

Description of General Usher Duties:

The usher position is one of the most important Friends of Will volunteer positions and we welcome you to this very dedicated and professional team. The usher can influence a patron's whole experience at the theater and we take pride in making a positive difference. Remember that your **FIRST PRIORITY** is the patron's well being and comfort at all times. Watching the performance is secondary.

Before Performance:

Sign in 1 hour before performance begins, in uniform – Black slacks or skirt, white shirt or blouse, black or dark dress shoes or dress sandals.

Use restroom so you will not need to while on duty.

Put on appropriate nametag.

Stuff inserts into Playbills as directed by head usher.

Get assignments for usher seating and for your tasks before performance, during intermission and after performance from head usher. Review written position description as needed.

Familiarize yourself with all aspects of the performance – length, number of tickets sold, post show reception details, information about special situations, etc. (on blackboard or in usher meeting).

Leave valuables in the Usher Room. House Manager will lock it during performance.

Take your assigned post by 5 minutes before house is due to open.

Whenever at post be quietly attentive, ready to assist patrons and watch for instructions from head usher or house manager to open the house or other. No eating or drinking. Smile and make eye contact with patrons. Watch for those needing assistance and ask if there's anything that you can do to help him or her. Treat patrons how you'd want to be treated as a patron.

Watch carefully for patrons with cameras, cell phones, food or beverages, babies or other articles not allowed in theater. Offer to have cameras locked in box office during performance; ask patron to shut off cell phone; to finish food or beverage in lobby. Refer other issues to House Manager.

Time signals:

House Manager will flash lobby lights **once at 15** minutes before performance begins, **twice at 5** minutes before performance begins and **three times at 2** minutes before performance begins. The time to close the doors will be given verbally by House Manager.

If attending performance:

Take your assigned seat quickly when House Manager indicates time – do not stand in aisles.

If assigned to help with late seating, stay by outside door and quietly let in late-comers until House Manager indicates pre-show speech is over.

Remain attentive to potential patron issues during the performance.

Wait for applause and house lights before moving into intermission or post performance position.

During intermission:

Take assigned post quickly.

Watch for other ushers needing assistance with their intermission duties. Coordinate restroom visits.

Close doors and return to your seat immediately after house manager ends intermission.

After performance:

Take post immediately.

Thank patrons for coming, but do not engage in opinionated or in-depth conversations.

Collect and sort playbills patrons are done with: recycle all earmarked or soiled ones, put gently-used ones back in playbill box, checking to be sure they contain inserts.

Wait until house is cleared before cleaning and preparing it for next performance.

Return nametag and flashlight as you retrieve personal belongings from usher room.

Detailed instructions for each usher post

Checking tickets/Bottom of stairs/2 ushers on each side

- Check the date on tickets to make sure ticket is for this performance.
- Check seat numbers and direct patrons to most appropriate side of theater. Seats 1-15 House right 16-30 house left.
- Offer patrons with limited mobility (e.g. difficulty doing stairs) the option of using accessible entrance.
- Refer any ticket problems to the House Manager or Box Office Manager.
- One ticket checker on each side will be assigned to stay outside the theater door for 15 minutes after doors close to assist with late seating.

Distributing Playbills/Top of stairs/1 usher on each side

- Bring enough playbills with appropriate inserts for each performance to top of stairs prior to house opening. Store out of the way of patrons.
- Keep doors shut and patrons from entering until house manager or head usher indicates that house is open.
- Give one playbill to each person entering the theater.
- When House manager gives 15 minute, 5 minute and 2 minute warnings and to close door, relay that information to Seating assistants inside.
- During intermission, float between door monitor and stage monitor positions on your side of the house, relieving either if they must leave their post. Assist head usher or House manager with other duties as assigned.
- After performance, help collect and sort used programs from exiting patrons, then help prepare theater for next performance.

Seating Assistants/Inside first and second set of doors/1-2 ushers on each side

- As doors open, check house to make sure it is clean from previous performance. Relay problems to house manager.
- Check to make sure you know the location of all aisle lights and exits.
- Greet each party entering theater and ask if you may help them find their seat(s).
- Look at tickets and escort person/party to the appropriate row. Stand at the end of the row so people will enter the row in front of you.
- When necessary, use your flashlight to light the path or highlight seats.
- At 5 minute warning (relayed from playbill ushers), check for large gaps in house seating indicating a large party has not arrived, and relay this to House Manager.

- At intermission, 1 on each side open doors after lights come up, direct patrons to auxiliary restrooms upstairs, monitor theater door for food and drink, re-close inside door at end of intermission. The other on each side stays in theater aisle to ensure no one goes onto stage and to assist with patron questions.
- After performance, 1 on each side opens door and helps collect used programs, the other monitors stage again, as during intermission. When theater is empty, assist with preparing theater for next performance. Lost and Found is in the Box Office.

