

USHERING

Welcome to the Acme Center of the Arts. Thank you for volunteering to serve as an usher and representative of the center. Your interaction with each person who walks through our lobby doors contributes immensely to a memorable experience for theatre patrons.

Acme Center of the Arts very much appreciates your helpful participation.

For more information and questions contact- Front of House Manager at 555-1212

Why Are You Volunteering?

To help make each patron's experience a pleasant and safe one. This is achievable through courtesy and professionalism. Be observant of surroundings and safety issues.

Time Commitment

Ushers are requested to arrive 1 hour and 30 minutes before the show begins, and to stay until the audience has exited the theatre and lobby areas after the show.

Dress Code

Casual business attire black & white and red jacket. Please no t-shirts, no flip-flops, no shorts, nothing revealing.

Working Conditions

- Expect to possibly stand for long periods of time.
- Be prepared that you may not be able see the entire show.
- Be ready that you may have to climb up and down stairs a few times.
- You may be requested to help lift and move up to 10 pounds such as chairs, boxes of programs.
- Expect to work in an environment that is not brightly lit.
- Punctual attendance is highly desired. Please arrive at the lobby 1 hour and 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the show.
- Ushers are expected to remain at their stations until dismissed by the House Manager. Even when relaxing in the lobby during the show, ushers are expected to be attentive to anyone exiting or returning to the theatre.

Duties

Before the Show

_____ Meet the House Manager 1 hour and 30 minutes at Theatre Lobby before the show starts to get instructions from him/her.

Ticket Scanning (At the door):

Volunteers are assigned at this station on either side of the theatre and are provided with a hand held scanner.

_____ Open the theatre doors when given the go-ahead by the House Manager and allow people to enter.

_____ Greet Patrons and scan tickets.

_____ Watch for any food/drinks (except bottled waters) or cameras being brought into the building. If you observe this, firmly request that food and drinks (except bottled waters) be consumed in the lobby.

_____ Watch for people with mobility challenges, walkers, wheelchairs who may be better off taking the elevator to their seats.

_____ When all the patrons are in, check the lobby and walkways in front of theatre for trash and straighten things up.

_____ If late seating is allowed, take the tickets from the group/individuals and explain to the ticket holder(s) how they are going to be seated. For example- "I/the usher at the top of the stairs will take you inside the theatre where another usher will seat you."

Before they enter, give them a sense of how many seats in they will have to move to find their seats so that the conversation isn't occurring in the theatre. If you aren't seating them in their assigned seats note that fact and inform them they may then move to their assigned seats at intermission.

It is important that this conversation occur before you open the door in order to minimize any sound, light and movement that will distract others in the audience.

Program Books

Generally 4-6 volunteers are assigned.

_____ Hand out programs to patrons.

_____ Answer patrons' questions with courteous manner.

_____ When requested, direct patrons to restrooms and drinking fountains.

_____ Prevent patrons from smoking or eating in the theatre. Invite patrons to finish their food in the lobby and smoke outside the building.

_____ Make the house manager aware of any problems.

_____ Make sure inside of auditorium, lobby and area immediately outside entrances are clear of rubbish.

Auditorium Duties:

Generally ushers assigned to these duties who should be able to stay in the auditorium at all times. Volunteers who are in the auditorium can watch the show and have a seat. But, you must actively assist patrons who are entering or exiting as well as watch for patrons using cell phones, taking photos and videoing.

_____ When the show begins and the house light is dim, please have your flashlights ready to assist any patrons who enter/exit during show. Please be attentive to the late comers.

_____ Remain in the house with flashlights to assist people exiting and entering. It is important that the doors are not allowed to slam and the house rules are followed. No food, no drinks, no taking photos, no audio/video taping, no cell phone use allowed.

_____ During the intermission you should stand at the same place where you were at the beginning of the show.

_____ Look for possessions left behind by audience members at the end of the show.

_____ In case of emergency, actively participate in the emergency evacuation of the theatre. An announcement will be made. (See section on emergency procedures of specific details)

Please open exit doors as directed. To every extent possible, without compromising your own safety, assist patrons with an orderly evacuation.

911- FIRE & MEDICAL

After the show:

_____ Return flashlights and personal items left behind by audience members (if any) to the House Manager

ASSISTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Who is a “Person with a Disability?”

