

CIVIC HALL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER USHER MANUAL

USHERS

Ushers are assigned by the Facilities Director or House Manager to work in specific locations in Civic Hall Performing Arts Center (hereafter CHPAC.) They are NOT to trade with anyone at any time. This includes the beginning of the performance and intermission duties. The CHPAC Facilities Director and House Manager supervise the entire Usher Corps. Usher Corps members usher for both school functions and community programs.

ATTENDANCE AND ARRIVALS

It is understood that members of the Usher Corps will be present and on time for all programs for which they have been assigned. **Call time will be one hour before the scheduled start of the performance.** Please arrive with enough time to be prepared to usher by the call time. Ushers should use the Stage/Dock doors located at the northeast side of Civic Hall. These are the doors to your right as you face the front of the facility and labeled '4'.

If it is impossible to avoid an absence, the usher should contact the Civic Hall Box Office by phone or email (973-3350 or boxoffice@civichall.com), two days before the program. Please do not find your own substitute, an alternate will be assigned.

There will be a short meeting before the outside entrance doors open for a review of everyone's duties. Ten minutes before the opening of the house doors, check the auditorium for any places that may need custodial attention. Those ushers working in the seating areas should be at his/her post ready to greet the patrons five minutes before the opening of the house doors. Those ushers assigned in the lobby area should be at their posts when the outside entrance doors are opened.

All ushers must be on duty until after intermission. Those ushers who are designated to leave may do so after intermission. Others will stay throughout the show. If an emergency arises which necessitates you leaving early, please notify the Facilities Director or House Manager.

USHER DRESS

Ushers and ticket takers will be neatly dressed in the style designated below. Ushers and ticket takers will arrive dressed for the event.

Ladies: Black or dark slacks or skirts, white long-sleeved shirts or blouses, black dress shoes/heels.

Gentlemen: Black or dark slacks, white long-sleeved shirts, ties (optional), black or dark dress shoes.

USHER TIPS

- All gestures of directions should be made with the **hand across** the body rather than to the side since it is easy to hit someone standing near you. An alert eye, relaxed but erect carriage, brisk but

unhurried walk, and a practiced air of friendliness on the part of the ushers will do much to convey to the patron an unspoken air of dignified welcome from his first entrance into the auditorium.

- On the last page is a chart of the auditorium seating arrangements. Everyone needs to know this chart and the different ways to get to each area.

Orchestra - The main floor is divided into three sections -- House Left, Center and House Right. Additionally, there are two sets of box seats -- Box 'A' and 'B' on House Left and Box 'C' and 'D' on House Right.

Mezzanines - The auditorium has a separate mezzanine broken into the same three sections as the Orchestra -- House Left, Center, and House Right.

Balcony - The balcony is divided into the same three sections -- House Left, Center Left, Center Right, and House Right. There are also two sets of boxes on the balcony level -- Box 'AA' and 'BB' on House Left and Box 'CC' and 'DD' on House Right.

All seats in the auditorium have the row letters on the arm of the first and last seat on each side. Each number of every individual seat is located on the front edge of the seat. House Left seats are odd numbers and House Right Seats are even numbered. Center seats and Box seats are consecutively numbered.

- Some of the regular patrons to Civic Hall Performing Arts Center find little need in seating assistance. For those who you feel desire some assistance, here is the recommended method of handling that need.
 1. The usher will say "Would you follow me, please?" Pause for a moment to be sure you know the shortest route to the seats. If there are patrons already in the row who must be disturbed, say, "Pardon me, please," and stand a little ahead of the row facing the rear of the auditorium, until your patrons are seated. As the patron enters the row, give him/her the ticket stub(s) and program(s). Wait until you are sure the patrons are in the correct seats, particularly if the row is partly empty, otherwise a seating error may occur. The usher should also say, "Thank you," and "I hope you enjoy the performance".
 2. Time your moving so that your patrons will not be left far behind. If a patron is elderly or infirm, do not force help on him, but stay near in case he needs assistance.
 3. After seating patrons, hasten your pace back to the foyer so as not to keep people waiting.
 4. If a person gives you a ticket stub for another section, tell him the easiest way to the proper entrance.
 5. Your presence adds a great deal to the professionalism of CHPAC. We have nothing to lose by remembering our own importance and influence as representatives of CHPAC and the school, and we have everything to gain. Any situation can be handled with firmness coupled with politeness. We are very proud of CHPAC and Richmond High School.
 6. Any seating difficulty which arises through mistakes (tickets for the wrong performance/seat, no tickets at all, forged or imitation tickets, etc.) should be referred to the House Manager.
 7. If a mistake is discovered, try not to be flustered. If it is a seating error, ask politely for the patrons ticket stubs. Do not appear concerned, and apologize for the inconvenience.

