

# **Chicago Theatre Standards**

December 2017

This document is authored by representatives of Chicago theatre companies, artists, and administrators who volunteered their time, experience and expertise over the course of two years. It has been tested over the course of a year by 20 Chicago theatres and vetted by a variety of industry and legal professionals.

A list of contributing institutions and individuals can be found at [notinourhouse.org](http://notinourhouse.org).

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## Declaration of Purpose

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Arts environments require risk, courage, vulnerability, and investment of our physical, emotional and intellectual selves. Chicago theatre has a history of authenticity and risk on our stages. We are proud of that legacy, and seek to nurture spaces with strong safety nets that support that ethos without compromising a visceral and authentic experience for artists and audiences.

When creative environments are unsafe, both the artist and the art can become compromised. Spaces that prize “raw,” “violent,” and otherwise high-risk material can veer into unsafe territory if there are no procedures for prevention, communication, and when necessary, response. Too often, artists have been afraid to respond to abusive or unsafe practices, particularly where there is a power differential between the people involved. Artists have been afraid that speaking out will ruin a show or harm their reputations, and artists subjected to extreme abuse sometimes leave the craft, cutting their careers short. We believe that even in the absence of high-risk material, having pathways for response to unsafe conditions and harassment help to maintain the integrity of the work, its participants, and the organization.

This document seeks not to define artistry, prescribe how it is created value one kind of work over others, or stand as a legal document. It seeks rather to create awareness and systems that respect and protect the human in the art – to foster safe places to do dangerous things. It is the result of input from a large and experienced group of theatre producers and artists. It is meant to be flexible and to accommodate as many types and styles of theatre, organizations of diverse structures, budgets, and environments as possible.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing anti-discrimination laws, but only some employees and some companies meet their definition of “workplace.” Participants in small theatres are often not covered by these laws. Many theatre participants are therefore are not covered by the protections provided by the EEOC. Actors who work under an AEA contract enjoy limited protections and opportunities for registering complaints, but only if the participant is a member of the union, and only if the issue is covered in the AEA rulebook. Moreover, certain kinds of conduct can be harmful even though they are not technically unlawful. With this framework in mind, members of the Chicago theatre community joined forces to create a tool for self-governance. We seek to foster awareness of what artists should expect, and what companies can strive to provide in their spaces.

This document is the result of dozens of Chicago theatre participants meeting in round-table discussions for a year to produce a first draft, followed by over a year of pilot testing in 20 participating theatres. The result is the following **Chicago Theatre Standards**, which outlines simple and largely cost-free practices and tools to prevent and respond to the everyday challenges in arts environments.

The overriding tenets of this document are: **communication, safety, respect, and accountability.**

The **Chicago Theatre Standards (CTS)** is voluntary, cost-free, and not subject to enforcement by any outside body. In adopting this document, organizations state their intentions through procedures designed to help them live by those intentions. Participants who work with organizations that adopt the CTS endorse these intentions by reading the document and following its procedures and protocols. All involved are encouraged to call attention to situations when these intentions are not being met by using the reporting channels herein. This is a free document available online at [notinourhouse.org](http://notinourhouse.org).

## History

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On January 15, 2015, Chicago actor Lori Myers made a social media rallying cry “NOT IN OUR HOUSE” after hearing yet another account of sexual harassment by the same perpetrator at their long-standing theatre. Hundreds of responses revealed that the problem was well known, but no one felt safe enough to speak out. They feared reprisal both from their abuser and from the larger community. They feared they would not be believed. They feared they would not work again. People who knew felt they could not speak out because they didn’t have first-hand experience. They feared they would harm the survivor. They feared they would be labeled as a gossip or divisive in the community. While a whisper network warned many, others knew nothing and some hoped they could “handle it.” This theatre was highly regarded and offered opportunities to emerging artists, who often got noticed by the press and eager audiences. The brave survivors who spoke out changed the tide, and the Not in Our House Chicago Theatre Community was born.

By March of 2015, this document was underway. Coordinated by Chicago actor Laura T. Fisher, a small group of theatre artists and administrators crafted a draft over the course of a year. Twenty theatres agreed to pilot the document – they incorporated it into their theatre practices and met periodically to improve the document and discuss implementation strategies.

## Mission Statement

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The **Chicago Theatre Standards** is a voluntary tool for self-governance that seeks to nurture communication, safety, respect, and accountability of participants at all levels of theatrical production. Its mission is to create:

- **Spaces free of harassment**, whether it be sexual, or based in race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, color, or ability;
- **Nurturing environments** that allow us to challenge ourselves, our audiences, and our communities; that support risk of mind and body; and that establish the freedom to create theatre that represents the full range of human experience;
- **A common understanding** of practices for theatre environments, including written, reproducible standards available at no cost; and by
- **Peer support** through mentorship and collaboration through online communication and community outreach.

## Who is the Chicago Theatre Standards for?

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**Non-Union theatres:** Non-union theatre companies were the inspiration for this document. They traditionally have the fewest regulations and support services. They are also where many theatre artists develop their craft and their professional ethic.

**Union theatres:** Those who work in Union theatres, particular those that do not meet the EEOC’s standard of a “work place” are not protected by EEOC laws. The CTS is a tool for self-regulation that can allow small union theatres to assert professional expectations in their space

**Large union theatres:** While many large, institutionalized theatres have HR departments and are covered by EEOC law, this document seeks to provide procedural preventions of unsafe conditions, industry-specific discussion of sexual harassment and other elements that are not covered in the current AEA rulebook

**Theatre schools:** Whether a college, a for-profit acting school, high school theatre club or other learning environment, these standards can help emerging artists learn what is expected of them, and what they can expect from potential environments they may engage in.

**Parents:** For parents who have children considering a career in the arts, these standards can support conversations about professional behavior, boundaries, and expectations. Too often when emerging artists find themselves in an, abusive or otherwise environment, they have said “I didn’t know who to talk to,” or “I just thought that’s the way things go.” One intention of this document is to educate prospective arts participants of what a safe environment can look like.

## **Disclaimer**

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This document is a nonbinding set of principles. It reflects the current state of a continually evolving interest to establish standards in theatre spaces, particularly theatres that do not have human resource departments or other institutionalized mechanisms to prevent and respond to unsafe environments and harassment. This document is not an agreement or contractual document. It is not intended, either by its explicit language or by implication, to create any obligation or to confer any right. It is not intended to change any person’s legal, employment, or contractual status or relationships. Rather, it is intended as a vehicle by which organizations can demonstrate their desire to apply standards, preventions, and resolution procedures that are identifiable, reproducible, uniform, and shared among a wider theatre community. By indicating their endorsement of the CTS, organizations publicize the intention herein to existing and potential participants, rather than entering into a legally binding commitment. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing in the CTS should be construed to prevent a theatre company or producer from affirmatively incorporating the standards set forth here into their agreements or other legal documents and thereby to imbue some or all of these standards with legal force. This document is an on-going collaboration of a growing community of organizations interested in adopting it. It will continue to develop as more experience with the document develops.

# How to Use This Document

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The following sections seek to define terms created for this document, provide a timeline for how the document is used from season-selection through strike, share wisdom from companies that have piloted the document, and offer suggestions for how to get off on the right foot when introducing the document on the first day of rehearsal.

## Definitions

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<b>Actor</b>	A performer in a live theatrical production.
<b>Casting Authority</b>	An individual or individuals who determine which actors are cast in a production.
<b>Participant</b>	Someone who is engaged by a producer to participate in, administer, or support making theatre. This includes actors, designers, directors, production staff, box office staff, board members, volunteers, donors, and anyone involved in the work of the theatre.
<b>Production</b>	A theatrical undertaking that results in one or more public performances.
<b>Producer</b>	The person or organization (theatre company) responsible for mounting a production.
<b>We/Our</b>	This document is designed to be administrated by producers. Sections of the CTS are written from the perspective of the producer. For example, “We recognize our responsibility to...,” can be read as, “We, ABC Theatre, recognize our responsibility to....”

