

# AACTFest Handbook

## 2011 Cycle

The Festival Commission of the  
American Association of Community Theatre



### **For questions or other information:**

Kristi Quinn  
Vice President, Festivals  
457 Highway 35  
Dakota City, Nebraska 68731-3028  
Office: 712-224-8903  
Cell/Home: 712-251-1113  
[festivals@aact.org](mailto:festivals@aact.org)

### **For adjudication assistance:**

Kathie Maldonado, Adjudication Committee Chair  
PO Box 154  
Alto, NM 88312  
Home: 575-336-1872  
Cell: 575-318-9012  
[kathietm@valornet.com](mailto:kathietm@valornet.com)

### **For copies of the *Handbook* and to forward completed forms:**

American Association of Community Theatre  
1300 Gendy St.  
Fort Worth, TX 76107  
Phone: 817-732-3177  
Toll Free: 866-Our-AACT (687-2228)  
Fax: 817-732-3178  
[info@aact.org](mailto:info@aact.org)



## Preface

The *AACTFest Handbook* is a collaboration. The policies, procedures, and rules stated herein have been gleaned from the festival experiences of many people from across the United States, its Territories, and the Armed Services abroad. The *Handbook* is an ongoing process with revisions at the end of each Festival Cycle. The individuals that contribute ideas and experiences change from cycle to cycle but in many regards they stay the same: young, old, and in between, from all regions, from all walks of life, from all income brackets, from all sizes of towns and cities, and from all sizes of community theatres.

The purpose of the *Handbook* is to establish a common ground for all festivals leading to the national AACTFest. By knowing what is expected, companies progressing from level to level can experience some continuity and do what they do best.

Anyone with ideas or experiences improving the festival cycle's efficiency should contact the Festival Commission Chair, any of the other Commission Members, or the AACT office. The Input will be considered for the next *Handbook* revision.

## AACTFest National Award



Companies that advance to the national festival receive a cast of "Changing Faces." This sculpture was inspired by a performance of the great French mime, Marcel Marceau. Monsieur Marceau performed on a totally black stage, and he himself, was dressed in black with a long flowing black cape. The lights were directed solely on his head, and as he performed, he used the cape to sweep across his masked face and when the cape came down, a new mask was in its place. The masks just seemed to fall away, which made the artist think how much this represented the continually changing faces of the characters in theatre.

The design was originally created for the 1979 Festival of the American Community Theatre Association (FACT).

# AACTFest Goals and Criteria

- To provide an optimum learning experience through festival entry at state, regional, and national levels, which affirm, support, and nurture community theatre companies as they strive toward excellence in theatrical production.
- To stimulate and inspire community theatre companies to strive for the best work possible and to recognize them for their achievement through an appropriate adjudication process.
- To provide learning experiences in artistic, technical, and management areas for people in attendance through performances, adjudication, and workshops.
- To develop enlightened and discerning audiences for community theatre.

Criteria are in place to achieve the aforementioned goals. Among the most significant are:

- All theatre companies must meet the same eligibility standards and requirements.
- **It is the responsibility of each entering company to read the entire AACTFest Handbook and ensure compliance with all of the rules.**
- The festival must be held in a functioning theatre facility.
- A production must be performed in the same form at all festival levels.
- Maximum time limits are 10 minutes for set-up; 60 minutes for performance and 10 minutes for strike.
- All actors, musicians and on-stage personnell must begin setup and end either in or immediately adjacent to the on-deck area.
- The house must be closed during each performance. It must remain open for setup and strike.
- Qualified and impartial adjudicators are essential to the success and fairness of the festival process.
- Adjudicators must not discuss productions before the first ballot.
- The Festival Commission Representative will make the final determination in all matters of dispute during a festival.

Refer to the remainder of this handbook for specific information.

# AACTFest Handbook

2011 Cycle

## Table of Contents

AACTFest Goals and Criteria.....	2
1.00 AACTFest Organization.....	5
1.01 Festival Commission.....	5
1.02 Naming .....	6
1.03 Festival Commission Representative .....	6
1.04 AACT Endowment .....	7
2.00 Entrants .....	9
2.01 Theatre Companies .....	9
2.02 Company Members .....	10
2.03 Productions.....	11
2.04 Requirements .....	13
2.05 International Festivals.....	14
3.00 Festival Chair.....	15
3.01 Overview .....	15
3.02 Scheduling .....	17
3.03 Company Packets.....	18
3.04 Entering Theatre Support.....	19
3.05 Required Program Insert .....	19
3.06 Adjudicators .....	20
3.07 Announcements.....	21
3.08 Awards.....	21
3.09 Wrap-up .....	22
4.00 Technical Specifications .....	23
4.01 Facilities.....	23
4.02 Personnel.....	24
4.03 Lights .....	24
4.04 Sound .....	26
4.05 Scenic Devices .....	26
4.06 Technical Meeting.....	27
5.00 Adjudication .....	29
5.01 Overview .....	29
5.02 Selection .....	29
5.03 Responsibilities.....	30
5.04 Guidelines.....	31
5.05 Orientation .....	32
6.00 Policies .....	35
6.01 Overview.....	35
6.02 House .....	35
6.03 Production.....	35



## 1.00 AACTFest Organizatiton

- 1.01 Festival Commission
- 1.02 Naming
- 1.03 Festival Commission Representative
- 1.04 AACT Endowment Fund



### 1.01

### Festival Commission

The festival process (festival cycle) culminating in a national theatre festival, held in odd numbered years, sponsored by the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) and is entitled AACTFest. The festival cycle presents a forum for community theatres from the ten regions of AACT to enter productions for adjudication and advancement from the state level to the regional level and finally, to the national level.

This festival process is regulated by AACT through the Vice President for Festivals, an elected officer of the American Association of Community Theatre, the Festival Commission Chair, and the Festival Commission of the American Association of Community Theatre.

**The Festival Commission** consists of a chair, adjudication chair, recorder, technical chair, current national festival chair(s), future national festival chair(s), two standing sub-committees (adjudication and technical), and Festival Commission Representatives.

**The Adjudication Sub-Committee** recommends adjudicators for the National AACTFest, suggests possible adjudicators at other levels and advises the Festival Commission Chair in matters related to adjudication.

**The Technical Sub-Committee** recommends adaptations or changes to the Festival Commission in matters related to the technical aspects of festival productions. Festival Commission Representatives can call the sub-committee members for clarification on technical matters during festivals.

**The National AACTFest Chair** produces a specific national festival, works and coordinates with other committees and reports to the Festival Commission Chair.

The AACT Staff receives and processes festival information, produces participation certificates for companies entering state and regional festivals, confirms AACT membership and fee payment status of entering companies, manages registration for the national festival, and provides other support and information as needed to the Vice President for Festivals, the AACT Festival Commission and its Chair, Adjudication Sub-Committee Chair, Recorder, Technical Chair, and the Festival Chairs.

The official name for the festival process is AACTFest. The first five (5) letters are capitalized and the last three (3) letters are lower case. The name is eight (8) continuous letters with no intervening spaces or punctuation marks.

Festival Commission Representatives will be assigned by the Festival Commission Chair (with staff assistance) to provide assistance to state and regional festivals.

The Festival Commission Representative will:

- Contact festival chair and tech director
- Initiate and maintain communication with the Festival Chair and Technical Chair through the festival process, providing assistance as needed
- Read scripts prior to festival
- Conduct the Production Meetings, attend rehearsals and performances, and distribute adjudicator evaluations to each company
- Conduct the Adjudication Orientation
- Confirm the eligibility of the entering companies
- Serve as the ballot tallying officer
- Complete the final report

In matters of dispute during the festival, the Festival Commission Representative makes the final ruling. Any questions or discussion of disqualification is made through the Festival Commission Representative. The Festival Commission Representative verifies each production's time with the official festival timekeepers and, if a violation occurs, respond appropriately at tallying. (Refer to [Section 5.03](#) for further information.)

Festival registration fees are waived for the Festival Commission Representative. Festival Host may provide lodging as well, but this is not required

The Commission Representative **shall not** be affiliated with any competitive production entered in the festival to which s/he has been assigned.

The Festival Commission Representatives will be the official liaisons between state and regional festivals and AACT. It is the responsibility of the Representative to confirm with the host festival chair all entering companies have complied with all regulations and are eligible to perform in the festival.

(Refer to [AACTFest Form M](#) for a checklist of Festival Commission Representative responsibilities)

A fund was established in 1985 to defray travel expenses for companies advancing to the National or international festivals. Over the years, the Endowment Fund has grown substantially from contributions and special fundraising events. The Endowment Fund Trustees oversee the fund, which provides grants to the companies representing their regions in the national festival.



## 2.00 Entrants

- 2.01 Theatre Companies
- 2.02 Company Members
- 2.03 Productions
- 2.04 Requirements
- 2.05 International Festivals



### 2.01

### Theatre Companies

Any amateur theatre organized for at least one year prior to the state festival, which has produced at least two shows prior to the state festival entry, and is governed by a board from the community, is eligible to enter the festival process. Companies from city or county recreational departments, universities, colleges, military bases, etc. must have a governing board from the community, separate from the umbrella organization. Ideally, any theatre meeting these criteria should be able to enter a state (or district) festival without any prior selection process. Fairly administered limits on the number of performing theatres for festivals, due to resource constraints, are acceptable.

Each theatre may enter only one production in only one state in any given festival cycle. Theatres may showcase other productions with the permission of the Festival Chair. Any production selected to proceed or that participates in a regional festival in a given festival cycle may not be reentered in the next festival cycle.

Methods other than a festival, such as a traveling adjudicator, for selecting a production to represent a state at the regional festival may be acceptable if the Festival Commission Chair grants prior permission. States may combine for festivals if adjudicators make their selections by state. If a state has no festival or other selection method, but a theatre wishes to enter the state's regional festival, the theatre may apply to the Festival Commission Chair for an appointment to the regional festival with a recommendation from their Regional Representative. Upon appointment, the company may represent the state with its production at the regional festival if all other requirements for participation have been fulfilled. A state theatre association may petition no entry from its state be appointed.

Prior to the festival, the director should explain to the cast and crew that following the performance and strike, there will be a public adjudication. It should be clarified that the purpose of the adjudication is not to criticize or denigrate a production, but to offer possible improvements. The adjudication process should be a constructive learning experience for the cast, crew and audience.

The productions selected to proceed from the state festivals are the entered productions for the respective regional festivals. If for some reason a production selected to proceed cannot do so, the production ranked next in the balloting will proceed.

State festivals with four or more entered companies may send two productions to the regional festival. Appointments will continue to be limited to one.

The productions selected to proceed from the regional festivals (one each for all regions except Region IV, which may have two) are the entered productions for the national festival.

In addition, a twelfth company is selected on an at-large basis in the following manner. When all entering companies at state festivals, each of which has agreed to “go on,” are confirmed, the Festival Commission Chair will count the number of companies. The count will be based on the total in each individual state regardless of the number of festivals. The state numbers will next be totaled by region.

The region with the most eligible entering companies will send two companies in the Regional Festival to the National Festival. Region IV is not eligible to send an additional company. In the event of a tie in the number of these companies between two or more regions, the Festival Commission Chair will supervise a coin flip to determine which region will send another production.

