



## **“Red Coat” Volunteer Informational Handbook**

### **I Introduction & Sign-Up**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Solvang Theaterfest “Red Coat.” As a volunteer, you help make our patrons’ experience unique. Your attendance and assistance ensure that patrons have a smooth and enjoyable visit; your customer service and positive attitude can affect how individual patrons view their performance and their experience.

Although we have many rules and guidelines, the most important guideline to follow is that you are there to enhance the experience for all patrons at all shows.

Sign-ups for performances are available online only (signup.com). Volunteers can sign up and cancel their shifts as needed. If you are going to cancel, please do so no later than 48 hours before your scheduled shift. If you need technical assistance, ask for help at [info@solvangtheaterfest.org](mailto:info@solvangtheaterfest.org). You do not need an account to sign up for a Red Coat shift. You may sign up for a friend. You will receive an automated reminder email from the website 48 hours before your scheduled shift. If you need to

cancel within two hours of your shift, please contact us at [info@solvangtheaterfest.org](mailto:info@solvangtheaterfest.org).

Frequent tardiness and last-minute cancellations may result in being removed from the Red Coat program.

### **II Arrival at the Theater**

Unless otherwise communicated, volunteers are asked to arrive at the Theater **at call time indicated on signup.com**. You will receive instructions and duty assignments from the House Manager prior to opening the house for patrons. Please be attentive during the opening instructions. You may feel like you’ve heard the information before, however each show is different and has special needs.

### **III Dress Code**

The dress code for all volunteers is an ALL-WHITE top (with an ALL-BLACK necktie or bow tie optional) and ALL BLACK slacks or skirt. Jackets and sweaters must be RED. Shoes must be closed-toe, quiet, and preferably BLACK.

Anyone not following this dress code may be sent home. Black mixed with other colors; patterns in other colors; accessories in other colors are not allowed.

It is important to retain the integrity of the dress code as this provides easy identification of volunteers for our patrons and provides a sense of comfort for those patrons.

## **IV Volunteers Practices**

In addition to ushering or concessions, volunteers may also be assigned tasks like disposing of trash or replenishing toiletries. These responsibilities are essential for maintaining a clean and comfortable environment for event attendees. Your willingness to assist in these aspects further demonstrates your commitment to ensuring a positive experience for everyone involved in the event.

Volunteers are specifically prohibited from consuming alcoholic beverages while on duty or just prior to duty. This compromises the safety of our patrons and the financial security of Solvang Theaterfest. Ushers in violation of this policy will be sent home and are subject to removal from the Red Coat Program.

Volunteers are to take any food/beverage breaks in the designated break area and should avoid sitting in tables or chairs designated for patrons.

Volunteers may store personal belongings in the Red Coat Closet. We ask that you do not take large purses or handbags into the seating area.

Be sure to set your cell phones to silent mode once you arrive for your scheduled shift. Once the house opens cell phone usage is not allowed.

### **1) House Rules**

The following are not allowed in the theatre:

SMOKING OF ANY KIND

GLASS

RECORDING DEVICES (unless instructed otherwise)

PHOTOGRAPHY (unless instructed otherwise)

### **2) Photography**

Union regulations and various copyright laws prohibit the use of cameras, video cameras, cellular phones, or any other kind of recording device in our theatres. This includes photos of the stage taken before or after the show (unless otherwise instructed). During the performance, flash photography is not only prohibited, but could be disorienting and dangerous to the actors' safety.

### **3) Seating**

If any Patron has an issue regarding their seating, identify the issue and provide a solution if possible. If you are unable to resolve the issue, notify the patron you will find house management to assist.

### **4) Late Seating**

In most cases, House Management or staff will handle late seating.

### **5) Seating of Ushers**

Ushers should be seated just before the performance begins. Ushers may sit in the last row of any available section, and whenever possible, not next to another usher. Ushers are not guaranteed seating and should avoid crossing over patrons to get to an available seat.

### **6) Food and Beverages**

Solvang Theaterfest does allow food and drink inside the Theater (although GLASS is not allowed).

## **7) Children and Pre-teens**

PCPA produces plays with adult content on occasion. You will be advised during opening instructions when such content is included in the current production.

## **8) Assisting Disabled Patrons**

a) If a Patron needs assistance getting to his/her seat, offer assistance by extending your arm. Do not take their arm yourself. Patrons with disabilities know how they need to be Supported.