## Terms Created for this Document

*The following terms and their meanings are used within each Standard of this document.*

**The Goal:** Each standard will be introduced with a goal; wherein a “creative problem” can be “solved.” Rather than creating a prescriptive action for every situation, a “goal” can be achieved in many different ways. The overarching goal is to create a participant-friendly space that values communication, safety, respect, and accountability.

**The Standard:** A general description of the collected suggestions of how to accomplish each goal. One might understand these as collected wisdom, and most are common practice in professional theatre spaces. These “suggested solutions” are geared for all budgets, size, performance venue, production style, etc.

**Requires Disclosure:** Disclosure assists prospective participants to make informed decisions when accepting auditions and offers, and know what to expect before they walk into the room for the first time. Disclosure also helps the producer assemble willing, able, and informed participants. In the event that elements of the CTS are not achievable (if a rehearsal is outside without access to drinking water, for example), conditions should be **disclosed** to all participants. Some standards have a “requires disclosure” section which serve to identify known elements that, if an organization cannot provide, should be disclosed. These items are not in the larger section as they might require money, or staff, and therefore do not meet the goal of the CTS to be usable for organizations of all budgets.

**Explore it Further:** In the interest of engaging producers at every budget level, this document seeks to suggest cost-free solutions. Suggestions that require money or other resources (sprung flooring, for example), appear in “Explore It Further” subsections.

**Implementation Notes:** During the Pilot Year, successful strategies for implementation were collected and are shared in these sections. It is understood that these sections may grow with more experience with CTS in spaces where it is used.

## The Process

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Adopting the CTS is a process that engages every level of a producing organization from season-selection through strike. This process requires a balance wherein the CTS is present without stifling creativity or causing participants to feel hesitant or distracted. One extreme would be filing the document away in a drawer and forgetting about it until a problem comes up. The other extreme would be a policed environment in which document became a tool for punishment or judgment. While each organization should strive to make the CTS work in their own space. A few things to keep in mind:

1. The CTS should be discussed at every level of the company, including company and board meetings. Everyone from the Board Chair to administrative staff to ensemble members to visiting participants should be encouraged to read the document, understand the company's commitment to its adoption, and any responsibilities each participant may have.
2. The CTS should be discussed as early as season selection meetings and pre-production meetings. Many problems can be avoided when safety issues are a regular part of pre-production discussions. For example, if a company cannot afford safe rigging, it should avoid plays that require aerial work. If a company cannot afford a fight choreographer, then a play with onstage violence might not be in the cards. The CTS is a tool for discussion to ensure that organizations choosing to adopt it work within their financial means and/or expertise.
3. Prospective stage managers should be informed that this document is being used with enough time for them to review the document and discuss the additional procedures and responsibilities.
4. The casting authority has an important role to play, and should be well versed in the document, particularly the audition section.
5. The CTS requires a thorough discussion on the first day of rehearsal. This is when participants with no exposure to the CTS will first encounter it. Taking the time (a suggested minimum of 30 minutes) to discuss the CTS in the first rehearsal will increase the chances of success with the CTS. Getting off on the right foot is essential to this process and the First Day Implementation Notes is designed to help.
6. CTS protocols throughout the rehearsal process, particularly for high-risk content.
7. Many elements of the CTS come into play during tech. Taking the time to visit safety, privacy, and other CTS elements helps to prevent problems before they happen.
8. The CTS offers suggestions for preventions and responses to issues throughout the run.
9. Theatres should be ready to address concerns. This document seeks to prevent some issues, but given that the document encourages those with concerns to come forward, it's recommended that theatres avail themselves of conflict resolution techniques. There are many good books on the subject, and The League of Chicago Theatres offers occasional classes on the topic.

## First Day Implementation Notes

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Creating a script for first rehearsals can make sure that all of the important points are covered. This script should be delivered by one or more representatives of the producing theatre (the Artistic Director, the Stage Manager (SM), the Director, an assigned company member, ...) See the appendix section of this document for a First Rehearsal Script example, including an Oops/Ouch approach for handling issues when they arise.

**Here are some of the most important things to communicate at the First Rehearsal:**

1. Tell the company why you've chosen to adopt the Chicago Theatre Standards.

2. Distribute the Concern Resolution Path (CRP). The CRP documents communication pathways for resolving concerns before they get out of hand, to inform participants who to talk to if issues arise, to avoid repeated unsafe practices, and to mentor those who violate boundaries. The CRP and The Non-Equity Deputy are designed to provide confidential reporting channels that support and protect everyone, including the person/s that create concern. *Gossiping with those outside the reporting channels, or creating an atmosphere of “heroes and villains” can result in an inability to use the document to mentor and resolve issues peacefully. There are gray areas on stage. People can get hurt physically and/or emotionally without there being a “bad guy.” In every possible situation, the CRP should be used to mentor participants, and nurture a positive and safe environment.*
3. Discuss the Non Equity Deputy (NED). The NED is a confidential liaison (reporting channel) between participants, the stage manager, and others on the Concern Resolution Path. The NED does *not* decide who’s right and wrong, or even necessarily solve problems, but helps to ensure that communication paths are open. The NED is selected by the participants of each production by the end of the first week of rehearsal and is, whenever possible, not an ensemble member or employee of the producer. More specifics are available in the section of this document dedicated to The NED.
4. Point out areas of the CTS that are particularly pertinent to the production. If there are high-risk elements in the production (sexual content, fights, nudity) suggest that the participants read those sections of the document in the interest of letting them know that safety protocols have been a part of the planning process for the production.
5. Producers are not asked to distribute hard-copies of the entire document, but please tell the company that they can read the document in its entirety online at [www.notinourhouse.org](http://www.notinourhouse.org).

## Concern Resolution Path (CRP)

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### The Goal

The goal of the CRP is to provide a documented communication pathway to address issues in a production or within an organization. The CRP seeks to inform participants what to do and who to address with serious issues, and dispel the fear of reprisal for reporting issues of safety, harassment, or other serious concerns.

### The Standard

This Concern Resolution Path should be printed and distributed to all participants and discussed on the first day of rehearsal. It should be clearly communicated that the producer seeks to resolve concerns early, before participants or the production are put at risk and before the concern escalates.

### *What is a concern resolution path?*

The CRP provides names and contact information for members of the organization and production who have agreed to be responsive to reported issues and work to resolve them. It consists of:

- A written, clear, and transparently shared list of procedures for addressing a concern;
- A written, clear, and transparently shared list of persons with whom the concern should be addressed;
- A commitment to give reported concerns priority and a reasonable timeline for resolution.

### Structure

- Level One—We recognize that many concerns can be resolved through conversation with the parties involved. Whenever possible participants should be encouraged to discuss challenges and concerns



with one another. Sharing and hearing concerns with openness and respect can prevent situations from escalating further.

- Level Two—The following participants should be granted a certain level of authority and trust to determine whether a concern can be resolved at this level or if it needs to be sent to the next level. All concerns should be reported to Level Three, even if no action is required.
  - Non-Equity Deputy
  - Stage Manager
  - Production Manager
  - Director
- Level Three—These participants should be considered the final level of the path, capable of resolving issues that have not been resolved prior to reaching this stage. They are strongly advised to consult with each other and review legal or other implications of any decision.
  - Artistic Director
  - Managing and/or Executive Director
  - Board Members

### **Communication**

- The CRP should be verbally explained and provided in writing at the first rehearsal (digitally and/or in print). It should include the name, title, and contact information for every individual on the CRP.
- A copy of the CRP should be posted or otherwise available in the rehearsal and performance spaces.
- Participants should be encouraged to report their concerns in writing for recordkeeping purposes.

