

The New Venture Theatre Production Manual

This is the latest iteration of the New Venture Theatre Production Manual. The original version was produced in 2007 by the then Artistic Director and Assistant Artistic Director. The aim of the document is to provide an overview of the production process and roles within the New Venture Theatre structure and some guidance for new Directors.

Each section listed below is complete in itself, but also combines to provide a fairly comprehensive manual.

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Directors' Briefing Meeting

A Directors' Briefing Meeting is held by the 3rd week of June.

1. Purpose of Meeting

- *To confirm the choice of plays and Directors for the season.*
- *To provide written confirmation of all dates and venues of plays for the season*
- *To obtain contact details of all Directors*
- *To explain the production process and notify Directors of the Pre-Production Meeting.*
- *To build a sense of company for the whole season*
- *To get a sense of what the plays will be*
- *To introduce new Directors to NVT procedures and key roles*

2. Date set for Pre-Production Meeting

The NVT Production Coordinator will plan the Pre-Production Meetings and agree with the attendees for that meeting

3. General points for Directors

Proposal to Direct and Production Checklist

- Directors will be encouraged to use the Proposal to Direct and Production Checklist to be kept up to date throughout the production process.

Directors will be encouraged to create a strong company spirit, with particular emphasis on

- *Keeping their rehearsal spaces clean and tidy including the kitchen and other areas*
- *Respecting and supporting their creative team, technical and backstage crew*
- *Raising safety awareness*
- *Encouraging their casts to support other shows at the NVT, especially bar FoH and Box Office duties.*

Attendees

- *Artistic Director,*
- *All the proposed Directors for the Season*
- *NVT Production Coordinator*
- *Technical Team*
- *Volunteer Coordinator*
- *Possibly Box Office and FoH Manager, Diary Manager, Newsletter Editor, Publicity Team*

Pre-Production Meeting

Each production will start with a Pre-Production Meeting, which will be the “kick-off” meeting for that production. This will usually be 12-14 weeks before the opening night. The meeting will be arranged and chaired by the NVT Production Coordinator who invites the attendees.

Aims of the Meeting

The Director to outline creative concept and explore and develop ideas with the creative team.

1. To identify key objectives of the production

2. To identify potential problems.

- *Complex design of set / sound / lighting / costume*
- *Any unusual technical requirements*
- *Likely casting problems e.g. large cast*

3. To identify potential risks

- *in set construction and materials*
- *in what is expected of the actors in rehearsal or performance*
- *in arrangement and rigging of lights, sound, SFX (special effects), to crew, cast or audience.*

4. To confirm their production team to date and identify shortfalls.

Key jobs for which to identify personnel are:

- *Production Manager*
- *Stage Manager / ASM*
- *Marketing (if additional to NVT is required i.e. Fringe productions)*
- *Sound design & Operation*
- *Lighting design, Rigging & Operation*
- *Set design, Construction & Dressing*
- *Costume design / liaison*
- *Properties*
- *Health and Safety*
- *Poster and Programme Design*
- *Photographer*

5. To agree a deadline for the final approved poster design.

- In most cases this should be a minimum of 1 week before the first night of the preceding production.

6. To outline the rehearsal timetable and make provisional key dates

- e.g. Get-in, Get-out, tech and dress rehearsals.

7. To decide the date of the Production Meeting.

8. To discuss the production budget.

9. To brief the Director on access to and security of the building the theatre.

10. To identify any additional rights licence requirements

- e.g. Interploated music

11. To provide the Director with access to the formal processes and procedures:

[Security of Theatre Building](#)

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

The Director, Cast, Crew and Production Team will be supplied with a copy of the NVT Health and Safety Policy, which he / she is required to read, then sign and return its attached slip to the Health and Safety Manager, to confirm that he / she has read and understood it.

[Use of Studio and Main Theatre](#): Notes to Directors and Set-builders

Copies of this document should be supplied to the Director, set-designers and set-builders / dressers.

[Production Budget Form](#)

Copies of this form are to be given to the Director or Production Manager and completed as soon as possible and in any event before the Production Meeting and be sent to the NVT Production Coordinator and treasurer. (finance@newventure.org.uk)

[Noise](#)

Directors will be advised about noise and the need to respect the neighbours, especially on leaving the building at night.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment of the production to be completed during the rehearsal process and sent to the Health and Safety Manager.

Attendees

- Director
- NVT Artistic Director
- NVT Production Coordinator
- NVT Health and Safety Manager
- Set Design and Construction Coordinator
- NVT Technical Team
- NVT Publicity Team
- NVT Volunteer Coordinator
- Production Manager, if appointed at this stage
- Any relevant member of the design team and crew for the production, if appointed at this stage

Audition Process

The audition is usually held approximately 12 weeks before the opening night. If you need to audition early, please inform and check with the directors prior to your show and the Artistic Director.

1. Audition venue

The Director / Production Manager should contact the NVT Production Coordinator to arrange space in the theatre for the audition and for any additional call-back sessions if required.

The Studio or South Hall are better venues as you have direct access for auditionees. If you need an additional space, please make sure it has been booked. This might not always be possible.

2. Audition Notice

The audition notice should be supplied to the Website Manager, Newsletter Editor and Publicity Team.

It should be included with the newsletter that goes out just prior to the audition date. The copy deadline dates for the next newsletter can be requested through newsletter@newventure.org.uk.

3. Audition notice content

- Name of play and playwright
- Director's contact details: name, phone number and e-mail
- Performance dates
- A summary of the play
- List of characters, giving approximate ages where relevant
- Positions needed for the production team
- Date, time and venue of audition and re-calls
- Please include that supporting another production by doing bar or box office duties is standard procedure to ensure the theatre can function.

Anyone may audition. However, offers of roles are conditional on applicants being paid-up members of the NVT for the duration of the entire rehearsal and performance period. Please refer to the NVT Child Protection Policy for restrictions on using children in performance.

4. Audition Scripts

Some Directors prepare key speeches to be used at the audition and encourage applicants to study these before the audition. Please email out to save copying costs, and ensure no infringement of copyright, please add that the script parts are only to be used for auditioning purposes.

5. Full Scripts

If the play is available in print, the cast and crew are required to buy their own copy of the script for their use.

- If the play is out of print, the Director will need to arrange for photocopies for each cast member and the relevant members of the production team, (but please avoid infringing

copyright).

- Please check with NVT Production Coordinator before doing a large amount of copying.

6. Applicant Contact Details

Auditions Applicant Forms should be available at the audition to be completed and signed by the applicants and kept by the Director.

7. Membership

It is mandatory that all cast and crew are NVT members and it is the Director's responsibility to ensure that all comply once the play is cast and crew selected.

- It should be made clear by the Director or Production Manager at the audition that no rehearsal may take place until all the company are paid up members of the NVT.

- *The cast should be encouraged to join (or renew) online when they accept the part.*

8. Membership Application Form

Membership application forms should be available at the audition and details of joining online.

- The Director should advise any cast or crew who are not NVT members that they will need to have joined before or at the first read-through or whole-company meeting.

9. Audition

The format of the audition is up to the individual director.

- It is important that all applicants are given the same fair hearing and should be organised to minimise waiting times.

- If any additional shows are planned, you must inform anyone auditioning before the auditions or latest at the auditions.

- The Director should ensure they have adequate people at the audition to manage any waiting area, especially if the theatre lobby is being used.

- The Director should inform all applicants at the audition that they must be members of the NVT if they are cast or chosen to be crew.

10. Casting

When will applicants hear?

- The Director should tell applicants when to expect to be notified of the outcome of their audition.

Alternative roles / productions

- It is sometimes possible to encourage an unsuccessful applicant to take some other role in the production, such as costume liaison or back-stage crew. If you think an actor/actress is suited for a different upcoming production, feel free to suggest that.

Contact Membership Secretary - Newsletter

- The Director should provide the Membership Secretary and the Newsletter Editor (see contact list in the newsletter) with a list of his/her proposed cast and crew for the show as soon as possible.

11. Rehearsal Schedule

- The Director/Production Manager for the show should create a rehearsal schedule, in consultation with the NVT Production Coordinator.

