Buskirk-Chumley Theater
Volunteer Usher Handbook
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Welcome!

Thank you for volunteering to usher at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater (BCT)! We value all of our volunteers and know that you are critical to the success of the theater. This document has been developed to explain, in as specific a manner as possible, what the BCT offers to and expects from our volunteers.

Because the audience, performers, staff, and volunteers change for each event, it is important that BCT volunteers are prepared and able to handle themselves in a professional, courteous, and poised manner, no matter the situation. Please read this handbook carefully and prepare yourself to be a representative of this historical performing arts venue. We are happy to have you as a member of the Buskirk-Chumley Theater team!
Requirements

Requirements to Usher

- Be 18 years of age or older (*Teens age 15-17 can apply to usher by submitting an essay in 150-200 words about why they would like to volunteer as an usher.)
- Be able to stand for the length of the performance and move within the theater quickly and easily
- Be able to read the small print on tickets and work in low light conditions
- Be friendly and willing to interact with patrons, staff, and other volunteers in a courteous manner
- Feel comfortable managing large crowds in normal and emergency situations
- Attend usher training

Usher Training/Orientation

All new ushers must attend a volunteer orientation and training session before ushering. These sessions are held once a month at the theater, usually on a weekday evening. The training sessions cover a brief history of the theater, the roles of ushers, theater seating, emergency procedures, and a tour of the theater.

Yearly Emergency Training

As an usher, it is important to stay up to date on emergency procedures. The BCT offers an emergency procedure training session at the BCT three times a year. VIP ushers are required to attend one of these each year, but all of our ushers are encouraged to attend one a year.

BCT Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the BCT that there will be no discrimination or harassment in its programs, activities or employment based on race, color, sex, sexual preference, marital or parental status, religion, national origin, age or mental or physical disability. Questions or concerns related to affirmative action, nondiscrimination or equal opportunity should be directed to the Executive Director by email at director@buskirkchumley.org or phone at 812-323-3022.
Expectations

These are the expected commitment levels that we have for our ushers.

All Ushers

- Volunteer on a regular basis throughout the year. Though we, currently, do not have a minimum number of times you must usher, it is most beneficial to the theater if volunteers usher for at least 6 events a year
- Only sign up for events that you are seriously committed to ushering
- Arrive on time and look professional in the appropriate usher attire: a clean, crisp, unwrinkled white dress shirt, and black dress pants or a skirt
- Seek to improve your skills and knowledge as an usher
- Avoid cancellations as much, as possible, but if you must cancel, do so at least 24 hours in advance by calling the Box Office at 812-323-3020 during business hours.

VIP Ushers

All of the above, plus...

- Volunteer 12 or more times in a year
- Attend one emergency procedure training session at the theater every year
- Be a positive example and resource for people who are new to ushering at the BCT
- Be knowledgeable about the various roles of ushers
- Be willing to step in and help, when possible, for events that need more ushers

House Managers

The House Manager will be in charge of the front of house coordination during any event, this includes managing all of the ushers. Ushers are expected to follow the instructions of the House Manager throughout the entire event.
Grounds for Dismissal

Canceling Without Notice

Cancelling for an event less than 24 hours in advance is only acceptable in the case of emergencies. If this happens more than two times in a year, the volunteer is subject to dismissal.

If a volunteer is absent from an event without notifying the Box Office more than once, then the volunteer is subject to dismissal.

Drugs and Alcohol

Volunteers are subject to immediate dismissal if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their volunteer duties.

General Grounds for Dismissal

Grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, failure to perform assigned duties, inability to perform assigned duties, failure to follow the BCT’s policies and procedures, failure to meet minimum standards of performance, abuse of patrons or staff, alcohol or illegal drug use while volunteering, theft of BCT property, misconduct or subordination.