### **Recordkeeping**

- The producer should maintain personnel files, which should include reported concerns. Such files are to be kept confidential and accessible only to the individual(s) responsible for maintaining the files.

### **Legal Remedies**

- In the event of civil or criminal misconduct or liability, the CTS is not a replacement for legal advice or action, nor does it stand in stead of any local, state or federal law.
- A violation of civil rights can be reported to the Illinois Attorney General:  
<http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/civilrights.html>.

### **Implementation Notes**

- Producers should complete a CRP with the names and contact information of all individuals who will serve on the path for each production. Theatres may adapt the CRP to reflect their staffing structure.
- The CRP is a tool to help create communication pathways to prevent and resolve issues, not create divisions. To that end, nothing in the CTS encourages firing or marginalizing participants for mistakes, a momentary loss of temper, an argument (whether artistic or personal), a single unintentional injury, etc. The CRP is designed to provide pathways to respond to events, behavior, and conditions that create reasonably understood *unsafe* conditions, not *uncomfortable* situations. The function and goal of the CRP should be discussed at the first rehearsal.
- Some of the individuals on the CRP will change with each production, and it should be updated for each production.
- All individuals listed on the CRP should understand their role in resolving concerns, the process for recording concerns, and the process for reporting those concerns to others on the path.
- Creating and using a Concern Resolution Path can assist with recordkeeping.
- The individuals listed on the CRP should be provided with resources and/or training in conflict resolution.

## The Role of the Stage Manager Regarding the CTS

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### The Goal

The Stage Manager (SM) is traditionally the primary communication conduit between participants and producers as well as between actors and directors; and so plays a crucial role in executing the CTS. The goal of this standard is to respect that the additional responsibilities of the SM in theatres that use the CTS compliment the expertise and authority of the SM as a leader and advocate throughout the production.

### The Standard

The Stage Manager's responsibilities with regards to the CTS are:

- Read and be familiar with the CTS.
- Know and follow the theatre's published CRP.
- Ensure that consent is discussed before scenes of sexual content and nudity and document applicable specifics.
- Document all choreography, including sexual content. The Stage Manager be present for all rehearsals when choreography is rehearsed.
- Allow for the selection of the Non-Equity Deputy (NED) during the first week of rehearsal and include the NED in the safety walk on the first day of tech before actors take the stage.
- Work with and communicate with the NED, particularly regarding any raised concern.

### Requires Disclosure

- SMs should be told if an organization has adopted the CTS before they commit to a production.
- SMs should have access to the script, or known scope of a production, before they agree to participate.

## Non-Equity Deputy (NED)

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### The Goal

The goal of the Non-Equity Deputy (NED) is to create a confidential and peer-level liaison and reporting channel between participants and the producer. Communicating concerns can be challenging. Participants often have long-standing relationships, aspirations for future collaboration, or a fear of being labeled "difficult." Any of these might dissuade a participant from voicing a concern. The NED can help to alleviate this tension.

### The Standard

The NED was inspired by the Actors' Equity's "Equity Deputy," but the NED does not report to any outside regulatory body, since the CTS is a tool for self-regulation. The NED navigates the CTS for participants over the course of a single production, can serve as a reporting channel for an individual participant or an acting company when confidentiality is required or requested, and may also serve (alongside the stage manager) as a first contact when a concern cannot be resolved by an individual.

### *Role and Responsibilities of the Non-Equity Deputy (NED)*

- Become familiar with the CTS, CRP, and any related policies and procedures provided by the producer.
- Help familiarize others with the CTS, CRP.
- Provide contact information and availability for consultation outside of rehearsal/performance space/hours.
- Serve as a liaison between the cast, crew, stage manager, and producer for issues brought to attention by participants.

- Protect anonymity whenever possible.
- Report concerns, both their own and those reported by fellow participants, using the CRP, and communicate the resolution of such concerns to fellow participants as appropriate.
- Respond to concerns as quickly as possible (within 24 hours whenever possible).
- Shadow the SM on the safety walk-through (see the Basic Health and Safety standard).
- Commit with integrity and empathy to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of participants and discourage efforts (intentional or otherwise) to use the CTS to divide or create an atmosphere of “heroes and villains.”
- Engage the CRP if the SM is unable, unwilling, or is the individual of concern.
- Understand that their role is not to solve problems or act in a judiciary role, but serve as a confidential reporting channel and liaison.
- Understand that their role is one of service, and not a position of power or status.

#### ***Outside of the NED’s Scope***

- The NED should not override traditional roles of the SM, director, or any other member of the organization.
- The NED should never create divisions or marginalize participants.

#### **Implementation Notes (how to select a NED)**

- Each producer should establish a process for selecting an NED. For example, this might include a nominating process with secret ballot at the first rehearsal or shortly thereafter.
- If a getting-acquainted period is necessary (where participants don’t know one another), a NED may be chosen by the end of the first week.
- For theatres with acting ensembles, the NED should not be a member of that ensemble, whenever possible.

# The Standards

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## Auditions

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### The Goal

To help prospective participants make informed decisions about proposed productions' requirements and expectations. We seek to communicate what we expect of our participants and what those participants may expect of us. For the purpose of this section, auditions may constitute interviews, readings, presentations of prepared pieces, improvisation, singing, movement, or similar activities involved in a casting process.

### The Standard

#### *Audition Notices and Invitations*

We intend to include the following information in audition notices and invitations:

- Role(s) for which the actor is called, and role(s) that already have been cast;
- Any role that depicts a character with a specifically stated disability;
- The nature of the activity to be performed at the audition (i.e., sides from the play, choreography, improvisation, monologue, etc.);
- Any potential stage combat, feats of physical daring, nudity, partial nudity, sexual content, or other reasonably-understood high-risk activities;
- An assertion that prospective participants can decline auditions without fear of losing future audition invitations;
- Disclosure if the audition will be recorded;
- The names of the director, casting authority, and producer.

#### *Auditions*

- We intend to provide a safe space for the audition including:
  - A smoke-free environment.
  - A reasonably clean space with sufficient lighting and safe temperature.
  - A safe surface for dance or fight calls, if applicable.
- We will not ask prospective participants to attend more than three (3) audition calls for a single production.
- Audition calls should be no longer than three (3) hours, and should not run later than 11pm.
- Required materials (scripts and sides) should be provided at the audition.
- We will not ask prospective participants to perform violence or sexual contact as part of the audition without disclosing this expectation in the audition notice or invitation.
- Any physical contact required for an audition should be disclosed and choreographed. Actors should not be asked to improvise violent or sexual contact.
- We will not ask prospective participants to disrobe at an audition. (See the Sexual Content and Nudity standard.)
- The casting authority should confirm with the prospective participant that they have reviewed the supplied materials and are aware of the requirements as outlined in the audition notice or invitation.
- Auditions should not be recorded unless specified in the notice or invitation. If recordings are made, there will be written assurance that the recording will be used privately among casting authorities and destroyed/deleted after the completion of casting.

- We will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations to facilitate access, such as allowing interpreters when necessary, holding auditions in accessible facilities, and providing audition materials in advance to artists with disabilities.
- Disclosures should be clearly posted at all auditions and callbacks (See the Sample Audition Disclosure Form).
- We will not charge prospective participants a fee to audition.
- Prospective participants may decline audition invitations or casting offers without fear of losing future opportunities, and will not be asked to explain their reason.

### **Requires Disclosure**

- If scenes of violence, sexual content, or other choreography will be a part of the audition.
- Whether or not understudies will be engaged for the production.
- Who is in the audition room.
- If an audition will be recorded.
- If known, when callbacks are scheduled.

### **Explore It Further**

- Provide the full script with audition invitation.
- Provide the names of the production’s design team, including choreographers.
- If the producer has an inclusivity policy, it should be provided with audition notices or invitations.
- Once casting is complete, producers should notify those who were called-back, but not cast.