The national host theatre for any particular festival cycle is not allowed to enter a production in the festival process for that cycle.

## 2.02

## Company Members

Once a play is in rehearsal for the festival process, actors and technicians may not be paid, directly or indirectly, to rehearse or perform in that production. Members of a theatre’s production staff, such as directors, designers, costumers, technical directors, etc., may receive normal remuneration, as long as no additional or bonus dollars are paid specifically for hands on efforts for that production.

Musicians who provide accompaniment for a production may be paid if they do not perform as actors, directly or indirectly. To not be considered an actor, a musician must meet the following criteria:

- They must perform from an orchestra pit, an offstage wing position or an onstage position that is not visible to the audience. Or...
- If visible to the audience, they do not interact in any way, physically, verbally or visually with any member of the cast or audience. Any interaction between musicians must not in any way relate to actions taking place on stage.
- If the theatre does not have an orchestra pit or adequate wing space, the Festival Commission Representative and the Host Technical Director may designate an area or the musicians to perform.

American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters are treated in a manner similar to musicians although they may “shadow” actors without being considered an actor and may be paid. If they take on a role, they cannot be paid.

Persons who receive more than twenty-five percent (25%) of an annual “living wage” as income from work as actors in live performances, or are active members of Actors Equity at any time during the festival cycle in which they are to appear, may under no circumstances perform at any level of AACTFest. All performers are required to sign the Affidavit of AACTFest Actor Eligibility. (Refer to [AACTFest Form D](#)). This includes musicians who do not meet the above criteria.

## 2.03

## Productions

A production entered in the festival process may be a cutting of a full-length play or musical, a one-act play, or any other performance of a theatrical nature. The total length of the performance may not exceed sixty minutes (including introductions, scene changes, and curtain calls). Any element, which brings the audience into the world of the play (music, sound, movement, lights, etc.), will begin the sixty-minute performance time. The complete cessation of such will complete the timing period. If a set-up or strike is intended to set mood, establish character, or entertain the audience in any way, it will be considered part of the sixty-minute performance time.

**Suggestion: Entering material requiring more than fifty-five minutes to perform may result in timing problems. Audience response may add time.**

The adjudicator(s) will comment on the performances. Emphasis will be on acting and direction, but final consideration will be the overall realization of the production. Because of difficulties in touring (unfamiliar stage, host technical crew, travel distance, festival lighting, etc.), theatres should consider the technical aspects of performing “on the road” when selecting a show. A blank stage or a complex set can be equally effective, if appropriate to the material selected.

Each company is responsible for furnishing any sets, props, or furniture needed for the production. The host theatre may provide standard articles of furniture, if requested to do so in advance.

All sets, props, costumes, musical instruments, special effects, etc. (everything utilized to present the production) must fit into a storage area that will be a minimum of 100 square feet. Costumes and make-up required to begin production may be donned off premise or in dressing room. Each company will have a storage area of a similar size and should be aware different spaces will have different height clearances. If planning to “high stack” scenery companies should check with the host facilities at all levels for available height. The on deck and storage spaces may be open on all four sides; items need to be self-supporting. Perishable or valuable objects and weapons should be brought to the storage space immediately prior to rehearsal and performance and removed thereafter.

The rules and laws governing the use of weapons, pyrotechnics and special effects vary greatly from location to location. Do not assume because it is allowed in one facility, it can be used in others. Even items as innocuous as cigarettes and candles can be a problem. Weapons are especially problematic; real guns (even if not fired) often present special difficulties.

Companies should check with the festival venue concerning rules governing special effects. Certain items can be used, but only with proper checkout by local authorities. Be aware of the possibility the checkout, which may include demonstrations requiring additional supplies, will probably not be during the scheduled rehearsal time. While the host facility should publish the necessary rules, **it is ultimately the responsibility of the performing company to confirm as to whether or not a specific item is permissible.**

Each production is allowed a maximum of 10 minutes set-up time and 10 minutes strike time, with timing beginning and ending with all actors, musicians, and on-stage personnel either in or, if necessary, immediately adjacent to the 100 square foot on-deck area. For setup, the entire company will assemble in the designated area. When ready, the company spokesperson will signal the festival stage manager (or the designee) who will announce “go” loudly enough for all timing personnel to hear. The company will proceed with the setup. When finished, all company personnel must assemble back at the start area. When all have reassembled, the company spokesperson will again signal the festival stage manager who will announce, “stop.” At this point, no other action may take place on stage until the start of the performance.

Light and sound operators are exempt and are allowed to remain in their respective operations areas at the end of set-up, if they have traveled there for setup/final checks and if not involved in setup or strike. However, any lighting and/or sound checks must be completed within the 10-minute setup time. Light and sound operators may also finish setup with the rest of the company and travel to their operational locations.

After the performance, strike will proceed using the same procedure as was used for setup. Strike may begin with the lighting and/or sound operators in their operational positions or the company may wait for them to join the rest of the company at the on-deck area. The choice is at the company’s discretion, but must be consistent before and after the performance. It is the responsibility of the company to ensure the stage floor is left in the same or better condition than it was when the setup began; including wet mopping, if necessary. Nothing may be placed on the stage floor that cannot be adequately removed within the allotted strike time. Care should be taken not to disturb succeeding shows’ spike tape. (It is recommended spike tape not be removed by the company during strike.)

The “production process” (set-up, performance, strike) should continue without significant delay until complete. Individual productions may hold for any unused set-up time.

Should a production exceed any time limits, the performance will not be stopped nor will an announcement be made. Adjudicators will comment as scheduled. Timekeepers will notify the Festival Commission Representative who will disqualify the company from selection to proceed. (Refer to [Section 6.06](#))

Immediately after the strike, company members are usually seated in the front rows in the auditorium for the adjudication.

Productions selected to proceed must be performed in the same form at all levels. Adjustments in staging may be made to allow for differences in stage facilities and for integrating adjudicator suggestions, but material may not be added or withdrawn. **Actors, production staff, musicians or technician substitutions may not be made without written consent from the Festival Commission Chair. Substitution requests must be for legitimate hardships.**

## 2.04

## Requirements

At each level, every company must provide the following to the festival chair before the festival begins. The festival chair should provide companies a deadline for the required material:

- Proof of permission to perform the property from the leasing agent and/or author.

Suggestion: It is wise to obtain performance permission for all three levels prior to the state festival.

- Proof of permission to perform the property as cut or altered.
- Warranty that the theatre has obtained all other necessary rights. (Refer to [AACTFest Form E](#))
- Five scripts marked as intended to be performed. **Do not photocopy any scripts without proper permission.** (This does not mean that scripts available only in anthologies cannot be copied if permission to copy is received.) Additional scripts may be required for interpreters, but only with notice to the company.
- Entry and registration fees as required by specific festivals
- Affidavits of AACTFest Eligibility for each performer. (Refer to [AACTFest Form D](#))
- Festival Entry/Information sheet. (Refer to [AACTFest Form B](#))
- Technical Information Form. (Refer to [AACTFest Form C](#))
- Program information.
- Proof of membership in state/regional associations and any other local applicable fees as required by the particular festival.
- A festival fee equal to the amount of the lowest AACT Organizational membership made payable to AACT (prior to state festival only). This fee is waived for AACT members. Organizational membership in AACT is required at the regional and national levels.

Failure to comply with the AACTFest rules may be grounds for disqualification. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to follow the terms of the licensing agreement. It is ultimately the entering theatre's responsibility to ensure all documentation has been obtained and submitted to the Festival Chair. If there are questions, they may be

addressed to the Festival Commission Representative or the Festival Commission Chair at any time. During the festival, the rulings of the Festival Commission Representative are final.

## 2.05

## International Festivals

A number of countries around the world hold amateur theatre festivals. Invitations to apply to enter these festivals often are sent to AACT's International Committee for recommendation of companies or theatres.

Participation in the National Festival allows companies to express interest in international opportunities, and facilitates the International Committee's opportunity to view and recommend productions to the attention of international festivals. However, no production can be guaranteed an invitation, nor are such committee recommendations linked to the actual placement at the National Festival.

Owing to the timing of international festivals, the preference of such festival organizers for certain specific types of productions, travel cost considerations, and the ability of companies to keep their production together for the required amount of time, the committee may from time to time seek to make recommendations from regional festivals as well as the National Festival.

## 3.00 Festival Chair

- 3.01 Overview
- 3.02 Scheduling
- 3.03 Company Packets
- 3.04 Entering Theatre Support
- 3.05 Required Program Insert
- 3.06 Adjudicators
- 3.07 Announcements
- 3.08 Awards
- 3.09 Wrap-up



### 3.01

### Overview

The Festival Chair is responsible for the co-ordination of a specific festival and needs a complete understanding of the entire process. A guidebook to assist the host with festival logistics is available for download from the AACT website and from the AACT office. (Ask for A Guide for Hosting AACTFest.) Although some of the states and regions provide the festival chairs with additional support and resources, this section assumes that the chair is solely responsible for the entire festival. Once a chair has been selected, he/she must:

- Contact the AACT office to request Chair packet & confirm contact information.
- **Read the entire *AACTFest Handbook* for the current cycle.** The *Handbook* can be photocopied, downloaded from the AACT website ([www.aact.org](http://www.aact.org)), or acquired from the AACT office.
- Refer to the Form Submission Checklist ([AACTFest Form A](#)) and send the appropriate forms to the AACT office in a timely manner.
- Select a festival date. State festivals must be completed by April 3, 2011, and sufficiently prior to the regional festival date in order for the state production selected to proceed will have adequate time to prepare. Regional festivals must be completed by May 1, 2011. Check the community calendar for conflicts, as a major event scheduled on the same date could create problems with air travel, crowded restaurants, over-booked hotels, etc. Contact the AACT office for AACT Board/Festival Commission meeting dates to avoid conflicts.
- Arrange for a theatre facility meeting all the requirements of [Section 4.00](#) of the *AACTFest Handbook*, Technical Specifications.
- If the theatre facility does not have a Technical Director who can be utilized for the festival, select a competent Technical Director. Ensure that the Technical Director has a copy of the current *AACTFest Handbook*.