- The NVT diary can be found here: www.newventure.org.uk/diary

- Please check the diary first and then contact the NVT Diary Manager to book spaces.

The Rehearsal Process

It is important to ensure the rehearsal schedule is carefully divided into units that will allow adequate rehearsal time for the whole play. Time and availability of actors and crew must be taken into consideration. Productions are prioritised in order of their performance dates.

- It is prudent to include rehearsal time for “pick-ups” and unforeseen events.

1. Creating the rehearsal schedule

The rehearsal schedule should be drawn up taking into account availability of cast and crew. It should be created in consultation with the NVT Production Coordinator.

- Key deadlines should be identified, such as the date by which all actors are expected to be off book, running of acts and stagger-through.

2. Booking rehearsal space

All rehearsal space must be agreed and booked with the NVT Production Coordinator.

- This should be done once the play is cast and the actors’ / director’s availability are all known.

Diary

- The theatre diary can be consulted online on www.newventure.org.uk/diary

3. The rehearsal process

The following section breaks down the rehearsal process into a number of distinct phases:

- Exploration and development

These early exploratory rehearsals provide the opportunity to discover what the play is about

First company meeting

- The first meeting of the whole company for a show is usually 8-10 weeks before its opening night.

Read-through

- This may happen at the first company meeting.

- Essential attendees

NVT Artistic Director

Director

All cast

Designers – lighting, sound, set, costume

Production Manager

Stage Manager

Props Manager

First rehearsals

- Break play into smaller workable units.

- Rehearse those units.

- Ensure the whole play is rehearsed.

- *Essential attendees*
- Director*
- Cast*
- Prompt (Stage crew on the book)*

Stagger-through

The first complete run-through of the play. Please inform the Health and Safety Manager at the PPM what date this will be, or as soon as possible.

- *The stagger-through provides a rough overview of the whole piece. Its purpose is to identify needs, constraints and problems.*

- *Essential attendees*
- Director*
- All cast*
- Health and Safety Manager*
- Additional attendees as appropriate*
- NVT Artistic Director*
- Designers – lighting, sound, set, costume*
- Production Manager*
- Stage Manager*
- Props Manager*
- All crew*

Nuts and bolts

- *These mid-section rehearsals go more thoroughly into practical and artistic issues.*

Pick-up rehearsals

- *Pick-up rehearsals pick up specific issues raised in stagger-through*
- *Identify gaps*

- *Essential attendees*
- Director*
- Cast*
- Prompt (Stage crew on the book)*

Main rehearsals

Main rehearsals deal with the mechanics and practicalities of how the smaller units come together as a whole

- *Focus on detail*
- *Look at continuity*
- *Ensure the story is clearly told*
- *Rehearse with props*
- *Look at stage business*
- *Ensure all actors are learning their lines.*
- *Identify date by which all actors must be off book.*

- *Essential attendees*
- Director*
- Cast*

Additional attendees as appropriate
Stage Manager

The bigger picture

This later stage of the rehearsal period provides the opportunity to consolidate, to fine-tune and to make any big decisions e.g. potential cuts, please avoid any infringement of copyright.

Running the play

Run entire acts, or the whole play

- *Ensure continuity in artistic and practical terms.*
- *Identify running time of whole play.*

- *Essential attendees*

Director

Cast

Stage Manager

- *The following should be invited to at least one full run:*

NVT Artistic Director

Designers – lighting, sound, set, costume

Production Manager

Props Manager

Health and Safety Manager

Photographer

Get-in, technical rehearsal process, dress rehearsals

These rehearsals are an opportunity for the director to receive objective feedback and advice from the creative team, the Artistic Director and any other consultants / advisers.

- Clarify the dramatic journey
- Consolidate creative decisions
- Assess how the piece is working as an artistic whole.

- These crucial stages involve the whole company and form the final phase of the rehearsal process.

See specific sections - [Get In](#), [Technical Rehearsal Process](#) and [Dress Rehearsals](#)

4. The Artistic Director

It is the Artistic Director's role to provide advice, encouragement and support for individual productions. The AD also is responsible for deciding whether the finished piece is of a sufficient standard for public performance.

In the final instance the Artistic Director has the authority to recommend to the NVT Management Committee the cancellation or postponement of a production.

Artistic Director attends rehearsals

The Director invites the Artistic Director to attend a number of rehearsals. The purpose of

these visits are as follows:

- To ensure the Director's concept is working and that the original artistic vision for the piece is achievable.
- To monitor progress.
- To give objective feedback to the Director and advise on possible ways forward.
- To monitor and comment on conduct of rehearsals where appropriate.

First Full Company Meeting

The first meeting of the full company for a production is usually 8-10 weeks before its opening night. A first read-through of the play may form part of this meeting. The Director/Production Manager should invite the attendees.

1. Membership

The Director / Production Manager must ensure at this stage that all cast and crew are paid up members of the theatre. Any outstanding membership subscriptions are to be collected at this meeting or paid online before the next rehearsal.

2. Health and Safety

The Director / Production Manager will provide a copy of the most recent [NVT Health and Safety Policy](#) to each member of the cast and crew.

- Health & Safety Confirmation Slips must be signed and returned to the Director/Production Manager, to confirm the policy has been read and understood. (the slips need only be completed once each season, unless the policy has been updated since completion).

- The Director/ Production Manager should highlight relevant sections of the policy at the meeting.

3. Housekeeping

The Director briefs the company about , and fire alarm procedures

Please be aware of other members using the theatre and ensure all areas are kept tidy and clean. Leave your rehearsal space and kitchen as you would wish to find it.

- Attendees
 - Director
 - Production Manager
 - Stage Manager
 - Lighting Designer
 - Set Designer
 - Sound Designer
 - Properties manager
 - Artistic Director
 - Health and Safety Manager
 - Cast for the show
 - Costume designer
 - All crew

Production Meeting

The Production Meeting is usually held 5 weeks before the opening night (or half way through the rehearsal period) of the show.

Attendees are invited by the director or production manager.

The Production Meeting is normally chaired by the NVT Production Coordinator.

It is not always possible to get all parties to attend one meeting. However, the main functions of production, stage management, sound and lighting design and set design should be represented. Other areas can be discussed at separate meetings if necessary, ideally before the PM.

1. Front of House and Box Office

- Front of House and Box Office are already aware of the production's dates and do not need to be contacted by the Director regarding these.

- The Director / Production Manager should inform Box Office of seating numbers, if a Studio production.

2. Aims of Production meeting

Key personnel in place

- *Ensure full commitment of all parties and identify the gaps in the team.*

Key dates agreed

- *Agree / Confirm key dates and gain agreement to meet these deadlines by all parties – please book the spaces:*

- *All props available*

- *Get in set,*

- *Set building dates*

- *Lighting*

- *Stagger-through*

- *Rig*

- *plot*

- *programme*

- *run cue to cue*

- *Costume fitting*

- *Tech Rehearsals*

- *Dress rehearsals*

- *Dress photographs*

- *Get out*

- *Marketing deadlines*

- *Programme deadlines*

3. Health and Safety

Review health and safety considerations.

4. Care of theatre property

- *Remind the Director on responsibility for ensuring that cast and crew maintain their*

rehearsal space in clean and tidy condition, including the kitchen and South Hall, if used.

- *Brief Director regarding NVT property.*
- *No drapes, curtains, etc. to be cut up or altered*
- *No costumes to be cut or altered*
- *No Front-of-House / Bar / South Hall items to be appropriated for props*

5. Budget

The Director presents the completed _____ for discussion at the Production Meeting.

6. Poster

- Poster and publicity designs must be approved by the Artistic Director before going to print.

7. Interpolated Music

- Confirm any music used in the production where the cast interact with it has the necessary performance rights licence.

