



Community Usher Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

As a volunteer usher, you provide not only a valuable service to the Fine Arts Center, but you also serve as the face of the community to our patrons. In donating your time, you have helped make the Fine Arts Center what it is today- not only a highly respected theatrical establishment, but an indispensable part of the town of Amherst, and the Pioneer Valley as a whole. We depend upon you to be friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable as you represent what the Fine Arts Center and University as a whole are all about.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Reporting times and Attendance

Concert Hall: one hour before curtain
Bowker Auditorium: one hour before curtain

Please arrive a few minutes early to get yourself settled. Please give us adequate notice if you cannot work. If an event is cancelled, postponed, added, etc., the Audience Services Manager will make every effort to contact you as soon as possible. If you miss an event without notice, please contact the office as soon as possible.

Dress Code

Our dress code is as follows-

Black pants/skirt, White dress shirt/blouse, Dark shoes. Conservative business casual or business dress – no t-shirts, short tops, sneakers, open-toed shoes, etc.

Please refrain from wearing dangling jewelry or overpowering perfume/cologne.

PERFORMANCES

Before the Performance

- For your safety, please be sure to have your personal belongings secured in the House Management closet. We ask that you do not bring handbags to your stations. Please do not bring valuables or large amounts of money with you.
- Please take a volunteer badge from the House Management closet.
- Please sign in on the clipboard once you have a badge and have put your belongings in the house closet.
- You will be briefed by the House Manager of your duties for an event one hour before the performance. Patrons are seated one half hour before an event. The House Manager will issue you a flashlight and a woodblock, if you are in charge of a section.
- After the House Manager briefs you, we ask you to bring programs to your assigned stations and do a pre-check of your section for any trash. If there are any inserts, you are responsible for putting them into the programs. Ushers are to hand patrons a program and assist them in locating their seats.
- Section doors are propped open with woodblocks once the hall is open, and closed once the event starts.
- During extremely busy nights, you may be asked to assist in front of the Box Office to direct patrons to bathrooms, other halls, etc.

Ticket Takers

- Ticket takers are to always greet patrons, look carefully at tickets and make sure that patrons are in the correct hall (remember that patrons get the larger portion of the ticket

and you keep the smaller portion) and direct them to their section. Be sure that patrons are on the correct side of the theater in the Concert Hall, even tickets on House Right, and odd tickets on House Left. No one gets in without a ticket. Ticket takers are to remain at their posts until dismissed by a House Manager. Please remain at your station during intermission.

During the Performance

- We ask that you stay at your station for the first 10 minutes of the performance. The House Manager will release you from your station.
- You may view parts of the event. But we ask that you remember that you are responsible for the care and safety of all of our patrons. We also encourage ushers to read or ask about the event that they're working. It will help you in talking with our patrons about the event.
- If you are watching the performance, please do so from your assigned section.
- During Intermission, we ask you to return to your station.

Late Seating

Bowker

- Once an event starts, latecomers are to enter through the House Right side door. An usher should be stationed there at all times. The ushers that are assigned to the balcony must remain there, especially if there are specific instructions on latecomers.
- Ushers are to be seated in chairs supplied by the House Manager at the back of the hall. Two ushers are to be seated to either side of the center doors to direct patrons house right for exiting during the performance as well as to open to open the doors at intermission.
- Ushers will be assigned to sit near the house right door inside the hall to assign patrons during the performance.

Concert Hall

- The late seating policy is at the request of the company, and changes from performance to performance. The House Manager will let you know of any late seating policy 1 hour before an event.

After the Performance

- You are responsible for inspecting your section and cleaning it up. Anything left in seats/aisles (umbrellas, cameras, etc.) is to be brought to the House Manager. Extra programs are either to be put into their boxes and left in an appropriate spot or recycled. Inserts are to be taken out (if not relevant to any other events) and recycled. Program boxes are to be restocked at the end of an event. It is your responsibility to return your badge, flashlight and woodblock. Once you have finished, please check out with the House Manager.
- After cleaning your section, you may leave.
- Please remember to return your badge, flashlight, and woodblock back to where you originally got them.

