



ALEX THEATRE
PERFORMING ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CENTER

Volunteer Usher Handbook

Updated 10/1/09

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Welcome

Welcome to the Alex Theatre and thank you for volunteering with us. Without your participation in our volunteer Usher program we would be not be able to provide the Glendale community with quality entertainment at this beautiful historic venue. It is our desire to make each visit to the Alex Theatre special for both you and our patrons. As ambassadors for the Alex Theatre, it is important that you help each guest to feel welcome and at ease. It is your actions, appearance, and general conduct that will influence a patron's perception of the Alex Theatre. Our general rule is that we treat patrons in the same manor that we would like to be treated and always greet patrons with a ready smile and willingness to help them with their needs.

We hope that you will find the information contained in this Volunteer Handbook to be helpful to you in your capacity as a volunteer Usher at the Alex Theatre.

Enrollment in the Volunteer Program

Participating as a member of the Alex Theatre's volunteer staff is a privilege and volunteers who fail to follow policies and procedures or do not meet our standards of courtesy in dealing with patrons will be dismissed from future participation in our volunteer program.

Qualifications

- Must be 16 years of age or older.
- Must be able to negotiate stairs.
- Must be willing to make a commitment to work an average of three events per month.
- Excellent customer service skills.
- Well groomed.
- Must be friendly and polite.
- Must be a team player who is able to work well with others and the ability to work and communicate effectively with people of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Physical Demands

While performing the duties of this job, volunteer Ushers are regularly required to use their hands to finger, handle, or feel objects or controls; reach with hands and arms; and talk and hear. Volunteers are also frequently required to sit, stand, walk and climb or balance. A volunteer is occasionally required to stoop, kneel or crouch and will occasionally lift and/or move up to 15 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, peripheral vision and depth perception.

New Volunteer Orientation

New volunteer Ushers are asked to arrive 30 minutes before the call time of their first scheduled shift for a brief tour and orientation of the Alex Theatre.

Volunteer Usher Responsibilities

Overview

As a volunteer Usher, your main responsibility is for the safety and comfort of Alex Theatre patrons. Before each performance or event, you are to inspect your assigned work area for cleanliness and any problems such as loose seats, torn carpet, unstable hand rails, or burned out lights, and report any problems to the House Manager or Floor Supervisor. You must also make certain that you are familiar with your surroundings including the seating area and the location of restrooms, courtesy telephones, first aid kit, emergency exits, fire extinguishers, and fire alarm pull stations. Please remember that viewing a performance is a side benefit of volunteering and when you are required to do something, or a patron needs assistance, it is imperative that you respond immediately. Failure to do so could result in your dismissal for the remainder of the evening and possibly your removal from the Alex Theater volunteer Usher pool.

In the case of an emergency, the House Manager or Floor Supervisor must know where you are at all times when you are working as an Usher at a performance. If you are going to watch the performance, please sit in available seats in the back of the theatre or on the stairs. Ushers are not allowed to sit next to patrons. Throughout the performance Ushers must continue to monitor patrons and watch for unruly behavior, as well as potential medical emergencies. In the case of a medical emergency, contact the House Manager or Floor Supervisor IMMEDIATELY. If you witness unruly behavior such as loud talking, running up and down aisles, dancing in aisles, or other behavior that is bothering other patrons, please ask the offending party/parties to be quiet or take their seats as politely as possible. If the problem is beyond your control or comfort level, bring it to the attention of the House Manager or Floor Supervisor.

While in the auditorium watching a performance, do not talk with one another as it is disturbing to patrons. If there is need to speak with another Usher, leave the auditorium and go to the outer lobby areas away from the entry doors as voices carry into the

auditorium. If there is a need to speak to a patron, please do so quietly. Respond to all patron comments and/or complaints in a prompt and friendly manner.

The majority of our events take place in the evenings and on weekends. There are also occasional events that take place during the day mid-week.

Ticket Takers

Ticket Takers are responsible for greeting patrons, reading and tearing tickets, and assisting the House Manager with counting tickets. Ticket Takers also help to monitor the front entry doors at intermission and at the end of the performance.