8. Attendees

Attendees include crew for the play plus those NVT members who have overall responsibility for every show:

- Director of the show
- NVT Artistic Director
- NVT Production Coordinator – who will facilitate the meeting
- Production Manager for the show
- NVT Technical Director (Light and Sound)
- NVT Health and Safety Manager / Adviser
- NVT Marketing / Publicity Officers
- Stage Manager
- Sound Designer
- Lighting Designer
- Film Designer – if relevant
- Set Designer
- Costume Designer

Other attendees - optional:

- Poster / Programme Designer (liaison is usually done separately by Director).
- Lighting / Sound Operators
- Any other crew

Posters and Programme

1. Posters

Early in the production process, the Director needs to appoint someone to design the play's poster. This should conform to the standard NVT format and the design should clearly highlight the name of the show.

2. Poster deadline

In most cases, the deadline for the final approved poster design should be 1 week before the first night of the preceding production.

Final approval of poster design

- The design must be approved by the Artistic Director to ensure that it is acceptable for an NVT production before printing can go ahead.

Poster template

- To obtain a copy of the NVT template, see contact list in the newsletter (NVT Publicity Officer).

Time scale for poster distribution

- Posters should be distributed at the latest 2 weeks before the opening night.

3. Poster production

Either the director or the poster designer should supply the completed and approved design, usually per email / memory stick, to MBE for printing.

- *The quantity to be printed should be agreed between the Director and NVT Publicity Officer and will depend on the distribution opportunities available for a particular production.*

Recommended quantity

- 2 x A1 posters (mandatory)

- 2 x A2 posters (mandatory)

- 6 x A3 posters

- 6 x A4 posters

- 300 x A6 flyers: Colour one side / Black and White on reverse (optional)

or

- 400 business cards in colour

- *A6 single or double-sided colour flyers with one side showing the show's poster and the other, if used, a synopsis of the play.*

- *Ensure the QR code is on all posters and flyers.*

- *Please don't waste NVT funds by ordering more posters / flyers than can reasonably be distributed.*

- *Any proposal to exceed recommended quantities of posters / flyers should first be approved by the NVT Committee.*

4. Poster / flyer distribution

The Director or Poster Designer need to collect the printed posters and flyers from MBE.

- *It is the Director / Production Manager's responsibility to ensure the following is set up:*

- *2 x A1 posters displayed in the cabinets outside the NVT as soon as the previous show has finished.*

- *2 x A2 on the pavement display boards by the front door during a production run.*

- A number of A3 / A4 around the South Hall / Building during the previous show.
- Flyers / cards on the South Hall tables during the previous show.
- Distribute posters / flyers in 'poster-friendly' locations round the town, if required
- Distribute flyers / cards around shops, cafes, bars around town, if required.

NB: No fly posting is allowed.

- All Posters must be removed at the Get-out.

5. Programme production

Either the director or the programme designer should supply the completed and approved design, usually per email / memory stick, to MBE for printing.

- The quantity to be printed should be agreed between the Director and NVT Publicity Officer and will depend on the venue and number of performances for a particular show.

How many?

- You should calculate the quantity required, depending upon expected audience figures and how many nights the production is running.
- Recommended quantity
 - 150 for a 8 night run
- There is not set format and you can create a programme to match your production.
- However, there is an NVT template to facilitate the design of the programme. The programme must adhere to the NVT guidelines and must include the NVT logo and border. The programme is usually one or two pages of A4, folded length-wise or width-wise as preferred. (See Contact List for where to obtain Programme Template)
- Programme designs that do not use the NVT template must not be excessively expensive to produce and the use of colour printing should be minimal. Please seek guidance if in doubt.

The standard programme is A5 and shows the poster as front page. It normally is 8 pages including the front and back cover (2 x A4 pages folded). Please see NVT template for full design details.

The programme includes:

- *introduction by the director*
- *cast, creative team and crew listing*
- *headshots and biography of cast and director*
- *synopsis / comments on the play, information about the author etc.*
- *a thank you section for all the support received, special thanks should be included to others who have helped with the production*
- *if sponsorship is obtained any adverts on agreement*
- *there is a standard panel to be included on the back, which lists other NVT activities – upcoming productions, sponsors, NVT history and events (see the template for this content)*
- *Please don't waste NVT funds by ordering more programmes than can reasonably be sold (check ticket sales to date).*
- *Any proposal to create a non-standard programme or to exceed recommended quantities of programmes should first be approved by the NVT Committee.*

It is the responsibility of the Director or Production Manager to ensure that programmes for the play are with the Front of House staff prior to the first night's performance.

Marketing and Publicity

Remember that the best publicity is achieved by cast and crew encouraging friends, relatives etc. to attend the production.

1. Copy for the Brochure

Directors should supply copy for the Brochure (the NVT events guide / calendar) to the Brochure Editor

Copy should include:

- 100-150 words to inform the public what the show is and to sell it.
- times and dates of the performances
- venue
- playwright
- Director

2. Approval of Brochure proof

- The final proof should be approved by the NVT Artistic Director before going to print.

3. Brochure Deadlines

- The deadlines will be emailed out and are usually around June / July (Oct-Dec), Oct (Jan-Apr and Feb (May-July).

4. Copy for newsletter

The Director should provide copy about the forthcoming play to, the NVT newsletter Editor.
- Confirmation should be obtained from the Editor that copy has been received and will appear in the next edition.

- *Dates for copy, printing and stuffing for the newsletter can be requested by emailing newsletter@newventure.org.uk. It is important that copy is supplied to the Editor well before the final copy date, so that he / she can plan the design of the newsletter. This is normally about 6-8 weeks before the opening night.*
- *The copy should be between 300 and 600 words and should be designed to attract the maximum audience from NVT membership.*

5. Photo or illustration for NVT newsletter

Provide a good quality photo or image for the newsletter. This will help to sell the show. - The following images are all acceptable and must be suitable for reproduction in black and white:

- *Photo of cast members in costume (provide names for caption)*
- *Rehearsal photo (provide names for caption)*
- *Poster – if no photos available*
- *NB: credit the photographer / artist*

6. Additional information

The following information should also be included:

- *times and dates of the performances*
- *venue*
- *For example:*
- *Times and Dates (The Studio) – Reservations coupon: page 2*
- *7.45 pm - Saturday 22 January and Tuesday-Saturday 25-29 January*

- *Matinee: Sunday 23 January – 2.30 pm*
- *(no performance Monday 24th January)*

7. Website

The Director should provide copy about the play and the production dates as well as an image to the Website Editor 12 weeks prior to the production.

8. Facebook

The NVT Publicity Team will set up an events page for each production on facebook. It is up to the production to post on this page and attract / invite audiences.

9. Twitter / Instagram

You can create a profile for each production and tweet from the NVT account. It is the responsibility of each production to tweet about their show.

10. Press Release

8 weeks prior to the production, the Director should provide Press Release copy to the NVT Publicity Team.

- Ideally this should be supplied as finished copy. However, the Publicity Team may be able to help with writing the press release if requested by the director. It is important that the director makes it clear as to whether help with writing is required or not.

- The Director and the Publicity Team should agree final copy. If agreement cannot be reached, then the Artistic Director should be consulted.

- The Press Release should be no more than one page long and should be presented in the standard press release structure and contain information along the following lines:

- TITLE of PRODUCTION and PLAYWRIGHT

PARAGRAPH 1 – About the play

- Brief synopsis / description to explain what show is about

- Classic or new work?

- Where else performed, or is this its premiere?

- Information about the playwright

- Does the production have particular relevance e.g. current events, local interest etc?

PARAGRAPH 2 – About the Director and Cast –not mandatory

- Director's biog / CV

- Cast biogs / CVs

- Any additional notes of interest re cast (e.g. large cast)

PARAGRAPH 3

- Outline the key selling points

- Note any special attractions e.g. play on school curriculum

- Which venue? Studio, MT – please note the flight of stairs

- Note any special warnings e.g. play contains sex, nudity or strong language

BOILERPLATE

- Dates, times and ticket prices for the show.

- Prices are first Friday and Tuesdays £8 (£7 members of NVT), £9 (£8), last Friday and last

- Saturday £10 (£9) for normal runs.

11. Photos for Press Release

Photos supplied with the Press Release increase the chance of attracting audience.

- photographs for publication need to be high resolution, i.e. 300dpi.

- photos should be taken during rehearsals, preferably with an attempt at costume (although as these photos are needed 8 weeks prior to the run, costume may not be possible).