- Determine a hotel to be used as the "festival hotel." A convention rate, less than the hotel's normal rates, can usually be obtained by coordinating with one hotel instead of a list of area hotels (This can result in some complimentary rooms).
- Ensure meeting rooms are available for all meetings, workshops, parties, etc. held in conjunction with the festival.
- Prepare a budget including the expected income and expense for all aspects of the festival.
- Organize committees for all aspects of the festival. Delegate work and decision-making to the proper committee chairs. The broader the base of workers, the easier the chair's job.
- Secure adjudicators as soon as possible. Qualified adjudicators are important to the success of the festival. Send contract and other materials per [Section 3.06](#).
- Appoint two timekeepers (refer to [Section 4.02](#)) and discuss timing regulations with them. Confirm timekeepers are provided with stopwatches, clipboards and the AACTFest Timing Form (refer to [AACTFest Form P](#)) prior to or at the adjudication orientation meeting.
- For state festivals, mail information outlining the festival process as a whole to all community theatres in the state, ideally six months or more before the festival. Included should be copies of or reference to [Section 2.00](#) of the *AACTFest Handbook*, festival specifics such as the city, theatre, dates, hotel, costs, etc., and an entry form with an entry deadline. The entry deadline is typically six weeks to two months before the festival. Festival chairs can obtain mailing lists of theatres in their state/region from the AACT office. Festivals using a website and a mailed postcard encouraging participation have been effective.
- Regional chairs will have a predetermined entry list, but should still mail either a brochure or the festival specifics as a flyer to all theatres in the region (a website may fulfill this function).
- Immediately upon receipt of an entering theatre's AACTFest Entry Information form (see [AACTFest Form B](#)) or similar form, copy the AACT office. The AACT office will send the theatre instructions for downloading or otherwise acquiring the 2011 *AACTFest Handbook* to the theatre. It is imperative entering theatres and technical directors have the *Handbook* as soon as possible. (State festival only.)
- Schedule rehearsals, performances, workshops, parties and the awards ceremony. AACT can assist with scheduling; contact the Festival Commission Chair for information.
- Assume the responsibility of the festival commission representative if one is not assigned.
- Provide showcase performances to round out the festival schedule, if desired. Showcases may be adjudicated, but not ranked to proceed.

The Festival Commission is a resource in this process. Contact the Festival Commission Chair with any questions, and/or to request specific help in addition to scheduling, such as finding adjudicators, technical issues, etc.

Immediately after the state deadline, but in no case less than twenty-five days prior to the first scheduled performance of the festival, typically when the number of productions entered is known, complete and distribute a schedule; include standard items:

- **Performance Days And Times**, including time for performance and adjudication of all entries in the festival. Productions and adjudications are normally presented in blocks of two or more. It is inadvisable to announce starting times for other productions within a block. After the first production's adjudication, the next production should proceed with set-up, keeping the festival moving. Companies must be warned of possible or likely earlier starting times. No announcements should be made between performances. See [Section 3.07](#) for more information regarding announcements.
- **A Production Meeting** must be held with each company. The Festival Commission Representative and the Technical Director must be present. The Festival Chair may attend. This session must be held prior to the company's rehearsal time with no other groups present. (Refer to [AACTFest Form N](#)).
- **Dressing Room Availability** Dressing room(s) should be available for each company a minimum of one hour prior to its set-up time.
- **Load-in and Load-out** Time Slots for each entering company to move sets, props, etc. into and out of the theatre. The load-in and load-out must be a time separate from the rehearsal time.
- **Rehearsal/Technical Time** of 80 minutes for each company in the performance space. The rehearsal time includes set-up from and strike to the on-deck area of all show related items. The time will be in reasonable proximity to the performance time. Rehearsal attendance will be restricted to the company in rehearsal, the festival technical staff, the Festival Chair, the Festival Commission Representative, and any other personnel requested by the rehearsing company. No one else should be permitted in the house, on the stage, in the control booths, or in the backstage area during this rehearsal period without the specific permission of the rehearsing company, the Festival Chair and the Festival Commission Representative. Service providers (ASL, etc.) are an exception.
- **Performance Order** A random drawing is often held to determine performance order of a state festival. The order of the drawing will be the performance order for the festival. It may be necessary to set up several possible schedules if the exact number of productions is not known at the time of the drawing. Individual companies may agree to exchange "slots" in this performance order, if desired, subject to approval by the Festival Chair. If two productions of the same play are scheduled back-to-back by the luck of the draw, the Festival Chair may change the schedule. It is preferable the rehearsal and production order is the same, but this is not required.

At the regional level the timetable and performance, order will be scheduled by random drawing prior to the dates of the earliest state festival in the region. Possible “second show” states should be anticipated in the drawing, (refer to [Section 2.01](#)) may be added to the beginning of the performance order, if necessary.

A random drawing to determine performance order for the National Festival is held in February of the preceding even-numbered year.(Refer to [AACTFest Form T](#).)

Confirm the list of entering companies with the AACT office for membership status.

### 3.03

### Company Packets

Distribute to all entering companies a packet giving **all times, dates, places, and other information**. This should include:

- The deadline for sending all materials required by [Section 2.04](#) of the *AACTFest Handbook*.
- Names with addresses, e-mail addresses, phone numbers and/or fax numbers of Festival Chair and Technical Director.
- Tentative schedule, to be updated when number of entries is known.
- Registration information for the festival and the hotel.
- Floor plan of the theatre and stage ground plan.
- Theatre technical specs.
- Light and sound plots and other technical information such as fly ability, soft goods plan, on-deck and storage square details, etc.
- Accessibility issues of the facility and provisions to request access assistance should be included. Notice of ASL interpretation or captioning, if provided, is also necessary.
- Maps and city information.

Regional packets with the aforementioned information for the Regional Festival should be prepared by the Regional Festival Chair and sent to the State Festival Chair(s) prior to the State Festival if the Regional Festival is within no less than thirty days of the State Festival, otherwise ninety days or more before the Regional Festival. The state festival chair will deliver it to the company (or companies) whose productions have been selected to proceed to the Regional Festival.

The National Festival Chair will prepare National packets with the aforementioned information. The National Festival Packet should include a request for a cast picture with identifications. This information will be distributed to each national festival company after their Regional Festival is completed, but not earlier than February 1, 2011.

The Festival Chair should confirm each theatre entered in the festival and all the company members comply with the rules and policies set forth in the AACTFest Handbook. However, it is ultimately the entering company's responsibility to read the Handbook and ensure the production complies with all applicable rules.

Rules and laws dealing with the use, handling and possession of special effects materials, pyrotechnics and weapons vary greatly between facilities and locales. Information on the restrictions placed on any types of weapons, flame devices, or special effects equipment will be made available to the entering groups as early as possible. The festival materials sent to the entering groups must supply the name and contact information of someone who can act as the ultimate authority as to what is and what is not allowed. Entering companies should be proactive in requesting the aforementioned information.

It is possible certain equipment, effects, or props may be used only after a special checkout or inspection is completed at the site of the festival. In this case, the host group should be responsible for scheduling such inspections. The inspection does not need to occur within the company's scheduled rehearsal time but at a time convenient for everyone. Furthermore, the scheduling must not create any undue hardship for the entering company.

A local host for each company should be provided. This host will be an individual who can find answers to the variety of questions a visiting company may ask. The host should greet the company upon arrival and be available throughout the festival. Ideally, the host will not be associated with any company participating in the festival.

AACT requires all festival programs to include basic information regarding censorship, production timing, and adjudicator guidelines and criteria for consideration. The entire text of the required insert is included as [AACTFest Form K](#).

A plain text (.txt) file is available to save re-keying information. The file is available for download from the AACT website or by e-mail from the AACT office.

Refer to [Section 5.00](#) — Adjudication, for complete information.

Festival Chairs **must** provide the adjudicators with:

- A copy of [Section 5.00](#) (Adjudication) and AACTFest Form H (Adjudicator Responsibilities) of the AACTFest Handbook.
- An original of each script (no photocopies), to be read in advance, marked as it is intended to be performed.
- An Adjudication Orientation meeting. (See [Section 5.05](#))
- A reserved seat in the house. (See [Section 5.05](#) for specific details)
- Paper, writing utensil, clipboard, and light if necessary.
- A quiet place to prepare comments before adjudications with beverages available.
- A local host available for the entire festival
  - to meet the adjudicator upon arrival
  - to ensure the adjudicators have transportation to and from the festival site
  - to ensure the adjudicators arrive at designated locations
  - to return the adjudicators to the airport etc. after the festival if necessary. (One host can usually serve all adjudicators and the festival commission representative.)
- Round trip travel expenses.
- Hotel accommodations if required.
- Festival schedules and programs.
- Ballots with the show names pre-printed (Normally supplied by the AACT office.).
- Free admission to all sessions, meals, and functions of the festival, except special fundraising events.
- A list of awards, beyond placement awards, they are expected to determine. The awards are at local option. (Note: It is not necessary to present an award if the adjudicators feel there was no one/no production deserving of that specific award. Awards should recognize outstanding work and should not be given just to give everyone an award.)

Festival Chairs **should** provide the adjudicators with:

- A contract detailing conditions of service. (Refer to [AACTFest Form I](#))
- An honorarium.

Festival Chairs must make certain the adjudicators can be seen and heard during the adjudication — a microphone and lighting are required.

Prior to the first performance, Adjudicator Evaluation forms (Refer to [AACTFest Form J](#)) must be given to:

- The representative of each presenting company.
- At least five festival attendees willing to complete the evaluation and who agree

to see no less than 80 percent of all the performances and hear the respective adjudications.

These evaluation forms must be completed and returned to the Festival Commission Representative before the awards announcement. The Festival Chair must send these to the AACT office immediately following the festival. (Refer to [Section 3.09](#) Wrap-up)

### 3.07

### Announcements

All opening remarks, festival announcements, and introductions must be made either prior to the set-up of the first production in the performance block or after strike and adjudication of the last show in the performance block. Any voice-overs or live comments shall not conflict, delay, or interrupt the production process (set-up, performance, strike).

The Festival Chair or Festival Commission Representative (or their designee) should briefly explain the timing and adjudication rules to the audience at the beginning **of each block of performances**. The explanation should clarify that although others may time productions, the festival designated timers will derive the official times.

### 3.08

### Awards

At the state and regional levels, the AACT office will provide the Festival Chair with certificates of participation suitable for framing for all entering theatres. Regional entries should also receive a plaque from the festival host for participation.

The productions ranked “1,” “2,” and “3” (if announced) may receive an award other than a certificate, such as a plaque or statue. Festivals should not announce “1” and “2” when two productions are selected to proceed.

At state and regional festivals, a minimum of first and second places should be announced at every festival, except in cases where there are three or fewer festival entries. Third place should only be publicly announced at festivals with four or more entries.

Each festival may choose what, if any, special awards to present. In the festival spirit, it is recommended that wording on the awards be for “Excellence In...” or for “Outstanding Work In...” Awards should always mean some aspect about a given production has been worthy of mention. Awards should never be passed out just because a company has participated in the festival. (A specific participation award given to all companies is acceptable, however.) It is recommended that adjudicators have discretion in determining the minimum and maximum number of awards. A reference list of awards is included as [AACTFest Form S](#).

State festival chairs, after announcement of awards, deliver Regional packets to the company(ies) selected to proceed to the regional festival. The chair must confirm the company's director or spokesperson understands the company is assuming responsible for becoming familiar with the contents of the packet, completing the forms, and returning them to the regional festival chair before the deadlines. Packets are described in [Section 3.03](#).

The State Festival Chair must inform immediately both the AACT office and Regional Chair the production(s) selected to proceed.

The Regional Festival Chair must immediately inform both the AACT office and national chair the productions selected to proceed. The National Festival Chair will contact the companies to confirm each has received the National packet.

State and regional festival chairs must send the following to the AACT office immediately after the festival concludes:

- Two copies of all programs from the festival.
- Names and biographies of adjudicators.
- Adjudicator evaluations
- PR information (clippings, etc.).
- Other information as requested.

