

ESU THEATRE

BOX OFFICE

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (Revised 4/18/05)

All box office numbers are the same - (620) 342-5374

Thank you for working in the ESU Box Office. The following Standard Operating Procedure describes box office procedures. Please follow these guidelines carefully. The box office is a vital link between our theatre program and the theatre-going public. And our theatergoers deserve the very best service we can provide. By following these procedures you help to assure a good theatre-going experience for our patrons.

WHEN OPENING THE BOX OFFICE

(This applies to all three box offices: Bruder, Albert Taylor Hall & the Frederickson.)

1. Show up early, at least 15 minutes before the box office opens to the public.
2. Get the key to the box office and the starting cash from Barb in the office.
3. Unlock the door and count the cash and put it in the cash drawer. Usually \$100 is the amount of starting cash for a normal business day. Let Barb know if the amount that was given to you was different.
4. Check the answering machine for messages. As you answer each message, take down the name of the person, what night they want tickets, how many tickets, what kind of tickets (G, Y, SR, etc.) and their phone number. Put all of this information in the appropriate column on the Call-in form. Listen to all of the messages and write it all down. Get as much information as you can. Before you erase the messages, listen to them again to make sure the information you took down initially is correct.
5. Fill the orders you just put on the Call-in sheet. Start at the top of the sheet and pull the tickets for each order. Mark them off the seating chart and put them in a manila envelope. Mark the envelope as directed in the section below. After you fill an order, cross it off the list. If there are any problems, call the patron back and clear them up.
6. Make sure the “stub barrels” are empty. If not, put the stubs in the appropriate “stub envelope.”
7. When the time is right, usually NOON, open the window to the public.

PHONE ETIQUETTE IN THE BOX OFFICE

1. When answering, pick up the receiver and say in a soothing tone: “ESU Box Office, this is (your name). How may I help you?”
2. If the person asks if there are any tickets available--and there are--you say: “Yes there are” and continue to step three. If there are not, follow the directions under What To Do When There Are No More Tickets to Sell.
3. Have your Call-in sheet ready and ask the questions at the top of each column--
“May I have your last name?”
“And your first name”
“What night would you like tickets?” “How many?”
“What kind of tickets will these be?”
“Does anyone that your are buying tickets for have special needs?”
“Would you like to pick these up the night of the performance or during our business hours?”
(If performance) “That’s fine. The box office opens one hour before each performance.”
(If business hours) “That’s fine. Box office hours are Noon-4:30, Monday through Friday.”
4. When getting off the phone, read back the order to the person, making sure all that you wrote down in correct. After you have confirmed the order, thank them for calling and wish them a good day.
5. Fill out the order as per the instructions in step five above (When Opening the Box Office.)

HOW TO SELL A TICKET AT THE BOX OFFICE

1. When someone comes up to the window, greet them and ask if you can help them.
2. Show them the seating chart for the night they indicate. If the patron seems indecisive, ask how many tickets that are looking for and make some suggestions.
3. When they select their tickets, make sure the tickets are available from the appropriate rack. If they are not, mark them off the Seating Chart and return to step 2. If the tickets are in the rack, ask the patron if they would like to pay for them now or reserve them for later. Whether they pay now or later, **MARK THEM OFF THE SEATING CHART**. Completely darken in with pencil--**not pen**--the boxes on the seating chart that correspond to the tickets that were just sold.
4. If they are reserving them for later, follow the instructions for How to Mark the Manila Envelopes. If they are paying for the now, move on to step 8.
5. Mark the back of the ticket for the appropriate type of ticket:
 - G** General Admission (Anyone out of college and under 60 years of age.)
 - SR** Senior (Anyone over 60. Do not ask for proof and do not assume.)
 - Y** Youth (A student of any kind, with proof of student ID)
 - C** Comp (A free ticket. See Comps below.)
 - TG** Theatre Guild (See the list in the box office.)
 - E** Emeritus (Retired faculty.)

6. Add up the total money needed, using a calculator if necessary.

	<u>BRUDER</u>	<u>FREDERICKSON</u>	<u>ATH</u>
G	\$8.00	\$8.00/\$4.00/\$2.00	\$15/\$12
SR	\$7.00	\$7.00/\$3.00/\$2.00	\$15/\$12
Y	\$4.00	\$4.00/\$2.00/\$2.00	\$8
C	\$0.00	\$0.00	***
TG	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0
E	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0

7. Make sure you stamp the backs of checks with “For Deposit Only” stamp provided. **WE DO NOT ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS.**
8. Tear off the perforated portion of the ticket and stick the small stub in the stub barrel. Hand the rest of the ticket and the correct change to the patron. Ask the patron if you can help them with anything else. Thank them.