### **Implementation Notes**

- Try creating a template email posting for audition notices and invitations. This will help ensure you don’t forget anything important.
- An Audition Disclosure Form visible at all auditions can streamline communication and disclosure.
- Engage Casting Director in any meetings/conversations to share necessary information with enough time to prepare audition disclosures with accurate information.

## **Agreements**

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### **The Goal**

To create an understanding between Participants and Producers of what is expected throughout the production process at the beginning of the process.

### **The Standard**

We will provide each participant with a document outlining our mutual expectations for each production. These agreements do not imply that participants are employees, but seek to provide information about the terms of the participant’s role in the production.

### **Requires Disclosure**

Agreements should include, at a minimum, the following disclosures:

- **Compensation**—the amount and payment schedule of any stipend, honorarium, or other compensation to participant.
- **Responsibilities**—a general outline of the responsibilities of the participant.
- **Schedule**—the basic schedule information (start date, whether the rehearsals will be the day or evening, proposed hours-per-week, dates/hours of tech) and the possibility of extensions.

## Explore It Further

- Having agreements reviewed by a labor attorney can help make sure that the agreements are as clear and comprehensive as possible.

## Implementation Notes

- A sample agreement is included in the appendix of this document. More are available at [www.notinourhouse.org](http://www.notinourhouse.org)
- Producers may customize agreements, or use those they already have, provided they include the information described here and accurately convey the expectations and responsibilities of the participants.

## Understudies

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### The Goal

Being an understudy is a tough job, and the job can be made more difficult if the understudy is not kept in the loop throughout the production process. This standard seeks to provide ways to prepare, include, and inform understudies so they are ready to save the day.

### The Standard

Engaging understudies is strongly encouraged. The following guidelines can help ensure that they are effective and productive members of the production, and given an opportunity to succeed.

- Understudies should have a written agreement detailing expectations and compensation.
- Understudies should be introduced to the NED and should have the CRP explained to them.

### Requires Disclosure

- If understudies will be engaged for the production (disclosed at auditions).
- Any special skills required (dialect, combat, singing, sexual content and nudity, etc.).
- What support the understudies will receive (work with dialect coach, choreographer/s, for example).
- Which role(s) the understudy is expected to cover.
- General rehearsal schedule including (in a general sense) when understudies are welcome into rehearsals.
- Whether a put-in rehearsal will be scheduled, if advance notice allows.
- Whether costumes will be provided, or if the understudy wears the costumes of the actor being covered, or if the understudy is expected to supply their own costume.
- If an actor leaves a production, whether the understudy will replace that actor or the role will be recast.
- The complimentary ticket policy.
- The amount of any stipend, honorarium, or other compensation that will be provided.

### Explore it Further

- Have understudies shadow the actors they are covering during a performance.
- Allow understudies to observe any rehearsals when special skills (dialects, choreography, etc.) are being taught.

## Implementation Notes

- Having understudies at the performance venue 30 minutes before each performance will ensure that they are always there when needed. Alternatively, being within a 30-minute travel radius on performance days gives understudies more flexibility while still helping to protect the production.
- Provide a date by which understudies are expected to be off-book and performance ready. Have a policy for what happens if the understudy has to go on before that date. Will they go on with a book or will the performance be cancelled?
- In the event a character has audio and or/video in production, (If a character leaves a voice mail, for example), backup recordings featuring the understudies should be made in case they go on.
- If an archival video recording of the production is made, giving understudies access to this recording can help them prepare for performance.

## Basic Health and Safety

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### The Goal

Performance-day problems are often preventable with careful planning, and we endeavor to create spaces and processes for auditions, rehearsals, and performance that are as physically safe as possible.

### The Standard

We intend to make health and safety a regular topic at production meetings, and to maintain awareness and procedures that contribute to a safe environment at all times. We seek to prevent injuries, identify and remedy situations that might be considered unsafe or unhealthy, and respond to injuries and medical events, and seek medical attention when required.

We will strive to promote basic health and safety practices by providing the following:

- Toilets and sinks, with soap and towels or a hand dryer;
- Access to drinking water or disclosure of lack of availability;
- A reasonable working temperature (avoiding inclement weather or unsafe temperatures outdoors);
- Lighting suitable for the work being carried out;
- Reasonably clean and well-maintained rehearsal space;
- Floors and traffic routes that are free from undue obstructions and tripping hazards;
- Functional, non-expired fire extinguishers;
- A suitably stocked first-aid kit;
- An insurance policy that covers on-site injuries;
- A plan for costume maintenance and laundry.

At the first rehearsal and first tech day with actors, a safety walk with the SM and NED should include:

- Fire exit locations;
- Locations of first-aid kits;
- Emergency procedures (including contact information for local police stations and the nearest ER);
- Tripping or safety hazards in rehearsal settings and constructed stage settings;
- Locations of restrooms;
- Scenic units, stage floor surfaces, and special effects;
- Areas of potential hazard that have or may require glow tape, including the opportunity for performers to point out where they need additional glow tape.

If unsafe conditions are discovered, they should be immediately reported to the stage manager, who should keep a record of concerns and their resolution. The SM should also maintain:

- Accident, incident, and first-aid reports;
- A checklist of first rehearsal and first tech rehearsal walk-throughs.

### **Requires Disclosure**

- If any aspect of this Standard cannot be achieved because of the nature of the rehearsal or performance space, it should be disclosed to all prospective and active participants. For example, if a rehearsal or performance space is outdoors, participants should be notified in advance so that they can wear appropriate shoes and clothing for the weather and the surface (grass, asphalt, etc.). Another example: if the theatre cannot supply, maintain, or launder costumes, that should be disclosed at the time of audition.

### **Explore It Further**

- Rehearsal and performance spaces should comply with the City of Chicago building and fire codes.
- Staff within the organization should be trained in first aid and CPR.
- Fire extinguishers should be regularly inspected by a professional.
- If individuals are leading participants in physical warm-ups, yoga, or other physical activities, they should have certification or professional training to do so.

## **Audience and Front of House**

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### **The Goal**

Audience members are active participants in live performance. In recognizing this, we seek to create an environment in which audiences and artists can collaborate and share a space in a way that is both safe for all involved and conducive to the theatrical experience designed by the production's creative team.

### **The Standard**

Productions are mounted in a wide range of venues, environments, and types of interaction with audiences. This standard defines them as follows:

A **traditional audience environment** is understood to be a performance that takes place in a theatre where the audience space and the performance space are defined and primarily separate from one another. In a traditional audience environment, actors are not typically expected to directly interact with the audience.

A **nontraditional audience environment** includes, but is not limited to, site-specific theatre, performances with direct audience interaction, promenade theatre, and performances where the actors move throughout and/or interact with the audience.

### ***Preproduction***

The type of audience environment should be disclosed to the participants at the time of audition, or as soon as known.

### ***Preview Performances***

Nontraditional audience environments may require that special attention be paid to the preview process in order to create the desired audience interaction. Preview performances for productions with audience engagement are strongly recommended.



## **Performances**

To the extent feasible, without disturbing the artistic integrity of the production, the nature of any audience interaction or other nontraditional audience environment should be communicated to audience members before the performance begins. This allows the audience to be willing participants in the production and can help to prevent unexpected audience behavior during the performance. It will also allow audience members to make informed an informed choice based on their needs and comfort level.

For all public performances, including previews, the producer should designate an individual to oversee the box office and front of house operations. This individual should be expected to:

- Attend at least one run-through or technical rehearsal prior to the first audience.
- Inform the stage manager of any audience conditions that may impact the performance.
- Conduct a pre-performance meeting with any and all ushers and front of house staff prior to every show to cover:
  - Building safety requirements and emergency plans;
  - Audience configuration;
  - Expectations of audience engagement;
  - A prevention and response plan for frequent unacceptable audience behaviors (drunkenness, inappropriate interactions with actors).

