



**Patron Liaison and Ushers
Procedures Manual**

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The Rochester Civic Theatre Company Contact List

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Who we are

The Rochester Civic Theatre Company (The Civic), one of Minnesota's largest community theatres, has been proudly providing professional, quality entertainment to thousands of Rochester residents and visitors for 65 years. This year the Civic Theatre will deliver a slate of nine main stage and studio theatre productions along with a full schedule of Educational, Civic Action, and Arts programs.

Mission Statement

The Rochester Civic Theatre Company is a non-profit, volunteer-based, community organization that educates and enriches the adults and young people of Rochester and southeastern Minnesota through the production and performance of live theatre.

Access Statement

The Rochester Civic Theatre Company is committed to providing equal access to employment, programming, educational and outreach programming, and volunteer opportunities regardless of race, national origin, color, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, and disability. The Rochester Civic Theatre Company encourages people of all races, creeds, and cultures to become involved in our theatre performances through acting auditions or volunteer opportunities.

Composition & Role of the Patron Liaison Team

The Patron Liaison Team consists of the Patron Liaison and the Ushers and is an essential part of The Civics' success. The positions of Patron Liaison and Usher are much more than tearing tickets and handing out programs; it's developing a positive rapport with the public and demonstrating reasons for that public to come back in the future and, more importantly, keeping our patrons safe.

The Patron Liaison Team has direct contact with the audience and therefore has tremendous influence on that audience's impression of The Civic. Think of the Patron Liaison Team as customer service after the sale: the box office staff makes it possible for a patron to attend the performance/event (the sale) while the Patron Liaison Team assists in making the patron's theatre experience both safe and enjoyable (the customer service). This is accomplished through efficient, courteous, and professional supervision of the activities surrounding all front-of-house aspects of each performance/event held at the Civic. Even though a patron enjoys the Civic performance/event but has an unpleasant experience with their seating, lobby, concession area or restrooms, may find they are more reluctant to attend another theatre performances/event. Conversely, a patron, whose entire Civic experience is one of convenience, comfort and enjoyment, will be much more likely to return to another Civic performance/event.

Patron Liaison

The Patron Liaison is the first point of contact for patrons as they enter the theatre lobby. This person works with the House & Box Office Manager to coordinate the required tasks for each performance. The Patron Liaison responsibilities include supervising the theatre lobby and house before, during and after the performance, assisting with ticket collecting and provide guidance to our patrons as to the location of theatre's many facilities. Any patron problem that cannot be handled is immediately referred to the House & Box Office Manager.

Ushers

Ushers are the second person of contact for the theatre patrons. Usher responsibilities may include taking tickets, assisting in the concession or coat check areas, handing out programs at the house entrances, assisting patrons to their seats, helping sell concessions, assisting and monitoring patrons during performances, and assisting in returning the house and lobby to a presentable sate of cleanliness after the performance /event. The House Manager will assign ushers to their duties.

House Manager

The House and Box Office Manager is a Civic Theatre paid staff and manages all aspects of the box office, front of house, and theatre house during Civic Theatre performances/events. The Patron Liaison Team report directly to the House Manager.

Patron Liaison Team – General Expectations

All Patron Liaisons and Ushers are expected to have a working knowledge of The Civics’ facilities and procedures as detailed in this manual. Further, it is expected that all front-of-house volunteers have been trained in their particular task as well as in emergency procedures prior to working a performance.

At all times, the Patron Liaison team is expected to be friendly, courteous, informed and cooperative with all patrons. Patron Liaisons and Ushers are expected to work with an emphasis on manners, decorum and ambiance.

Loud conversation or shoptalk amongst Ushers is inappropriate in front of the public, artists or artistic staff.

Any differences of opinion between volunteer persons, Patron Liaison or Usher will be conducted discreetly and privately. Significant issues should be addressed with the House Manager.

Appropriate Dress and Vests

All Patron Liaisons and Ushers are to dress in **all black** casual professional attire. The objective is to look professional, to ensure a uniform look within our team, as well as to not be a distraction when moving around in the house during a performance.

All front-of-house volunteers will also wear appropriate Civic Theatre identification. Currently, this is a dark vest with The Civic logo. The Civic provides vests for Ushers and Patron Liaison to wear during every performance/event.

