



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

**Port Stanley Festival Theatre Mission:**  
**Create Inspire Develop Sustain**

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**Purpose:**

Volunteers play an essential role to the theatre’s success. They are our ambassadors who have direct contact with many of our patrons. For many visitors, that contact can define whether the theatre experience was positive or negative. Volunteers also help reduce the financial strain allowing us to keep tickets at affordable prices.

**Volunteer Commitment**

Greeter /Ticket-Takers, Ushers, and 50/50 Draw Volunteers

Those volunteering in the theatre are asked to commit to a minimum two shows per spring/summer season and one show in our fall/winter season.

Note: Volunteer shifts need not be accrued in only one role. If you prefer to assist in a variety of roles, you are welcome to do so.

**Hours:**

During the Summer Season, the Theatre is open Tuesday-Saturday, closed Sunday, Monday.

- Matinee performances 2:00pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.
- Evening performances 8:00 pm Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

During the Winter Season, open Tuesday through special performances.



the Theatre Box office is Thursday, and for

## Volunteer Positions

### Greeter / Usher

Greet patrons at auditorium entrance, electronically check them in, inform patrons of seat location and share any other relevant information such as a friendly reminder that there is no intermission, where applicable.

### Usher Shift Layout

#### Before the Show

1. Always review the latest updates posted on the volunteer info board (Box Office Door).
2. Upon arrival, sign in with FoH staff (Box Office and Front of House Managers) where you will be assigned volunteer duties, obtain aprons, tablets and flashlights.
3. Do not express any concerns in front of patrons but instead share them with FoH staff in private immediately.
4. FoH staff is responsible for ensuring ushers know the number of attendees. This is important if an emergency situation occurs.
5. Ushers will remove walkers once patrons have been seated and store them in the hallway on second floor to enhance safe exit if an emergency arises (Fire regulations).



#### Accessibility Procedures

1. Support all patrons that may require assistance. (FOH) will do their best to inform ushers which patrons may need help in advance. (e.g., two patrons with walkers; one with 1 wheelchair, and one using a listening device).
2. Provide help getting on and off the elevator; help individuals to their seat; remove walkers or wheelchairs to the hallway on the second floor during the show (inform patron that FOH will disinfect walker/wheelchair while the show is on); retrieving walker or wheelchair; ensuring listening device is working for the patron.

#### During the Show:

1. Ushers will sit in designated spots assigned by FOH. One volunteer will be seated by emergency exit at “House Left” to direct patrons in case of an emergency.
2. FoH will bring late comers to Ushers to guide to an appropriate seat until the intermission. These individuals will change the attendance count and be recorded by FoH.
3. The ushers seated by stage-side emergency exit will remain by that door, and usher seated by main entrance and by the elevator will remain in their positions.
4. FoH will disinfect high touch areas during the performance – before and after intermission.
5. The Ushers are encouraged to lead patrons in applause.
6. If a patron is unwell and must leave the theatre an usher will escort them to the box office for assistance. Re-entry into the theatre will be decided by Stage Manager.
7. Under no circumstances is anyone allowed to use the elevator while the play is on.

## 8. ENJOY THE SHOW!

### **End of Show:**

1. FoH will announce exiting procedures at end of show.
2. Patrons with difficulty walking and those using wheelchairs and walkers will be asked, for safety reasons, to wait for the elevators until most patrons have exited.
3. Ushers will remain in the theatre until all patrons are gone.
4. Clean up theatre. Plastic gloves are available for clean up if you wish. Bring all garbage down the stairs to be disposed of in provided receptacles.
5. Disinfect high touch areas, including arm rests, railings, elevator buttons, door handles after all patrons have exited.
6. Return all lost/found items to box office and sign out. After the show, pick up any items or garbage left in theatre and place in the receptacle provided.

### **Other Volunteer Positions**

#### **Concession Assistant**

The Concession is located in the Dorothy Palmer Room. Current Smart Service qualifications are required. A commitment to assist with at least ten shows per year is needed. Assistants need to arrive one hour prior to the performance.