## **Dressing Rooms**

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### **The Goal**

Performers need time and space to prepare for their performance. The space provided for this preparation should be safe, respectful, and wherever possible, private.

### **The Standard**

Even in the tiniest of spaces, privacy and concentration are important when preparing for performance. We will endeavor to create a dressing room environment where all inhabitants recognize these values and participate in fostering a safe place for artists to prepare.

- Children under the age of 18 should be given private dressing room accommodations whenever possible.
- Reasonable accommodations should be made to respect individual modesty, and designated space should be provided for participants to change clothes and prepare for their performance. This space will be referred to as a dressing room, even if it's not an entire room.
- Non-actors (with the exception of the SM and wardrobe staff) should not be allowed in the dressing room during the time between 30 minutes before the performance begins and 30 minutes after the performance ends. In the event that is not possible, communication between the dressing room inhabitants and those who need to pass through is encouraged to establish the least intrusive way to share the space.
- Where costumes are used, a clothing rack and hangers should be provided.
- Recording by any means, and posting any recordings or photos online, should not be permitted in the dressing room without the prior consent of all individuals present.
- Reasonable accommodations should be made to respect the preferences of all participants sharing a dressing room, particularly with regard to the discussion of reviews or who might be in the audience.
- Inhabitants of dressing rooms should respect the property and personhood of fellow inhabitants by limiting their use of perfumes, smelly or messy food, and behavior such as talking on cellphones, playing music (without consulting dressing room mates), or other similar activities.

- Any concerns related to the dressing rooms should be resolved (a) between its inhabitants, (b) with the consultation of the NED, or (c) according to the concern resolution path.

### **Explore It Further**

- Dressing room space should accommodate a reasonable amount of participants' personal belongings.
- While it is always advisable to leave valuables at home, provisions should be made for a reasonable quantity of "valuables" to be collected before and returned immediately after each performance.
- Where separate dressing and restrooms are available for men and women, actors should be allowed to occupy the dressing room in accordance with their gender identification.

## **Choreography: Nudity, Violence, Movement, and Physical Theatre**

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### **The Goal**

Some forms of theatre and styles of movement carry with them a greater risk of harm than others, and the goal of this section is to outline considerations specific to these forms of higher-risk theatre, including onstage violence, sexual choreography and nudity, and physical theatre. These forms share many of the same considerations, while some considerations are form-specific. The shared considerations also apply to other forms of physical theatre, including dance and other forms of choreography, and this section may serve as a guide for these forms as well.

### **The Standard**

In audition notices, auditions, offer discussions, agreements, understudy preparation, rehearsals, tech, and performances, we intend to create a safe and respectful atmosphere for all participants. We believe that communication, safety, respect, accountability, artistic freedom, collaborative integrity, and personal discipline are the cornerstones of this atmosphere.

### **Facilities**

The following should be provided in all rehearsal and performance spaces in which high-risk physical theatre takes place:

- First-aid kit, including cold packs
- Accident report forms
- Water
- Telephone for emergencies
- Adequate on- and off-stage lighting
- Temperature control
- Ventilation
- Space for warm-ups
- Floors and surfaces that are clean, well maintained, and appropriate for the activity
- Padded and/or glow-taped corners and hazards
- Proof of liability insurance

### **Equipment, Weapons, and Specialized Costumes**

All specialized equipment and costumes should be:

- Suitable for the required choreography;
- Installed by a qualified rigger, if applicable;
- Inspected/maintained by a trained technician before each use;
- Inspected by any actors who use the equipment before each use.
- Handled only by those required to do so.

### ***Preproduction and Auditions***

- A designer or choreographer should be engaged for any production that includes weapons, hand-to-hand combat, sexual violence, specialized movement techniques, or any similar high-risk activity.
  - This designer/choreographer may or may not be the production's director or an actor in the production, so long as the role is clearly communicated to all participants.
  - This designer/choreographer should be engaged as early in the production process as possible and be included in production and design meetings whenever feasible.
- At the time of audition, prospective participants should be notified about:
  - The nature of any specialized movement or physical theatre (i.e. weapons, physical combat, sexual violence, tumbling, aerial acrobatics, dance, yoga, etc.) acknowledging that concepts may change;
  - The name and professional experience of the designer/choreographer if possible.
- At the time of audition, prospective participants should be asked to provide accurate descriptions of their physical abilities and limitations/injuries as they relate to the possible choreography.

### ***Rehearsal***

- The designer/choreographer should be introduced to the cast at the first rehearsal, or as soon thereafter as possible.
- A schedule for rehearsing all choreography should be established and followed.
- Adequate time should be allocated for stretching and warming up before all choreography rehearsals.
- Adequate time should be given to teach, rehearse, and adjust all choreography or movement techniques.
- Adequate time should be allocated at the end of rehearsal for cooling down, asking questions, and voicing concerns.
- Before work starts the actors, director, choreographer, and stage manager should agree to the requirements of the planned activity (kiss, slap, dance, etc.). Participants are then responsible for staying within those agreed-upon boundaries.
- A choreography captain (typically a cast member with experience in the form of physical theatre being taught) should be chosen to ensure that the choreography is rehearsed and doesn't change unintentionally. The captain should be empowered to notify the stage manager or designer/choreographer of any issues with the choreography.
- Choreography should be recorded (in writing or on video, if appropriate) so that performers and captains have a reference for maintaining the choreography.
- Time should be set aside at the beginning of rehearsal to run through choreography. These calls are particularly important before running the show. Calls should be conducted in a distraction-free, appropriately lit space.
- Actors should communicate any injury, discomfort, or fatigue experienced before, during, and after rehearsals.
- A 10-minute break should be provided after every 80 minutes of physical work.
- The director/choreographer and actors should agree on a vocabulary of safety (i.e., the word "bail" could be used to abandon a movement mid-execution).
- Regular rehearsal reports should be sent to the designer/choreographer and should include notes to the designer/choreographer if any adjustments need to be made to the choreography, or if any problems develop.

- A comfortable working temperature should be maintained in the rehearsal space. The nature of the choreography should be considered when establishing this temperature (warmer in the case of nudity, cooler in the case of highly physical activity, for example).

### ***Performance***

- Choreography calls should occur before every show, and should take place in a focused environment free of interruptions or distractions.
- Performance reports should include the designers/choreographers, noting any issues that arise and any actor injuries (whether related to the choreography or not).
- Performers should have a communication plan with the stage manager to report (on the day it occurs) any inappropriate or potentially unsafe changes in the performance of choreography and/or use of equipment or weapons.
- A comfortable working temperature should be maintained in the space. The nature of the choreography should be considered when establishing this temperature (warmer in the case of nudity, cooler in the case of highly physical activity, for example).
- The stage manager should check in before and after performances with each actor involved in the choreography, confirming that the choreography is maintained and consent/boundaries have not been overlooked.
- If any choreography is altered during performance, actors should notify the stage manager and/or NED as soon as possible.

## **Specific Considerations: Violence**

### ***The Goal***

Onstage violence can be a shove, a slap, the use of weapons, elaborate fight sequences, sexual violence and more. We believe that performers should not routinely incur pain, bruises, or other injury while enacting violence. Our intention is to prepare for and mitigate the risks of onstage violence to create a safe space in which to take artistic risks.

### ***Implementation Notes***

- It can be helpful to assign a fight captain who is not involved in the fight choreography, so that the fight captain has the opportunity to observe the choreography from the outside (off-stage during performances, if possible).
- The stage manager should have a good line of sight to any fight choreography so that they can monitor and discuss any changes during the run of the show.