Arrival Times for Patron Liaison & Usher Volunteers

PERFORMANCE TIME	7 pm	7:30 pm	2 pm
Front of House doors open	6 pm	6:30 pm	1 pm
Usher to arrive	5:45 pm	6:15 pm	12:45 pm
Patron Liaison to arrive	5:45 pm	6:15 pm	12:45 pm

General rule of thumb

1. Lobby Doors open one hour before the performance start time.
2. Patron Liaison & Ushers should be here 15 minutes before the lobby doors open to meet with the House Manager for show briefing

Definition of Tasks

Controlling access to the theatre house

The Ushers controls unauthorized entrance to the theatre house, limiting the access to approved staff or volunteers and patrons with correct tickets. The doors to the theatre house **do not open** until the House Manager instructs the Ushers accordingly.

Distributing programs/directing patrons to correct seats

Front of House Ushers distribute programs and/or any other materials provided by the theatre staff. They welcome patrons and determine if patrons need assistance in finding their seats, directing them as necessary. Front of House Ushers will remain at the theatre house doors during the performance/event to assist latecomers as they enter and exit the theatre house. This is to assure that entrances and exits of any latecomers do not overly disturb already seated patrons as well as the performers on stage.

Flashlights

The Patron Liaison can retrieve flashlights and hearing devices from the file cabinet in the concession area as necessary. Ushers should obtain flashlights from the House Manager prior to opening the theatre house and then return them to the House Manager after the performance. Ushers on both sides of the theatre house doors, must have flashlights accessible for emergency use and to assist seating latecomers in the dark theatre. When using a flashlight to assist latecomers to their seats, keep it pointed at the floor in front of the patron so they may see where they are going and minimize distraction.

Monitoring Theatre House during performances

The Inside Ushers monitor the theatre house during the performance, anticipating potential patron problems such as excessive or loud talking, use of cameras and/or phones and consumption of food. Since food and cameras are not allowed in the theatre, it is the Ushers responsibility to inform patrons of this restriction before they enter the theatre house.

Selling Concessions and Coat Check

Concessions are available for purchase before and during intermission. The House Manager will conduct the needed training for the concession area prior to a volunteer working there. Coat check is available for patrons during the colder seasons. The House Manager will assign the volunteers responsible for both the concession and coat check areas.

Ticket Taking

Ticket taking will be done by the Patron Liaison or appointed Usher. Tickets may be pre-printed, home printed copies of the tickets, or shown to the ticket taker on the patron's cell phone. All tickets need to be checked for the correct performance date and time and seat location.

Procedures During a Performance/Event

Front-of-House Set-up & Training

- The Patron Liaison Team will check in with the House Manager when they arrive at the theatre to receive information on particular guests, performance running times and expected situations that might have an impact on the orderly management of the performance, etc.
- When the Patron Liaison Team is assembled, the House Manager will review the performances' expected attendance, length of show, intermissions for the performance, etc. with the team. The House Manager will instruct any new personnel on policies, emergency procedures and brief them on the performance. Once the training and review is completed, the House Manager makes the assignments for that performance.
- Front-of-House tables are cleaned and readied: this includes making sure that the votive candles are refreshed and lite and that the placement of designated theatre publications has been addressed.
- The ticket collection box (or basket) is put into place.
- Large baskets, containing the current playbills, are placed at the appropriate theatre house doors.
- The Patron Liaison and Ushers must be aware of patrons who may have arrived early.
- If there are any significant problems or issues that require greater authority during the lobby set up, the House Manager is on hand to assist.

Pre Show

Opening Front of House

When everything is ready in the lobby area, the House Manager will unlock the exterior doors to the Civic. This will be done no later than one hour before the scheduled performance time. Even though the lobby is opened, the theatre house doors remain closed until directed by the House Manager to open them.

Ticket Taking

The Usher or Patron Liaison will position himself or herself near the front entrance to the theatre to ensure the free flow of guests into the lobby while taking tickets. The Usher/PL should greet patrons and direct them to the best entry door to the theatre, while making them feel welcome and comfortable. Every ticket will be checked for the correct event, date, time, and seat number. On pre-printed tickets, detach the smaller portion of the ticket stub and retain it in the appropriate collection box, returning the larger ticket portion to the patron. Home computer printed tickets or tickets shown on personal cell phones must also be checked for the correct event, date, time and seating assignment and then returned in full to the patron. Persons with incorrect tickets are referred to the House Manager or box office. The Usher/Patron Liaison taking tickets will also assist in monitoring the exterior doors to prevent unauthorized access.

Theatre House Doors

The Front-of-House Usher controls unauthorized entrance to the theatre, limiting the access to approved staff and volunteers and patrons with correct tickets. The doors to the theatre house **do not open** until the House Manager instructs the Ushers accordingly. The Stage Manager and House Manager will determine when these doors will be opened.