12. Word of Mouth Email

2-4 weeks prior to the production, the cast and crew of the production should email out to all relatives and friends of word of mouth email, as this direct relation brings in most punters.

- The email will contain most of the Press Release and the poster image and ideally a link to ticketsource.

13. Complimentary Tickets for Press

- Complimentary tickets (2 per reviewer) may be offered to members of the press, where there has been an agreement with publicity that they will preview, review or publicise the play. Press reviews should be within the first 3 performances.

No complimentary tickets may be issued without the prior approval of the Publicity Team, who should ensure that Box Office is duly notified of details.

Audio Visual

This section is about setting up equipment. It is important to refer to Section 14-18 for additional information on AV operation and procedure.

1. Lighting Design

The creative concept for lighting will be outlined by the Director / Light Designer at the Pre-Production Meeting. Special requirements regarding equipment may be discussed with the NVT Technical Director at this stage.

- *Lighting requirements may change throughout rehearsals. Any significant lighting requirements, such as the need to hire or purchase extra equipment, for example, should be discussed at the Pre-Production Meeting and confirmed at the Production Meeting.*
- *Each production requires a Lighting Designer, people to rig lanterns and de-rig after the show and lighting operator(s) .*
- *The Lighting Designer needs to attend selected rehearsals and technical rehearsals.*

2. Sound Design

The creative concept for sound will be outlined by the Director / Sound Designer at the Pre-Production Meeting. Special requirements regarding equipment may be discussed with the NVT Technical Director at this stage.

- *Sound requirements may change throughout rehearsals. Any significant sound requirements, such as the need to hire or purchase extra equipment, for example, should be discussed at the Pre-Production Meeting and confirmed at the Production Meeting.*
- *Each production requires a Sound Designer and at least one Sound Operator and, depending upon the complexity of the requirements, it may also be necessary to engage a composer and performer / s if original music / effects are desired.*

Original music / sound effects

- *Any original music / sound effects need to be commissioned in plenty of time, so they can be completed and agreed with the director by this stage.*
- *The Sound Designer needs to attend selected rehearsals and technical rehearsals.*
- *For the purposes of sound operation, all final sound recordings should be put onto the computer systems in the operating box.*

3. Video projection

The creative concept for video projection will be outlined by the Director / Film Designer / Animator at the Pre-Production Meeting. Special requirements regarding equipment may be discussed with the NVT Technical Director at this stage and confirmed at the Production Meeting.

- *Please ensure you are not infringing copyright laws.*

Original videos / animation

- *Any original video and animation need to be commissioned in plenty of time, so they can be completed and agreed with the director by this stage.*
- *The sound operator often operates the projector as well, depending on the complexity of the production.*
- *For the purposes of operating the projector, all final film recordings should be put onto the computer systems in the operating box.*

4. Hire or purchase of equipment

Hire or purchase of additional technical equipment should not be undertaken without first consulting the Technical Director and, if required, authorised by the committee.

Set

1. Discuss initial design concept

At the Pre-production Meeting for the show, the Director / Set Designer set out his / her concept for the set design, to the NVT Set Design and Construction Advisor and also the Health and Safety officer, so that an initial design can be created / approved, taking cost, practicality and safety into consideration.

- It is helpful if set-builders can be proposed by this stage. If any part of the set construction, e.g. the erection of scaffolding, needs to be undertaken by a suitably qualified person, this should be addressed.

2. Booking space for set-building

Access to the space for set building must be booked in advance with the NVT Production Coordinator until 3 weeks before the show opens, when that venue will be reserved solely for your production. N.B.: Ensure time is allocated in the rehearsal schedule for set building and dressing.

3. Production Meeting

The design will be discussed in more detail at the Production Meeting, with particular regard to practical and safety constraints.

4. Follow-up meetings

Directors should arrange follow-up meetings with the Set Designer and builders as necessary, to monitor progress and address any problems.

- The director is responsible for the safety of his / her production and should ensure that the Health and Safety officer is consulted and advised of progress as necessary.

5. Use of Studio and Theatre Upstairs

It is essential that all those involved in the design and construction of sets are issued with copies of the detailed [guidance document](#) and that they read and abide by the rules set out in it.

6. Seating numbers

The seating format and seating numbers should be agreed by the director in consultation with the Health and Safety Officer.

- Some example seating formats can be found in [Studio Seating](#), however this is not an exhaustive list and one-off designs can be used to compliment a production.

- The seating numbers in the Theatre Upstairs is a maximum of 75.

7. Notification of number of seats (mainly for Studio productions)

The Director / Production Manager should notify Front of House and Box Office of the final audience seating numbers for the show no later than 2 weeks before the first night.

- Once seating arrangements have been agreed they must not be altered. If an alteration seems inevitable, the Health and Safety Officer and Artistic Director must be consulted first.

- If the standard seating arrangement is not used, please inform the box office no later than the Pre-production Meeting, so that the number of tickets on sale can be reduced and managed until final confirmation.

Props & Furniture

1. Props List

The Director and Stage Manager should provide the NVT Props Officer with a copy of the script, as soon as possible.

- *The Director should make it clear whether the Props Officer is to derive a properties list directly from the script.*

- *If this is not the case, the Director should supply the Props Officer with a separate properties list. In the latter instance, a script should nevertheless be supplied for reference / interest.*

- *The props list should contain a detailed description of each item required, e.g. size, period, colour, etc. and should state the name of the play and dates by when props are needed.*

2. Meeting with Properties Officer

- *Having provided the props list, the normal practice is for the Director and Stage Manager to arrange a meeting with the Props Officer to view what has been found / can be made and discuss how to source or substitute missing items.*

3. Furniture

Use items of furniture stored upstairs at the theatre in the first instance.

- *Furniture must not be altered unless permission has been given and is returned to its original state after the production.*

- *Furniture with a wooden finish must not be painted.*

- *Furniture that has already been painted may be re-painted as needed.*

- *Furniture made for the production must be structurally fit for purpose and the cost is within the production budget.*

4. Making Props

It is advisable to consult the NVT Props Officer and possibly set-builders before making props.

- *If specially constructed props are considered necessary, their cost should be within the production budget and also adequate time allowed for their construction.*

5. Return of Props

Props should be assembled and returned in good order at the Get-out of the play.

- *They should be handed to the NVT Props Officer, clearly labelled, either in a container, or at least placed safely together, or as advised by the NVT Props Officer.*

6. Items not permissible as props

No furniture or other items (e.g. crockery) is to be taken from Front-of-House / Bar / South Hall for use as props.

Costume

1. Costume Design

It is important to start the process of designing the costumes early in the production process. The costume designer will, if possible, be invited to attend the Pre-production Meeting, where the Director will discuss the concept for the production.

- If it is not possible to have appointed a Costume Designer by the time of the Pre-production Meeting, it is essential that costume design discussions be held as soon as possible after that date.

2. Costume budget

No money may be spent on costume outside the limits of the production budget without prior consultation and authorisation from the NVT committee.

- Costume costs should therefore be carefully considered and expenditure kept to a minimum.

3. Costume Liaison

The Director / Production Manager should appoint someone to act as costume liaison for the play.

- This person, or people, will attempt to source costumes in liaison with the Director and Costume Designer as necessary.

- Costume Liaison will provide a link between the Director and costume supplier and will assist in measuring the cast, fitting and organising the costumes, and ferrying them to and from NVT, ensuring that all costumes are returned to the supplier at the end of the run. - Hired costumes may not be altered in any way and every care should be taken to avoid damage.

- Please check if costumes need to be laundered.

4. Sources of Costume

The NVT does not store costumes or maintain a wardrobe. Current options for costuming a show are as follows:

Hire

- [Glad Rags](#) - any items purchased for the show are normally donated to Gladrags in exchange for a credit

- [Harveys](#) – military items

- Moss Bros – often suits are provided for our production at no charge, subject to a full page advert in our programme

Buy

- Charity shops etc.

- Make

- In-house (if any members skilled in this area)

- Professional (e.g. Glad Rags)

- Personal wardrobes

Choice of source for costumes should always be made with regard to the production budget.