Benefits

- Helping to keep this Bloomington historical theater alive!
- If you usher for two or more events within a 30 day period, you can request a complimentary ticket to an event within the next 90 days.
- If you usher 12 or more times in a calendar year, then you will become a VIP usher and receive your own BCT name tag, and have the first opportunity to sign up for BCT Presents events.
- You will be involved in the community and stay in-the-know about events happening at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater.
Signing Up to Usher Events

In order to sign up to usher, you will need to have a personal email account and access to a computer with internet. Each volunteer must individually sign up to usher by logging into their BCT Box Office Account. You will not be able to sign up for friends or family members on your own account. If you need assistance signing up online, please contact the volunteer coordinator at volunteer@buskirkchumley.org.

It is your responsibility to keep track of the times and dates of your commitments.

Cancelling for Events

Cancelling More Than 48 Hours Before an Event

If it is more than two days before an event and you realize that you are not able to usher for the event you have signed up for, then please email the volunteer coordinator at volunteer@buskirkchumley.org.

Cancelling Less Than 48 Hours Before an Event

In this case, if you have become ill or are otherwise unable to report for the event, please contact the box office by calling 812-323-3020. Give the staff your full name, which event you were scheduled to usher, and briefly why you cannot usher the event.

We understand the sometimes things come up, however, it is important that volunteers consistently follow-through with ushering the events for which they sign up.
What to Wear

Please look professional and clean; wear nice solid pressed black pants or skirt, with dark comfortable dress shoes and a crisp white (not beige) formal top. If the shirt is a button up, please tuck in your shirt and wear a black belt. Once you are at the theater, you will pick up your usher name tag or lanyard to wear as well.

Please do not wear strong perfume or cologne, as some people are sensitive to them. Also, please refrain from wearing jewelry that may make noise as you walk.
Primary Usher Assignments

Greeter

Greeters stand at the front doors to welcome patrons and direct those picking up will call to the Box Office. At intermission greeters may need to watch to see that patrons do not take alcohol outside of the theater. It is also a good idea to watch for patrons with accessibility issues and ask if they need any assistance.

Ticket Taker

Ticket takers tear tickets and direct patrons using these terms for direction: “Main Floor right/left” and “Balcony right/left.” At intermission ticket takers may need to check the ticket stubs as patrons re-enter the theater.

Program Pusher

Program pushers (lovely name, right?) hand out programs, assist with tickets, and help to direct patrons, particularly those with wheelchairs or other accessibility needs. It’s important to keep your hand gestures small in this role, as the area will be crowded.

At intermission program pushers may need to direct the flow of the concessions line and direct patrons to the bathrooms.
**Seater**

Seaters stand in the theater and assist patrons, who need help, with finding their seats. Seaters will need to remain outside of the doors for 15 minutes into the event, in order to assist latecomers.

It is important for seaters to speak quietly with patrons outside the doors once the production has begun and to use their flashlights discreetly, at no more than a 30 degree angle to their body, while inside the theater.

At intermission seaters will be available for patrons who have questions.

**Security**

Security stand or sit at the doors that lead backstage, restricting access to only performers and BCT staff. Security must stay at their station until a House Manager releases them - no exceptions.

During intermission Security will stay at their assigned door. However, if a bathroom break is needed at this time, ushers working security can flag down an usher or House Manager to take their place during their break. This may also be arranged with the House Manager before the show.
Theater Seating and Tickets

All directions are from the perspective of the audience looking toward the stage.

**Orchestra Level**

The Orchestra Level is where you will find 100-300 numbered seats. 100 on the left, 200 in center, and 300 on the right. Rows are lettered U-W in the orchestra pit (when these extra seats are added). The fixed seat rows are lettered A-M front of theater to back in the center and A-R from front to back on the left and right.

**Box Seats**

The Box Seats are numbered 001-005. Box Seat rows are lettered YL & YZ on the left and YR & ZR on the right.

**Lower Balcony**

In the Lower Balcony seats are numbered 400-500. 400 on the left, 500 on the right. The rows are lettered AA-CC from front to back.

**Bench Seat**

The Bench Seats are numbered in line with the upper balcony (600-800). The Bench Seat row is lettered XX.

