Usher Training & Policy Manual

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Caine College of the Arts Production Services
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Introduction

As an usher for the Caine College of the Arts Production Services, you are a personal representative of the Caine College of the Arts and its presenting organizations. We want nothing more than to provide an enjoyable and professional experience for our patrons. As an usher, you are part of the key to that success, because you are one of the first people to interact with our patrons. Their experience with you will often determine whether or not they return.

Responsibilities

Ushers must be able to:

1. Stand for long periods of time.
2. Accurately read small print on tickets and verify the correct date, time, event, and seat location.
3. Be 18 years of age or older.
4. Provide friendly customer service for patrons attending events.
5. Assist in event preparation – stuffing programs, light dusting & cleaning, table set-up, etc . . . .
6. Remain calm in the event of an emergency.
7. Provide appropriate clothing items to complete the usher uniform.

Duties include, but are not limited to:

1. Remain at his/her assigned post as needed.
2. Ensure patrons are ticketed correctly, questions are answered accurately, and policies are enforced efficiently.
3. Inspecting public areas to ensure safe conditions and cleanliness, and notifying a supervisor of problems.
4. Attending usher training sessions and usher evaluations.
5. Being familiar with methods of customer service and public relations.
6. Assisting patrons with disabilities.
7. Understanding and following evacuation procedures.
8. Be familiar with seating in each venue.

Please remember that ushers are not guaranteed a seat to view a performance, especially if the show is sold out. If seats are available, you may sit near your assigned post unless you are required to remain standing. However, when in the venue you must still be looking for camera use, disruptive children and food. Ushers should always return to their post during intermissions or any time the house manager asks you to do so. We understand that there are many slow times throughout the night that enable you to finish some homework. Please do NOT bring laptops. Books and/or notebooks are fine.
We thank you for your enthusiasm and willingness to help provide a wonderful arts experience for our patrons.

Signing up

All ushers are required to work 2 shows per month to stay on staff. It will not be counted against you in months where there aren’t enough events to provide slots for everyone to meet the requirement. The box office coordinator will assign you to the 2 shows based on the availability you give him/her each semester. Any slots left to be filled after that point will be open to anyone who wants them. **You are welcome to change your availability at any time, however, once you have been assigned to a show, you are responsible for finding a replacement or covering the shift yourself.**

Schedules for each month will be sent out via email the last week of the preceding month. At that point, you can reply back to sign up for any additional shifts you’d like to take. Weekly follow-up/reminder emails will be sent out for additional sign-ups for slots that aren’t filled yet for the following week.

If the needs of an event change, a ticket clerk may be moved to ushering.

Commitment

When you are assigned or sign up for a show, you are expected and counted on to be there. If you are unable to make a shift it is your responsibility to make sure your shift is covered. Please use the phone list sent out to contact other employees. Once you have found someone to cover your shift, let the box office coordinator know the event, call time and person taking the shift.

We understand there are emergencies. If an emergency arises and you have no one to cover your shift please contact the box office coordinator at 435-797-4044.

Report Time

Ushers are usually expected to report one hour prior to curtain (i.e., 6:30 pm for a 7:30 pm performance). Times vary, so please pay attention. Punctuality is a **must**.

Upon arrival, you must select a vest and a name tag from those made available. Please keep your backpacks and coats in coat check or the kitchen by the green room.
The House Manager will begin the usher briefing ten minutes after report time. This is an important briefing, as you will learn everything you need to know for the event, including:

1. Roll Call
2. Usher Assignments
3. Show description, length, and intermissions
4. House count (if applicable), wheelchair seating, and latecomer seating
5. How to use assisted listening devices, if applicable
6. Policies for children, photography, food, etc
7. Any other special information regarding the event

**Usher Uniform**

The CCA provides:

1. A black vest
2. "Usher" name tag
3. A flashlight

You are to provide:

1. Black slacks or skirt (knee-length or longer)
2. White dress shirt.
3. Black shoes with appropriate socks/nylons.
4. Non-offensive, professional-looking tie (men only)

**Uniform Requirements:**

1. The shirt MUST be white.
2. Shirts must look professional.
3. Denim or other casual fabrics are unacceptable for slacks and skirts.
4. No decorations on slacks, skirts, or vests that can be deemed unprofessional.
5. No hats allowed.
6. No bulky coats. Light jackets are acceptable, so long as they are clean, neat, and professional looking – no wind breakers.