HOW TO MARK THE MANILA ENVELOPE

1. In the upper left-hand corner, put the LAST NAME (comma) FIRST NAME.
2. In the bottom left-hand corner, put the NIGHT the tickets are for.
3. On the middle of the envelope put:
THE NUMBER OF TICKETS
TYPE OF TICKETS
UNIT PRICE
TOTAL PRICE
(For example: 4G@\$8.00=\$32.00)
4. Under all of the totals on the middle section write the complete total and circle it.
(For example: 4G@\$8=\$32, 3Y@\$4=\$12 \$44.00 Total)
5. Do not mark the back of the tickets before you put them in the envelope. **MARK THEM ONLY WHEN YOU ARE SELLING THEM, NOT** when you reserve them.
6. If you know the patron cannot pick up their tickets until show night, then write **HOLD** on the lower right-hand corner.
7. Place the envelope in the show boxes under the correct alphabetical order for the LAST NAME.
8. See the example below.

Anderson, Tom
4G@\$8=\$32.00
4Y@\$12=\$12.00
<u>\$44.00</u>
HOLD FOR THU 10/21

COMPS IN THE BRUDER THEATRE

1. Comps are basically free tickets. They are distributed as follows--
2. Theatre majors on opening night get one (1) Comp ticket.
3. Anyone ushering gets one (1) Comp ticket.
4. Any member of the company for that show gets two (2) Comp tickets.
5. Any perspective students that have been cleared through the Theatre Office is entitled to tickets for the show. (Usually this will be the student and his or her parents.)
6. Some Comps are issued to persons or businesses that provide us with goods or services. There should be a list in the box office from the Director of Theatre and/or the Director of the production.
7. If you have any questions about Comps, notify Barb (5256) or Jim (5704) in the Theatre Office.

PATRONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

1. We do have a section for wheelchair patrons to sit.

In the Bruder Theatre, they are designated on the Seating Chart in Row B. There is one chair seat next to the row so if there is a non-wheelchair member to their party, they can sit in that seat. Try not to sell Row C unless you have to, so that if there are a lot of people who want to sit together in wheelchair seating, they may do so.

In Albert Taylor Hall, they are designated on the Seating Chart in Rows A, E, F, K and L.

In the Frederickson Theatre, these seats will vary from show to show.

2. Some performances are signed for the deaf. In the Bruder, there is a designated section on the Seating Chart on the house left side for these patrons. Check with the Office to see if there is a signed performance and if so, what night. For that particular night, sell these tickets only when you have to.

HOW TO CLOSE THE BOX OFFICE AFTER A NORMAL DAY

1. At 4:30 p.m., if there is no line, close the window. Pull out your Daily Report Sheet, a sharp pencil and a calculator.
2. Take one of the Stub Barrels and dump out the stubs for ONE NIGHT ONLY. Separate the stubs into categories (G, SR, Y, C, TG, E).
3. Count the number of stubs for the different categories and put those numbers on the Daily Report. When you are done counting the stubs for an evening PUT THEM BACK INTO THE BARREL. Now move on to the next night and repeat the process until all the stubs have been counted. DO NOT dump the stubs into the stub envelope until the very end so if you need to recount, you can do so.
4. Once you have the evening totals, total the columns together to find out the net totals for the day.
5. Now you need to make a net cash total for each category of tickets. Some categories will have no cash totals, such as Comps, Emeritus or Theatre Guild.
6. Determine the total sales by adding the columns together.
7. Count all of the cash in the cash drawer and put this total on the "Total Cash" line at the bottom of the daily report. Add the totals of the checks and put that total on the line for "Checks." Make sure all of the checks have been stamped on the back with the ESU Theatre stamp. On the line for "Starting Cash" put \$100.00 (or if different, the amount you started with.)
8. Now add the Cash Total and Check Total and subtract the Starting Cash Total from that to get the Net Total. This Net Total should match the total cash brought in. If it does not, look for obvious math errors first. If that does not fix it, count all your stubs and cash again. Try as best you can to match everything up. Take your time and be patient. The numbers should work out. Don't rush through this. Once you have your totals, sign the Daily Report.
9. Take the stubs from that day and put them in a Stub Envelope. Put all the money, checks, stubs and the Daily Report in the money bag.
10. Tidy up the box office. Turn out the lights and make sure the answering machine is turned on. Lock the box office door and put the keys in the moneybag. Return the moneybag to Barb in the Theatre Office.

SHOW NIGHT PROCEDURES IN THE BRUDER THEATRE BOX OFFICE

1. Show up 15 minutes ahead of your call time of 6:30 p.m. (Calls may differ from show to show.)
2. Find the House Manager and get the key. (They should have gotten the key from the Stage Manager.) Retrieve the moneybag from the Theatre Office. Make sure that you turn out the lights and lock all the doors you found locked.
3. Return the keys to the House Manager.
4. Use the key in the moneybag to unlock the Box Office.
5. Count the money and put it in the money drawer. Make a note of how much starting cash you put in the drawer. Usually this amount is \$150-\$200.
6. Move the night's tickets from the South wall to the ticket holder on the North wall. Take care to make sure that you are putting the correct tickets in the correct slot. Listen to the answering machine. (See steps 4-6 in **WHEN OPENING THE BOX OFFICE**)
8. At 7:00 pm, open the box office to the public. There should be another person helping you. If there are a lot of reservations, you may want to form two lines--one for reservations and the other for at-door sales.
9. Mark off all of the tickets as you sell them on the Seating Chart. You will have to share this chart with your coworker.
10. When the house is closed, wait about ten minutes before closing your window. After you close the window, do a show report. Count all the stubs and cash just like a normal day.
11. The House Manager will need to get a Show Report from you as well. Count the number of tickets not sold for the performance. These will be listed on the Show Report under Unsold Tickets.
12. Take out all of the envelopes from the Show Boxes and count the tickets that were not picked up for that night. This number goes under Uncalled Tickets.
13. Take all the stubs for the night's performance and separate them into categories. Do not let the House Manager do his/her count where you are, because if you mix up the stubs, you are screwed.

