\*\*\*or possibly just some sensible guidelines for FOH managers… \*\*\*

reviewed September2014

These guidelines are intended to provide an outline of the tasks involved in running a successful Front-of-house operation, together with a “countdown to the show” which is a timetable designed to ensure everything gets done in time.

***Help! I’ve never been a Front-of- house manager before; what’s my job?***

The front-of-house manager co-ordinates the aspects of the show which involve face to face contact with the audience. These are:

* Staffing the box office and recruiting FOH team
* Organising and selling refreshments
* Putting up the foyer display
* Ensuring toilet areas are as pleasant as we can make them
* Ensuring FOH team are aware of health and safety issues and procedures, e.g emergency evacuation, responsibility for disabled audience members etc.

***Yes, but how do I know what to DO?***

Just follow these simple tips!

***Box office***

* You need to have one (or preferably two) people on the box office to check names off against the bookings list as the audience come in. Phil Braithwaite will provide the lists and can advise you on expected numbers. Contact him at [tickets@woodhouseplayers.co.uk](mailto:tickets@woodhouseplayers%3eco.uk) Please keep a tally of additional unbooked audience members; just numbers of full/ comp tickets sold.
* Cash boxes are kept by the treasurer, who will bring them in on the first night, and there should be a float available for giving change.
* At busy performances try to have one or two of FOH team selling programmes inside the auditorium to avoid delays at the box office desk.

***Front of house team***

* The team can be recruited by putting out a general e-mail to the group. This should be sent to Jim Killeen for forwarding at [members@woodhouseplayers.co.uk](mailto:members@woodhouseplayers.co.uk) .
* Aim for at least 5 staff per show. This enables you to have enough staff to avoid big queues for refreshments, and to have time to chat with the audience and answer queries, which they always appreciate.
* All FOH staff should wear black, with a “Woodhouse Players” badge so they can be easily identified.
* For “in the round” shows, with seating on stage, it’s essential to have at least one member of FOH in the auditorium, to field latecomers and anyone who needs to leave the hall.
* Have staff on the door after the show, encouraging audience to use the comments book and giving out flyers for next show, if available.

***Refreshments***

* The refreshment table is usually sited in the foyer, but for small studio productions it is possible to keep refreshments in the kitchen and use the serving hatch.
* Sell refreshments before the show as well as in the interval. Tea, coffee, water and soft drinks sell well, with sweets for the Panto. Home-made and themed cakes are particularly popular, and look good displayed on cake stands.
* The urn needs to be filled to max and heated well before the show. Allow 40 minutes for a full urn to heat up. Take care to site it safely.
* Put milk and sugar on a separate table to avoid congestion, and use the WP bin for waste.

***Foyer display***

* Prepare a display of cast and technical team photos for the foyer. Check website cast list for correct spellings of names.
* Ensure there are posters of current and next show displayed in the foyer.

***Toilet areas***

* Check on cleanliness, loo rolls, paper towels before each show.
* Spray with air freshener and put out soap pumps.

***Health and safety: ensure that you and your team know the location of***

* fire exits and fire extinguishers
* first aid box (on top of the filing cabinet)
* injury log (filing cabinet)

***Whew! That’s a lot of stuff. How do I organise it all and get everything done?***

Just follow the Front -of -house countdown and all will run like clockwork…

***Front-of-house countdown***

***Three weeks to go:***

* Send out a mailing to all members to recruit FOH team via Jim Killeen at members@woodhouseplayers.co.uk. Get them to come as early as possible for performances to brief them and allocate jobs.
* Check FOH photos are available for all cast and crew. If not (e.g. new members), gently remind the director.
* Prepare labels.

***One to two weeks to go:***

* Audit refreshments. Contact Jackie Withnall for assistance with bulk buying.
* Recruit your cake-making team. Send out requests for cakes via Jim at [members@woodhouseplayers.co.uk](mailto:members@woodhouseplayers.co.uk). Because of the performance pattern you need to aim to sell out on Saturday nights, so it’s a good idea to get people who promise cakes to specify which performances they can make them for.