## **Specific Considerations: Sexual Content and Nudity**

### ***The Goal***

Sexual Content and Nudity (SC/N) require careful consideration as early as the season selection process. Artists in scenes with SC/N take great personal risk, and our goal is to allow them to take that risk in an environment that is as safe, supportive, and comfortable as possible. SC/N should only be included in a production when it can be done responsibly and according to the following recommendations. We seek to replicate the conditions, detail and documentation and accountability traditionally employed for fight choreography for scenes with sexual choreography.

### ***Preproduction and Auditions***

- SC/N should not be required or requested at any audition.

- Actors performing nude must be at least 18 years old, and should provide proof of age at the audition.
- Actors who will be asked to perform SC/N as part of the production should confirm consent to performing SC/N at the time of audition.

### ***Rehearsal***

- Prior to rehearsing scenes with SC/N, the actors, director, choreographer, and stage manager should discuss the content and create consent for the rehearsal. Participants should build consent and discuss boundaries before rehearsing scenes with SC/N. A safe word (such as “hold”) should be established for SC/N rehearsals.
- Initial SC/N rehearsals should be closed, such that only participants involved in the scene are present. SC/N rehearsals should be opened after agreement by the stage manager, director, and actors involved. The stage manager should be present at all rehearsals where SC/N is rehearsed.
- Stage managers should document the terms of consent and details of sexual choreography.
- Actors performing nude scenes should be allowed to have and wear robes or other coverings when not rehearsing.
- Actors should have the option to decline SC/N elements added after audition disclosure.
- Nude actors should not be photographed or recorded on video at any time during rehearsal, tech, or performance.

### ***Tech***

- Nudity during technical rehearsals should be limited to those times when it is absolutely necessary. Flesh-colored clothing or a robe may be worn when nudity is not required.
- Technical rehearsals should be closed to visitors during scenes with SC/N.
- The stage manager should be vigilant in identifying and resolving potential physical hazards for nude actors, such as splinters and rough edges.

### ***Performance***

- Only participants whose presence is required should be present in the wings or in any backstage space with a view of the stage. Gawkers should be dispatched.

### ***Consent***

We believe that building consent among participants is an important part of creating an atmosphere of trust and communication. We intend to recognize the following practices when building consent among participants:

- A consent-building conversation should specify the range of contact that is acceptable (e.g., anything but bikini area is within the range, or kissing is always closed mouth, etc.).
- The boundaries may change over the rehearsal process, either narrowing or broadening, but any change to the boundaries should be discussed and agreed upon before the rehearsal.
- There should be an opportunity to discuss potential boundary violations at the end of each rehearsal and performance.
- The agreed-upon structure of intimate contact should be maintained once a show is in production.
- Actors should inform the stage manager and their scene partner(s) if they are sick (sore throat, cold sore, etc.), and alternate choreography should be defined for sick days.

### ***Requires Disclosure***

- SC/N should be disclosed in notices and invitations and at auditions.
- Precast actors or hired designers should be made aware of SC/N prior to accepting their roles.
- Designers should receive disclosure of SC/N and known design requirements.

### ***Explore It Further***

- When sexual choreography is required, prospective participants can be auditioned using nonsexual choreography to determine physical control.
- Discussions around sensitive requirements and how they will be handled should begin during preproduction meetings.
- Intimacy designers should be engaged for the production and included in pre-production meetings.
- The producer should standardize communication and protocols with directors requiring SC/N.
- If a full script is made available to prospective participants, language similar to the following should be included: “Please read the script closely and confirm that you are comfortable working with this material. Feel welcome to bring questions about content to the audition process. Your level of comfort with the content of this script will not impact your casting consideration for future productions.”
- Robes should be provided and regularly laundered for all actors who will appear nude.
- Actors, directors, and choreographers should have equal status in devising SC/N scenes.
- A time limit for rehearsing SC/N should be established and communicated.
- Backstage areas and dressing rooms should provide reasonable accommodations for modesty/privacy.

### **Specific Considerations: High-Risk Physical Theatre**

#### ***The Goal***

High-risk physical theatre uses performance techniques that carry with them a greater chance of injury than traditional theatre practices. This includes but is not limited to acrobatics, tumbling, performing on silks or other equipment, and performing in motorized set pieces. This type of work should not be undertaken without the extra attention, equipment, and precaution needed to do so safely.

### **Sexual Harassment**

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#### **The Goal**

We seek to understand sexual harassment as it pertains to the theatre, provide procedures to prevent it, and outline recourse when it occurs. We recognize the potential for harassment in rehearsal, during performance, and outside the theatre among participants, staff, board, and audience members. We acknowledge theatre environments can court confusion about the difference between chemistry, artistic freedom, and harassment; we believe participants can be bold and live “in the moment” of theatrical material while maintaining choreography, fellow participants’ safety, and agreed-upon boundaries.

#### **The Standard**

Clear boundaries should be established and agreed upon among all participants involved, both in rehearsals and performance, particularly in scenes depicting violence, sex, intimate contact, abuse, or gestures of intimacy.

For reference, according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is described as follows:

It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person’s sex [sic]. Harassment can include “sexual harassment” or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex [sic]. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general.

Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex [sic].

Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

The EEOC covers "employees" only, not contractors and volunteers. For that reason, this standard seeks to provide a definition for sexual harassment in the theatrical workplace for participants not covered by EEOC laws and other regulations, and to provide an understanding of and sensitivity to the nuances of a theatrical workplace.

***Harassment in a broader sense includes, but is not limited to:***

- Inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, or innuendoes or taunting about a person's gender, gender identity, sexual identity, racial or ethnic background, color, place of birth, citizenship, ancestry, creed, or ability;
- Persistent unwanted questions or comments about a participant's private life outside the boundaries of consent established in rehearsal;
- Posting or displaying materials, articles, graffiti, and so on, which may cause humiliation, offense, or embarrassment on prohibited grounds that are outside the parameters of the production. A production about pornography, violence, or racism may involve such images in the rehearsal space or in a dramaturgy packet, but such images are not appropriate for open display in dressing rooms, bathrooms, or other similar spaces.

***Sexual Harassment in a theatrical workplace:***

- In a theatrical context, harassment can be additionally defined as one or a series of comments or conduct of a gender-related or sexual nature outside the boundaries of consent or production content, which is known or ought reasonably be known to be unwelcome/unwanted, offensive, intimidating, hostile, or inappropriate. It is worth noting that the higher the emotional/sexual risk a production asks of its artists, the greater the diligence of each member of production and artistic staffs is needed to foster an environment of emotional safety.
- Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to:
  - Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes, or taunts about a person's body, attire, gender, or sexual orientation outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
  - Negative stereotyping of race, gender, gender identity, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, ability, or other status protected by law outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
  - Any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact such as touching, kissing, massaging, patting, hugging, or pinching outside the boundaries of consent or production content;

- Unwelcome inquiries or comments about a person's sex life or sexual preference outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
- Leering, whistling, or other suggestive or insulting sounds outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
- Inappropriate comments about clothing, physical characteristics, or activities outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
- Posting or displaying materials, articles, or graffiti that is sexually oriented outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
- Requests or demands for sexual favors, especially those that include, or imply, promises of rewards for complying (e.g., job advancement opportunities) and/or threats of punishment for refusal (e.g., denial of job advancement or opportunities) outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
- Attempting to engage in sexual behaviors offstage that are choreographed for the stage;
- Suggesting an actor who appears naked onstage or in rehearsal is not allowed physical boundaries and/or privacy backstage or in the dressing room and/or not respecting those boundaries;
- Intentional failure to observe the dressing room standards laid out in this document;
- Inviting an actor to rehearse sexual content outside of scheduled rehearsals;
- Repeated invitation/suggestion to take relationships of a sexual nature beyond the stage;
- Using the text of a production that is sexual, violent, threatening, or offensive in offstage discourse;
- Improvising sexual content without expressed consent.
- **Participants have the right to be free from:**
  - Sexual solicitation or advance made by a person in a position to confer, grant, or deny a benefit or advancement outside production content;
  - Reprisal or threat of reprisal for the rejection of a sexual solicitation or advance where the reprisal is made by a person in a position to grant, confer, or deny a benefit or advancement outside production content.