**Upper Balcony**

In the Upper Balcony seats are numbered 600-800. 600 on the left, 700 in the center, 800 on the right. The rows are lettered DD-KK from front to back in the center and DD-JJ from front to back on the sides.
Accessible Seating

Wheelchair

Ushers will escort patrons in wheelchairs to the far right aisle of the orchestra level in order to access the wheelchair seating area easily. The Buskirk-Chumley Theater does not have elevators, so all accessible seating is on the orchestra level.

Things to Remember About Wheelchair Accessible Seating

- **Ask permission** - Always ask wheelchair users if they would like assistance before you help.
- **Be respectful** - Individual's wheelchairs are part of their body space. Don't hold onto or lean on them unless given permission.
- **Speak directly** - Be careful not to exclude the wheelchair usher from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, you may sit or kneel to get yourself on the same level as the individual in the wheelchair.
- **Further Assistance?** - Ask if there is any other way that we can assist them.

Hearing Aids - Hearing Aids are available in the tech booth. The devices work best in the orchestra level seating above row L. If the patron needs to move seats to use the device during a reserved seating show, please ask a House Manager for assistance.
In an emergency it is important to act calmly, quickly, and efficiently.

**Patron and Volunteer Emergencies**

If a patron or volunteer has an accident, is injured, unconscious, or vomiting, *immediately* report this to a House Manager. Volunteers should never attempt to clean up any human blood or other body fluids. If there are body fluids, keep patrons away from the area.

**First Aid Kits**

We have first aid kits in the usher closet, in the tech booth, and in the concessions area.

**Tornado - Take Shelter**

In the event of a tornado warning (meaning a tornado has been sighted in the area), everyone in the theater will be asked to take shelter until the warning is clear. If patrons choose to leave the theater and go elsewhere, they can do so.

The House Manager and Technical Director will assist you with sheltering patrons in these areas, in this order, beginning with the Orchestra Level:

- **Basement** - Dressing Rooms, Storage Rooms, Machine Room
- **Auditorium Hallways** - Audience Left, Audience Right
- **Auditorium** - Tech Booth, Dressing Rooms
- **Main Floor** - Bathrooms, Closets
- **Inner Lobby** - Away from glass doors

The House Manager or Tech Director will announce when the threat is clear.
Fire - Evacuate

Always evacuate if the alarm goes off.

**Orchestra Level Evacuation Procedure**

**Audience Right Exit:** Move to the Exit Door, raise your hand, calmly, but loudly say, "**We are evacuating the theater. Please exit here.**" You may need to say this multiple times. If there are two ushers, it is ideal that one holds the first door and the other directs the patrons outside at the sidewalk.

**Audience Left Exit:** Move to the Exit Door, raise your hand, calmly, but loudly say, "**We are evacuating the theater. Please exit here.**" If there are two ushers it is ideal that one holds the first door and the other directs patrons at the far door to the parking lot.

**Caution:** Open the door leading to the parking lot very slowly, as it opens onto an alley road.
Balcony Level Evacuation Procedure

**Balcony Left & Right Exit:** Move to the Exit Door, raise your hand, calmly, but loudly say, "*We are evacuating the theater. Please exit here.*" You may need to say this multiple times.

Patrons on the left side of the balcony will exit out of the left Exit Door. Patrons on the right side will exit out of the right Exit Door. When patrons get to the main floor, they will exit out the front theater doors and go east on Kirkwood and then south on Washington. Everyone will meet on the far side of the parking lot behind the theater.

![Diagram of Balcony Level Evacuation Routes](image-url)
BCT Services & Restrictions

Food/Drink - Only BCT concessions and Blu Boy Cafe food and drinks are allowed in the theater.

Bathrooms - Accessible bathrooms are on the main floor, larger mens/womens bathrooms are upstairs.

Drinking Fountains - There are two drinking fountains on the main floor and one upstairs.

Recycling/Trash - There are trash cans throughout the theater and recycling available for cans, plastic, and paper.

Cell Phones/Photo/Videos - Using phones to call or text people is not allowed in the auditorium during an event. The policy for photos and videos changes according to the performance. The House Manager will brief ushers on this before the event.