***Tech and dress rehearsal nights:***

* Check on provisions, cups, spoons, napkins etc. Replenish if necessary.
* Get the cast photo board up. The blue boards are stored in the small store room by the Gents toilets. Please only use Velcro-style fasteners on the board.
* Ensure urn clean and usable!
* Put banner out on railings

***First night and subsequent performances:***

* Get there as early as possible. Note that on Fridays, the nursery do not leave until 6:30
* Get urn on to heat as early as possible, ensuring it is safely sited
* Ensure hall is swept before chairs are set out.
* Set up refreshment table. Audit after each show and buy more as needed.
* Set up box office desk and put out cash boxes
* Put out comments book (kept in filing cabinet)
* Check toilet areas.
* Ensure all FOH team are aware that any noise in the foyer or kitchen carries through to the auditorium, so quiet must be maintained throughout the performance.
* For security reasons a member of staff should remain in the back hall throughout performances. If this is not possible, the back hall should be kept locked.

***Health and Safety issues.***

* Ensure home-made items are kept hygienically and handled with gloves or tongs.
* Ensure FOH team all know location of fire exits and extinguishers
* Ensure first aid box and injury log are in place
* Check whether any of FOH or tech team are trained first aiders and use them as first contact in case of accidents/injuries.
* If disabled audience members are expected allocate a member of FOH team to assist them in emergencies.
* Ensure both doors in foyer are unbolted and that gate from backstage area to car park is unlocked.
* Allocate each FOH team member to a fire exit/ area of building which they will be responsible for patrolling/ clearing in the event of an emergency evacuation.

*This file contains copies of a daily checklist, which can be used on performance days to ensure that all FOH tasks are completed.*

**Front of House checklist**

**Play:**

**Performance:**

**Audience size:**

*Before show starts:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Completed** |
| Toilets checked : cleanliness/ soap/ paper towels/ bins empty |  |
| Box Office set up (cash box, programmes, flyers) |  |
| Check hall clean |  |
| Seats in hall set up |  |
| Refreshments set up |  |
| Urn turned on |  |
| Liaise with Stage manager re opening house |  |
| If disabled audience members booked allocate FOH staff to assist them in emergency |  |
| Check fire exits not blocked |  |

*After show:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Completed** |
| Toilets checked |  |
| Foyer and kitchen cleared and swept |  |
| Check hall clean |  |
| Cash boxes to Treasurer once run complete |  |

*Comments:*

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

## Welsh Church Hall, Leytonstone High Road

**NOTE**: PROCEDURES 2 & 3 ARE APPLICABLE BOTH FOR DRILL AND ACTUAL INCIDENT EVACUATION

**RESPONSIBILITES**

The **STAGE MANAGER** is responsible for the Stage, dressing room and Cast

The **FOH MANAGER** is responsible for the Audience, Foyer and Kitchen and Toilet areas.

**Fires and smoke are dangerous. Under no circumstances should you put yourself at risk. The building can be re-built – you can’t**

###### 1] ON DISCOVERING A FIRE

* Activate the fire alarm [Nearest Break Glass Call point]
* Call 999

2] ON HEARING THE ALARM

**The FOH manager should**:

* Send FOH team members to escort identified disabled persons from the building and to staff their designated exits
* Inform the audience that the building needs to be evacuated and direct them to the appropriate exits.
* Check that nobody remains in the auditorium, kitchen, toilet or foyer areas before leaving the building

**The stage manager should**:

* Direct the cast and crew to the nearest appropriate exits.
* Check that nobody remains in the stage and side chapel areas before leaving the building.

**NB**: IF YOU SEE OR SMELL FIRE OR SMOKE, REPORT YOUR FINDINGS IMMEDIATELY TO THE FOH MANAGER OR STAGE MANAGER. SPEAK CLEARLY AND CONCISELY. DO NOT PANIC.

When the FIRE BRIGADE arrive the Stage and FOH managers should report to the Senior Office that the building is clear and that there are no people in the building.

The Audience and the Cast should be directed to the other side of the building (Star of India side) and remain there until the Senior Fire Brigade Officer in attendance says that it is safe to re-enter, or directs them to a place of safety