Program Distribution

Ushers are responsible for distributing programs and splitting patrons. Splitting patrons is reading the seat locations on tickets as patrons enter into the seating area and directing the patrons to the correct seating side of the theatre. Ushers are also responsible for ensuring that no food or drink with the exception of bottled water is brought into the auditorium by patrons.

Ushers

Ushers stationed in the auditorium are responsible for reading tickets and seating patrons in the correct seat location for which they hold a ticket. Ushers also answer questions and provide directions to various amenities in the theatre such as restrooms, phones, concession stands, etc. ALL STAFF USHERS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR LATE SEATING.

Appearance and Conduct

The Alex Theatre's approved Usher uniform consists of a white shirt/blouse or sweater with black pants (no jeans)/skirt and black shoes (no athletic shoes). Skirts should be no shorter than just above the knee. If you want to wear a jacket or sweater over your shirt/blouse, that must also be black. Since Ushers serve as representatives of the Alex Theatre, it is important that the Usher staff dress conservatively and in the proper

uniform so that they are easily recognizable by patrons as an Usher. A vest will be issued to you at the beginning of the shift and must be checked back in when you leave.

While in public view, Ushers are to refrain from eating, drinking or chewing gum, smoking, voicing personal opinions concerning any production, performers or patrons, lounging or leaning against a wall. Gentlemen should be clean shaven and neatly trimmed beards and mustaches are permitted. Simple jewelry is acceptable, but large or excessive jewelry should be avoided. Political or religious buttons are not permitted.

Unless permitted by the House Manager, Ushers are not allowed to participate in or eat food at receptions prior to, during or after a performance for which they have volunteered.

Threatening, Abusive, or Vulgar Language

The Alex Theatre expects its employees and volunteers to treat everyone they meet through their jobs with courtesy and respect. Threatening, abusive, and vulgar language has no place in the Alex Theatre workplace. It destroys morale and relationships, and it impedes the effective and efficient operation of our business.

As a result, the Alex Theatre will not tolerate threatening, abusive, or vulgar language from volunteers while they are on the worksite. Volunteers who violate this policy will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Signing up for Events

1. You can come to the Alex Theatre and review the “Red Book” to sign-up to work upcoming events. If you should decide to sign up in this fashion, please make certain that there is someone here to help you with access to the Alex Theatre and the book by calling and setting an appointment. You can also sign-up to work events when you are at the Alex Theatre working another event.
2. Sign up via the mail. The Event Schedule will be posted at our website, www.alextheatre.org, download and print the document and mail it to:

Karen Smith
Alex Theatre
216 N. Brand Blvd.
Glendale, Ca.91203

3. You can fax your filled out Opportunity Sheet to the theater @ 818.243.3650.
4. You can also sign-up to work an event by using the Sign-Up field at our website.
5. If for any reason you cannot make an event that you have signed up for, please call 818-243-7700 x218 at least 24 hours in advance to prevent a “no show” on you record. We are aware that emergencies do happen and will make exceptions depending on the circumstances.

Event Procedures

Punctuality

Your reliability as a volunteer Usher is important to the success of the Alex Theatre. Signing up for an event is a commitment to work, so please show up and be on time. When the Alex Theatre is under-staffed it presents safety issues in our ability to properly manage patrons. If you cannot make an event, please have the courtesy to call so that other arrangements can be made to replace you.

Show call times are generally one hour before the scheduled curtain time, but this can vary from event to event. The seating of patrons usually begins one ½ hour before the scheduled curtain time. The show call time is when you are to be at the Alex Theatre and ready to work, not when you are to arrive.

All volunteers must be present during the event orientation meeting because each event has its own criteria to be discussed such as the seating of late arriving patrons, seating holds, lengths of performances and intermissions. Failure to be present for the orientation meeting could result in your dismissal for the evening.

Personal Belongings

Your personal belongings can be stored in our Usher Break Room. The Alex Theatre cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items, so please leave valuables and large sums of money at home.

