

Montford Park Players Director Packet

Thank you for directing with Montford Park Players. We are grateful for the time, vision, care, and leadership that directors bring to our productions.

This packet is intended to help set expectations early so directors, staff, cast, designers, stage managers, and volunteers all begin the process with a shared understanding of timelines, communication, and support. MPP is a primarily volunteer theatre, so clear planning and early communication are essential to a successful production.

This document is not intended to limit a director's creativity. It is meant to provide structure, reduce confusion, and help each production move smoothly from early planning through tech week and performances.

Director Role Overview

The director is responsible for the artistic leadership of their production. This includes the overall interpretation of the script, script cutting, casting, rehearsal process, staging, pacing, tone, actor guidance, and collaboration with the production team.

Directing with MPP is a paid 1099 contractor position unless otherwise stated in writing. By accepting the role, directors are representing Montford Park Players through their production and are expected to work in alignment with MPP's mission, policies, values, artistic goals, and community-centered culture.

Directors are expected to work within MPP's outdoor performance model, budget, available resources, production timeline, and volunteer-centered structure.

The director is the primary artistic decision-maker for the production and is responsible for bringing the work of actors, designers, and production personnel into a cohesive whole. Artistic decisions should be made clearly and in a timely manner. The director's artistic authority remains subject to licensing requirements, MPP policies, safety requirements, approved budgets, available resources, and the physical limitations of the venue.

Directors are expected to review and follow any additional guidelines, procedures, or departmental expectations provided for stage management, costumes, props, facilities, safety, marketing, and other production areas relevant to their show.

Directors are not expected to do everything alone. MPP staff is available to provide guidance and help coordinate appropriate production support.

Key Contacts

Directors should know who to contact for different needs throughout the production process.

Executive Director

John Russell

Email: john.russell@montfordparkplayers.org

Organizational concerns, policy questions, administrative needs, escalation issues, and matters that move beyond a specific production.

Artistic Director

Jason Williams

Email: jason.williams@montfordparkplayers.org

Artistic vision, director support, casting questions, script cuts, major artistic concerns, and process concerns.

Production Manager

Deanna Braine Smith

Email: deanna.brainesmith@montfordparkplayers.org

Production logistics, set needs, props, sound, equipment, budget questions, build needs, storage, load-in, strike, and production feasibility.

Production Stage Manager / Stage Manager

Caitlin Marshall

Email: caitlin.lane@montfordparkplayers.org

Rehearsal communication, schedules, rehearsal reports, contact sheets, conflicts, production communication, and tech week organization.

Production Costumer

Trinity Smith Keel

Email: trinity.smith.keel@montfordparkplayers.org

Costume planning, costume inventory, fittings, measurements, alterations, costume needs, and returns.

Facilities Contact

Walker Linkous

Email: walker.linkous@montfordparkplayers.org

Venue needs, site concerns, access, storage, weather-related space needs, safety concerns, and indoor space requests when applicable.

Marketing Contact

Kristi DeVille

Email: kristi.deville@montfordparkplayers.org

Audition notices, show descriptions, production photos, promotional needs, cast/crew information, and public-facing show details.

General MPP Inbox

Email: info@montfordparkplayers.org

Communication Expectations

Clear communication is one of the most important parts of directing at MPP.

Directors are expected to:

- Use the agreed communication channels.
 - Respond to staff and stage management in a timely manner.
 - Share schedules and updates clearly.
 - Communicate changes as early as possible.
 - Escalate concerns – even if it feels minor at the time - before they become larger issues.
 - Keep communication respectful and production focused.
 - Work collaboratively with MPP staff and volunteers.
-

Conflict and Concern Resolution

Concerns should be addressed as early and directly as possible.

If an issue arises during the production process, directors should first work with the appropriate person based on the type of concern:

- Rehearsal schedule or attendance: Stage Manager or Production Stage Manager.
- Production needs or technical concerns: Production Manager.
- Costumes: Production Costumer.
- Facility or weather-related needs: Facilities contact or Production Manager.
- Artistic concerns: Artistic Director.
- Conduct, safety, or policy concerns: Executive Director, Board representative, or designated escalation contact.

MPP's goal is to support productions while maintaining a respectful, safe, and collaborative environment for everyone involved. If a director is unsure who to contact about a specific issue, they should reach out to the Artistic Director, Production Manager, or Stage Manager for guidance. Directors are responsible for reinforcing applicable conduct and safety expectations in the rehearsal room and promptly reporting suspected policy violations through the appropriate escalation process. Directors should not independently investigate serious conduct complaints.

Production Meetings and Check-Ins

Directors should expect production meetings at key points in the process to ensure the production is planned, supported, and communicating clearly.

At minimum, productions should include:

- A production meeting **prior to auditions**.
- A production meeting **prior to the start of rehearsals**.

- Additional production meetings or check-ins as needed during the rehearsal process.