#### **Special Events:**

Assistance with set-up, tear down, etc. during special PSFT and/or community-based events. (e.g., Dickens Day, fundraising events, etc.) Assistants are asked to commit to helping with at least six shows per year, (in combination with assistance at other shows).

#### **Bingo:**

Assist with PSFT's involvement with Ontario's Charitable Gaming program (located at Jackpot City Bingo, St Thomas) which supports our theatre's professional development program, allowing us to offer high-quality, entertaining live theatre at an affordable price. Shift length is two hours; PSFT shirts are provided; training is provided on-line.

#### **Billets:**

Port Stanley Festival Theatre looks for billet homes for our theatre artists each summer. Are you able to provide temporary accommodation for our artists? We look for local residents to share their homes for between one to six weeks. This allows actors and other creative team members to live close to the theatre while they prepare, and act in, their roles. Or perhaps you have a trailer that could be used? We look for:

- Private or semi-private units (e.g., granny suite, self-contained bedroom and bath, preferable a separate entrance), or

- A private bedroom in an owner-occupied home with access to a bathroom, shared cooking and living space, or
- Within walking distance to the theatre; if further away parking space is needed,
- Internet and laundry access appreciated, if available.

As a token of our appreciation, volunteer billets will receive one pair of season tickets, a tax receipt for the allocated value of the accommodation, a gift certificate to a local restaurant or retailer, and an invitation to the post-summer season volunteer appreciation party.

### Board Member:

Board members are responsible for ensuring conscientious, careful responsible oversight of the business operations of PSFT. Board members typically commit to a three-year term with members rotating on/off the board at the annual general meeting each December. PSFT actively seeks members whose skill sets include management skills such as: financial, legal, business operations, volunteer management, fund raising, strategic planning, etc. The Board meets monthly from August through June with no planned meeting in July. Each Board member will participate in a Board Committee and assist with the Strategic Plan.

Board Members are important ambassadors for PSFT; they are expected to attend a majority of performances throughout the year and speak positively of the Theatre while active in the community.

The total commitment is expected to be approximately 9 hours/month.

### Student Work Experience

We are happy to support students' opportunities to complete their work experience programs. If you require a record of your hours or a reference letter, we can provide those upon written request. Please indicate that you are a work experience student on the Volunteer Application Form.

## **Volunteer Policies**

### Dress Code

Port Stanley Festival Theatre strives to project a professional image, and this includes the appearance of our staff and volunteers. Volunteers are expected to maintain an appropriate dress standard that is business like, neat, clean and in good condition. We ask all volunteers to wear solid white top/blouse/sweater/shirt with solid black bottoms, skirt/pants/trousers.

The following are not suitable: Garments with slogans that may be offensive to others; underwear-type garments (such as camisole tops); leggings/sweats (or other exercise-wear); beach-type or cut-off shorts; clothing that reveals undergarments or is otherwise overly revealing; denims (unless black).

### **Attendance and Rescheduling**

We ask that you try your best to find a replacement if you are unable to attend your scheduled shift. If you are unable to please contact the box office at 519-782-4353 to notify them of your situation as far in advance as possible.

Staff will use your preferred method of contact (phone call, text or email) to provide a reminder 48 hours prior to your shift. Volunteers should arrive at least 1 hour before show time which, for a 2pm matinee would be by 1 pm and for an 8 pm evening performance would be by 7 pm.

### **Emergency Procedures**

#### **In case of an emergency that affects the audience:**

1. Listen for instructions from the Stage Manager who will direct which exit(s) to use.
2. All staff and crew are trained and ready to respond in case of an emergency.
3. Patrons using wheelchairs, walkers, etc., will be asked to remain seated until crew and/or staff can assist them. Staff will endeavour to assist those who are able to exit with minimal assistance. Inform emergency workers of the location of any patrons with mobility issues requiring additional assistance immediately upon their arrival.
4. No one is to use the elevator!
5. If patrons are not to exit through your exit, you must ensure that no one does.
6. Ushers at emergency exits count as patrons leave to ensure that EVERYONE is led to safety.
7. The usher who is posted at the elevator is responsible for leading patrons into Glover Park where another head count will be done.
8. Box Office Manager will count staff, volunteers and confirm patron numbers with Ushers; Stage Manager will count cast and crew.
9. Most importantly remain CALM. With your help everyone will be evacuated safely.