14. Fill out the Show Report. If the totals do not match, do a recount. The House Manager's report should match your report. When you are done, put both reports and both groups of stubs in the moneybag.

15. The box office stays open during intermission in case there are any problems.

16. After intermission, get the key to the Theatre Office from the House Manager and return the moneybag to its designated spot. When you return the keys to the House Manager, you are finished for the night.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE ARE NOT MORE TICKETS TO SELL

1. Tell patrons that you are sorry but the show is sold out. The only way to get tickets now is to come to the theatre an hour before the show starts.

2. When the box office opens that evening, the patron can sign a waiting list. They need to provide a name and the number of tickets they are looking to buy.

3. After signing the list, they should return to the box office about ten minutes before the show starts. That is when you should begin calling names from the list-- in the order in which they signed in.

4. When someone returns a ticket, refund their money and put the ticket back in the rack. Do not sell it until 10 minutes before opening curtain.

5. We always reserve a few house seats to every show just in case. They are usually in an envelope separate from the ticket rack. You are not to sell these tickets unless instructed by the Director of Theatre to do so. There is an exception. If the play is sold out and it is 10 minutes before the show starts, ask the House Manager for permission to do so and release these tickets to the public, starting at the top of the list again.

7. When you have sold all the returns and house seats, go through the reserved envelopes and call out the names on each envelope. If no one in the lobby claims the tickets, you can release them for sale to people on the waiting list. Release tickets that have HOLD written on the lower left-hand corner last.

8. If you release someone's tickets that did not have HOLD written on them and they are angry because they were not there to pick up their tickets, put their name on the list and remind them that it is ESU's policy that tickets must be picked up by 4:30 p.m. the day of the performance to guarantee that the tickets will be available.

9. The House Manager should hold the house as long as it takes to get everyone a ticket. Do this as fast as you can because you don't want to be the reason the show started late.

10. IMPORTANT!!! You cannot sell a ticket twice. This means that if you know a seat is empty, but you don't have the ticket for it, you **cannot** let someone sit in it.

11. Try to remain calm and friendly. If they feel they were treated fairly, most patrons will understand.

HELPFUL HINTS

1. Always use pencil. Do not use pen. You can always erase.

2. If things are "slow," you can do a few maintenance jobs. Go through the show boxes periodically and make sure that all of the envelopes are in alphabetical order. Another helpful thing to do is to check and make sure that all of the tickets that are marked off the Seating Chart are gone from the rack. If they are not, erase the marks from the seating chart. Also, check that all the tickets that are on the rack are not marked off.

3. When someone needs to return a ticket, take the ticket and make sure that you return the right amount of money. You'll need to go through the stubs and find the ticket stub that matches the seat number on the ticket. Fully erase the marks on the back of the ticket and tape the stub back on the ticket. Return the ticket to the rack.

4. When you mark the back of a ticket, make sure you use pencil and clearly mark the type of ticket sold.

5. If you find on show night that someone said they had tickets reserved and you can't find them, first look through all the show boxes to make sure it was not just misplaced. Check the show boxes for the other nights to see if they were just misfiled. If neither of these are the case, sell them new tickets. If the new tickets are not together or really far back, check with the Director of Theatre or the House Manager to see if "house seats" can be used.

6. Always be courteous and friendly with our patrons. As a former Director of Theatre was fond of saying, "You are always auditioning."

7. Bring something to do for the times when you have done all the maintenance and you just don't want to sit and stare at the wall.

ABOUT THE FREDERICKSON THEATRE BOX OFFICE

- 1) There is no reserved seating in this theatre. All seats are first come, first served. This helps you because there is no seating chart to worry about.
- 2) Try to sell the tickets in numerical order, this will help you with your counts later on.
- 3) There are no reservations for tickets in the Frederickson Theatre. The only reason you should have to use the Show Box is that someone has paid for a ticket for someone else and they may pick it up at the window.
- 4) There is only one window, so if two people are working, one may be handling money and the phone while the other handles tickets. See what system works best for you.
- 5) Since the box office is located beneath the booth, you need to be aware of noise and light which may bleed upstairs.
- 6) Unless there are specific instructions from the Director of Theatre to the contrary, there are no comps issued for Frederickson Theatre productions.

ABOUT THE ALBERT TAYLOR HALL BOX OFFICE

1. The only ESU Theatre productions in this venue is the Homecoming Musical, so that means NO COMPS!
2. The prices for this show are higher than a show in the Bruder or in the Frederickson, so check to see how much tickets are for this performance and where on the seating chart the prices are different. There is a balcony for this seating chart.