## 4.00 Technical Specifications

- 4.01 Facilities
- 4.02 Personnel
- 4.03 Lights
- 4.04 Sound
- 4.05 Scenic Devices
- 4.06 Production Meeting



### 4.01

### Facilities

The Festival Chair and host must provide a proper theatre facility, one primarily intended for theatrical performances. The stage of the theatre is required to be in working order and fitted to mount a production.

Hosting organizations should request participating companies and individuals indicate required accommodations and requests for special assistance.

All theatre facilities must be accessible without restriction to the Festival Chair and Festival Commission Representative at all times during the run of the festival including during the performances. The facilities may include (but are not limited to) backstage, dressing rooms, light, sound and other control booths.

The Technical Director will allot each entrant a minimum of 100 square feet of off-stage storage. No penalty or disqualification will be made to an entering theatre if the state, regional and national host theatres do not all have identical storage provisions. Some flexibility may be needed to handle problems in this regard.

The company will be permitted to pre-assemble any portion of the set on site during load-in, or other pre-agreed times available to all companies, provided that the assembled scenery does not exceed the allotted storage space, and the process does not interfere with any other entrant or the reasonable rules of the host. Any assembly that cannot be accomplished during load-in or the pre-agreed times will need to be accomplished during the company's rehearsal time.

Perishable items or those having extreme value (foodstuffs, cameras, musical instruments, etc.) may be removed from the storage area for safekeeping and replaced just prior to setup with the approval of the host Technical Director and the Festival Commission Representative. They will explain the proper procedure and timing. All real weapons and pyrotechnics must be stored under lock and key or removed from the facility.

If the storage areas are in close proximity to the playing area, setup and strike may take place from the storage areas. If the storage areas are removed from the playing area or

different groups' storage areas are at significantly different distances from the playing area, the scenery may be moved to a more convenient "staging area" prior to the 10-minute setup.

Safety procedures and reasonable policies of the host theatre are to be followed at all times.

## 4.02

## Personnel

Each festival, at all levels, must have a designated technical director, host stage manager, two timekeepers (one backstage and one in the house), equipment operator(s), and such other personnel as necessary to keep the festival moving in a timely order. While light and sound operation by performing groups is at the host's option, there must be someone capable of running the equipment, if necessary, and present at all rehearsals and performances.

## 4.03

## Lights

The use of a basic festival lighting plot will be provided for all entering companies. The plot may not be altered in any respect including, but not limited to, instrument location, focus area and gel color. The basic plot will include:

- A minimum of six (6) individually controlled cool and warm wash areas which are eight (8) to ten (10) feet in size. (A larger playing area will necessitate more areas.)
- Any additional instrumentation necessary to illuminate the playing area completely.
- Two followspots.
- Additional instrumentation may be provided as part of the basic plot at the discretion of the host.

The host must provide all performing companies with drawings, magic sheets, etc. clearly illustrating the instrumentation, gel colors, circuiting and wash areas on a timely basis consistent with deadlines shown elsewhere in the ~~D~~QGERRN

Performing companies may have lighting needs beyond the basic festival plot. Special lighting, within certain limits, is permitted, but companies need to remember on-stage rehearsal time will be limited to no more than eighty (80) minutes and any special lighting will need to be setup during that time block. The rules concerning the use of lighting specials are:

- If it is necessary to replug, re-aim and/or re-gel instruments between performances, the operation will be completed by the host staff and will be done prior to the production company's setup. Any errors by the host staff discovered during the company's setup may be corrected without the use of the performing company's setup time.

- The Host Technical Director must approve all instrumentation for lighting specials.
- The producing company is ultimately responsible for providing instrumentation for any lighting specials. The host may, at their discretion, provide instrumentation to the companies but every company must have access to the same selection of lighting instruments.
- It is the producing company's responsibility to ensure any instrumentation not provided by the host has electrical connections compatible with the host facility's equipment. Any safety requirements of host must be followed.
- Lighting specials must be able to be setup during the company's rehearsal period. The host may, at their discretion, setup specials prior to the company's rehearsal if the same level of accommodation is provided to all groups.
- Lighting specials may be connected and left in place between a company's rehearsal and performance unless the Host Technical Director determines the placement may be detrimental to other companies. If this is the case, the specials must either be relocated or setup and struck as necessary by the host technical staff prior to the 10 minute setup.
- If a company elects to supplement the host facility's lighting equipment with portable control consoles, etc., specials will be subject to the six (6) instruments / circuit / dimmer / channel rule. The equipment, including any necessary power or control cables, must be set up during the company's rehearsal period. The Host Technical Director will determine whether the placement of any or all of the equipment is detrimental to other companies. If so, the designated equipment must be set-up and struck during the standard set-up and strike time.

The host facility control system may not be used for the control of any DMX dependent equipment, including, but not limited to, automated lighting fixtures. In this context, DMX will be construed to mean any computer control protocol (MIDI, ACN, etc.). The only exception is if the equipment is part of the basic festival light plot supplied by the festival host. Should a performing company wish to use other DMX controlled equipment, they must provide their own control mechanism. The setup will be subject to the same rules as supplementary lighting equipment.

Some participating companies may be unfamiliar with computer controlled lighting consoles. Should a host theatre utilize such equipment, the host must ensure the availability of technicians able to assist with lighting operation or, if necessary operate the equipment during the performance. Companies unfamiliar with computer lighting consoles should be aware that in addition to light levels, the console may also store and control fade times. It is the company's responsibility to do one of the following:

- Program fade times for each cue
- Learn how to run cues manually (if possible)
- Run the show with the default fade times

The host theatre may elect to program cues for the entering companies prior to the scheduled rehearsal times, subject only to offering the opportunity to all performing companies. The host may set reasonable conditions for the service, such as a specific deadline for submission of cue parameters prior to the festival. It remains the company's responsibility to ensure the cues have been programmed correctly and the proper sets of cues have been loaded into the lighting console for the performance.

The host theatre at all levels must have a functioning sound system with a minimum of:

- A cassette player.
- A CD player.
- House speakers.
- A means of communication between the light booth, the sound booth, backstage and the spotlight positions.
- A mixing board capable of accommodating the available sound sources.
- A house microphone for use by both the companies and the adjudicators.

If a company elects to supplement existing equipment, the company's equipment may be set up during the company's rehearsal period and the host technical director will determine whether the placement of such equipment or accessories is detrimental to other companies. If so deemed, the equipment must be set up and struck within the standard set-up and strike times.

If the host facility offers any optional equipment to any company, it must be made available to every company.

There is no limit to the number of sound cues or effects used during the performance but any sound effect devices, such as a door unit that is used for a "slamming" sound during the performance, must be set up and struck during the set-up and strike times. Any special sound effects are the sole responsibility of the company.

The host must provide performing companies with complete information including static microphone and speaker locations on a timely basis.

No scenic devices may be hung, placed, or positioned in the playing area prior to the set-up. Scenic devices used for creating special effects have no limit, but must be provided by the company. The host facility must approve scenic devices requiring set up in the "house" of the theatre. The host may override placement of any special devices if deemed a hazard. The devices should be set up during the company's technical rehearsal. The Host Technical Director may determine a scenic element should stay in place to prevent potential injury, and may allow a scenic element to stay hung as long as it is not detrimental to other companies. Set-up and strike are an important part of festival production; installation of most scenic devices can and should be done then. The Host Technical Director and/or Festival Commission Representative are a resource in accomplishing any setup, and should be consulted prior to the technical rehearsal. Bring a large enough crew to accomplish technical and setup objectives.

Companies are advised to have an adequate crew; enough individuals to accomplish technical and set objectives.

If a company has equipment requiring significant warm up time (fog machines for example) the equipment should be stored at the edge of the company's storage area and arrangements made with the Host Technical Director to initiate the warm up process.

As theatre technology advances, there may be occasions where it is questionable exactly how a piece of equipment should be classified. An example is a video or slide projector. Should it be considered a scenic device, which must be positioned during set up, or is it a lighting device, which may be positioned during rehearsal and allowed to remain? A company with a question or desiring a ruling should contact the Festival Chair. In one specific case, it was determined that the projector was more closely related to a lighting instrument and could be dealt with according to the rules for lighting specials.

## 4.06

## Production Meeting

A production meeting must be held separately with all the company's members, including cast, crew, musicians, etc., prior to the company's rehearsal time. The session must be held in the theatre and should include a tour of the host facility. The Festival Commission Representative should conduct the meeting in conjunction with the Host Technical Director and Host Stage Manager.

Each facility and festival is unique, and as such, adaptations may be necessary for local conditions. Most items covered in the production meeting are a reiteration of information supplied by the individual companies on the technical questionnaire.

Determine the following information from each company:

- Who is the designated company spokesperson for the technical rehearsal? Is it the same person for production?
- Where will the spokesperson be during the performance?
- What is the approximate length of set-up, performance and strike?
- Is set-up and/or strike part of the actual production?
- Did the company bring any supplemental lighting or sound equipment?
- Are any lighting specials needed?
- Will anyone be barefoot on stage?
- Is there any use of matches, candles or other open flame?
- Is there any use of real or simulated weapons?
- Will there be any use of smoke, fog or haze machines?
- Are there any pyrotechnics or other special effects?
- Is AC power needed on stage?
- Are microphones needed?
- Are any special effects, equipment, or devices to be pre-set at rehearsal?
- Are curtains or other soft goods to be utilized and, if so, when?
- Will the company begin the performance immediately following set-up or wait the full 10 minutes?

- How does the show begin and end?
- Will someone be calling or prompting the show? From where?
- Will any actors use the house for entrances or exits?
- Will the lighting and/or sound operators participate in setup or strike?

The following information should be announced to the company:

- Times and procedures for load in and out of the theatre, if not earlier directed.
- Location and assignment of storage area and dressing room(s).
- Location of on-deck, smoking and ASL interpreter (if utilized) areas.
- Rehearsal and performance times.
- Times and locations of all festival activities.
- Review of festival production procedures and policies.
- That no spike tape should be removed during strike
- Review of rules
- Answer any questions.

## 5.00 Adjudication

- 5.01 Overview
- 5.02 Selection
- 5.03 Responsibilities
- 5.04 Guidelines
- 5.05 Orientation



### 5.01

### Overview

Adjudicators must be individuals with a wide range of theatrical training and experience. Adjudicators view each festival production and share their reactions with the participants and audience. Comments should be confined to those within the AACT Guidelines. (Refer to [Section 5.04](#) for complete guidelines.)

**Do not underestimate the importance of selecting qualified adjudicators.** Articulate and objective adjudicators provide an exceptional learning experience for all present.

It is important to have the adjudicators **sign a contract specifying what is expected of them** (see AACTFest Form I). The Festival Commission will help you in your search but does not recommend or endorse adjudicators. For assistance, contact the Festival Commission Adjudication Chair.

### 5.02

### Selection

**State Adjudicators** are selected by the state festival committee or chair. Assistance may be requested from the Festival Commission Chair or Adjudication Committee Chair. States may use one to three adjudicators; it is preferable that three are used. It is strongly recommended at least one adjudicator be from out of state. An adjudicator associated with a company participating in the festival may not be utilized.