Seating/Playbills

Once the theatre house doors are opened, Front-of-House Ushers will hand out performance playbills and assist patrons with their seat selections as they enter the theatre house. If patrons are familiar with the theatre

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and their seat locations, they may simply be directed towards their seats. If they are unfamiliar with the facility, they should be led to their row and directed to the correct seats. Always be ready to offer assistance to patrons and be aware of patrons who have already entered the theatre house that may be having a problem. If there is a question or problem about seating (*two people claiming the same seat, etc.*), the Usher should ask to see both parties' tickets. Improperly seated patrons are then politely directed to the correct seats. The House Manager will work with the box office to solve seating problems such as handling duplicate tickets or any other more complicated seating problems. The House Manager will have emergency house seats available to accommodate last minute seating problems.

Start of Show

The House Manager coordinates the actual curtain time with the stage manager. Although it is our policy to start promptly, lines at the box office, technical/artistic problems backstage or inclement weather may force a delay. The House Manager, in consultation with the Stage Manager, will make the final determination when to begin the performance.

The Civic does not have a curtain that opens and closes on stage, so the actors need the theater to be dark in order to get in place before the show starts and before each act. Therefore, the house doors should be closed for the curtain speech unless otherwise directed. After each act, and after the show, the actors also need dark time to get off the stage. The house doors should remain closed until the houselights fully come up.

During Performance

Team Positions

The Front-of-House Ushers, The House Manager & the Patron Liaison remain in the lobby during the performance to assist with latecomers entering the theatre house to prevent doors from slamming as patrons move into the theatre or from bring disruptive as they move to their seats. Inside House Ushers will be seated inside the theatre house during the performance to assist with patrons exiting the theatre house, as well as to monitor food and electronic use.

Latecomer Seating

All patrons arriving at the theatre once the performance has begun are considered latecomers. All Patrons, even late ones, are to be treated with courtesy. They will be admitted into the theatre house as soon as possible, taking the performance needs into consideration. The House Manager will advise during pre-show briefing the entry limitations.

Latecomers can be seated at appropriate points in the performance, pre-determined by the Stage & House Manager. Avoid interrupting quiet musical or dramatic moments by seat latecomers between musical pieces or at movement breaks. If available, latecomers are to be seated in the closest available sections to the door. Inform the latecomer that they can move to their reserved seats at intermission. If latecomers are to be held for a significant time in the lobby, make them comfortable, offer programs to read, or allow them to stand near the closed door to hear the performance. If patrons are standing by the theatre doors, advise them not to talk loudly and to be prepared for the possibility of exiting audience members.

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Intermission

The House Manager establishes the intermission length with the Stage Manager. At the beginning of intermission, Inside House Ushers are to move to the theatre house doors to monitor food and theater access. Remaining Ushers should report to their assigned locations. The Patron Liaison and House Manager will assist the Ushers as needed.

As the intermission ends, the Stage Manager dims the lobby lights to signal the need for patrons to return to their seat. The Patron Liaison Team will give polite reminders to stragglers if necessary. Inside House Ushers should return to inside the theatre house. The theatre house doors should be closed promptly before the next act starts. Concession and lobby area should be cleaned up and the team members should return to their assigned performance positions.

Post-Show

Theatre House

Ushers must not open the doors until after the house lights come up. While patrons are leaving, Ushers will assist with walkers/wheelchairs as needed. Should a patron need assistance with the steps, Ushers will provide assistance to the lobby area. Once the theatre is clear of patrons, Inside House ushers will begin at Row A to check for trash or personal items left behind. Lost items go to the House Manager immediately.

Front-of-House

The lobby and restrooms are checked for personal items and trash. When the lobby is clear, the exterior doors are closed and locked.

Checking Out

Flashlights are returned to the House Manager reporting any weak batteries, faulty switches, etc. Assistive listening devices will be returned to the House Manager. Civic vests are returned to the designated location in the box office. Members of the Patron Liaison team need to notify the House Manager when tasks are completed and they are ready to leave the theatre.

General Theatre Policies

Smoking, Food, Beverages

There is no smoking in the Rochester Civic Theatre Company building. Food is prohibited in the theatres but is allowed in the lobby. Only beverages are permitted in the theatres.

Recording Equipment, Cameras

The use of cameras, phones or recording equipment is strictly prohibited. Persons found using such equipment are asked to stop. If they continue, the House Manager should be informed and will take the equipment away until the end of the performance. The patron is to be informed that the equipment can be claimed from the House Manager after the performance.