#### **Elevator Breakdown**

- Inform FoH and Box Office Staff immediately if the elevator breaks down while someone is in the elevator.
- Find out how many are inside and if they are in distress. Remain calm and encourage them that help is on the way.

#### **Patron is Sick During a Show**

- An usher will assist patron out of the theatre and will inform FoH immediately. In medical emergencies FOH will call 911 if patron is unable to do so.
- Please escort patrons from the Theatre through the doors. DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR unless it is an extreme emergency and 911 has to be called. There will be a chair outside the door for the patron to sit on until staff is able to further assist.

## Public Health Practices

To provide a high level of protection for all patrons and workers it is important to realize that no single measure is completely effective. With this in mind know that PSFT will adjust health measures as advised by local health authorities.

Due to raised awareness of public health concerns from the COVID-19 pandemic, patrons are encouraged, but not required, to wear masks while inside the theatre building. Wearing a mask is encouraged as an added public health measure to minimize the risk of spreading respiratory infections, especially in theatre settings where physical distancing is difficult

All cleaning supplies will be outside the theatre doors on the window ledge including gloves for those who choose to wear them. Additional cleaning supplies are available in the box office. When cleaning focus on high-touch objects and surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, handles, rails, buttons, light switches, and faucets). These should be cleaned and disinfected more often and when visibly dirty.

Hand cleansing stations are located inside the main box office entrance, outside the theatre and in the Palmer Room. You are encouraged to wash or sanitize your hands at appropriate times, such as:

- at the start and end of shift,
- before eating, drinking, or smoking,
- after touching shared or high-touch items, equipment, and surfaces,
- after using the washroom,
- after coughing or sneezing,
- after cleaning and disinfecting,
- before and after putting on or removing personal protective equipment or a mask.

### Accidents while on Duty

Should an incident or injury occur with a patron or other volunteer obtain an incident report from the Box Office Manager for completion. Do not discuss the incident with patrons except to check their condition and convey your concern and interest in getting assistance, if needed.

### **Code of Conduct Policy**

All Port Stanley Festival Theatre volunteers are expected to meet the highest standards of conduct. The purpose of this policy is to inform volunteers of expected conduct in relation to their roles with PSFT.




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If you test positive with COVID or other highly transmissible disease and have been active at the theatre in the past four (4) days please call the box office to inform us immediately.

Phone: 519-782-4353

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When in doubt about how to act in a given situation, volunteers should contact the Box Office Manager, FoH Staff or Theatre Manager for further guidance.

This Code is organized as follows:

<b>Conduct</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
Providing Services	Always act with fairness, honesty, integrity and openness; respect the opinions of others and treat all with dignity and respect. Promote the mission and objectives of PSFT in all dealings with the public on behalf of the theatre.
Interpersonal	Treat other volunteers, employees, donors, customers and all stakeholders with dignity and respect no matter their personal characteristics, background or values. Refrain from engaging in any behavior that could be considered discrimination and harassment under the Human Rights Policy. Refrain from behaviour that could be considered demeaning, bullying, threatening, intimidating or violent. Do not be under the influence of, or affected by, illegal drugs, controlled substances or alcohol during working hours.
Personal Accountability	Act with honesty and integrity and with professional standards. Comply with both the letter and the spirit of any training or orientation provided to you by PSFT. Adhere to the policies and procedures of PSFT and support the decisions and directions of all Box Office and PSFT staff. Take responsibility for your actions and decisions. Follow reporting lines to facilitate the effective resolution of problems. Ensure that you do not exceed the authority of your position.
Confidentiality	Respect and maintain the confidentiality of information gained as a volunteer, including, but not limited to, all computer software and files, PSFT business documents/printouts, and all volunteer, employee, member, donor and supporter records.

Code of Conduct Violations Penalty

PSFT has a zero-tolerance policy for the following:

- Harassment or discrimination of any kind, or
- Insubordination towards any PSFT staff, other volunteers or patrons, or
- Any activity that interferes with our patrons’ enjoyment of the theatre.