**Regional Adjudicators** are selected by the regional festival committee or chair. **Regional festivals must use three adjudicators.** It is strongly recommended at least one adjudicator be from another region. A person connected with a state festival entry within the region may not adjudicate at that regional festival. An adjudicator may not adjudicate both a state festival and its regional festival. Violation of this policy could be grounds for exclusion as an adjudicator at future regional and national festivals.

Festival hosts, at any level, are urged to research adjudicators. Assistance with adjudicator experience can be provided by the AACT office. The AACT office and AACT officials will not endorse specific adjudicators. It is the responsibility of the host to research and determine the validity and appropriateness of adjudicators.

**National Adjudicators** are recommended by the Festival Commission Adjudication Committee in consultation with the Festival Commission Chair. The AACT Executive Committee approves national adjudicators and an alternate at least 18 months prior to the national festival. The alternate is chosen according to the same criteria and must adhere to the same rules of engagement. The alternate will serve if one of the National Adjudicators withdraws or cannot serve. The Adjudication Committee will provide biographical information on all proposed adjudicator candidates to the Commission Chair for submission to the AACT Executive Committee prior to the meeting at which it approves the adjudicators. National adjudicators and the alternate may adjudicate up to two state festivals prior to the National Festival, but may not attend other state or regional festivals in the cycle. If a National adjudicator or alternate chooses to adjudicate state festivals, the festival may not be in the adjudicator's home region. In any case, the Adjudication Chair must be notified immediately if an assignment is accepted.

The Adjudication Chair should be notified of the festival adjudication selection or sent a copy of Form G.

The Vice President for Festivals and the Festival Commission Chair are not allowed to adjudicate at any level.

Prospective adjudicators at all levels should be sent the Adjudicator Responsibilities and Adjudicator Guidelines before being engaged. A prospective adjudicator, who has reservations about any of these responsibilities or guidelines, should not be utilized. It is strongly suggested adjudicators sign a contract stating what is expected of them and what they should expect in return. A sample contract is included as [AACTFest Form I](#).

Each adjudicator should be provided with transportation, hotel accommodations, food, admission to all festival social events and a local host. An honorarium is recommended.

## 5.03

## Responsibilities

Adjudicator responsibilities include:

- **Prior to the festival, adjudicators must read the plays to be presented.** The Festival Chair will provide the scripts, edited as intended to be performed, on a timely basis.
- Adjudicators may be asked to fill out an evaluation of the festival.
- Each adjudicator will have a period of time to respond to the performance based on the AACT Adjudication Guidelines. The adjudicator response begins immediately following the performance. The festival chair will determine the duration, usually

between 5 and 10 minutes, of the comment period. Companies may tape the adjudicators' comments about their own performance. Adjudications are open to all festival attendees; no private sessions may be held until after the awards are announced.

- Adjudicators **will not** discuss the festival plays with anyone, including other adjudicators, until after the first balloting.
- Adjudicators' personal likes and dislikes as to authors and material are not to play any part in the adjudication process. Persons who cannot overcome an aversion to certain authors or plays during the festival must not adjudicate.
- Adjudicators will be required to rank the productions in numerical order. The balloting shall be conducted by the Festival Commission Representative with the adjudicators ranking each production in order of preference with the most fully realized performance being "1," the next "2," etc., on the Adjudicator's Ballot form (refer to [AACTFest Form Q](#)). A majority vote of the adjudicators will determine the ranking.

The first ballot will be taken after the final production's adjudication, without discussion and before any other awards are determined. If a majority vote is established on the first ballot for the "1," "2," and "3" positions, the adjudicators may then proceed to discussion of other awards. If there is no majority vote for the "1" position, discussion may then take place before the next ballot. The "1" position must be determined before the "2" and "3" positions are determined. If on the first ballot the "1" position is determined, that position is finalized; the "1" production may not be moved to a lower position because of discussion. If on the first ballot, the "2" and "3" positions have a majority vote but the "1" does not, the "2" and "3" positions are not finalized and may be moved to other positions because of discussion. If on the first ballot, the "1" is determined, but does not have a unanimous vote and the "2" might be changed on a second ballot without the "1" show, a second vote may be taken to determine the "2." If any of the productions are not eligible to proceed for any reason, the tally sheet (refer to [AACTFest Form R](#)) should be altered to indicate the company's ineligibility to proceed. Particular festivals, especially festivals with ten or more shows, may wish to continue the ranking process beyond the "3" position. Ties are not allowed; if necessary, the Festival Commission Representative will be the tiebreaker.

## 5.04

## Guidelines

Plays are to be adjudicated based on the overall production with **acting and directing** as the major elements. All types of productions (comedy, drama, original works, musicals, revues, avant-garde, "controversial," etc.) are acceptable entries to the festival and must be considered on a similar basis, with the best production being the one most fully realizing all production values and criteria. Technical competence is to be given consideration as to its effectiveness as an integral part of the total production experience.

Each company has a free choice of material (a one-act, a cutting, a selected act, etc.). Adjudicators may not question the choice, except as to its appropriateness for the company and comment only on how it was performed.

**Among the criteria to be considered are:**

- Is the acting believable and technically skillful with effective timing?
- Are the characters well interpreted?
- Does the company display ensemble work?
- Is the material appropriate for the company?
- Is the concept appropriate for the material and realized by the company?
- Has the structure of the production been controlled?
- Are the movements and stage pictures effective?
- Is the production well paced?
- Do the technical elements support the overall production?
- How effective was the total impact?

Focus is to be placed on positive solutions to problems the companies have with production issues by suggesting alternative possibilities. Productions may advance to other festivals; these companies should be able to benefit by incorporating the adjudicators' comments. **CAUTION: The adjudicator should not redirect the show.**

Any question of rule violation must be addressed to the Festival Commission Representative, whose decision shall be final. Adjudicators must focus attention on the performances, not possible rule violations.

5.05

Orientation

The Festival Commission Representative (or Festival Commission Chair designee) will conduct an orientation session with the adjudicators. A minimum of one hour should be scheduled for the session with attendance limited to the adjudicators, adjudicator hosts, Festival Chair, Festival Co-Chair or Assistant, Technical Director (or designee), Festival State Manager, and timekeepers. The session will cover the following mechanics of AACTFest:

- Ascertain the adjudicators have received, **read**, and understand the AACT Adjudicator Responsibilities and Guidelines. It is wise to recap the Guidelines. (Refer to [Section 5.04](#) and [AACTFest Form H](#))
- Review the timing regulations to make sure all present have a clear understanding of the 10-minute set-up time, 60-minute playing time, and 10-minute strike time. (Refer to [Section 2.03](#))
- Inform the adjudicators timing and rule decisions are not part of their responsibilities.
- Inform the adjudicators they may watch the production's set-up, but after the performance, they should leave the auditorium and retire to a private place to collect their thoughts and review their notes for the adjudication.
- Emphasize that adjudicators must not discuss the festival plays with anyone. After the first ballot the adjudicators can discuss the plays with each other. The adjudicators may discuss the plays with all individuals after the awards are

announced. Adjudicators may have discussion with the Festival Commission Representative if desired or needed.

- Announce the time allowed for each adjudication. Procedure for a one-minute warning should be agreed upon to encourage adjudicators to conclude comments. If an adjudicator would like a longer warning that should also be determined. Adjudicators should not be stopped during adjudication, but they should try to keep within the time allowed, so in the interest of fairness, all groups get equal time.
- Inform the adjudicators they will rotate in order as to who goes first, but each adjudication is to be delivered independently (unless in the panel format). Adjudicators may not hear preceding adjudications, but may hear succeeding ones, if they wish. Remind everyone the adjudication process is a learning experience for the audience as well as the performing companies. As such, adjudicators should address comments to the entire house as well as the cast and crew of the production just completed. Typically, the production's cast and crew are seated in the first two rows of the house.
- State and region festivals may use panel format adjudication when using three adjudicators. The national festival will not use the panel format. The selection will be made by each festival, not by region. The duration of each panel adjudication will be 15 to 30 minutes. Except during the panel setting, the adjudicators will continue to be constrained from any discussion of the productions with each other until after the first ballot and with anyone else until the results are announced. The panel adjudication selection must be made on a timely basis and published with other festival details. The Festival Commission Chair must be immediately notified.

Adjudicators should be comfortable and familiar with the panel process. Designate an adjudicator to act as the moderator for each adjudication session, rotating through each session. Encourage discussion between adjudicators during the panel process. Each adjudicator will have a microphone promoting interaction. Panel adjudication should be informal. At the time agreed upon during the adjudication meeting, the moderator will begin the final remarks.

- Private sessions with adjudicators are optional after the awards have been announced.
- Provide the adjudicators a complete list of awards to be considered for presentation.
- Balloting information should be reviewed and a clear understanding of the process shared by all. Availability of cast pictures during balloting is desirable.
- Explain adjudicators will be evaluated on their performance. Distribute copies of the form, ACCTFest Form J. Any attendee (participant or not) may evaluate the adjudicators **if** the attendee has seen no less than eighty percent of all performances **and** the respective adjudications. The evaluations must be done before the awards are announced. The completed forms become the property of AACT and are kept by the AACT office, with copies to the Festival Commission Chair and the Adjudication Committee Chair.
- The AACT office will provide the adjudicators with copies of their evaluations with the names of the evaluators deleted.
- Adjudicators choose their seats in the house. Each must sit in the same seat for the entire festival to provide a consistent vantage point. It is recommended

adjudicators sit in different areas of the theatre for a range of perspectives. Where practical, the seats next to, behind, and in front of the adjudicator should be blocked.

Since one of the most consistent adjudication criticisms is inability of the audience to hear the comments, adjudicators are required to use a microphone. Presentation lighting on the adjudicator during comment will allow notes to be read.

## 6.00 Policies

- 6.01 Overview
- 6.02 House
- 6.03 Production
- 6.04 Censorship
- 6.05 Waivers
- 6.06 Disqualification
- 6.07 Handbook



### 6.01

### Overview

AACT's primary festival focus is on the productions. The intent is that the AACTFest rules, guidelines, and decisions are made for the benefit of the entering companies.

### 6.02

### House

The following house policies have been established:

- The host theatre facility's house regulations will apply as pertains to smoking areas, food and beverage consumption, admission of children, etc.
- No recording devices will be allowed in the house except those officially designated by the Festival Chair (which includes groups wishing to record the adjudications). The official photographer may not use any kind of flash or distracting light, and must be as unobtrusive as possible. If a performing group feels photography will be detrimental to their performance, the group may request an alternative solution from the Festival Chair or Festival Commission Representative.
- The house must be closed once performance has begun, but should remain open during set-up and strike.

### 6.03

### Production

The following production policies have been established:

- Companies should set-up with the main curtain open. Set-up may occur behind a closed curtain if a public setup would have a negative impact on a production. It is assumed this will be an uncommon occurrence and must be

cleared with the Festival Commission Representative in advance. There is nothing to preclude use of the storage area during production.