8. Always be pleasant, respectful, and warm to the patrons.
9. Please caution patrons when ushering in the Box 'A', 'B', 'C', and 'D' as these areas have a step-down to the first row of chairs. Also please make patrons aware of the steps in the West balcony lobby leading to Balcony House Left, Box 'AA' and Box 'BB' seating.

- Ushers may check the new Civic Hall website for Usher show assignments, show dates and start times at www.civichall.com

DOs and DON'Ts

DO:

- Know the location of the rest rooms on the first and second floors; public telephones; Facilities Director's office; first aid kit, wheelchair, coat racks, etc.
- Keep cool in an emergency. The patrons will look to you if an emergency should occur, and if you act as though there is nothing seriously wrong, they will be much calmer and easier to handle. Be familiar with exits used by your sections in case of necessity for independent action. In case of any emergency, instruct everyone to walk and not run. In the case of a patron needing medical attention, stay with the patron. Get another usher to notify the Facilities Director and/or the House Manager. They will make any pages or calls necessary.
- Remember the necessity for quiet in the auditorium and especially in the lobbies while a performance is in progress. Once the performance starts, movement inside the auditorium must be at a minimum so as not to disturb the audience.
- Ushers should seat themselves in any empty seats near their station. If there are no seats available at your station, please notify the House Manager and they will provide a movable seat for you. Remember to be quiet and respectful of all patrons.

DON'T:

- Cause any disturbance or be obtrusive at any time, on or off duty, while you are in CHPAC.
- Don't begin seating procedures until you receive the cue from the House Manager. The house opens only after the Technical Director, Stage Manager, and House Manager have certified that the house is ready to open.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Lost and found articles are to be turned in to the box office or to the House Manager. Try to make a note of where they were found.
- The outer doors to the facility will open one hour before the performance for patrons to purchase tickets and enter the main lobby area. Seating of patrons begins one half hour before the scheduled performance.

- Soft drinks, food, gum and candy may not be taken to any part of the auditorium. This is because of possible damage to carpets and furniture. **Plastic water bottles with caps are permitted.**
- Cameras, tape recorders, and radios are allowed in the seating area of the auditorium on an event by event basis. The user groups will determine this.
- Smoking is not allowed on RCS grounds at any time. Smoking is allowed on the Hub Etchison Parkway sidewalks and in the parking lot across the street from CHPAC.
- If latecomers should arrive during a performance, seat them at an appropriate time(s) to be determined by the user group. If a time is unknown or this information is unavailable, use your own judgment. If any resistance should arise, explain that these are **house policies**. If that is not accepted, refer them to either the House Manager or the Facilities Director.
- If someone should become ill during a performance, stay with them. Try to get them out of the auditorium if they are ambulatory. Send another usher to notify the House Manager or the Facilities Director. Be sure the messenger usher is as fully aware of the situation as possible. This will make the response time shorter. Make the patron as comfortable as possible. Remain calm. There will be someone to help you and the patron quickly.
- Suggested exits for Fire or Bomb Threat:
 - House Left Orchestra -- West door by the stage.
 - House Center Orchestra -- East or West doors by the stage or East or West doors in the middle of the auditorium.
 - House Right Orchestra -- East door by the stage.
 - House Left Boxes -- Rear door to the box.
 - House Right Boxes -- Rear door to the box.
 - House Left Mezzanine -- Rear doors to the auditorium or West door in the middle of the auditorium.
 - House Right Mezzanine -- Rear doors to the auditorium or East door in the middle of the auditorium.
 - House Left Balcony -- Rear doors to the auditorium or West door behind the box seats.
 - House Right Balcony -- Rear doors to the auditorium.
 - House Left Balcony Boxes -- Rear door to the box.
 - House Right Balcony Boxes -- Rear door to the box.
 - Ushers should have these routes memorized in case they are called upon to evacuate the auditorium.
- If the patron is in a wheelchair, he/she will sit at the rear of the House Left and House Right Orchestra in the space provided. Ask if the person accompanying the wheelchair patron wishes to sit with them. If yes - seat that person in a movable chair next to the wheelchair patron. As a courtesy, show the accompanying patron the emergency exit route in case it is needed.

- Wheelchair seating is similar to the house seating. On the House Right side the seats are numbered – starting at the aisle – 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12. On the House Left side the seats are numbered – starting at the aisle – 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11.
- Emergency phones for usher use are located backstage and in the Box Office.