From the Americans with Disabilities Act 1990

“An individual with a disability is a person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such an impairment.”

Many disabilities are hidden, invisible, and not easily detected. People with disabilities range from the person who has difficulty walking great distances (such as older adults) to the person who uses a wheelchair; one who is blind and uses a guide dog to the person who cannot adjust quickly to changes in lighting conditions; someone who has age-related mild hearing loss to the person who is congenitally deaf.

When You Approach a Person with a Disability

- See the person, not the disability. Avoid “talking down”.
- Speak directly to the individual, not to a companion or an interpreter.
- Treat adults as adults. Be considerate. A person with disability may take more time to say or do things.

- Relax. Do not worry about using common expressions such as “See you later” or “I’ve got to run”.

Understand the Needs of Older Adults

While older individuals may not need specific assistance, they can benefit by communicating information that acknowledges their needs such as the distance one has to walk from the car or front door to one’s seat.

When You Offer Assistance

- Always give the individual your complete attention and introduce yourself by name and say that you work for the theatre as a volunteer usher.
- Speak clearly and distinctly but do not exaggerate or shout. Be flexible with language. If the person does not understand, rephrase the statement using simpler words.
- Never be afraid to ask someone, May I assist you?

If your offer to assist is refused, do not insist

If persons with disabilities state their needs, trust their explanations and respond respectfully. An individual’s safety and comfort are always important considerations.

The followings are some examples of what to do and what not do when you are assisting with people with disabilities.

Do hold or stabilize wheelchairs while patrons transfer to a conventional seat.

Do not lift or carry them.

Do push peoples’ wheelchairs to the restroom if requested.

Do not accompany them into the toilet area.

Do assist a patron in purchasing beverages or getting to a water fountain if requested.

Do not feed or administer medication.

Do help people to be comfortable.

Do not do anything to jeopardize patron’s or your own safety.

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

Police/Emergency 911

- If any disturbances occur and you are involved or a witness to the occurrence, you may be asked to provide information for an incident report. Be sure to make note of names and contact information of people involved, witnesses and chronology.

When reporting an emergency, please stay on the line with the dispatcher so that they can be correctly directed to the site of the problem.

In all emergency situations it is important to remain calm and in control. You know the building better than anyone else. People will look to you for direction.

- **In case of a fire**, an usher will be asked to dial 911 to report the fire. The house lights will be raised and the announcement should be made by House Manager. Ushers will open exit doors as directed to lead patrons out of the building.

- **In the event of a medical emergency**, an usher may be sent to call 911 to report the emergency. You may be asked to help maintain a clear area around the affected people or to catch the attention of emergency personnel and direct them to the best access doors.

An **Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** kit is located near X.

- **In the event of a power failure**, the emergency lights will come on. An announcement will be made by the House Manager while staff checks on the status of the power outage. It may not be necessary to empty the building if the power is going to be restored soon. If it is necessary to evacuate, ushers will open exit doors as directed to lead patrons out of the building.

Tornado

The Acme Center of the Arts has designated tornado shelter areas. In the event of a tornado or other severe weather, an announcement will be made to evacuate to shelters.

The audience should be evacuated as follows:

Lower Tier, Odd Number seats – exit through the west side of the theater and go to the basement. People in wheelchairs will go to the lobby restrooms.

Upper Tier, Odd Number seats and people in wheelchairs- and exit through the west side of theatre, cross the mezzanine bridge, down the stairs and into the lobby restrooms. The concession area and box office will be used for overflow.

Lower Tier, Even Number seats will exit through the east side of the theatre and go to the basement. Restrooms in the back hallway and the dressing rooms may be used for overflow or people with mobility difficulties.

Upper Tier, Even Numbered Seats will exit through the east side of the theatre and go into the Black Box Theater.

Earthquake

In case of an earthquake. Find a safe, sturdy place away from windows and falling objects to take immediate shelter. Your shelter spot should be as close to your current spot as possible as chance of injury increases the farther you move.

Once the shaking has stopped, help calm those around you and check for injuries. Power is likely to be out so communication will likely be by shouted instructions.

Remain in place until instructed. Since earthquakes can cause breaks in gas and electric lines and fallen debris, not every exit route may be safe.

Fire alarms and sprinklers may be triggered by tremors, but that does not necessarily mean there is a fire. Remain in place unless a visible fire or heavy smoke threatens your safety.