Accessibility Assistants/ House Right hallway and door/2 ushers

- Greet limited mobility patrons and their assistants, look at their tickets and give them playbills. Ask if they need assistance taking their seats. Offer to bring walkers, wheelchairs (if they are not using them during performance) canes or other equipment to store out of theater during performance (House manager will instruct where). Inform patrons of the location of their equipment and that intermission is short and bathroom lines long so encourage leaving promptly when it comes.
- Close doors to hallway and curtain just before performance cued by House Manager.
- Take assigned usher seats.
- When intermission starts, immediately ask who needs to leave their seat and bring necessary equipment to patrons and help direct them to bathrooms, etc. If line is long, request to cut line on Patron's behalf. Encourage them to return to their seats when House Manager flashes 5-minute warning. Store equipment as before.
- At end of show, open curtain and doors, retrieve equipment and offer patrons help getting out of the theater or building. Collect and sort any playbills they return.
- Monitor back (accessible) entrance to ensure exiting patrons stay out of restricted back hallway.

Hosts (formerly greeters)

- Circulate in lobby prior to the performance and during intermission.
- Welcome patrons as they enter, ask if you can help direct them, answer questions.
- Use Resource table for information about the festival and the Winona Community.
- At beginning of intermission, get bell from House manager. When lights flash for 5 minutes and for 2 minutes left in intermission, go outside, ring bell and announce minutes until the performance resumes.

Theater Rules

- No children under 6 years of age except by prior arrangement with management.
- No food or beverages allowed in the theater except for water bottles with a cap.
- No recording devices or cameras allowed.
- Cell phones and pagers must be TURNED OFF. No text messaging is allowed in the theater.
- If you have any difficulties enforcing these rules with patrons, ask house manager or head usher to assist you.

Usher Stations at a glance

Tasks/Stations	# of Ushers	Equipment/Materials
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Before the Performance

Checking Tickets	4 (2 each side)	
Distributing Playbills	2 (1 each side) 4 (2 each side)	Playbills
Assisting with Seating	4(2 each side)	Flashlights
Accessibility Assistants	2	Playbills/Flashlights
Hosts	2	Lobby information table

During Intermission

Stage Monitors	2 (1 on each side, assigned to seating assistants)
Door Monitors	2 (1 on each side, assigned to seating assistants)
Floater	2 (1 on each side, assigned to playbill distributors)
Ladies Room Monitors	2 (assigned individually at each performance)
Outdoors bell ringer	1(assigned to one host)
Assist limited mobility patrons	2 (assigned to limited mobility ushers)

After the Performance

Open Doors after curtain call	2 (1 each side same as intermission)
Collect used playbills from exiting patrons	4 (2 each side) same as above plus 1
Stay inside a keep patrons off stage	2 (1 each side same as intermission)
Assist Limited Mobility Patrons to exit	2 (limited mobility ushers)
Ensure theater is clean, ready for next performance	4 or all other ushers

USHER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Medical Emergency

1. Stay calm.
2. If person leaves theater on his/her own and doesn't need help, stay in your seat. House manager or Head usher will help him/her in lobby.
3. If more serious medical emergency, closest usher discretely approach victim and quietly ask first aid questions to determine needs.
4. Another usher goes to lobby to inform House Manager immediately.
5. Do not move the person unless there is danger of further injury if left in place.
6. Do not give the person anything to eat or drink.
7. If possible, show will continue, but you may asked to assist with crowd control or other.

Building Evacuation Emergency

1. Stay calm.
2. Remain in theater until told to evacuate by House Manager or Stage Manager.
3. Have flashlights available to guide and assist audience members out of theater.
4. Under direction of Head Usher (house left) or House Manager (house right) exit people through main doors to the lobby and handicap entrance (house right). Do not use scene shop exit.
5. Ask audience to gather away from the building to allow emergency vehicles access to the theater.
6. Assist with crowd control and getting audience back into the theater after all clear.

Tornado Emergency

1. Stay calm.
2. Remain in theater until told to evacuate by House Manager or Stage Manager.
3. Have flashlight available to guide and assist audience members out of theater.
4. Under direction of House Manager (house right) or Head Usher (house left), assist audience to exit at bottom of theater stairs.
 - Those exiting house left will proceed through the scene shop to the back hallway and down the stairwell to the basement.
 - Those exiting house right will proceed through the limited mobility door, go left in hall to back hallway and left down the stairwell.
 - Audiences in the Black Box theater will exit directly to the hallway (house left of main theater) and proceed right to back hallway and down stairwell to basement.
5. In the basement, direct patrons to designated areas and ask them to crouch on their elbows and knees and put their hands over the back of their heads:
 - House left – fill costume shop, costume shop office and hallway with as many people as safely possible.
 - House right – fill women's dressing room, props room, and hallway with as many people as safely possible.
 - Actors and company members go to men's dressing room and make up room.
6. Stay in the designated area until the "all clear" word is given.
7. Assist patrons unable to navigate stairs at least into stairwell. Do not use elevator.

Security or Facility Problems

1. Inform House Manager immediately of any problems or concerns.