**Appearance:**

1. Hair should be neatly cut and groomed. Please look professional.
2. Men must be clean-shaven or facial hair neatly trimmed.
3. If you wear jewelry, keep it simple.
4. No nose, tongue, lip, eyebrow, or other non-conventional rings or jewelry.
5. No gum-chewing or smoking is allowed while on duty. Breath mints are fine.

If you have a question about a particular item of clothing, then choose something else.
Disciplinary Action

It is of the upmost importance that all ushers look and act as professionally as possible. Every client that uses our venues is required to use our services, and is also required to pay for our services. Please show them their money wasn’t wasted.

Each usher is allowed up to two disciplinary actions on his/her record. Upon meeting the requirements for a 3rd disciplinary action, his/her employment will be terminated.

The following is a list of examples of possible offences (this is not an exhaustive list):
1. Wrong color shirt
2. Skirt too short
3. Wrong color slacks or skirt
4. Laptop use while at work
5. Rudeness to patron(s), ticket clerks, house staff, or event staff
6. Poor hygiene
7. Patron complaint (as evaluated by Box Office Coordinator)
8. Arriving late or leaving early
9. Texting or talking on the phone while patrons are in the lobby
10. Consuming alcohol or controlled substances during or immediately before working hours
11. Profanity
12. Not meeting minimum monthly requirement for shifts

Payment

At the end of your shift, please remember to clock out with the time clock, as well as check with the House Manager. If you are at a venue without access to the time clock, a form will be provided to record your hours, and that information will be entered into the time clock software by the budget assistant. Ushers will receive a 2 hour minimum for each show worked. If an usher arrives late or leaves early, that amount of time will be taken off his/her minimum time.

House Policies

Cameras, recording equipment, electronic devices, & cell phones are not allowed in the theatre unless the House Manager has notified you otherwise in the briefing. Please remind patrons to turn off their electronic equipment. By wearing your usher badge, you have the authority to (politely) ask a patron to leave the theatre due to their disregard of this rule.
Food & Drink
If refreshments are sold, they must be consumed in the lobby or outside. Please do not allow food or drink on any carpeted area. Water is allowed in all venues except the Performance Hall.

Coats & Bags
In an attempt to keep The Performance Hall looking new as long as possible, and to minimize wear and tear on the theatre, backpacks are not allowed in the house for any reason. They may be checked at the coat check area or left in the lobby. If it is raining or snowing, please inform patrons that we have a mandatory coat check policy, and direct them to the coat check area.

Infant / Child Seating
Due to fire regulations, every person in the theatre must have a seat. If a child is sitting on his/her parent’s lap, there must also be an empty seat the child could occupy. For all events, age restrictions will be set by the event, and you will be notified of them in the usher briefing. If you notice a disruptive child in the theatre at any time please ask the patron if you can light their way out of the theatre.

No child under 8 years old is admitted to any event in the Performance Hall.

Audience Management
For safety reasons, audience members will not be allowed on-stage or backstage before, during, or after the performance. If you see anyone entering these areas, please inform the patron of this policy and offer to assist him or her in locating a proper exit, cast member, etc.

If you see anyone defacing property belonging to CCA, please notify the house manager immediately.

General Usher Guidelines

General Duties
1. Smile.
2. Be sure patrons know you are ready and willing to help them with anything they may need.
3. Clean your assigned area before and after each performance. Lost and found items are to be turned into the production manager’s office.
4. Please be professional at all times.
5. Do not blame house managers, ticket clerks or box office clerks for mistakes. Apologize and assure the patron you will resolve the problem.
6. Hand out programs when applicable.
7. Assist patrons with wheelchair seating, if needed. If the patron chooses to transfer to a regular seat, ask if he/she would like the wheelchair during intermission. Store
the wheelchair in the lobby and remember where you put it and who it belongs to. In the event of an emergency, you are responsible for assisting the patron out of the theatre.

8. Do not bring additional chairs – other than wheelchairs – into the theatre. Placing chairs in the aisles violates fire code. Strollers, crutches, and other items should not block the aisles, either. They can be stored in the coat check area or in the lobby until after the performance.

