for auditions and callbacks.
  ▪ General Auditions: not too dressy, not too casual.
    • Spike heels for women are too hard to work/walk in. They aren’t attractive in these circumstances, they are hazardous.
    • Tight clothing (on men or women) can impede your ability to move in a way that permits you to do your best work. Same is true for extremely short skirts.
    • Showing too much skin can be distracting for those observing the auditions. So can excessive jewelry.
  ▪ Callbacks: suggestion of appropriate clothing (clothing that helps you to feel like the character).
✓ Prepare your callbacks.
  ▪ Coming in and just reading is not preparation.
  ▪ Read the entire play at least once prior to your callback.
  ▪ Show up early and be ready to work when you are called.
✓ Respect other people’s preparation for auditions and callbacks.
  ▪ Keep sound to a minimum.
  ▪ Find a place to be alone if that helps you to focus.

REHEARSALS:
✓ Arrive at least 5 minutes before your call time so you can be ready to work the moment rehearsal begins.
  ▪ Always bring your script, a notebook, and a pencil to rehearsal. Actors will write down their blocking and their notes.
  ▪ Be prepared. Don’t come in at the exact same point at which you left the last rehearsal. Progress should be made between rehearsals. That is your job, your homework.
✓ If you’re in the rehearsal room, you’re working.
• No whispering or doing anything distracting while others are working.
• Watch rehearsal, but don’t respond inappropriately.
• If the Stage Manager says something, acknowledge it.
• Go to the bathroom during break, not when it’s time to begin work.
✓ The Stage Manager is the liaison between actor and management, not your mother or maid.
  • Pick up after yourself.
  • Hang up your rehearsal costumes.
  • Return your rehearsal props to where you found them.
✓ Learn lines with no paraphrasing
  • Be very familiar with your lines or off-book for your first rehearsal.
✓ Dress in ways that are helpful for you.
  • No open-toed shoes in rehearsal (unless you will be wearing them in performance).
  • Wear shoes to rehearsal similar to those you will wear in performance.
  • Wear appropriate rehearsal clothing. Special items such as corsets will be provided by the costume shop.
✓ Make sure you know when/if it’s appropriate to eat and drink.
✓ Hygiene…Don’t go too heavy with colognes, brush your teeth, etc…
  • Shower or bathe every single day. This is intimate work.
✓ If you have physically intimate moments, prepare your scene partner if you’re going to do anything new.
✓ Don’t cross between (in front of) the Director and the work the Director is watching.
✓ If you have an issue with another actor, deal with it directly. Or privately to the Stage Manager or Director.
  • No notes to other actors. Ever.
  • Don’t bad mouth anyone. It WILL get back to them.
  • Go to your Actor Deputy in cases of disagreement.
✓ Appreciate everyone…Stage Manager, dresser, runners, designers, etc…
  • You are no more or less important than anyone else involved.
  • Dressers are in a particularly sensitive position, be sensitive to them
✓ Never wear white or light colors to technical rehearsals (that are not dress rehearsals).
  • It’s most useful to wear clothing that is similar to the color of your costume.

FITTINGS:
✓ Show up on time (or early) for costume fittings.
  • Wear appropriate underclothing to fittings.
  • No cell phone during fittings.
  • Be respectful and patient during fittings.

PERFORMANCE:
✓ Warm up.
  ▪ Give yourself all of the time you need in the theater.
  ▪ Take care of your health.
✓ No peeking through curtains to see who is in the house.
✓ Respect other actor’s privacy. Respect other actor’s preparation. Everyone readies themselves for performance differently.
✓ Don’t try to crack anyone up on stage. Or from the wings. Or by slipping the wrong prop to an actor. Be professional and find your joy in the work.
✓ Perform as directed, even when the director isn’t there. There’s a certain amount of natural growth, as long as it doesn’t go against what was rehearsed.
✓ No inappropriate crowd responses and behavior. These group scenes need to be organic and truthful.
✓ Don’t let a dull, quiet or disruptive audience affect your performance. Pushing will prevent you from telling the story.
✓ Don’t grab focus or upstage your fellow actors.
✓ Maintain integrity in the curtain call.
✓ It’s the Stage Manager’s job to stop a performance, not yours. Unless you or another actor are in physical danger.
✓ Treat back stage crew with grace and equanimity.
✓ Beware cutesy program bio stuff.
✓ Don’t let side coaching from anyone affect the integrity of what you rehearsed.
✓ Never bring in or discuss reviews or opinions of the play…whether it’s a teacher, other students, another director or your mom.
✓ Superstitions!
  ▪ Superstitions are a wonderful part of the theater history, and it’s fun to respect them.
  ▪ Don’t say the name of or quote from “The Scottish Play”.
  ▪ Don’t whistle in a theater.
✓ Remember that even though places for each act will be called, you alone are responsible for all of your entrance cues.

TECHNOLOGY:
✓ Posting complaints or comments online (about your casting, rehearsal, someone’s behavior in rehearsal, etc…) is self-destructive. It will be seen by people who will make presumptions about your attitude. Commit to treating your online communications like you will treat them when you are a professional.

HALF HOUR CALL:
✓ Half hour is not just the time at which you have to arrive at the theater in order to be ready for ‘places’.
✓ HALF HOUR IS THE POINT AT WHICH EVERYONE SHOULD BE FOCUSING ON THE TASK AT HAND! Which is, of course, the readiness to perform.
✓ You should have already warmed up and checked your props…but now, getting into costumes and make-up, you have an opportunity to check in on your internal readiness. It’s a time to leave the world of Kantner and OU and enter the world of the play.
✓ All actors prepare differently. Some need silence, some need to listen to music (use ear buds if you do), some want to chat with friends to stave off nerves or just check in. BUT THE DRESSING ROOM AT ½ HOUR NEEDS TO BE FOR EVERYONE, and it is important that your way of getting ready doesn’t impose itself on your peers. Just because you want to goof off doesn’t mean everyone does.
✓ At a professional union-contracted theater, half hour is considered sacred, and everyone in the dressing room is expected (in fact obligated by contract) to respect everyone else. This extends to all of the crew. Please bring your most respectful and professional self to everything you do, most particularly the production environment.

DRESSING ROOM DO’S AND DON’TS:
✓ Do sign-in immediately.
✓ Do keep your dressing area neat and organized.
✓ Don’t warm up in the dressing room.
✓ Don’t sing in the dressing room.
✓ Don’t talk loudly or dominate the dressing room.
✓ Don’t play music in the dressing room. If you want to listen to music you must use headphones or ear buds at a volume that allows you to hear the intercom.
✓ Do respect the preparations of your fellow cast members.
✓ Do check that all of your costume pieces are ready and in place.
✓ Do treat your costume and running crew with the utmost respect and gratitude. It is customary in professional theater to tip your dresser. While we do not encourage that here, letting them know how much you appreciate their work is a great substitute.
✓ Do report violations to your Stage Manager