Smoking - The BCT is a “smoke-free” facility. Patrons who want to smoke should directed outside of the front doors on the sidewalk along Kirkwood away from the theater doors.

Alcohol - Alcohol may be available for sale in concessions, depending on the event. No outside alcohol is allowed into the theater and alcohol purchased inside the theater cannot be taken outside.
Most Important Things to Remember

Before the Show

● If you must cancel less than 48 hours before the show, then call the box office at 812-323-3020. Do not send an email, as it may not be seen before the event. Understand that not showing up without notice is grounds for dismissal.
● Be on time and dressed in the appropriate usher attire.
● Listen carefully to the House Manager’s instructions and ask questions to clarify.

During the Show

● Remain outside the theater 15 minutes into the show in order to seat latecomers.
● When assisting patrons with late seating, use your flashlight discreetly, keeping it at no more than a 30 degree angle to your body.
● Once you are released into the theater, stay in the seats assigned to you and keep an eye out for patrons who need assistance and also for disruptions that need addressed.

Intermission

● Return to your original assigned stations at intermission, unless asked by the House Manager to do something else.
● Remember to close the auditorium doors once the patrons are back inside.
● Return to your seats in the theater only after House Manager has released you.

After the Show

● Prop open the doors and return to your assigned stations, unless the House Manager has directed you elsewhere.
● Wish patrons a good night on their way out and collect returned programs.
● Assist the House Manager with light clean up once the patrons have left the theater.
General Theater Information

**Buskirk-Chumley Theater/BCT Box Office Address**

Buskirk-Chumley Theater  
114 E. Kirkwood Ave  
Bloomington, IN 47408

**BCT Box Office** - The BCT Box Office is next door to the theater. The box office sells tickets for events at the BCT, as well as events at other locations (i.e. Bloomington Playwrights Project).

**Box Office Phone Number**

812-323-3020

**BCT Box Office Hours**

Monday - Friday 11am - 6pm  
Saturday - Sunday 12pm - 5pm  
*All nights with events at the BCT, the box office stays open 30 minutes into the event.

**BCT Volunteer Coordinator**

Jovita McCleod  
volunteer@buskirkchumley.org  
812-323-3020

**Executive Director**

Danielle McClelland  
director@buskirkchumley.org  
812-323-3022
FAQ

Where can I park?

There is metered parking all around downtown. Parking is free at the meters only on Sundays and federal holidays. The parking lot behind the BCT is free for the first three hours and after 5pm. There is a parking garage on Walnut and 4th St, it has free parking for the first three hours and after 6pm. More information about parking is available at www.bloomington.in.gov/parking.

Where can I put my personal belongings during my usher shift?

There is a limited space for jackets and purses in the ushers’ closet located in the front lobby. This closet is not locked, so you may request that the House Manager lock valuable belongings in the office upstairs if necessary. Volunteers are cautioned not to leave valuables in the building. The BCT cannot be responsible for loss of personal property in locked or unlocked rooms.

May I bring a family member or friend to usher with me?

Since the BCT requires that all volunteer ushers complete usher orientation and training, ushers are generally not allowed to bring friends or family members to usher with them. Even if your friend or family member is a BCT trained usher, all ushers are required to sign up individually for the events that they usher. This way the House Manager will have an accurate list of who will be ushering prior to the event.

*Occasionally, there are special events, labeled “Bring a Friend” events, where ushers are allowed to bring one friend or family member to usher with them. These will be noted on the event sign up list.

Is there a Lost and Found?

There is a permanent lost and found box that is kept in the box office; all Lost and Found items should be turned into the box office. If the box office is locked, please give the item to the House Manager. If a patron is missing an item, please notify the House Manager, who can check for the item in the Box Office. Patron’s can also call or return to the box office during business hours if the lost object has not been found during or immediately after the event.
Thank You

Thank you for volunteering at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater. We hope you enjoy your experience as a volunteer. As you learn your volunteer duties, feel free to ask questions or share suggestions. Our staff are happy to help you and also value your input. It is your commitment and that of volunteers like you that allows the BCT to serve this wonderful community. Thank you!