Patrons with disabilities

The Patron Liaison Team is to help seat any patrons needing assistance. Persons in wheelchairs are seated in Row K. Persons who have difficulty with steps are seated on the aisle near the main house entrance. Ideally, such persons will have requested special seating in advance. If not, the House Manager may need to make some adjustments to make the patron comfortable such as removing an additional theatre seat. In the event of an emergency, one Usher will be assigned to remain with any disabled patrons and assist as necessary until the emergency is resolved.

Children

Rochester Civic Theatre Company offers many programs especially selected for children and families. To assure safety and fairness, all children, other than babes-in-arms, will be required to have their own seat. While we welcome all children to the vast majority of our performances, the length and content of some programs may not always be appropriate for children.

Common Questions

Restrooms

Restrooms are located just off the main theatre lobby: Gentlemen - first door on right: Ladies - second door on the right.

Telephone

The theatre does not have a public telephone. In the event of emergency, the House Manager can assist.

Water Fountains

There are water fountains at the end of the main theatre lobby, just past the restrooms on the right.

Lost and Found

Items found in the theatres/public areas are given to the House Manager immediately. They are stored in the Box office until claimed.

Concessions & Bar

Concessions & alcoholic refreshments are offered in the lobby prior to performance and at performance intermissions. The concession area will be stocked prior to performance and each cash register will have adequate change available. Every sale must be registered in the iPad Square program.

All On duty volunteers are offered 25% discount on any item available for sale.

Box Office

The box office is located just outside the main doors of the theatre. The box office is open prior to every performance. Before a show, the box office sells tickets for only that event. Contacting the box office during regular box office hours can purchase tickets for future theatre events.

Emergency Procedures

[Refer to Standard Procedures for Audience Safety Manual for full detail](#)

Injury

1. Call for assistance (activate EMS) (9) 911
2. Assess the nature of the injury
3. Clear the area of other patrons
4. Reassure the victim and protect him/her from further harm. If the victim has fallen, keep him/her from moving until emergency assistance arrives to begin preliminary treatment. If he/she decides to move, do not attempt physical restraint, as it might cause further injury.
5. Have another staff member take a list of witnesses to the accident, noting their observations and understanding of what occurred. Have the statements signed.
6. At all times, remain calm, in charge, and reassuring.
7. Do not attempt to administer first aid unless you are certified.

Fire

1. Call for help (9) 911
2. Activate the building alarm. Notify the Stage Manager and House Manager. The House Manager will take control of the evacuation once the house lights are up.
3. The Stage Manager will make an announcement and direct the evacuation from the stage.

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4. Know the location of fire extinguishers and how to use them.
5. Know which extinguishers are used for which kinds of fires. If the fire is minor and may be put out with an extinguisher, direct the discharge at the flame base. Do not use water on a fire near electrical equipment to avoid a potential electrical shock.
6. Know the location of all emergency exits, as well as the shortest route to them.
7. Assist in an orderly and calm procession to the outside. Give particular attention to the elderly and disabled.
8. IF evacuation of the theatre is necessary, direct patrons to a clear, safe area away from the building. Be available to assist police when they arrive.
9. Keep walkways clear for emergency vehicles. The last staff leaving the building should look out for persons not yet evacuated.
10. Do not return to inside the theatre until given the all clear from the on-site Public Safety.

Note: Due to the effects used in some shows, such as 'smoke' or 'haze' effects, the smoke detectors may go off even though there is no fire. In this event, the crew will notify the Stage Manager via headset, the Stage Manager will instruct a crewmember to establish for sure that there is no fire. Once established, the crewmember will then notify the House Manager or person in charge. This individual will contact the fire department and Custom Alarm and request that they stand down. The House Manager will silence the alarm at the alarm panel. At all times, the instructions of the Fire Department supersede these instructions, and must be complied with.

Acts of God (Tornado, Severe Storm, etc.)

1. Do not endanger yourself.
2. Notify the House and Stage Managers.
3. Keep patrons away from windows and glass doors in case of breakage.
4. If evacuation of the theatre is necessary, coordinate with public safety personal to determine the safest route.
5. During a Tornado warning, assist in calmly and quickly directing all individuals downstairs to the Green Room and Makeup area.

Disruptions

1. If anyone attempts to disrupt a performance, notify the House Manager.
2. The House Manager will first ask the person to leave quietly, offering to discuss the problem in the lobby. Once out of the theatre, attempt to calm the person and avoid a scene.
3. If the person refuses to leave quietly, contact public safety personal. Do not attempt to physically remove the person yourself.