Budget

1. Rough estimate of production costs

Each production has its own budget to cover everything except royalties and poster / programme printing (which come out of a separate theatre fund.)

- As a general rule the amount will be the same for each standard production, based on figures advised by the NVT Treasurer.

Production Specification

- A rough estimate of costs should, as far as possible, be provided in the Proposal to Direct, or at least discussed at the Pre-production Meeting, so that any unusual costs can be identified and agreement sought. At this stage the budget should be agreed in principle.

2. Providing a written budget

The Director should obtain a [Budget Form](#) by the Pre-production Meeting.

- The form must be completed as fully as possible and presented at the Production Meeting.

3. Keeping to the budget

Any items that would bring the budget over its limit must be discussed with the NVT Committee prior to any expense being incurred.

- In occasional cases, specialist equipment may be purchased out of NVT funds, (i.e. separate from the budget for that specific production) with Committee approval.

4. Recording expenses

The Director / Production Manager should keep a clear record of all expenses for the production. It is essential to obtain and keep receipts for all expenditure.

All expenditure on a production should be first cleared with the Production Manager.

5. Claiming expenses

Records of expenses and receipts should be presented to the NVT Treasurer for reimbursement.

- Expenses can only be reimbursed on presentation of receipts.

- Please provide the bank details for a swift transfer.

6. Permissions / rights / royalties

Performing rights for the season are obtained by the Treasurer and paid for out of a central budget.

Get In

The Get In of a production is normally 2 weeks prior to opening night. The following are implemented at the Get-in.

1. Rostra and Seating in the Studio

On no account may rostra, including steps and guard-rails, be assembled without first consulting the Health and Safety Officer.

- *The agreed [seating plan](#) is implemented.*

2. Permission to come on set

From the Get-in onwards, permission should always be obtained to come on set.

- *Normally this would be from the Director, or designated person, e.g. Stage Manager, set builder, scaffolder, etc.*
- *Unauthorised intrusions onto a set can be dangerous and may be discourteous.*

3. Set build

Construction begins

- *ensure you book time and space for set building.*
- *please use protective equipment and signage.*
- *The set needs to be safely in place and as complete as possible, for technical rehearsals to begin.*

4. Lighting

Lighting equipment needs to be installed, rigged and focussed according to the lighting design, ready for the technical rehearsals.

5. Props and Furniture

Furniture needs to be installed.

- *The stage should be marked to indicate positions of furniture and props.*
- *The props table to be set up in a place that is not accessed by the audience.*
- *All rehearsal props to be in place as soon as practical, latest 1 week before tech rehearsals.*
- *An accurate record to be kept of all incoming items*

6. Sound

Ensure speakers installed in correct position in accordance with sound design.

7. Costume

Dressing-rooms to be prepared.

- *Costumes to be safely stored in dressing-rooms, clearly labelled.*
- *An accurate record to be kept of all incoming items.*

Technical Rehearsal Process

Technical preparation: The first technical rehearsal and the cue-to-cue rehearsal are procedures which may happily happen over a single weekend but it is important to realise that they are separate stages which require careful organisation to make best use of time and resources. This process should normally take place one week before the first performance.

1. Essential Preparation

This covers general technical points that must be covered before the first tech rehearsal can take place, e.g. plotting of cues, sourcing materials, agreeing sound effects / music with the director.

Lighting

- *Lanterns rigged, focussed, gelled in accordance with the lighting design*
- *Lighting states plotted in conjunction with script*
- *Lighting states recorded and programmed into the lighting console*

Sound

- *Any sound recording needs to be transferred into the computer system and cued in showcue.*
- *The sound designer and director should plot the sound cues in the script.*

Audio-visual equipment

- *Video projector to be rigged, focussed and video cues plotted in the script*

Props

- *All performance props to be available*
- *Props table(s) to be set up and marked up by Stage Manager*

2. First Technical Rehearsal

This rehearsal is for the benefit of the technical operators. Its object is for the operators to try out the process and for the director and design team to agree that lighting, sound and other technical issues are satisfactory.

- *AV cues are run together and any adjustments made.*

Essential personnel

- *Director*
- *Designers – lights, sound, set, film / video, costume*
- *Lighting operator*
- *Sound operator*
- *Video operator if required*
- *Stage Manager*
- *Wardrobe*

All cues recorded

- *The Stage Manager should note all essential cues – lighting, sound, set, props, costume (if costume affects other technical cues) – in preparation for the Cue-to-cue rehearsal.*
- *This ensures that all essential cues can be called by the Stage Manager at the Cue-to-cue.*

Sound levels

- *Provisional sound levels are set, agreed and noted.*

3. Cue-to-cue

The Cue-to-cue brings together all the elements – sound, lighting, props, set, costume (where

dependent on technical elements) and actors.

- *the play is run from one essential cue to the next and only runs cues.*
- *this rehearsal is an opportunity for technicians to integrate the various technical elements into the production. Actors are essential to this process and they should be prepared to jump from cue to cue as required, and as often as is necessary.*

Essential personnel

- *Director*
- *Sound operator*
- *Lighting operator*
- *Designers – lighting, sound, set, costume*
- *Stage manager*
- *Wardrobe*
- *Cast*
- *Others as necessary – musicians, scene shifters, video operators etc*

4. Dress / Tech

A run in real time, with all elements of the production, with only essential stops in cases where adjustments need to be made.

- *This is the last chance to solve problems.*
- *It is essential that actors rehearse in costume and that costumes are available at this rehearsal.*
- *If dressers are to be used they should be involved in this rehearsal.*

Dress Rehearsals

A run that sets out to reproduce performance conditions as closely as possible. Costume, make-up, hair etc. may be in place for the first time.

1. Preparation of space

- Auditorium to be cleared
- Entrances and exits as for performance
- Stage space, props and set to be set up as for performance

2. Times

Dress rehearsals should start at the same time as performances are scheduled

- The Front of House Manager should be notified of the approximate running times, including the duration of the first half and the interval and the expected finish time.

3. Cast and crew arrive on premises

All cast and crew to sign in on arrival on the paper on the board at stage door (bottom of the stairs).

- This needs to be taken in case of an evacuation.
- All cast and crew to check for any instructions on the board.
- All cast and crew to arrive in advance at a time agreed by the director that will allow adequate time for preparation.
- Evening shows 6:30pm
- Matinee shows 1:30pm

4. Stage Manager runs the Dress Rehearsal and Performances

- The Stage Management team will run dress rehearsals and performances, calling times as agreed.

5. Rehearsal Notes

- Time should be built in to the rehearsal period for the director to give notes, both to cast and crew.
- It should be agreed beforehand, if at all possible, the optimum time for these notes to be given.

6. Preview performance

Complimentary tickets are not given for the performance run of any show other than to reviewers and press.

- However, one dress rehearsal may, if required, be designated as a preview performance. - This provides an opportunity for those who have worked on the show, e.g. set-builders, Duty Managers, Box Office Managers or those have contributed significantly to it, to see the performance.
- It also provides the actors and the whole company with an opportunity to perform before a friendly audience.

7. Dress Photographer

Invite photographer to 1 / 2 dress rehearsals.

The Run

From this point on we are open to the public. It is essential that all members of the company conduct themselves with professionalism during a production, to ensure the safe and smooth running of the show. We have a responsibility to the public who pay to see our shows, to maintain a high standard of conduct.

1. Signing in

- All cast and crew should sign in on arrival on the board at the stage door.
- All cast and crew to check for any instructions on the board

2. Arrival times

Arrival times are arranged by the Director and Stage Manager according to the needs of the production.

Actors

- Normally, actors would arrive an hour before the performance is due to start. This allows time for essential preparation, e.g. costume, make-up and warm-up.

Technical crew

- Technical crew should arrive half an hour before performance is due to commence. This allows time for essential preparation, e.g. technical checks, replacement of broken bulbs etc.

Late arrival

- Any delay, or circumstance that prevents a member of the company from arriving punctually should be communicated immediately to the Stage Manager.