9. If you see or hear patrons talking loudly or otherwise causing distractions, politely ask them to stop or invite them to leave the theatre. You ARE authorized to do this.

10. Assisted listening devices are available for all of our venues. See the house manager.

11. As a general rule, latecomers should never be seated until an appropriate break in the performance, and are not guaranteed their assigned seat once the show has started. The house manager will brief you on the specifics of each performance.

12. Flashlight etiquette:
   a. Use your body as a shield between the audience and the light by turning away and keeping the light shining downward.
   b. Do not point with your flashlight. It is very disruptive to other audience members whose evening is already being interrupted by patrons who didn’t show the courtesy to arrive on time.
   c. Always walk patrons all the way to their seats after the house lights have gone down.
   d. Do not turn the flashlight off until there is no danger of the patron tripping.

Ticketed Performance Guidelines

1. When checking tickets, be sure to confirm the section, date, and time of the event before showing patrons to their seats.

2. Tear all tickets stubs, and give them to the house manager once the show has started.

3. Always offer to take the patrons all the way to their seat. This prevents confusion and traffic jams in the aisles.

4. If someone does not have a ticket, direct them to the house manager or ticket clerks.

5. If a patron comes to you and says that someone is in his/her seat:
   a. Ask the patron if you may see his/her ticket.
   b. Make sure the ticket is for the correct date, time, event, and location. Also check the section and seat number. Most double seating problems are caused by someone coming to the right show on the wrong night.
   c. Ask the patron to wait for you while you verify the ticket information of the other patrons.
   d. If the tickets are identical, ask the names of both patrons and write them on their tickets. Take both sets of tickets to the house manager, and he/she will take it from there.
Emergency & Evacuation Procedures

In the Event of an Emergency
All ushers are used as evacuation ushers, and assignments vary by location. Please refer to the evacuation maps attached to this document.

The house manager and ushers are responsible for evacuating people in front of house. If you ever think there may be a need to evacuate, contact the house manager immediately.

If the fire alarm goes off: Do not panic or give patrons any cause to panic. Remain calm and signal for patrons to exit the theatre.

If the theatre needs to be evacuated:
1. The house manager or technical director will announce the need to evacuate.
2. Move to your assigned post.
3. Hold the doors open for patrons and direct them to the holding zone (parking lot or grassy area designated in the evacuation plans). Each theatre has a different holding zone; refer to the maps.
4. Keep the flow of traffic steady, but not panicked. The most important thing is to remain calm and keep the patrons calm.
5. All ushers and patrons must wait in the holding zone so they don’t interfere with emergency vehicles. Wait for further instructions.
6. If you helped seat a wheelchair patron whose chair is being stored, you are responsible for that patron. Retrieve his/her chair, and assist the patron out of the theatre.
7. The only person authorized to give the “OK” to re-enter the building is the “Incident Commander (IC),” who will be with the firefighters. Do not let patrons re-enter the theatre until you have heard from the house manager (who knows from the IC) that the building is clear.

Accidents/First Aid
All house managers for CCA are CPR/First Aid certified. Notify the house manager immediately if:
1. A patron is injured or has fallen.
2. A patron vomits or has a medical emergency such as a heart attack, seizure, etc.

Remember:
1. Never leave the scene of an emergency unless there is not another staff member to go for help.
2. Do not move an injured person.
3. If needed, send a patron for help. If you must leave, return to the site as soon as possible to keep everyone calm and away from the injured person.
If at any time you are near the scene of an accident, remember as many details as possible. This will assist the house manager in filling out a liability accident report. Details may include:

1. Exact time and location of the accident.
2. Whether or not the injured party was assisted by anyone.
3. Any comments that were made by the injured party or by other patrons in the immediate area.
4. Please ask witnesses to remain until their account of the accident is reported. Obtain their names and phone numbers.
Red and Yellow - Evacuate out your respective doors and move through the lobby to the Kent Concert Hall lobby, thru the glass doors and into the courtyard. From the courtyard move to the north west parking lot.

Blue and Green - First Choice - Evacuate out your respective doors and move down the theatre wing hallway, down the stairs and out the doors. Move to the grassy area away from the building. Second Choice - Evacuate out your respective doors and move through the lobby to the Kent Concert Hall lobby, thru the glass doors and into the courtyard. From the courtyard move to the north west parking lot.