

A photograph of two women on a stage, illuminated by dramatic lighting. One woman is in the foreground, looking down, while the other is slightly behind her, looking to the side.

STAGE MANAGER INFO PACK

Stage managers typically provide practical and organisational support to the director, actors, designers, stage crew and technicians throughout the production process. They are also the director's representative during performances, making sure that the production runs smoothly.

The role of the stage manager is especially important to the director in rehearsals. Here the director and the stage manager work side by side, with the stage manager recording the director's decisions about blocking and notes for the actors, keeping track of logistical and scheduling details and communicating what goes on in rehearsals to the rest of the team. This enables the director to concentrate their full attention on directing.

Stage managers have several key responsibilities and tasks to perform in each phase of a production, including:

- Scheduling and running rehearsals
- Communicating the director's wishes to designers
- Coordinating the work of the stage crew
- Calling cues and possibly actors' entrances during performance
- Overseeing the entire show each time it is performed

In conjunction with the director, the stage manager determines the scheduling of all rehearsals and makes sure everyone involved is notified of rehearsal times, meetings, publicity, costume fittings and coaching sessions. During the rehearsal phase, stage managers also:

- Mark out the dimensions of the set on the floor of the rehearsal venue
- Make sure rehearsal props and furnishings are available for the actors
- Attend all rehearsals
- Notify the designers of changes made in rehearsal

In rehearsals the stage manager also records all blocking plus all the light, sound, AV and set change cues, in a master copy of the script called the prompt copy. The information in the prompt copy also allows the stage manager to run the technical rehearsals, calling each technical cue in turn to determine precisely how it needs to be timed to coordinate with the onstage action.

The stage manager and the production manager also work out a smooth and efficient plan for the stage crew to follow during set changes. Furniture and prop plans for complicated sets are drawn up by the stage manager and technical designer to show exactly where the furniture and props are to be positioned on stage at the beginning of each scene and sometimes in the wings.

Once the show opens, the director's work is essentially complete. Now it's the stage manager's job to make sure that every aspect of the production runs just as the director intended time after time, until the production closes.