Any of the behaviors outlined here have the potential to create a negative environment for individuals or groups. It should be noted that a person does not have to be a direct target to be adversely affected by a negative environment. It is understood that creative atmospheres are not always “emotionally sanitary”—they can safely be bawdy, profane, vulgar, and challenging. We assert that having (a) a practice of building consent and (b) an environment that allows for response to clear boundary violations can broaden our opportunity to be challenging and fearless in our work.

Concerns about harassment, safety, or a negative environment should be reported using the concern resolution path (starting with level one wherever possible), and all concerns should be treated with the utmost respect for the safety and well being of all participants.

## **Diversity, Inclusion and Representation**

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### **The Goal**

Theatre engages the full spectrum of humanity. Telling the stories of complex human experience often includes representations of violence, racism, homophobia, abuse, and other challenging content. We seek an ethical atmosphere when engaging in this content, working with diverse groups of participants, and particularly when producing culturally sensitive work. The Chicago Theatre Standards does not dictate



content, casting, design, or other production elements but seeks to create respectful, safe and equitable environments.

## **The Standard**

We make the following commitments to all participants who work with us:

- When invited to audition, prospective participants have the right to make inquiries about how their cultural personhood will be used within the production, particularly when the work will be devised (when there is no script at the time of audition). Inquiries will receive a thoughtful response and will remain confidential.
- Sometimes a potential participant discovers in the course of auditioning that they are uncomfortable with production elements as they relates to their personhood. Potential participants have the right to decline casting offers without fear of reprisal such as losing future opportunities. It is not the participant’s responsibility to explain why they chose to decline an offer.
- Whenever possible, diversity and inclusion should be considered both in casting and in assembling production and design teams. In particular, culturally specific work should seek production personnel who can speak to that cultural experience.
- During the rehearsal process, participants should voice concern if they feel uncomfortable with the use of their cultural personhood, which may include:
  - Costume pieces that can reasonably be understood as culturally demeaning, which were not disclosed at audition/casting, and could not have been expected by a reading of the script or otherwise available materials;
  - Staging (culturally based violence or abuse, for example), which was not disclosed at the time of audition/casting;
  - Accents or dialects to underscore a cultural representation not disclosed at the time of auditions/casting;
  - Make-up that can reasonably be described as “black face,” “brown face,” or similar portrayal, which was not disclosed at the time of audition/casting.
- When staging scenes of cultural violence, or other culturally charged narratives and language, we will follow the same practice of consent building outlined in the Sexual Content and Nudity standard. Disclosure of this type of performance will be made at the audition, and the emotional risk associated will be recognized throughout the process.
- We seek to address concerns with generosity and humility through the channels of the Concern Resolution Path as outlined in this document.

## **Explore it Further**

- Producers should seek opportunities to intern, mentor, include, and professionally engage participants of color at all levels of their organization.

# Appendix of Forms and Supplemental Support

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## Sample Concern Resolution Path

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Creating a safe and comfortable environment for all members of our team is important to this company. We take concerns seriously and seek to address issues in a sensitive and timely manner.

The following individuals are available to help you resolve any concerns or issues that may arise. We encourage concerns of level 2 and above to be made in writing when possible.

### Level One

If you feel comfortable doing so, we encourage you to first directly address your concern with the individual(s) involved. This helps to foster an honest and open community and is often the fastest path to a resolution.

### Level Two

If you are not comfortable directly addressing the individual(s) involved, or if no resolution can be agreed upon, your next points of contact can be any of the following:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: Stage Manager  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: Director  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: Non-Equity Deputy  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: (Equity Business Rep. or other/s)  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Level Three

If an issue is not been resolved through Levels One and Two, or if you are an individual named in Level Two who needs assistance to resolve the issue, your next points of contact can be any of the following people. The contacts at this level may consult with each other and review any legal or other implications of any decision.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: Artistic Director  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: Managing or Executive Director  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: Board Member  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: (Other Individual)  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

A complaint may include allegations of civil or criminal misconduct or liability, and may require legal advice or action.

A violation of civil rights should be reported to the Illinois Attorney General:

<http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/civilrights.html>.

In case of physical emergency or criminal activity, call 911.

# Sample Audition Disclosure Form

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- This theatre has adopted The **Chicago Theatre Standards**, which seeks to foster an environment of communication, safety, respect, accountability, and the health, safety, and well-being of institutions and its participants. We hope the following disclosures help you make an informed choice should you be offered a role in this production.
- All theatres that abide by The Chicago Theatre Standards make the following audition commitments to you:
  - You will not be asked to audition more than 3 times for this production without compensation
  - You will not be kept at any audition more than 3 hours, or past 11pm.
  - You will not be asked to disrobe or perform any intimate contact or violence as a part of your audition.

## PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

First day of rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_

Range of rehearsal hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Tech begins: \_\_\_\_\_

First preview: \_\_\_\_\_

Opening: \_\_\_\_\_

Closing: \_\_\_\_\_

Days/times of planned performances: \_\_\_\_\_

Performance venue: \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCLOSURES (check all that apply):

- There is a possibility that the production will be extended through \_\_\_\_\_.
- Costumes will be supplied by the producer.
- Actors will be expected to help build and strike the set.
- There will be understudies for this production.
- There will be pay for this production in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_.
- This production contains sexual content.
- This production contains nudity.
- This production contains violence.
  - If yes, a fight choreographer will be on staff for this production.
- This production contains culturally sensitive content.
- This production is accessible to actors who use a mobility device.
- This production will have a nontraditional audience seating arrangement.
- There are \_\_\_\_\_ previews planned for this production.

Further Disclosures: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*The Chicago Theatre Standards welcomes feedback at [help@notinourhouse.org](mailto:help@notinourhouse.org) at [NotInOurHouse.org](http://NotInOurHouse.org). Please fill out an anonymous e-comment card at [NotInOurHouse.org](http://NotInOurHouse.org) and let us know any questions or suggestions you have regarding this disclosure form, or any experience you have relative to the CTS. We respect your anonymity. Thank you!*

# Sample Written Agreement

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*This sample agreement is written for a performer. Additions and omissions should be made to adapt the agreement for directors, designers, and other participants.*

The following agreement is made between \_\_\_\_\_ (“Theatre”) and \_\_\_\_\_ (“Actor”) on this \_\_\_\_\_ (date). The Theatre hereby engages the Actor in its production of \_\_\_\_\_ (“Production”) in the role of \_\_\_\_\_.

**1. Production Dates.** The Production Dates are as follows:

Rehearsals:

Tech:

Previews:

Opening Date:

Performances:

Tentative Closing Date:

**2. Compensation.** Actor shall receive a total fee of \$\_\_\_\_\_, according to the following schedule: \_\_\_\_\_ . This agreement shall not constitute the Actor as an employee of the Theatre, and it is understood that the Actor shall perform his/her duties as an independent contractor.

**3. Rehearsal and Performance Schedule.** Subject to Section 4 of this Agreement, the Actor agrees to report to and attend punctually all rehearsals, tech, calls, and performances as stipulated by the Theatre, the director, or the stage manager. The Actor agrees to be available for all performances. Any factors that may impact the Actor’s availability must be immediately communicated to the stage manager. The failure by the Actor to attend such rehearsals, tech, or performances or the late arrival by the Actor to such rehearsals, tech, or performances may result in termination of the Actor and removal from the Production at the discretion of the Theatre, without notice or compensation.