HOUSE POLICIES

The following items are prohibited within the theater:

- Cameras (unless otherwise noted)
- Recording devices
- Food
- Drink (with the exception of water)
- Smoking
- Animals (with the exception of service dogs)

- You may provide patrons with the option of checking their items at the Box Office. Should you see a patron with any of the aforementioned objects, approach him or her and politely explain our policy to him or her.
- *If at any time you feel that you cannot handle a situation on your own, please contact the House Manager immediately. The Fine Arts Center staff is there to support you!*

THE HALLS

Concert Hall

- The Fine Arts Center Concert Hall has 1,895 seats (including pit seats, 1,981 seats); 1,500 seats on the floor and the remaining seats are in the three mezzanines and two balconies. As you face the stage, even numbered seats are on the right side and odd numbered seats on the left. Please refer to the seating chart for more details.
- The FAC Concert Hall is equipped with an Assisted Listening System. If a patron asks for one, let a House Manager know.
- Rest rooms are located on the lower level adjacent to the University Gallery. The Ladies' Rooms are on the left side of the house and the Men's Rooms are on the right side of the house. There are also Ladies' and Men's Rooms in the FAC Lobby and a handicapped unisex bathroom in the alcove in the left lobby. When available, there are additional rest rooms in the Rand Theater.
- Drinking fountains are located outside of each rest room, at the top of the balcony stairs on both sides of the house, outside of Section 1 on both sides of the house, and in the FAC Lobby.
- Sections 2 and 3 House Right in the Concert Hall are handicapped accessible. Please be aware of any needs these patrons might have.
- EMTs are located in the South Lobby (level 1) in the Concert Hall.
- There is a wheelchair located in the FAC Lobby closet.
- On busy nights, we will be opening up the Rand Theater to use their bathrooms. Two ushers may be assigned to direct people to and from the bathrooms.
- The University East Gallery is usually open for patrons to cross through to each side of the Hall to use the men and women's bathrooms. If it is not, patrons will have to go around to each side of the Hall. Patrons may use the restrooms prior to opening the house, but may not go to their seats.

Bowker Auditorium

- Bowker Auditorium, located in Stockbridge Hall, has 704 seats- 500 seats on the floor. As you face the stage, even numbered seats are on the right side and odd numbered seats on the left. Please refer to the seating chart for more details.
- The Ladies' Room is located off the corridor on house right. The Men's Room is located downstairs house right. There is a handicapped unisex bathroom house left across from the handicapped entrance ramp.
- There is a drinking fountain across from the Box Office.
- There is no public telephone in the building. Patrons are to be directed to the outside pay phone in front of Flint Lab or to the Campus Center.
- EMTs are located in the back of House Left in Bowker.

MANDATORY TRAINING

We ask our volunteers to attend three training sessions: Emergency training, Usher training, and Fire Extinguisher training. This is a requirement to remain a volunteer at the Fine Arts Center. You will be made aware of the training dates when you sign up for performances.

Emergency Training

We ask our ushers to attend emergency training annually. Our procedures change and are updated throughout the year, and it is important that you be made aware of these changes in the case of an emergency. We also walk through the emergency routes and refresh our staff on the proper procedures in the case of an evacuation.

Usher Training

Usher training is required of ushers biannually. Our policies at the Fine Arts Center change with a certain frequency to remain as up to date and professional an establishment as possible. We are constantly trying to better our service. As a result, we ask you to attend usher training every other year to be made aware of changes in policies, relevant news and information, and to brush up on your skills.

Fire Extinguisher Training

The FAC now offers Fire Extinguisher training, which we ask our ushers to attend biannually. This training is lead by a fire prevention expert, and you will be given the opportunity to handle a fire extinguisher. Naturally, this training goes hand in hand with emergency evacuation training in assuring that the Fine Arts Center is as safe as it possibly can be.

SIGNING UP FOR PERFORMANCES

Every August and December, you will receive a letter from Audience Services containing a list of shows that you may sign up for. We have picked the performances that we believe our volunteer staff would find to be the most interesting, as well as historically understaffed events such as graduations and summer concerts. You may sign up for up to 6 events, then e-mail or send your selections back to us. Be sure to keep a copy of the selections (including date, time, and location) for yourself. You will be notified as soon as possible of which performances you have been selected to work.

Note: The event time listed on the sign-up sheet is the event start time. Your reporting time is 1 hour earlier.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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- FAC Box Office: 545-2511
- Fire /Police/Medical (emergencies only):
911 or 545-3111
- Environmental Health & Safety: 545-2682
- Bowker Box Office: 545-4162
- University Campus Police: 545-2121
- University Health Services: 7-5000