

# Handy Stage Manager Terms

**Anti-Rake** - The act of modifying furniture or props by shortening the upstage legs etc. so that they can stand level on a raked stage.

**Raked Stage** – A theatre stage floor angled from the edge of the stage, near the audience, up toward the back of the stage, furthest from the audience. This angled position of the stage prompted the use of the terms 'upstage,' 'centre stage' and 'downstage'.

**Sightlines** - A series of lines drawn on plan and section to show how much of the stage can be seen by the extreme seating positions in the auditorium. Often marked in the wings as a guide to the actors and crew to stay out of view.

**Half Call/30 Minute Call** – Called 35 minutes before curtain up. Usually cast warm-up 5 mins before this call.

**Quarter Call/15 Minute Call** – Called 20 minutes before curtain up.

**5 Min Call** – Called 10 minutes before curtain up.

**Beginners Call** – Called 5 minutes before curtain up.

**Front of House Calls** - Announcements made by stage management or FOH (Front of House) staff calling the audience into the auditorium, or informing them when the performance begins. Calls or Bells are normally made at the Half for 'House Open', and then bar bells after the 5 Min Call for the audience to 'take their seats as the show is about to begin.'

**House Open** – The stage manager will notify the Front of House Manager when the stage is 'set' and ready for the audience to take their seats. The FOH Manager/Stage Manager will then shout 'House Open' to notify Ushers/Backstage not to cross the stage and to open the auditorium doors.

**House Lights** - The auditorium lighting which is commonly faded out when the performance starts.

**Front of House Clearance** – When all of the audience have taken their seats the FOH Manager notifies the stage manager backstage. The stage manager can then give clearance to the DSM to 'Put The Reds Up' & 'Stand By'

**Put The Reds Up/Stand By** – A term used by stage management to 'prepare' for the opening of the show. The DSM will stand by for the first cues. They will stand by the operators for lighting/sound, stage crew, assistant stage managers and actors. The DSM will also stand anyone by on the 'prompt desk' via 'cue lights'. Once the DSM has had verbal and visual acknowledgement she/he will notify the stage manager. The stage manager will then say 'thank you, it's all yours, take it away.' The DSM will then start the show.

**Cue** – A command given to technical departments to carry out an operation. For Example: Fly Cue or Sound Cue.

**Cueing** - The standard sequence for giving verbal cues.

DSM = 'Stand-by please for Sound Cue 19'

Sound Technician = 'Standing By'

DSM = 'Sound Cue 19 - Go'

**Prompt Desk & Cue Lights** – Here are examples of a prompt desk & cue light.

A cue light system is for giving technical staff and actors silent cues by light. Cue lights ensure greater precision when visibility or audibility of actors/crew is limited. Sometimes used for cueing actors onto the set. For technical cues, lights are normally now used just as a backup to cues given over the headset system. A flashing Red light means stand-by & Green light means Go. The actor/crew/technician can acknowledge the standby by pressing a button which makes the light go steady.



**Iron Curtain or Safety Curtain** - A fireproof curtain that can be lowered between the stage and the main part of a theatre to prevent the spread of fire.

**Setting Line/Curtain Line/Iron Line** - Imaginary line across the performance space marking the point where the front tabs or curtain is flown. A setting line is also used in a mark up and on a CAD (Computer Aided Design) drawing.

**Proscenium Arch** - an arch framing the opening between the stage and the auditorium in some theatres.

**Centre Line** – The line in the centre of the stage.

**Model or Model Box** – The design and a scale model provided by the set designer to help all the technical departments to co-ordinate and plan a production. Used as a reference when building, painting, dressing and lighting the set. The first stage of model-making is the WHITE CARD model which shows the form of the set, but not the detail of painting / texture / colour. When the final model is produced which should look identical to the finished set on stage. This is used as a reference by scenic artists and lighting designer etc.

**Mark-up or Marking up** - Sticking tapes to the floor of the rehearsal space to indicate the ground plan of the scenery. Also for marking position of furniture etc. within a set.

**Spike/Spike Mark** - Marking the position of an item of set/furniture on stage or in the rehearsal room or onstage. LX tape is usually used. Or Glow Tape for dark areas which is a luminous yellow self-adhesive tape used to mark floors so that positions can be found in blackouts.

**Ground Plan** - A scaled plan from the model box & designer. Usually put together by the designer or production manager. This is usually a CAD drawing. A bird's eye view of the theatre stage area and the set design. It enables all technical departments to ensure that everything will fit correctly into the space available. The ground plan shows all items standing on the stage floor and any permanent items which will affect the production, and the position of any flown pieces/lights/speakers etc. The set design ground plan enables the lighting designer and sound designer to be clear about exact location of all items, and will have the walls of the stage drawn on it so that the stage management team and production manager can plan furniture and set moves offstage. It also ensures for an accurate rehearsal room mark up for actors to rehearse on.

In theatre, we usually use a metric scale of 1:25 (1cm to 0.25m). Venues have a base plan showing proscenium, walls, seating etc, on which individual set and lighting plans can be drawn.