Volunteers who are found in contravention of the PSFT Code of Conduct will be removed from the Volunteer list and will be unable to volunteer again for a period of at least one year from the date of removal.



### Reporting Code of Conduct Violations

Whenever a volunteer believes that they or someone else may be in violation of the Code of Conduct, they must discuss the situation with the Box Office Manager and/or the Theatre Manager to get direction about what is required. An appropriate investigation will promptly commence, and corrective action will be taken as required.

Corrective action may include disciplinary action up to and including termination of the relationship between Port Stanley Festival Theatre and the volunteer.

### Confidentiality

Strict confidentiality is critical throughout the investigation process; information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. The Theatre Manager and/or the Box Office Manager will conduct a thorough investigation and determine what, if any, appropriate corrective action will be taken. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Theatre Manager and/or Box Office Manager will share the findings with the alleged offender and what, if any, disciplinary action (up to and including termination of relationship with PSFT) has been determined.

### Retaliation

Any retaliation against individuals who report apparent discrimination/harassment or for participating in the reporting, investigation or complaint resolution process is also a serious violation of this policy. Anyone who is found to have committed retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of relationship with PSFT.

### Volunteer Complaint Procedure:

During the normal course of business, situations may arise where a volunteer has a complaint that needs addressed. Complaints should be reported as soon as possible without interfering with the running of the performance. The following procedure lists appropriate steps for a volunteer to take should such a situation arise.

#### **Volunteer complaint about another volunteer:**

A volunteer should first seek resolution of a complaint directly with the other volunteer, unless:

- a) the volunteer feels uncomfortable approaching the other volunteer, or
- b) the complainant has already approached the other volunteer and the complaint has not been resolved, or
- c) the complainant feels the matter is too large or serious to be discussed directly with the other volunteer.

If any of these situations apply, the volunteer should discuss the complaint with the Box Office Manager or the Theatre Manager.

#### **Volunteer complaint about a PSFT employee:**

A volunteer should seek resolution of a complaint directly with the employee, unless:

- a) the complainant feels uncomfortable approaching the other employee, or
- b) the complainant has already approached the employee and the complaint has not been resolved, or
- c) the complainant feels the complaint is too large or serious an issue to be discussed directly with the employee.

If any of these situations apply, the volunteer should discuss the situation with another Box Office or PSFT staff member.

**Volunteer complaint about an organizational issue:**

These complaints should only be discussed with a PSFT staff member. PSFT will address it with the appropriate staff member(s) with a response provided to the volunteer within seven business days.

If all previous complaint procedures have been exhausted and the complaint is still not resolved to the satisfaction of the volunteer, the matter must be referred to the PSFT Board of Directors. The Board’s decision on the issue is final.

If a complaint is found to be made in bad faith or of mischievous intent, it will result in PSFT re-evaluating its relationship with the volunteer.

**Complaint Resolution**

Once the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the Theatre Manager, a written report of the complaint, investigation process and final resolution will be completed and retained in the Theatre Manager’s confidential files for a period of ten years.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy**

Our commitment to inclusion across race, gender, age, religion, identity, and experience drives us forward every day in allowing PSFT to *Create Inspire Develop and Sustain* professional Canadian theatre.

PSFT is committed to being a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace. We value all employees and volunteers, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or identity, education or disability. We offer equal employment and advancement opportunities. We seek opportunities to demonstrate diversity and inclusion and to provide an inclusive, respectful environment with equitable treatment for all.

Anyone found to have engaged in any behavior that could be considered discrimination and harassment under the Human Rights Policy will be subject to an investigation and potential repercussions as described in the Code of Conduct.

## Glossary

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
FOH:	Front of House refers to Box Office and Front of House Managers
House Left/Right:	When facing the stage, seated in the auditorium theatre staff refer to left and right in this manner.
Stage Right/Left:	When an actor or crew person is on stage facing the audience, staff refer to their left and right from the stage perspective.

*Thank you for Volunteering*

Those who can, do.  
Those who can do more, volunteer.

~ Unknown ~