- Once in progress, a production may only be stopped or interrupted for reasons of public safety. A production may also be stopped or interrupted due to problems with the theatre facility — equipment malfunction, wrong cue book/disk, etc. — which are temporary in nature and particularly affect the overall quality of the production.
- Only the Festival Commission Representative or the Host Facility Coordinator (this may be the Festival Chair) may determine and declare a Public Safety Problem.
- The designated representative of the company in performance may also declare a problem with the theatre facility. In such a case, the Festival Commission Representative will immediately investigate the seriousness of the problem and the likely impact on the production. If the declaration is denied, the production will be disqualified. The disqualification will not be made public and the company will be notified of the disqualification following AACT policy. In any case, the performance may begin from the beginning or from the point of interruption, at the company's option, subject to local scheduling needs. Problems with the theatre facility should be invoked in only the most extreme of circumstances. A missed lighting cue, noisy audience member, etc., are not grounds to declare a problem.
- Any declaration must be made while the performance is in progress, no claim will be entertained after the fact.

## 6.04

## Censorship

AACT supports a policy permitting the widest possible range of dramatic material to be performed in a festival of the American Association of Community Theatre. Companies are expected to exercise good taste, good judgment, and respect for the values of the host theatres.

Host theatres may notify their patrons in advance if they have reason to believe a festival performance may be locally unacceptable, or publish a disclaimer, but in no case refuse to allow the company to perform. If the controlling body of the host theatre forbids said performance in the festival performance space, the host group, with the approval of the Festival Commission Chair, will provide an alternate performance space of similar caliber.

Any request for a waiver of specifications must be submitted in writing to the Festival Commission Chair, and contain adequate detail as to the reason. The request may pertain to facilities, scheduling, adjudication, personnel replacement, etc. The solution must maintain equality for all companies.

**Failure to comply with festival rules and requirements will be grounds for disqualification. The decision of the Festival Commission Representative is final. In the situation where a disqualification takes place, no public announcement shall be made.**

The Festival Commission Representative will notify the contact person for the disqualified company by mail. The Festival Commission Representative will send copies to the Festival Commission Chair and the AACT office, within one week of the close of the festival regarding the reason for disqualification. The notification should include a reference to the Handbook section dealing with the violation.

The 2011 *AACTFest Handbook* is available to all at [www.aact.org/aactfest/handbook.html](http://www.aact.org/aactfest/handbook.html). All Festival Commissioners, Regional Representatives, festival chairs, festival technical directors, and theatres that enter a festival are required to obtain and read the *Handbook*. A copy may be requested from the AACT office.

The *AACTFest Handbook* will be revised and updated based on the following:

- In June of each odd numbered year, the Festival Commission shall hold a public meeting to solicit comment, input, and experience relating to the most recent festival cycle. Information received before the meeting and the Commission members' observations will be discussed.
- Recommendations will be made on policy issues.
- Further written comment will be taken until August 31 at which point no new changes will be considered.
- The Commission will prepare a revised draft *Handbook* for review at the Fall AACT Executive Committee meeting in odd numbered years. Following the Fall Executive Committee meeting, the *Handbook* will be published.
- No further changes will be made until the festival cycle is complete.
- Earlier editions will no longer be valid.



# AACTFest Forms and References

<b>A</b>	<b>Form Submission Checklist</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Entry Information</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Technical Information</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Affidavit of Actor Eligibility</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Warranty of Company Compliance</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Festival Information</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Adjudicator Information</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Adjudicator Responsibilities</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Sample Adjudicator's Contract</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Adjudicator Evaluation</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>Required Program Insert</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>Final Report</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Festival Commission</b>
	<b>Representative Responsibilities</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Technical Meeting Checklist</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Adjudication Orientation Checklist</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Timing Form</b>
<b>Q</b>	<b>Adjudicator's Ballot</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Ballot Tally</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>National AACTFest Recognition Awards</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>National AACTFest Special Procedures</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>National Host Application Procedure</b>



# Forms and References Usage

To be completed or used by

Submission Checklists	<b>A</b>	Chairs, Companies, Commission Rep
Entry Information	<b>B</b>	Companies
Technical Information	<b>C</b>	Companies
Affidavit of Actor Eligibility	<b>D</b>	Companies
Warranty of Company Compliance	<b>E</b>	Companies
Festival Information	<b>F</b>	Chairs
Adjudicator Information	<b>G</b>	Chairs
Adjudicator Responsibilities	<b>H</b>	Chairs, Adjudicators
Sample Adjudicator's Contract	<b>I</b>	Chairs
Adjudicator Evaluation	<b>J</b>	Chairs
Required Program Insert	<b>K</b>	Chairs
Final Report	<b>L</b>	Chairs
Festival Commission		
Representative Responsibilities	<b>M</b>	Commission Rep
Technical Meeting Checklist	<b>N</b>	Commission Rep
Adjudication Orientation Checklist	<b>O</b>	Commission Rep
Timing Form	<b>P</b>	Commission Rep, Timekeepers
Adjudicator's Ballot	<b>Q</b>	Commission Rep, Adjudicators
Ballot Tally	<b>R</b>	Commission Rep
National AACTFest Recognition Awards	<b>S</b>	
National AACTFest Special Procedures	<b>T</b>	
National Host Application Procedure	<b>U</b>	

**Chairs: Forms J, P, Q, and R, pre-printed with adjudicator names and show titles, will be provided by the AACT office.**

**For questions or other information:**

Kristi Quinn  
 Vice President, Festivals  
 457 Highway 35  
 Dakota City, NE 68732-3028  
 Office: 712-224-8903  
 Cell/Home: 712-251-1113  
[festivals@aact.org](mailto:festivals@aact.org)

**For copies of the Handbook and to forward completed Forms:**

American Association of Community Theatre  
 1300 Gendy St.  
 Fort Worth, TX 76107  
 Phone: 817-732-3177  
 Toll Free: 866-Our-AACT  
 Fax: 817-732-3178  
[info@aact.org](mailto:info@aact.org)

# AACTFest Form Submission Checklist

# A1

Forms for Entering Companies		
Which Form/Item?	To whom is it submitted?	When should it be submitted? Insert deadline set by festival
Entry Information Form      B	<input type="checkbox"/> Festival Chair	
Applicable fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Festival Chair	
Technical Information      C	<input type="checkbox"/> Festival Chair	
Proof(s) of permission	<input type="checkbox"/> Festival Chair	
Scripts (as cut)	<input type="checkbox"/> Festival Chair	
Program Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Festival Chair	
Affidavits of AATFest Actor Eligibility      D	<input type="checkbox"/> Festival Chair	
Warranty of Company Compliance      E	<input type="checkbox"/> Festival Chair	



# AACTFest Form Submission Checklist

# A2

Forms for Festival Chairs		
Which Form?	To whom is it submitted?	When should it be submitted?
Festival Information Form F	<input type="checkbox"/> AACT Office	When festival site or date is known
Adjudicator Information Form G	<input type="checkbox"/> AACT Office	When adjudicators are known
Entry Information Form B	<input type="checkbox"/> AACT Office	Immediately upon receipt from company
Technical Information C	<input type="checkbox"/> Retain with Festival records except for production(s) selected to proceed: send to next level Festival Chair	Immediately after Festival
Affidavits of AACTFest Actor Eligibility D		
Warranty of Company Compliance E		



# AACTFest Form Submission Checklist

# A3

Forms for Festival Commission Reps*		
Which Form?		What action should be taken?
Production Meeting Checklist	N	No additional action needed after Production Meeting
Adjudicator Orientation Meeting Checklist	O	No additional action needed after Orientation Meeting
Timing Forms**	P	Forward to AACT Office ASAP after Festival Festival should retain a copy until next level festival has concluded
Adjudicator Ballots**	Q	
Ballot Tally Forms**	R	
Adjudicator Evaluations**	J	Forward to AACT Office ASAP after Festival
Final Report**	L	
Commission Representative Report**		

\* or Festival Chair if no Commission Rep; \*\* provided by AACT Office



# AACTFest Entry/Information

# B

<b>Festival Level</b>		<b>Festival Dates</b>	Submitted by: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of	<input type="checkbox"/> Region #	/ / Month/Dates/Year	Theatre: _____
			Submission Date: _____

**AACT Membership:**  Yes  No **AACT #** \_\_\_\_\_

## Theatre Information

Theatre Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
(F) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Production Information

Production Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Author/Composer Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Estimated Set Up Time \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated Run Time \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated Strike Time \_\_\_\_\_

## Entry/Production Representative

Entry/Production Representative Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
(F) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Technical Representative

Technical Representative Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
(F) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_



# AACTFest Technical Information

# C1

Festival Level		Festival Dates	Submitted by: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of	<input type="checkbox"/> Region #	/ / Month/Dates/Year	Theatre: _____
			Submission Date: _____

## Technical Representative

Technical Representative Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
(F) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Production Information

Production Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Estimated Set Up Time \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated Run Time \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated Strike Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of headsets needed and their locations \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cast Size: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

## Technical Requirements

**Lighting Needs** -- Please detail any specials you intend to use including instrument type, preferred hang location, approximate focus location, and whether you will be providing it (them) or if you would like festival host to. Please note any equipment you plan to bring under "Special Equipment" on Form C2.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Followspots needed ▶  None  One  Two

**Sound Needs** -- Please detail any equipment you will need such as reel-to-reel tape deck(s), cassette deck(s), CD player(s), offstage microphone(s), etc. Please note any equipment you plan to bring under "Special Equipment" on Form C2.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(continued on C2)*

**Set Specifications** -- Please detail any soft goods needed including trim and opening. Please attach a floor plan and sectional view of your set if available.

---



---



---

**Fly Space Requirements** -- Please detail the number of fly lines you want. Include your preferred location, their intended use, and the approximate load weight.

---



---



---

**Special Equipment/Needs** -- Please detail any special effects equipment you may be bringing (especially those involving smoke, fog, or combustible material). **Any equipment not approved by the Festival Technical Director, prior to your arrival, may be prohibited from use in the theatre.**

---



---



---



---



---



---

**Other Special Considerations** -- Please note if your production uses firearms or other weapons (real or simulated) or uses any type of open flame (including matches, candles, etc.).

---



---

## Personnel Requirements

3OHDVHPDUNRXUSHUVRQQHOUHTXLUHPHQWVRQWKHJULGEHORZ1RWHWKDWGXHWRFRQWUDFW  
 DJUHHPHQWVLQVRPHWKHDWUHVHJUWDLQSRVLWLRQVDPKDYHWREHVVDHGEKRXVHSHUVRQQHO

Light Board Operator	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Needed	<input type="checkbox"/> We will provide	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide for us
Follow Spot Operator #1	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Needed	<input type="checkbox"/> We will provide	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide for us
Follow Spot Operator #2	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Needed	<input type="checkbox"/> We will provide	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide for us
Sound Board Operator	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Needed	<input type="checkbox"/> We will provide	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide for us
Fly Line Operator	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Needed	<input type="checkbox"/> We will provide	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide for us

# AACTFest Affidavit of Actor Eligibility

D

Festival Level		Festival Dates	Submitted by: _____ Theatre: _____ Submission Date: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Region # _____	/ /	
		Month/Dates/Year	

To be filled out by individual representing entering theatre company. ↕

THIS DOCUMENT **MUST** BE SENT TO THE APPLICABLE STATE AACTFest CHAIR NO LATER THAN TWO (2) WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FESTIVAL DATE.