Extraordinary circumstances

- If, as a result of accident, illness or other extraordinary circumstances, an actor or crew member is unable to attend a performance, it is essential that they notify the Stage Manager as early as possible, to allow time for contingency plans to be implemented.

3. Stage Manager's role during performance

The director hands the keys to the Stage Manager and explains access and security of the building.

- The Stage Manager runs the performance
- The Stage Management team will run performances, calling times as agreed.
- The Duty Manager gives the Stage Manager "Clearance" to start the performance.
- During a performance period the actors and crew are responsible to the Stage Manager.

Emergency situations

- In the event of emergency, e.g. fire or accident, the cast and crew should follow any instructions given by the Stage Manager.

Emergency evacuation of building

- In the event of a fire, or other emergency requiring the evacuation of the building, all cast and crew should follow the instructions issued by the Stage Manager.
- The Stage Manager liaises with Duty Manager on evacuating the building.

Halting the show

- The decision to halt a show in an emergency, or for any reason, is the responsibility of the Stage Manager in consultation with the Duty Manager.
- Cast and crew have an obligation to comply with such a decision.

4. Conduct

It is essential that members follow the NVT rules of conduct

5. Safety

Cast and crew must behave responsibly at all times with regard to their own safety and that of others.

6. Neighbours

The NVT is situated in a residential area and it is essential that all members of the theatre show consideration to our neighbours.

- *taking care to leave the premises quietly.*
- *this applies to the smoking area and yard during rehearsals.*
- *doors must be closed by 10:30pm and no use of the yard is permitted.*

Get Out

As time is at a premium, it is important to plan the implementation of the Get-out in good time. Normally a day should be reserved for the Get-out. The studio floor should be painted back to black, with enough time allowed for paint to dry before use by the next production.

1. Rostra and Seating in the Studio

On no account may rostra, including steps and guard-rails, be disassembled or assembled without first consulting the Health and Safety Officer.

- Seating to be left in place or, by arrangement with the next production, arranged to their specific requirements under supervision from either the Health and Safety Officer.

2. Strike set

Set to be struck safely, ensuring appropriate tools are available.

Screws / nails

- All screws / nails etc. to be removed from flats.

- As much as possible, materials, such as nails or screws to be stored and re-used.

Reusable materials

- Materials / flats for re-use to be stored in scene dock and / or exterior stores.

- On no account should set items / material be left in the exterior yards, the stage upstairs or anywhere other designated storage areas.

Disposal of materials

- Materials for disposal to be placed tidily and safely outside in the north yard.

- Care should be taken to avoid obstructing essential gangways / paths

- Please advise the Buildings Manager accordingly, so arrangements for disposal can be made.

3. De-rig Lighting

The Technical Team / Designer of the next production should be consulted as he or she may prefer the rigged lanterns to stay in place.

Lanterns

- If not advised differently, de-rig all lanterns and lighting equipment.

- Store lanterns and lighting equipment in the Studio Lighting Box.

Plugs

- Plugs to be removed from dimmers for Studio productions. They are hardwired in upstairs.

Lighting script

- Script for lighting to be returned to the director.

4. Props and furniture

Collect and label

- Props should be assembled and returned in good order at the Get-out of the play.

- They should be handed to the NVT Props Officer, clearly labelled, either in a container, or at least placed safely together, or as advised by the NVT Props Officer.

Furniture

- All furniture to be taken out of the theatre space and either be returned, stored upon agreement or disposed of.

- Where furniture is to be temporarily stored before being returned to source, this should be for as short a time as possible. Storage should be agreed prior to the Get Out

NVT furniture

- *NVT furniture to be returned to its storage location.*

5. Sound

Return sound equipment

- *ensure that any mobile sound equipment is returned and safely stored.*

Return scripts

- *scripts for sound to be returned to the director.*

6. Ops boxes

- *Studio to be returned to good order. Floor to be vacuumed, rubbish to be disposed of.*
- *Theatre Upstairs to be cleared and cleaned.*

7. Costumes

To be sorted, labelled, accounted for, checked off against original record, laundered if necessary and returned to the correct source.

8. Keys

Director / Production Manager of the show to return all keys to the Chairman by the day of the Get-out.

Production Manager Role

1. General role

- *The Production Manager (PM) is responsible for the overall production.*
- *This is a co-ordinator's role, ensuring that the various teams or individuals (props, costumes, set design/build, publicity, etc.) are all able to fulfill their particular tasks by the agreed deadlines.*
- *This should not preclude the PM from becoming involved, in a hands-on sense, with any aspect of the production seen to be requiring attention.*
- *The role also involves liaison with the NVT Production Coordinator, principally finance, as it is the PM who will control the production budget.*
- *The PM has overall responsibility for the production during the run, working closely with the Stage Manager.*

2. Production Schedule

- *The PM will agree with the Director the production schedule:*
- *production meeting dates*
- *rigging dates*
- *technical and dress rehearsal dates*
- *distribute production schedule to crew and cast*

3. Cast/Crew details

- *The PM will agree with Director all crew roles and responsibilities and ensure all roles are filled.*
- *Create crew and cast list with contact details:*
- *Distribute this list to Artistic Director, NVT Production Coordinator; Front of House Manager, Newsletter Editor and Membership Secretary.*
- *Assist Director in ensuring all crew and cast are paid up members of NVT.*

4. Budget

- *The PM will agree budget with Director and submit draft to NVT Production Coordinator.*
- *Obtain approval from Committee for any essential over-limit spend before incurring it.*
- *Manage budget – receive receipts and record all spending.*
- *Submit final budget and expenditure sheet to NVT Treasurer for reimbursement.*

5. Meetings

- *The PM will Book production meeting spaces in NVT calendar by contacting NVT Diary Manager, or in their absence, Chairman.*
- *Attend all Production Meetings.*

6. Rehearsal Schedule

- *The PM will work with Director on creating draft Rehearsal Schedule.*
- *Distribute to cast and crew and solicit feedback to dates selected.*
- *Book rehearsal dates, times and venues in NVT calendar by contacting NVT Diary Manager.*
- *Distribute confirmed schedule to cast and crew.*
- *Attend rehearsals regularly to keep abreast of progress.*

7. Posters and Programmes

- *The PM will coordinate the production of the poster and programmes.*
- *The PM will ensure publicity photos and cast bios are available when required.*

8. Get Out and Post Production

- *The PM will plan the Get Out in consultation with the Director*
- *Prior agreement will be made for storage or disposal of furniture and props*
- *Moving of the rostra in the Studio will be agreed prior with the Health and Safety Manager.*
- *Future Front of House (Bar & Box Office) cover will be scheduled with the Director, Cast and Crew.*

Stage Manager Role

1. General role

The SM is an organisational role.

- *The SM ensures the smooth running of the production during the run.*
- *The SM liaises closely with the Front of House team during the production to ensure both parties know what is expected.*
- *The SM agrees all prop and furniture requirements with the Director and will liaise with the Production Manager to get approval for any essential over-limit expenditure.*
- *The SM works with the Props and Set team to obtain all props and furniture.*
- *The SM is responsible for signing for all NVT Props used by a production and for returning these in good condition to the Props Room at the end of the production.*
- *The SM will agree with the Director the date when all props should be available for rehearsals.*
- *The SM will ensure that props are available for rehearsal and stored safely in an agreed location in between rehearsals.*
- *The SM will start attending rehearsals at least from the point at which props are needed.*
- *The SM will produce a props sheet marking what props are needed where and at what time in each scene, so that someone else can take over this duty in any emergency.*
- *It is recommended that the SM appoints one or more ASMs to assist and provide back-up cover in case of illness or unexpected absence.*
- *The SM will liaise with the NVT Health and Safety Manager about evacuation routes and procedure.*

2. During the run

The following is a list of the tasks performed by the Stage Manager during the run:

- *Arrive between 6.30 and 7.00 pm (or equivalent for different start time e.g. matinees), depending on complexity of the props.*
- *Check cast and crew members into a register before each performance.*
- *Turn on relay speaker in the Dressing Rooms.*
- *Check with box office staff how many audience are in.*
- *Check theatre space is clean and clear of litter.*
- *Ensure space available for wheelchair users (studio only).*
- *Organise and position props ready for each performance, replacing consumable props as needed.*
- *Assist cast or crew in any last minute hitches.*
- *Ensure a torch is available to read prop directions in script.*
- *Call the hour – inform cast and crew.*
- *Liaise with Duty Manager about plan for audience entering theatre space.*
- *Inform Duty Manager on length of each half, exit use during performance, procedure for latecomers etc.*
- *Ensure cast are dressed and in position at least half-an-hour before curtain.*
- *Call the half-hour.*
- *Ensure crew are in position and that sound and light tests have been carried out.*
- *Ensure all health and safety throughout run: fire door access, presence of fire extinguishes (foam filled near electrical appliances), no costumes blocking corridor in dressing rooms, etc.*
- *Call the quarter hour to curtain up.*
- *Advise Duty Manager when the theatre space is ready to be opened. This may be close to*

start if cast are preset.