**B** We do allow Service Animals. If there is a service animal in your assigned section, be aware of it and monitor its behavior to ensure the safety of other patrons and the integrity of the show. Also, avoid touching Service Animals.

## **9) Redcoat Conduct**

Ushering demands a heightened level of courtesy, chivalry, and consideration. Some examples: ALWAYS let a patron go first in any line. ALWAYS address patrons as Sir or Ma'am unless you know their names.

When you are on duty as an Usher, remember the maxims of service professionals:

Be nearby and available but never obtrusive.

Anticipate but never intrude.

Be friendly but not overbearing.

It's important for ushers to avoid lengthy, emotional, or opinionated conversations with patrons.

If any patrons share their opinion of the production, kindly keep your comments neutral.

If a patron is upset or non-cooperative, it is best to alert house management and work together to find an amicable solution. If during your usher shift you see friends or acquaintances, please keep your interaction with them brief. If you would like to have an extended conversation, ask your friends to wait for you outside after the show.

## **VI Volunteer Duties**

Regardless of what duty you are assigned to for your shift, Volunteers should take a proactive approach with respect to handling tasks such as straightening patio chairs, stocking restrooms, picking up trash, programs and rental items, tidying up work areas including the company store, and other duties brought to your attention by house management or staff.

Upon arrival for your shift, please alert House Management if for medical reasons you are unable to perform certain shifts. While we will certainly take your preferences into account, we are unable to guarantee that you will have your chosen position. We would appreciate your cooperation in assisting us with what is needed per performance.

If you have completed your assignment and do not wish to watch the performance, please alert house management that you will be leaving for the remainder of the performance. There is no need to stay outside of the theatre in the garden if your duty has been completed.

### **1) Gatekeeper (Ticket-taker)**

Gatekeepers are the "forward guards" during a performance. For security and liability reasons, you should make every effort to make sure no one enters the theatre without a ticket.

Exceptions for this rule are made for some individuals such as staff, members of production, or others that have been given permission from staff. If possible, confirm that permission with house management or staff before allowing entrance.

During intermission and at the end of the performance, gate keepers should return to the gates to say farewell and help ensure that no patron leaves with a rented item.

## **2) Company Store**

The Company Store sells items to help raise funds for Solvang Theaterfest. This position requires handling of both cash and credit cards, and sometimes requires fast transactions.

Unless otherwise instructed by the House Manager, the Company Store should open approximately one hour before the performance begins (for PCPA shows), and as directed for other Theaterfest performances.

You should be in position to sell items during intermission and after the performance if the Company store is open during these times.

## **3) Concessions**

Working concessions involves a variety of tasks to ensure a seamless experience for event goers. As a concession stand worker, you will be responsible for preparing and serving food and beverages, handling transactions, and providing accurate change, maintaining cleanliness in the concession area, restocking supplies, and addressing customer inquiries.

## **4) Programs**

The program ushers hand out programs to patrons as they enter the seating area.

## **5) Restroom Concierge**

Ensure impeccable cleanliness and ample supplies in all restroom stalls, while also optimizing guest efficiency by promptly directing them to available facilities.

## **6) Seating Ushers**

Once patrons have arrived in their aisle, Seating Ushers are responsible for assisting patrons in locating their correct seats.

It is important to be adept at the rows and seats in your assigned section. If patrons are not sure of where their seats are located, the best practice is to lead them to the correct row and guide them with an open hand gesture to their specific seats. During intermission, you should stand against the back wall of the theatre and be available for any questions.

## **7) Backdoor Guard (Section 7)**

This position is to prevent any patron from using this exit before the show or during intermission, unless they are Theaterfest Staff, or with PCPA. No exceptions. At the end of the performance, the exit door at the back of section 7 is allowed as an exit only.

## **Starting the Show**

It is important for all patrons to be in their seats prior to the start of the performance. Five minutes prior to the scheduled start time, please encourage any patrons not sitting in their seats to find their seats. Ushers must also be vigilant for patrons putting their coats, hats, or programs on the railing surrounding the stage. This is not allowed at any time before, during, or after the performance.

## **Departing Patrons**

Patrons may decide to leave the theatre during a performance. There is no need to interfere with departing patrons unless they have a question or concern.

## **Wheelchair & Disabled Patron Access**

Accessible seating for disabled patrons is available in designated spaces in the back row (row M).

## **After the Show**

Ushers should stay in your seat until the final curtain call is over and the house lights have been turned up. This will encourage patrons to stay seated. After the performance, you should assist other ushers in picking up trash and programs throughout the seating area.