---

To be filled out by actor and given to individual representing entering theatre company. ↕

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify that:

1. I am receiving no payment (direct or indirect) for my participation in AACTFest 2011 as a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Theatre Company in the production of \_\_\_\_\_ Production Title
2. I am not an active member of Actor's Equity at this time and will not become an active member of Actor's Equity as long as I am involved in an AACTFest 2011 production eligible for competition.
3. I will not have earned more than twenty-five percent (25%) of a living wage as income from work as an actor in **live** performances for the year preceding the first day of the applicable AACTFest.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# AACTFest Warranty of Company Compliance

# E

Festival Level		Festival Dates	Submitted by: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Region # _____	/ /	Theatre: _____
		Month/Dates/Year	Submission Date: _____

This representation is a guarantee to the American Association of Community Theatre (hereinafter AACT) and festival host(s)

by \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter Theatre),

a(n)  non-profit corporation  unincorporated association whose legal notice mailing address is:

c/o Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

as and for partial consideration for the entry of its production in the 2011 AACTFest for the

State of \_\_\_\_\_  Region Number \_\_\_\_\_  National

The Theatre hereby warrants that:

***it has obtained all necessary music rights, and rights for art, photographic (still, movie, video), visual, and any others that may be utilized in the production, that are not in the public domain, and holds AACT, its agents, employees, and subcontractors harmless and free from all financial responsibilities connected with the production and the acquisition of rights.***

In Witness whereof, the Theatre, by one of its officers, executes this Warranty under the express,

formal authority of the Theatre's governing board, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Theatre Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type or Print Name/Title



# AACTFest Festival Information

**F**

Festival Level		Festival Dates	Submitted by: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Region # _____	/ / Month/Dates/Year	Theatre: _____
			Submission Date: _____

## Festival Information

Festival Name \_\_\_\_\_

Festival Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_

(F) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Festival Host Group \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_

(F) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Festival Location (if different from host) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_

(F) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_



# AACTFest Adjudicator Information

**G**

Festival Level		Festival Dates	Submitted by: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of	<input type="checkbox"/> Region #	/ /	Theatre: _____
		Month/Dates/Year	Submission Date: _____

## Adjudicator Information

**Adjudicator Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_

(H) \_\_\_\_\_ (F) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Adjudicator Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_

(H) \_\_\_\_\_ (F) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Adjudicator Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephones: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_

(H) \_\_\_\_\_ (F) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_



# AACTFest Adjudicator Responsibilities

*(Abridged -- Refer to Section 5.03 of the AACTFest Handbook for the complete text.)*

H

- **Adjudicators must read the plays, as intended to be performed, prior to the festival**
- Each adjudicator will have a specified amount of time immediately following the production to comment on the performance
- Comments are to follow the AACTFest Adjudicator Guidelines
- Adjudications are open to all festival attendees
- No private sessions may be held until after the awards are announced
- Adjudicators must not discuss the festival plays with anyone, including other adjudicators, until after the first balloting
- Adjudicators' personal likes and dislikes as to authors and material are not to play any part in the adjudication process
- Persons who cannot overcome an aversion to certain authors, plays, or subject matter during the festival must not adjudicate
- Adjudicators will be required to rank the productions in a numerical order
- The balloting shall be conducted by the Festival Commission Representative with the adjudicators ranking each production in order of preference with the most fully realized production being "1," the next "2," etc., on the Adjudicator's Ballot form
- The first ballot will be taken after the final production's adjudication, without discussion and before any other awards are determined
- Companies will be permitted to record (audio and/or video) each adjudicator's public comments



# AACTFest Sample Adjudicator Contract



## ADJUDICATOR CONTRACT

This contract made and entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 201\_, by and between Organization Name (hereinafter referred to as “Host” [or other brief form of organization name]) and Adjudicator Name (hereinafter referred to as “Adjudicator”) is fully binding to both parties to this Contract subject to the statutes of the State of State Name .

1. Host hereby contracts with said Adjudicator, and Adjudicator hereby agrees to provide for Host, adjudication of all entries for the event known as Name of Festival (“Festival”) at the time and place specified. This festival is scheduled for Dates of Festival . Host expects the Adjudicator to arrive in City of Festival on Necessary arrival date .
2. Adjudicator is required to read all scripts provided prior to viewing the productions, to attend an orientation meeting prior to the opening session of the Festival, to present public adjudication Time determined by Festival minutes in length immediately following each production and to participate in the selection of awards.
3. Adjudicator has read, understands and agrees to abide by guidelines detailed in the current AACT Festival Handbook – Section 5.00 – attached to this contract.
4. At the conclusion of the Festival, the Host shall pay the Adjudicator an honorarium of \$ Amount of honorarium for services stipulated above.
5. In addition, the Host shall provide lodging at the headquarters hotel, will pay the Adjudicator’s reasonable meal expenses from the beginning of travel and return Date of return , will provide round trip transportation as mutually agreed, in advance of travel, from the Adjudicator’s home, and transportation during the Festival to and from workshop and performance sites, and will provide complimentary admission to all social and meal events that are part of the regular festival registration during this period.
6. The Adjudicator agrees to furnish the Host a publicity photo and bio no later than Deadline date .
7. This Contract for Services will be considered an offer until signed by both parties thereto. This offer may be withdrawn by the Host if not signed by the Adjudicator and returned to the Host on or before Deadline date .
8. Either party may terminate this agreement herein by giving a minimum of \_\_\_ weeks prior written notice.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adjudicator

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
for the Host

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# AACTFest Adjudicator Evaluation



## General Information

**Adjudicator Name** \_\_\_\_\_

State of \_\_\_\_\_  Region Number \_\_\_\_\_  National Festival

Festival Dates \_\_\_\_\_ Number of productions adjudicated \_\_\_\_\_

## Adjudicator Evaluation

LYHQWKHFRQGLWLRQVXQGHUDZKLFKWKHDXGLFDWLRQZDVGHOLYHUHGSOHDVHUDVHWHKHDGMXGLFDWLRURQWKH  
 \$GLWLRQDOFRPPHQWVUDUHHQFRXUDJHGDQGVKRXOGEHZULWWHQWQRQWKHEDFNVLGH

Focused on the producing group, acknowledging its dignity and capability.

Effectively communicated by establishing an appropriate rapport.

Was open-minded, honest, and responsive to the group's work.

Was knowledgeable and provided accurate, critically relevant responses.

Opened up new awareness and alternative possibilities in a constructive manner.

Was clear, thorough, and appropriately specific.

Showed an understanding of community theatre.

Adhered to criteria as outlined in the *Handbook*.

Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

Are you affiliated with an entered company?  Yes  No

Would you want this person to adjudicate at another festival?  Yes  No

,QRSOHDVHH\$ODLQRQWKHEDFNRWKHRUP

## Adjudicator Evaluation

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

,FHUWLWKDW,KDYHVHHQDQGGKHUGDWOHDVWRWKHDXGLFDWLRURQWKHEDFNVLGH

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



## STATEMENT OF CENSORSHIP

The American Association of Community Theatre supports a policy permitting the widest possible range of dramatic material to be performed in a festival of American community theatre. Performing companies are expected to exercise taste, good judgment, and respect for the values of the host theatre. Host theatres, if they have reason to believe a festival performance may be locally unacceptable, may notify their patrons in advance or publish a disclaimer, but in no case may the host refuse to allow the company to perform. Should the controlling body for the host theatre forbid said performance, the host group, with approval of the Festival Commission, shall provide an alternate performance space.

## PRODUCTION TIMING

The total performance time of each individual production may not exceed 60 minutes, including set changes, time lapses and curtain calls. There is an additional 10 minute set-up time and 10 minute strike time from an on-deck area with all performers and stage personnel beginning and ending the set-up and strike in, or immediately adjacent to, the area. If the set-up and/or strike set mood, establish character, or "enter the world of the play" in any way, it is considered part of the 60 minute performance time.

## GUIDELINES FOR ADJUDICATORS

Plays are to be judged on the overall production, the major elements of which are acting and directing. The choice of material is to be as unlimited as possible with musicals judged by the same standards as other dramatic material. Because of the difficulties of touring (unfamiliar stage and technical crew, minimal rehearsal time, travel distance), entering companies should consider the technical aspects of performing "on the road" when choosing material. A blank stage or a complex set can be equally effective, if appropriate to the material selected. Technical competence is to be given consideration as to its effectiveness as an integral part of the total production experience.

Any and all statements made by adjudicators are strictly their own opinion and do not necessarily represent the opinions of AACT or any other organization with which they may be associated.

## CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION

- Is the acting believable and technically skillful with effective timing?
- Are the characters well interpreted?
- Does the company display ensemble work?
- Is the material appropriate for the company?
- Is the concept appropriate for the material and realized by the company?
- Has the structure of the production been controlled?
- Are the movements and stage pictures effective?
- Is the production well paced?
- Do the technical elements support the overall production?
- How effective was the total impact?

The preceding information is excerpted from the AACTFest Handbook. The complete Handbook must prevail in case of disagreement or confusion.



# AACTFest Final Report



<b>Festival Level</b>		<b>Festival Dates</b>	Submitted by: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of	<input type="checkbox"/> Region #	/ /	Theatre: _____
		Month/Dates/Year	Submission Date: _____

## Results Information

- One company proceeding       Two companies proceeding

Company to proceed \_\_\_\_\_

Show Title \_\_\_\_\_

Director \_\_\_\_\_

Company to proceed \_\_\_\_\_

Show Title \_\_\_\_\_

Director \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Company to Regional/National Festival \_\_\_\_\_

Show Title \_\_\_\_\_

Director \_\_\_\_\_

Number of productions in the festival:

Eligible to Proceed \_\_\_\_\_ Showcase \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people attending and participating in the festival: \_\_\_\_\_

### Also Include With This Report:

- Two copies of the program
- Adjudicator bios, if not in program
- Adjudicator Evaluations
- Adjudicator Ballots and Ballot Tally Forms
- Timing Forms

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Festival Commission Representative



# AACTFest Festival Commission Representative Responsibilities

**M**

- Communicate with the Festival Host and Technical Chair as soon as possible after assignment.
- Serve as a liaison between the festival and AACT.
- Communicate with the adjudicators and confirm that they have received the necessary paperwork and scripts. Answer questions.
- Confirm that all companies have complied with all AACTFest regulations.
- Assist festival chairs and local hosts as requested.
- Answer questions regarding the *AACTFest Handbook*.
- Arrive in time to conduct the companies' technical meetings.
- Check for appropriate permissions from the licensing agent(s).
- Review the script (fourth script) and pay attention at rehearsals.
- Ensure the cutting follows any conditions specified in the royalty contract.
- Conduct the Adjudication Orientation.
- Obtain a list of awards to be given.
- Check each production's time with the official timekeepers and collect signed Timing Forms.
- Make the final ruling in all matters of dispute.
- Recover scripts from adjudicators and return to companies.
- Serve as the ballot tallying officer.
- Send appropriate forms to the AACT Office.
- Return Final Report with an evaluation of the adjudicators to the AACT Office.
- Perform other duties as requested.