- *When all audience members are in the auditorium the Duty Manager will give 'CLEARANCE' to start the performance.*
- *If play is in the studio, ensure lights in foyer are out..*
- *For studio performances; ensure lights in corridor to toilets and props table area are off.*
- *Get first actors ready. Stand-by light and sound.*
- *Light and sound queues to start.*
- *Usher cast in unless they start in the space before audience is let in.*
- *Agree actual time to re-start after interval with Duty Manager.*
- *Clear props during interval and set for 2nd half.*
- *Give actors 5 minute call before audience comes in.*
- *Inform Duty Manager when ready to get audience back in.*
- *When all audience members are in the auditorium the FoH Manager will give 'CLEARANCE' to re-start the performance.*
- *Ensure actors ready to go on and queue sound and light.*
- *At the end of the performance, clear auditorium of audience and rubbish.*
- *Clear props and re-set for first half.*
- *Turn off tannoy in dressing rooms.*
- *Check that lights and power have been switched off and doors locked upstairs once cast has changed and taken required belongings.*

Role of the Duty Manager

The Duty Manager (DM) has overall responsibility for the security and running of the building during any performance. They also manage all aspects of a performance that are within the realms of the audience.

1. Opening the Bar

- The DM will brief the bar cover and fire steward members and setup the bar along with normal procedures
- Any specific requirements for the production will have been advised to the DM previously by the NVT Front of House Coordinator
- The DM will confirm with the Stage Manager any specific requirements for the production - doors open, preset cast or early opening of the house etc.
- The DM will ensure the Box Office is manned.

2. Opening the Doors

- The DM will confirm that all is ready with the bar, Box Office and Stage Manager before opening the doors.
- The DM will put out the 'A' board
- The DM will maintain liaison with the Box Office and update the Stage Manager on audience still to arrive from 15 minutes before the start time.

3. Opening the House

- The DM will liaise with the Stage Manager to get 'CLEARANCE' to open the house.
- The DM with agreement of Box Office and Stage Manager, will open the house and make the announcement to the audience.

4. Starting the Performance

- The DM will ensure the 'A' board is brought back in, the front door is shut and bell switched off.
- The DM will decide - in agreement with the Stage Manager - to start the performance even if some audience has not arrived no later than 5 minutes after the scheduled start time.
- The DM will ensure all audience members are in the auditorium - and confirm the number with the Fire Steward - before giving 'CLEARANCE' to the Stage Manager to start the performance.

5. Interval

- The DM will liaise with the Stage Manager on the duration of the interval.
- The Stage Manager will give the DM 'CLEARANCE' to send the audience back into the auditorium.
- The DM will give the announcement, check all audience members are in the auditorium - and confirm the number with the Fire Steward - before giving the Stage Manager 'CLEARANCE' to re-start the performance.

6. End of the Performance

- The DM continue to manage the building and its security until the bar is closed, building is clear and locked for the evening.

7. In the Event of an Emergency

- *In the event of the fire alarms sounding The DM will implement the Fire Alarm Procedure.*
- *Any decision to evacuate the building will be taken by the FoH Manager.*
- *If a member of the audience is taken ill, the DM will liaise with the Fire Steward and Stage Manager. Assistance will be provided to the audience member and the performance will be stopped if it is necessary to do so.*

Security of Theatre Building

Apart from during a performance, where the Duty Manager has the responsibility, the security of the building falls to the Director (or other key holder) managing the activity.

1. The Director is responsible for the security of the building.

The Director must ensure that when the building is vacated the following actions are taken:

- *All doors are locked*
- *Fire exit doors are secure*
- *All lights are turned off*
- *Hot/cold water taps are turned off*
- *All lighting/electrical equipment is made safe*
- *All kitchen appliances are switched off (with the exception of the Ice Machine)*
- *The burglar alarm is set.*

2. It is important to ascertain whether there are other users in the building, before leaving.

- *All users should ensure that they agree and understand who will be the last to leave the premises and who is to take responsibility for locking which doors.*
- *Misunderstandings can result in the building being left insecure.*

3. When the building is in use, the Director should ensure that the building, its occupants and contents are secure.

- *Individuals need to be safe from intruders.*
- *Personal valuables and items belonging to the theatre should be secure.*

The following precautions should therefore be taken:

- *Access to the theatre should normally be via the stage door and not the main (front) door.*
- *If essential to gain access via the front door, it should not be left open unless someone is monitoring who is coming in. At all other times the front door should be kept shut.*
- *The north side passageway door (the one with the keypad fitted) should be kept shut at all times. This prevents unauthorised persons getting in.*

4. It is important to use the side passageway entrance at all times if possible.

- *All authorised users of the premises should be provided with the keypad code and instructed about the above security procedures.*

5. Where at all possible, do not bring valuables onto the premises.

- *Loss or theft of property can result in suspicion falling on NVT members, which is unpleasant for all concerned.*
- *The NVT cannot be held responsible for items being stolen.*
- *The NVT does not undertake to compensate for loss or theft of property from its premises. All cast, crew, etc. should be advised of the security arrangements to ensure their own security and that of the theatre, by taking the above precautions.*

Noise

The theatre is in a residential area. It is a condition of our licence that the following rules are strictly observed:

1. When leaving the building at any time, everyone should be as quiet as possible. This is particularly important in the evenings, when any noise, even normal conversation, carries a long way.
2. The keypad gate (North passageway) should be kept shut at all times and care taken to close it quietly to avoid annoyance to neighbours.
3. When using the patio, outside fire-escape stairs, or side passageways, any noise should be kept to a minimum. The patio must not be used after 10.30pm. No music may be played outside the building.
4. Members should spend no longer than absolutely necessary on the fire-escape, out of respect for the privacy of our neighbours, whose property it overlooks. Using it as a Smoking area from the Dressing Rooms is not allowed.
5. The fire door to the rear garden area should, whenever possible, be kept closed. In any event, it must be kept closed after 10.30pm.
6. The front door must be kept closed as soon as the audience have left the auditorium. In any event, the front door must be kept closed after 10.30pm.
7. The only music permitted in the South Hall will be low-level background music. No music is allowed after 11.00pm.
8. No bands playing amplified music are permitted in the building.
9. If amplified live music or drums are required for a production, then permission should be sought from the Committee.

It is vital that we maintain good relations with our neighbours through our courteous behaviour.

Use of the Studio and Theatre Upstairs

1. Notes for directors, set-builders light-riggers and others assisting on set.

The Director has overall responsibility for the health and safety of his/her cast and crew, this includes set-builders, those rigging lanterns, or anyone else who is working on the production. It is essential that this document should be read in conjunction with the NVT Health and Safety Policy.

