



## **Actor's Rules and Etiquette**

This document outlines the expected standards of an actor's behaviour that help make a production go smoothly and produce a quality show. It includes not only guidelines but also rules of the society.

When accepting a role in a **Halifax Thespians** Production you agree to:

- Become, if not already, a paid-up member of Halifax Thespians. (Subs should be paid on or before the first rehearsal).
- Pay an £10 deposit (cash or cheque) for your script. At the end of the run, you will have the opportunity to keep the script; in which case your deposit will be retained. Should you not wish to buy the script please ensure any moves and notes are marked in pencil and erase them at the end of the run to enable you to return the script in reasonable condition. Your deposit will then be returned to you. The deposit should be paid to either the director of the play or a member of the Play Selection and Casting Group
- It is Halifax Thespians policy that when rehearsing on stage and during performances that no alcohol or drugs will be taken by any cast or crew prior to, or during rehearsal and performance. (You run the risk of the play not happening if the Stage Manager/ Stage Director does not allow you on stage).
- Except for character or period costumes, you may be expected to provide your own costumes, and make up etc. (especially if it is a contemporary play, although we do have an extensive wardrobe dept.)
- Before purchasing anything for a production where you want the society to reimburse you, ensure you have obtained authorisation from the stage Director.

### **You will also be expected to**

- Before accepting a part in, or assisting with other productions, obtain agreement from the Artistic Director and play director where this may impact the rehearsal period or performance week.

### **Rehearsals**

. A positive attitude is everything! Treat your fellow actors and director with respect.

- attend all rehearsals as set out in the call sheet prepared by the play director.
- Be ready to rehearse on time.
- **the expectation is that ALL cast members will attend all rehearsals the week prior to the performance week. Any cast member who does not/cannot attend the cast technical rehearsal (usually either the Thursday or Friday before opening night) will normally be withdrawn from the cast.**



## Rehearsals continued

- obtain permission to be absent from a rehearsal from the play director. The absence from a rehearsal without the permission of the play director or without an adequate reason shall be sufficient justification for the Play Selection and Casting group to consider re-casting the part.
- notify the play director (or Stage Manger from the tech rehearsal onwards) as soon as possible of any unexpected absences.
- Agree to perform the work as written (unless authorised changes are made)
- Follow reasonable instructions given by the play director. Be direct-able. That means try the things asked of you, even if you disagree. If you continue to disagree, speak to the director but only after you've tried it a few times.
- Talk to your partner about boundaries. No physical contact without first discussing it.
- Try not to paraphrase lines.
- Always keep communication open.
- Remember that no matter the size of your role, you're part of a bigger picture. Keep your ego in check—you're almost always replaceable.

## Director's notes

- Refrain from disputing a director's note or engaging in lengthy explanations when given direction.
- Always be open and gracious, even if you disagree. Say "Thank you" after the director gives you the note, or "May we speak about this later?" if you don't understand or disagree.
- The note session is not therapy for your character, but rather a session of quick fixes for many elements of the show.
- Find time separately for you and the director to solve issues that affect you or your character only.
- Your creative ideas are always welcome and encouraged but keep your character idea flexible. The director may steer you in a different direction, so try it out. If you're not feeling it, use your reading and analysis of the script to support your case. Don't be defensive—it's a collaboration—but ultimately the director has the final say.
- Never direct or prompt a fellow actor.
- Be attentive in rehearsal. Not only will you be ready when you are needed but you will learn more quickly. Direction, suggestion, information given to another actor may affect/inspire you.
- Always bring a pencil and your script to rehearsal and write down ANY AND ALL notes, blocking and direction you are given, preferably in pencil so you can accommodate any changes easily.
- Call for line in rehearsal by staying in character with a minimum of hesitation and loss of focus.

### Director's notes (continued)

- Observe the off-book deadline by knowing your lines as well as you can.
- Pay attention during rehearsal. Know when it is your time on stage. Do not have the director or stage manager have to come and find you.
- Show respect for the space by always cleaning up after yourself.
- Keep the noise down during rehearsals and when you are backstage. Avoid talking and/or whispering while others are working. Respect that some actors have to intensely focus on their lines and character during rehearsal and performance and do not need to be distracted.
- “Down Time” in Rehearsals: When you are not on “stage”, there are a few options.
  - The best is to give the actors who are on stage your undivided attention—you are their practice audience!
  - In addition, if you listen to the direction given to other actors, the director will not have to repeat themselves for your benefit.
  - Other acceptable behaviours include silently looking over your lines or quietly doing any other production related activities. Loud conversations etc are not acceptable.

### Mobile Phones:

- Mobile phones can be indispensable - but they can also interrupt focus and concentration. For this reason, turn your cell phones to silent while in rehearsals.
- Mobile phones should never come with you on stage. Take them out of your pockets and leave them in your bag or jacket, or even better the phone safe.
- During the run, make sure your mobile cell phones are turned off when backstage. Not only could you miss a cue if you were on your phone, but it can distract your fellow actors in the dressing room who are trying to focus.
- As mobile phones have cameras, there are privacy issues with phones in the dressing room.
- If you absolutely need to have your phone available (for childcare or other emergencies), have a discussion with the stage manager.

**Tech Rehearsals:** This is the only time the crew get to rehearse and to fine tune their work with you there.

- This can be a long and tedious process, so please be patient.
- Don't disrupt their rehearsal and stay close to the stage, because they are always going to go back a few scenes when they resume.
- respect that all members of the crew are an integral and important part of the show.



## **Performance**

- **Small or Unresponsive Audiences:** The lone audience member today paid the same ticket price as the full house that loved your performance last night. A quiet audience may be enjoying the play as much as the louder one. You have a responsibility to perform the show the best you can, no matter the audience size or behaviour.
- Play as directed with no alterations for your own gain or because of the advice of critics, family, or friends.

## **Public:**

- When you are out and about town and someone asks you how the show is going, always be positive. You might say, “Show’s going great. You’d better get your tickets early.
- Help publicise by putting up posters in your local shop etc.
- Hand out flyers to friends and family, try to encourage people to buy tickets.
- Share posts on social media

## **And finally**

- You’ve had your opportunity to shine on stage, now consider volunteering for a backstage role in a future production to help someone else shine, as someone helped you.