# AACTFest Production Meeting Checklist

# N

Company:  
City:

Performance Block Number:  
Performance Block Start Time:

Production:

Performance Number (within block):  
Estimated Start Time:

Spike Tape Color: **ATTACH SAMPLE HERE**

Rehearsal Day/Time:  
Load-in Time:                  Load-out Time:

## Areas To Be Covered

Who is the designated company spokesperson? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the est. length of the setup? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the est. length of the performance? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the est. length of the strike? \_\_\_\_\_

How does the show begin? \_\_\_\_\_

How does the show end? \_\_\_\_\_

Will it begin  immediately after setup?     after waiting the full 10 minutes?

Will there be a curtain call?     Yes                   No

Walk through the timing process for setup and strike, as well as the start/stop rules for the production.

Do they wish to use the main act curtain?

Do they need AC power on stage?

Will any actors use the house for entrances/exits?

Will anyone be barefoot on stage?

Are they using microphones or lighting specials?

Are they using any real or simulated weapons?

Are they using matches, candles, or other open flame?

Are they using pyrotechnics or other special effects?

Are they using smoke, fog, or haze machines?

Will they be prompting or calling the show?

Remind them not to remove their spike tape during strike.

Any questions?

Dressing room assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Access to dressing room at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm



# AACTFest Adjudication Orientation Checklist

O

## Attendees

**Festival Commission Representative**  
**Festival Chair** (if not connected with a festival production)  
**Festival Assistant/Co-chair** (if not connected with a festival production)  
**Adjudicators**  
**Adjudicator Host(s)**  
**Timekeepers**  
**Technical Director** (or designee)

## Areas To Be Covered

- Introduce all participants.
- Explain the function and responsibilities of each position.
- Determine the speaking area for the adjudication.  
7KLKRXOGWDNHLQWRDFFRXQWDJRRGLJKWOLQHIRUWKWLPHPDUGILSHU
- If panel adjudication, discuss methodology (See *Handbook*).
- Confirm the length of the adjudications and the method of signaling “time.”
- Confirm that the adjudicators have received and understand [Section 5.03](#) (Responsibilities) and [Section 5.04](#) (Guidelines) of the *AACTFest Handbook*.
- Discuss and confirm other awards that will be considered.
- Distribute Adjudicator’s Ballot ([AACTFest Form Q](#)) to the adjudicators and explain its use.
- Distribute Timing Form ([AACTFest Form P](#)) to the timekeepers and explain its use.
- Show the adjudicators the Adjudicator Evaluation ([AACTFest Form J](#)) and explain the process.
- Reinforce the fact that adjudicators may not discuss any production within their group or with anyone else before the awards ceremony.
- Tour the adjudicators’ room, restrooms, etc.
- Explain and tour the physical production space.
- Determine the seating for the adjudicators and timekeepers.



# AACTFest Timing Form

**P**

<b>Festival Level</b>		<b>Festival Dates</b>	Submitted by: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of	<input type="checkbox"/> Region #	/ /	Theatre: _____
		Month/Dates/Year	Submission Date: _____

	<b>Show Name</b> (in order of performance)	<b>Setup Time</b>	<b>Performance Time</b>	<b>Strike Time</b>
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				

Anything which brings the audience into the world of the play (music, sound, lights, etc.) will begin the sixty-minute performance time. The complete cessation of such will complete the timing period. If a set-up or strike is intended to set mood, establish character, or entertain the audience in any way, it will be considered part of the sixty-minute performance time.

Each production is allowed a maximum of ten minutes set-up time and ten minutes strike time with timing beginning and ending with all actors, musicians, and on-stage personnel either in or, if necessary, immediately adjacent to the 100 square foot "on deck" area. Light and sound operators are exempt and are allowed to be in the operations booth for both set-up and strike.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_



# AACTFest Adjudicator's Ballot

**Q**

<b>Festival Level</b>		<b>Festival Dates</b>	Submitted by: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of	<input type="checkbox"/> Region #	/ /	Theatre: _____
		Month/Dates/Year	Submission Date: _____

Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Ballot Number** \_\_\_\_\_

Please rank all productions with "1" being the most fully realized, "2" being the next most fully realized, etc. A majority vote of the adjudicators will determine the ranking. When complete, please give your ballot to the tallying officer. Please do not discuss the performances until after the first ballot has been tallied.

Show Name (in order of performance)		Ranking
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		

AACT recommends shows for international festivals. Generally speaking, most international festivals want a 40-60 minute show that is movement or music oriented and/or telling a universally familiar story that can be understood and enjoyed by a multi-national audience that may not speak English. Individual festivals have specific criteria, but generally speaking, which of the productions in this festival, if any, might have possibilities? Please identify by writing "Int'l poss" to the left of the number(s). A production does not have to move on to be considered.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



# AACTFest Ballot Tally

# R

<b>Festival Level</b>		<b>Festival Dates</b>	Submitted by: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State of	<input type="checkbox"/> Region #	/ /	Theatre: _____
		Month/Dates/Year	Submission Date: _____

<b>Show Name</b> (in order of performance)	Adjudicator 1 Ranking	Adjudicator 2 Ranking	Adjudicator 3 Ranking	1st	2nd	3rd
				X	X	X

	Adjudicator 1 Ranking	Adjudicator 2 Ranking	Adjudicator 3 Ranking	1st	2nd	3rd
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						

The first ballot will be taken after the final production's adjudication, without discussion and before any other awards are determined. If a majority vote is established on the first ballot for the "1," "2," and "3" positions, the adjudicators may then proceed to discussion of other awards. If there is no majority vote for "1" position, discussion may then take place before the next ballot. The "1" position must be determined before the "2" and "3" positions are determined. If on the first ballot the "1" position is determined, that position is finalized; the "1" production may not be moved to a lower position because of a discussion. If on the first ballot the "2" and "3" positions have a majority vote but the "1" does not, the "2" and "3" positions are not finalized and may be moved to other positions because of the discussion.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Festival Commission Representative

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Festival Chair

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Suggested AACTFest Recognition Awards

S

Below is a suggested list of awards. There is neither a minimum nor a maximum number to be given for any award. Other awards may be given if the adjudicators agree that there is some other achievement deserving special recognition. It is best to avoid giving awards that state or imply “best \_\_\_\_\_.” All special recognition awards are optional and no award needs to be given in a category where the adjudicators believe none is deserved.

- Outstanding Performance
- Outstanding Set Design
- Outstanding Costume Design
- Outstanding Lighting Design
- Outstanding Sound Design
- Outstanding Makeup and/or Hair Design
- Outstanding Musical Direction
- Outstanding Ensemble Performance
- Outstanding Direction
- Outstanding Choreography



# National AACTFest Special Procedures

T

There are certain special considerations applying only to the national level festival. These considerations are:

- Production order for the National Festival will be scheduled by random drawing during the AACT Winter Board meeting in the year prior to the national festival. The Regional Representatives or, if absent, a designee will draw for the order.
- At the National Festival, the Festival Commission Chair and the Adjudicator Committee Chair will conduct the adjudicator orientation.
- The Festival Commission Chair will act as the Festival Commission Representative at the National Festival.
- At the National Festival, the host will present a mounted casting and a check to each entered company.
- The national adjudicators must be provided with a cast photograph of each participating company to facilitate identifying actors for any individual awards.



## Timing

An invitation to submit proposals to host the National Festival will be published in the spring approximately three years before the prospective festival. Each applicant will submit to the Festival Commission Chair:

- A letter of interest by July 31 of that year.
- A preliminary proposal to be reviewed by the AACT Executive Committee prior to its fall meeting, which may produce requests for additional information for the selection process.
- A final proposal, including a budget, by December 31.

After receiving the initial letter of interest, the Festival Commission Chair will send the applicant a more detailed information packet for use in preparing the proposal.

## Proposal Information & Selection Criteria

Each applicant will present the final proposal to a combined meeting of the Festival Commission and the AACT Board at the time of the Winter Board Meeting approximately two years before the proposed festival. The festival site selection is normally made at this time by a vote of the combined bodies. Persons who are members of both bodies will only vote once.

### The proposal to host a national festival should contain:

- Specifics about the proposed theatre space including seating capacity, stage size and type, set storage capabilities, lighting equipment, offstage facilities, and staff (paid and/or volunteer).
- Hotel and housing availability and approximate costs.
- Meeting space for board, committees, workshops.
- Transportation available to and within the city.
- City map with theatre, hotel, and transportation terminals marked.
- Evidence of the proposing applicant's stability in the community.
- Evidence of the community's support.
- A statement regarding the relationship of the applicant with the state and local arts councils. For example: Is support available and is the organization in good standing with any of the applicable commissions?
- The National Festival is usually set for the third weekend in June. Any wish to deviate from this should be explained in the proposal.
- A video showing the interior and exterior of the facility.

### Selection criteria includes the following:

- Theatre Space including: location, seating, physical plant, ground plan, handicapped accessibility, staff (full time, part time, volunteer).
- Meeting space for board, committees, workshops.
- Housing arrangements and rates.
- Transportation availability including: air, ground-to-city, ground-within-city.
- Preliminary budget.
- Preliminary schedule.
- Proposed registration fee.
- Organizational plan with number of volunteers.
- Co-hosts, co-sponsors.
- Community support and resources and relationship with local and state arts councils.

## Selection criteria continued:

- 501(c)(3) or other tax determination status.
- AACT membership.
- Festival experience including festivals hosted, attended, entered.
- Video of the theatre space.

## National Festival Host Responsibilities

**FINANCIAL:** Contact the AACT Office for information regarding specific fees.

- Host Fee to AACT.
- Contribution to the AACT Endowment Fund.
- Travel allowance to each of the twelve entering theatre companies.
- Provide adjudicators' travel, housing, and meals.
- Produce and mail two different printed promotional pieces.
- Mount and tag castings, provided by AACT, for each of the twelve Regional productions selected plus one for the national host group.
- Provide audio-visual equipment, supplies, facilitator expenses, etc. for workshops.
- Responsible for any other required expenses.
- Responsible for all income.
- Unless stated otherwise, the host is responsible for all expenses and retains all income.

## PAPERWORK:

- Provide a budget to be updated and re-submitted as part of the regular report at each AACT Board meeting after the selection.
- Provide a final report including financial statement.
- Sign a statement of agreement with AACT, which specifies the responsibilities of each organization, and that the host will follow all festival rules and procedures set forth in the *AACTFest Handbook*.

## PHYSICAL SPACE:

- Provide a fully operational theatre facility, seating approximately 600.
- Provide space for all scheduled workshops.
- Provide space for committee, board, and membership meetings.
- Provide facilities for the pre-festival technical theatre and management conferences.

## CEREMONIES:

- Conduct opening and closing ceremonies as agreed with the Festival Commission Chair and Awards Committee Chair.

## AACT will:

- Advertise the festival in 6SRWOLJKW
- Provide the award castings.
- Provide mailing list for the two promotional mailings.
- Select the adjudicators.
- Pay honorariums to the adjudicators.
- Direct the selection of workshops and facilitators.
- Direct the curriculum and selection of facilitators for the technical theatre and management conferences.