To ensure both theatre spaces are looked after and maintained to the highest possible standards and that Health and Safety requirements fully complied with, it is essential that the following rules are observed:

- *The Director / Production Manager should provide all the above with a copy of the [NVT Health and Safety Policy](#). - He/she should ensure that they each sign and return a copy of its attached confirmation slip, acknowledging that they have read and understood the policy.*
- *The completed confirmation slips must either be returned to the Health and Safety Manager or left in their tray in the office as soon as possible.*
- *The Director / Production Manager should ensure that whilst set-building, lantern-rigging, or any other technical/construction work is being undertaken, only those authorised to be there are present.*
- *The Director / Production Manager should also ensure that all cast and crew know and understand the action to be taken in the event of a fire (see fire action notices).*
- *The Production Manager / Health and Safety Manager are responsible for ensuring that all those involved in technical activities are fully aware of Health and Safety requirements and comply with them.*
- *Only those who have been trained and authorised are allowed to use ladders.*
- *Hard hats must be worn when anyone is working above ground-level.*
- *Consideration must be given to the safety of the audience at all times. This is particularly important in the Studio.*
- *Sets must be constructed so that the audience can be safely seated and able to vacate the theatre quickly in an emergency (minimum access to both fire exits of 1.6m).*
- *All emergency exits must be kept clear at all times and emergency signs must not be obstructed.*
- *Pre-set lighting must be sufficiently bright for audience members to be safely seated.*
- *In the Studio Theatre, props must not be set or left on the stage at the interval or end of the performance in such a way as to cause a hazard to audience members.*

2 Risk assessments

In order to comply with Health and Safety legislation it is necessary to carry out individual risk assessments. Risk assessments are required when any activity is being carried out that could result in injury, whether during a production or at any other time.

- *Examples of instances where risk assessments would be required within a production include smoking or use of any naked flames on stage, acrobatics and stage falls or fights.*
- *Additional expert training may be required to minimise the risk in falls, fights etc.*
- *Examples of instances where risk assessments would be required during the set building process would include erecting scaffolding, using ladders and working at heights.*
- *Where any of these activities are being considered, the Health and Safety Manager must be consulted before such activities are started.*
- *In the case of lantern-rigging, it is accepted that a risk assessment has already been carried out and that as a result there is an agreed safe procedure for rigging lanterns.*

- It is the responsibility of the Director / Production Manager to ensure that any person rigging lights has been appropriately trained in this procedure.

3. Flame-proofing of set and props.

Flame-proofing of all flammable materials is essential.

Wood

- All wood less than 18mm thick must be flame-proofed

Fabric

- This includes curtains, bed linen, tablecloths, carpets, banners and in some circumstances, costumes.

- It should not be assumed that anything is flame-proofed. If there is any doubt, the Health and Safety Manager should be consulted.

- Where items need flame-proofing, the Health and Safety Manager should be consulted.

- All flammable materials will be tested before the production starts and those not flame-proof will not be allowed.

4. Rostra in the Studio

For rostra to be safe they must be erected correctly.

Changes to rostra

- No changes are to be made to the layout of rostra without first consulting the Health and Safety Manager.

- When erecting the rostra, particular attention must be paid to ensuring that the metal frames are securely linked, guard rails are correctly positioned and unguarded steps and edges marked with white tape.

- Where appropriate, guards/chair-stops should be put in place at the back of the rostra to prevent chairs from becoming dislodged.

- All chairs must be securely linked together, with end-of-row chairs fastened so that they cannot be moved.

- The rostra may not be painted or have any fixings attached to them, (e.g. by screws or nails) that might damage them in any way.

5. Studio Capacity

For all Studio productions the audience capacity must be agreed with the Health & Safety Manager before the PPM.

- It must be possible to provide an appropriate space for anyone who is a wheelchair user.

- Once the [seating layout](#) has been agreed with the Health and Safety Manager, no changes to the layout should be made, or any seats added or taken away without first consulting the Health and Safety Manager.

6. Set-painting

Only emulsion paint may be used for set painting, unless it is special scenery paint from a theatrical supplier.

- Gloss paints or varnishes must not be used on sets or props under any circumstances.

- The Studio walls are to be left black.

- Drapes, curtains or banners may not be hung without prior consultation with the Health and Safety Manager. All such materials must be flame-proofed.

- If the Studio floor is to be painted other than black (emulsion paint only) it must be returned to black at the get-out, unless otherwise agreed by the Artistic Director.

- Time should be allowed for this when scheduling subsequent rehearsals or other use of the Studio space.

- No materials such as paper or wood are to be stuck to the Studio floor.

The auditorium of the Theatre Upstairs is not to be painted as part of any set.

- Any alteration or adaptation of the auditorium for a particular production may not be undertaken without prior consultation with the Health and Safety Manager and Artistic Director.

7. Set building

All sets must be securely fixed.

- It is not permitted to drill holes or attach fixings into brick or plaster walls.

- For health reasons, MDF should not be cut within the building.

8. Personal protective equipment

- Protective equipment such as safety goggles, protective gloves, dust-masks etc should used where necessary.

- Hard hats must be used when anyone is working above ground-level.

9. Lifting (manual handling)

Lifting of any materials whilst set-building, or actors lifting props, or each other, must follow legal guidelines for safe practice. Advice can be obtained from the Health and Safety Manager.

10. Noise

When set-building or other noisy activities are being undertaken, ear defenders must be worn, as appropriate.

11. Sound Visual and other Effects

- During performances, noise e.g. explosions, loud music, should not be at a level that could cause damage to anyone's hearing.

- Use of flashing lights, smoke machines, smoking on stage, strong smells etc. must be assessed for safety prior to the performances.

A warning announcement prior to performance is not in itself an adequate safeguard.

- Please note that legal permitted levels of noise, flashing light rates etc. and ensure you are below these levels. Advice can be obtained from the Health and Safety Manager.

12. Health & Safety equipment, notices and signs

No fire extinguishers/blankets, fire exit signs, Health & Safety notices etc are to be removed, repositioned, obscured, or altered in any way.

- If, under exceptional circumstances it is essential to do any of the above, the Health and Safety Manager must be consulted before any action is taken.

- If there are any doubts or concerns about any of the requirements set out in this document, they should be raised with the Health and Safety Manager and advice sought.

13. Workshop areas

Access to these areas are restricted to authorised personnel.

- Flats and materials are stored in these areas and must be returned and carefully stored after the production.

- All consumable materials e.g. hinges, door-locks, screws etc should be detached from their mountings and returned to the store for future use.

- There is a supply of tools available for use, which must also be returned to the store. - Power tools and certain hand tools e.g. jigsaws, wood chisels etc must only be used by

competent people. Those who have not used such equipment before should not be allowed to do so unless instructed in their safe use and supervised by a competent person.

H&S – pdf

Production Forms

Accepting everyone works in different ways a selection of forms have been collected for use as fit your needs.

[Rehearsal Schedule / Budget / Contact combined form](#)

[Budget Form](#)

[Audition Applicant Form](#) - pdf

[Proposal to Direct Form](#) - pdf

Procedure for Agreeing Additional Performances for a Production

NVT productions run from Friday to the following Saturday, with a matinee on Sunday and no evening performance on either the Sunday or Monday. There is one exception to this; the Fringe production in May does have a performance on the Monday evening. This means all productions have 8 performances (9 for the May production) out of the box.

Some productions may need additional performance to be planned. This may be due to one of the following reasons.

- Reduced seating capacity
- Potentially popular production e.g. Christmas
- The play is part of the current school curriculum
- Local / popular playwright

This list is not exhaustive.

If a director feels they may need additional performance(s). This should be raised initially with the Artistic Director during the planning process if possible. If not, then it is preferable for this to be done as early as possible and certainly before the auditions so it can be clear when casting.

With the agreement of the artistic director, the committee should be consulted if there is a significant cost to increasing the number of performance, due to licence fees etc. In addition to the cast and crew being able to undertake the additional performances an early approach to the Box office and Front of House coordinators should be made to give them the heads up and enable the identifying of any problems that may occur. Resolution to any such difficulties will be a priority and the production may be required to assist in Bar & Box cover on additional performances where this cannot be secured through the normal arrangements. This should all be undertaken swiftly after the additional performance(s) have been agreed, to ensure all is ready for accurate publicity of the production.

In extreme situations it may be necessary to look at adding an additional performance late in the rehearsal process e.g. due to unexpectedly high ticket sales. This should go through the same procedure as above, being expedited, advertised and tickets made available as quickly as possible. It is anticipated that this would be a rare occurrence.

[Casting Children In Plays And Youth Theatre Productions](#) - pdf