**4. Conflicts and More Remunerative Employment.**

- a. Any potential conflicts with the performance schedule shall be disclosed to the Theatre prior to the execution of this contract. All absences due to conflicts must receive prior approval by the director and stage manager. Approvals for an Actor’s absence due to conflicts will not be granted for tech, previews, or opening night or any performance during the first weekend (“Opening Weekend”).
- b. In the event the Actor has been offered short-term, higher paying employment in the entertainment industry during the Production, the Theatre will generally grant permission to the Actor to take a short-term leave of absence to pursue such employment. *Such employment must be within the jurisdiction of one of the entertainment unions.*? In order to receive approval for such more remunerative employment, the Actor must notify the director and the stage manager no later than at the time of the audition for employment that would qualify under this section. Approval is at the discretion of the Theatre, and will not be granted for tech, previews, or Opening Weekend.

**5. Responsibilities.** The Actor agrees to meet all guidelines generally accepted for professional behavior, including, but not limited to, punctuality with regard to all rehearsal and performance calls and adherence to the director and producing body’s intents. The Actor agrees to perform such roles and duties as are listed on the face of this contract as well as other duties that may be assigned at a later date. The Actor further agrees to abide by all rules, regulations, and policies as set forth by the Theatre, such policies to be discussed and

distributed at the first rehearsal, and deemed to be incorporated into this agreement. The Actor's failure to comply with the responsibilities herein stated may result in termination of the Actor and removal from the Production at the discretion of the Theatre, without notice or compensation.

6. **Property.** The Theatre and its representatives are not responsible for the Actor's personal property during meetings, rehearsals, tech, or the run of the production. The Actor hereby waives all claims for recovery from the Theatre for any such loss or damage (whether or not such loss or damage is caused by negligence of the Theatre).

7. **Complimentary Tickets.** [Insert complimentary ticket policy]

8. **Severability.** The provisions of this contract shall be separable, and the invalidity of any provision shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions.

9. **Entire Agreement.** The parties agree that this instrument represents the entire agreement between them and that the terms of this agreement may not be altered unless such alteration is accomplished in writing and is signed by both parties.

Agreed and Accepted as of the date first written above, by:

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Name:  
For the Theatre

Name:  
Contractor

## Sample First Rehearsal Language

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The following is adapted from the First Rehearsal Script created by Lifeline Theatre In Chicago; one of the contributors to the Chicago Theatre Standards. The following is an extension of the “First Day Implementation Notes” described earlier in this document. Pilot theatres have found these support documents particularly helpful. The following is not prescriptive or definitive, but is offered as a sample to be used or adapted. This script does not include the election of the NED, although that is often done at the first rehearsal.

**Staff Member:** \_\_\_\_\_ Theatre has adopted The Chicago Theatre Standards, available at [notinourhouse.org](http://notinourhouse.org).

The aim of the CTS is to adopt procedures to prevent and respond to unsafe and/or abusive events, environments or individuals. If there is a fight scene in the show, there will also be a qualified choreographer. If there’s a sex scene in the show, parameters will be agreed upon and safeguards will be put in place to maintain them.

An important component of the CTS is the Concern Resolution Path. This is a three-tiered list of people who you can contact if you feel uncomfortable or have any concerns throughout this production process. You have received a printed copy of the Concern Resolution Path with contact information for everyone on the path. This document will also be posted in the rehearsal and dressing rooms for your reference. I’d like to ask everyone on the path to introduce themselves.

The Chicago Theatre Standards contains a number of pledges that we, the producing theater, make to you. Among these is a welcoming environment free of harassment and discrimination.

Since a positive environment is a team effort, we’d like to take this opportunity to read the definitions of harassment aloud to make sure we have a shared understanding. **NAME (show director)** if you could begin, and then everyone else just jump in for a section when you like, no particular order, changing speakers with color changes.

**Company members read aloud:** Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, innuendoes or taunting about a person's racial or ethnic background, color, place of birth, citizenship, ancestry, creed, or disability,
2. Unwanted questions or comments about an Artist’s private life,
3. Posting or display of materials, articles, or graffiti, etc. which may cause humiliation, offence or embarrassment on prohibited grounds.
4. Sexual Harassment:
  - a. One or a series of comments or conduct of a gender-related or sexual nature that is known or ought reasonably be known to be unwelcome/unwanted, offensive, intimidating, hostile or inappropriate. Artists have the right to be free from:
    - i. Sexual solicitation or advance made by a person in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement,
    - ii. Reprisal or threat of reprisal for the rejection of a sexual solicitation or advance where the reprisal is made by a person in a position to grant, confer, or deny a benefit or

advancement.

b. Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to:

- i. Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes or taunting about a person's body, attire, gender, or sexual orientation,
- ii. Unwanted touching or any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact such as touching, kissing, patting, hugging or pinching,
- iii. Unwelcome enquiries or comments about a person's sex life or sexual preference,
- iv. Leering, whistling, or other suggestive or insulting sounds,
- v. Inappropriate comments about clothing, physical characteristics or activities,
- vi. Posting or display of materials, articles, or graffiti, etc. which is sexually oriented,
- vii. Requests or demands for sexual favors which include, or strongly imply, promises of rewards for complying (e.g., job advancement opportunities, and/or threats of punishment for refusal (e.g., denial of job advancement or opportunities).

All or part of the above grounds may create a negative environment for individuals or groups. This may have the effect of "poisoning" the work environment. It should be noted that a person does not have to be a direct target to be adversely affected by a negative environment. It includes conduct or comment that creates and maintains an offensive, hostile, or intimidating climate.

**Staff Member:** Thank you. Negative comments or actions often occur accidentally – but even when that is the case -- if we don't address them in the moment it can start a slide into a less professional room. (please see following page for Oops and Ouch approach)

## Oops and Ouch: One way to handle negative comments or actions in real time

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We'd like to recommend a system of "Ouch" and "Oops." For instance:

*Speaker A is trying too hard to be funny and makes a thoughtless remark. Speaker B says "Ouch!" This cues Speaker A to realize that the funny remark was potentially hurtful. Speaker A says "Oops" to indicate recognition and regret. Then there's a Pause.*

It's up to the Ouch-caller whether this moment requires some conversation. So maybe there's a conversation – or maybe the Ouch caller says "Cool, let's move on." But the decision to move on must come from the Ouch-caller.

Please note that anyone in the room can call "Ouch." It does not have to come from the person who is the focus of the potentially hurtful remark.

Any questions or discussion?

- Most common *question* is: "Sometimes I don't know there was an "ouch" until I'm trying to sleep that night. Can I bring it back later?"
- I say "Yes. If you've felt an ouch and didn't say anything, please do bring it to whoever you're comfortable with on the leadership team. We want to know and we will figure out how to address it.
- \*\* most common *comment* is "If anyone is thinking this feels like overkill, let me tell you what happened to me last week at blahblah (insert bad story here). If something like this had been set up in advance, I bet it wouldn't have happened."

Thank you. May I ask that we pledge to each other that we will work together to promote an environment where it feels safe to speak up -- and that we will welcome any reminder to maintain a positive and respectful room. If you so pledge, please say "I do."

Thank you. If an experience ever feels larger than an Ouch-Oops moment, please know that concerns about harassment, safety, or a negative environment may be reported through several channels.

1. For cast members:

- a. The stage manager.
- b. The non-equity deputy (NED) (After the first week of rehearsal, the cast elects a member who agrees to be a conduit to bring cast questions or concerns to the stage manager or to the organization).
- c. If you do not feel comfortable reporting to either your stage manager or the NED, please report to either \_\_\_\_\_ (Artistic Director) or \_\_\_\_\_ (Managing Director)

2. For production team:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ (Production Manager)
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ (Artistic director) or \_\_\_\_\_ (Managing director)



## **Additional Resources for Conflict Resolution**

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### ***Books***

Nonviolent Communication by Marshall B. Rosenberg

### ***Workshops***

Effective Management Strategies for Theatre Leaders, produced regularly by the League of Chicago Theatres