Intermissions

When intermission begins, Ushers are to return to their assigned area so that they are available to assist and direct patrons. *Intermission is a break for the audience, but not for the staff.* Please use the restrooms, telephones, or drinking fountains prior to or after the intermission.

End of Performance

When the performance has ended Ushers are to return to their assigned position and help with clearing the house. Once the audience members have left the theatre, you will walk the seating aisles, putting up seats and looking for lost articles that need to be turned in to the House Manager. When the auditorium is secured, you will be dismissed.

Cell Phones

Ushers are not allowed to use cell phones while volunteering for events. We request that you turn them off. If there is an emergency that you must attend to, tell your Floor Supervisor or the House Manager so that you may be excused to make a phone call.

Backstage

No Ushers are allowed to go backstage unless otherwise instructed by the House Manager. If a rental user asks you to do something that requires you leaving the auditorium or lobby areas, please refer them to the House Manager.

Parking

You may park wherever you would like, however, we encourage volunteers to utilize one of the various parking structures the Alex Theatre provides validation for. These parking structures include the Orange Street Garage, the Exchange, and the Market Place. With the validation stamp, you can park for 4 hours for \$1. The Alex Theatre will reimburse you for the \$1 charge. If you are required to be at the theatre longer than the 4 hour time limitation and incur further costs, please get a receipt from the parking attendant and you will be reimbursed. The House Manager takes the names of volunteers that have used the parking structures at the event orientation for that night only, but will accept receipts for reimbursement at that time from other events.

Autographs

Ushers are not allowed under any circumstance to approach a performer or celebrity patron attending a performance to ask for an autograph or to pose for a photograph.

Theatre Policies

Smoking

The Alex Theatre has been designated as a non-smoking facility by the City of Glendale's Smoking Ordinance. If a patron wishes to smoke, they must do so out on the sidewalk along Brand Boulevard. Patrons should not be sent to the Alex Theatre's back parking lot to smoke.

Photographs and Video Taping

Photographs and video taping by patrons is generally not permitted. On occasion, rental user's will film the production and they will be designated to specific areas. Filming equipment is not allowed in the seating aisles unless predetermined by theatre staff. The House Manager will announce whether or not certain performances will allow photographs during the event orientation. If you should witness the setting up of filming equipment in a non-designated area or by someone who was not discussed during the orientation, please bring this to the attention of the House Manager.

ADA/Wheelchair Access

If you encounter a patron with an ADA/wheelchair ticketed seat, please escort them to the proper section. If you encounter a patron that has a ticket for an area other than the ADA/wheelchair sections and needs to have access to seating in that area, please notify your Floor Supervisor or the House Manager.

Duplicate Tickets

In the event you are faced with a duplicate ticketing situation, read all tickets separately—never take all tickets into your possession at the same time to avoid confusion—check the date, time, performance name and ticketed seat(s) and return the tickets to the proper party or parties. If all of the information is the same, notify your Floor Supervisor or the House Manager.

Electronic Devices

There is an announcement at the beginning of the performance to turn off cell phones, pagers and similar items. All patrons should have their devices set to vibrate or silent mode.

Aisle, Stairs and Landings

All aisles, stairs and landings are to be kept clear as per Fire Regulations and Code. Patrons are not allowed to stand or sit in these areas.

Food and Drink

Patrons are welcome to enjoy beverages and food items in the lobby areas, however, ONLY bottled water is allowed inside the auditorium seating area. Patrons attempting to carrying food into the seating areas will be asked to leave their items with the House Manager. This is standard for ALL events unless otherwise stated in the event orientation by the House Manager.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, immediately notify the Floor Supervisor and stay with the patron(s) until the House Manager arrives. Under no circumstances is an Usher to touch or attempt to move an injured patron.

Evacuation

In the event of an evacuation, note your closest exit, work with other staff members in alerting patrons in your seating/lobby area to the safest way to an emergency exit, and assist patrons in leaving the building in a calm manner.