These meetings are intended to support the director and production team, clarify expectations, identify needs early, and prevent avoidable surprises later in the process.

The pre-audition production meeting may include discussion of:

- Director's vision or concept.
- Script cuts or adaptation needs.
- Casting needs and audition structure.
- Production team needs.
- Stage management needs.
- Schedule expectations.
- Budget questions.
- Set, costume, prop, sound, music, or special technical needs.
- Any safety, fight, intimacy, accessibility, or weather-related considerations.

The pre-rehearsal production meeting may include discussion of:

- Final or near-final cast list.
- Rehearsal schedule.
- Read-through plans.
- Communication channels.
- Production deadlines.
- Design and technical progress.
- Rain day planning.
- Indoor space needs, if applicable.
- Early concerns or support needed from MPP staff.

Additional production meetings may be scheduled during the rehearsal process if needed due to production complexity, weather issues, design needs, communication concerns, staffing needs, or other circumstances that require staff and production leadership alignment.

These meetings are not intended to micromanage the rehearsals. They are meant to ensure the director, production staff, stage management, and MPP leadership have the information needed to support the production successfully.

Production Team Support

MPP staff can help source stage managers, assistant stage managers, designers, costumers, builders, prop support, and other production team members as needed.

Directors may also recommend, interview, or bring people they would like to work with on their production team. Any production team members brought in by the director should be discussed with MPP staff before they are confirmed so that expectations, budget, availability, and responsibilities are clear.

Production team needs should be discussed as early as possible. The earlier staff knows what support is needed, the easier it is to help find the right people and avoid last-minute gaps.

Budget

MPP will provide production budget information upon request or as part of the pre-production process.

Directors should not make purchases, promise payment, commit to rentals, or approve outside expenses without confirmation from the executive director or production manager. Any expenses paid out of the director's own funds that were not approved in advance may not be reimbursed.

Budget conversations should happen early whenever a production element may require additional purchases, rentals, specialized personnel, equipment, or rehearsal space. Directors are encouraged to dream creatively, but all production choices should be realistic for the approved budget, available staff support, volunteer capacity, and outdoor performance space.

Script Cuts and Adaptation

Directors are expected to review the script early and determine whether cuts or adaptations are needed for the production.

A final cut of the script should be provided to MPP staff **no later than one month before rehearsals begin**. This allows time for any needed review of major cuts or changes, casting support, rehearsal planning, actor preparation, production planning, and script printing.

All script cuts, edits, adaptations, or changes must comply with licensing, royalty, and rights requirements for the production. Directors should not assume that text may be cut, added, rearranged, adapted, or altered unless those changes are permitted by the licensing agreement or approved through the appropriate process.

Major cuts or adaptations should be discussed with the Artistic Director or artistic liaison before they are finalized.

When making cuts, directors should consider:

- Overall runtime.
- Clarity of story.
- Character arcs.
- Casting needs.
- Outdoor audience experience.
- Sound and visibility.
- Volunteer actor capacity.
- Rehearsal time available.
- MPP's mission and audience.
- Licensing, royalty, and rights restrictions.

Any major concept changes, framing devices, added text, significant restructuring, or changes that affect the meaning of the work should be discussed before rehearsals begin and must remain within the rights granted for the production.

Where possible, the final production should aim for a performance runtime that fits within approximately **7:30 PM to 10:00 PM**. This helps create a stronger audience experience, supports volunteer and staff capacity, and keeps the production aligned with MPP's outdoor performance environment.

Auditions and Casting

Directors are expected to work with MPP staff to plan auditions, callbacks, and casting communication.

Pre-casting is prohibited, and all roles should be open to all actors who audition.

Audition information should be provided to Marketing and appropriate MPP staff no later than three weeks before the audition date. This gives Marketing adequate preparation time and allows staff to identify any scheduling conflicts.

Before any casting offers are made, directors should also provide the audition signup list to the artistic director and production manager before auditions so any known scheduling, policy, or participation concerns can be identified early.

Audition information should include:

- Audition date and time.
- Audition location.
- Whether auditions will be by sign-up appointment or held as a group audition.
- Whether actors should prepare a monologue.
- Whether actors will read from provided sides – a pdf of the sides should be provided for printing and, when appropriate, posting on the website.
- Whether sides will be provided in advance or at auditions.
- Any additional materials or preparation needed.
- Any movement, dance, fight, music, or other special audition requirements.
- Callback date, time, and expectations, if applicable.
- Character descriptions or casting needs.
- Any known rehearsal or performance conflicts actors should be aware of before auditioning.

Directors should communicate any specific casting needs, preparation materials, callback needs, or scheduling requirements as early as possible.

Casting should be finalized **no later than three weeks before the rehearsal period begins**, preferably sooner when possible. Earlier casting is strongly encouraged so actors have adequate time to review the script, plan around the schedule, and prepare for rehearsals.

Directors should consider and continue to monitor actor availability, disclosed conflicts, role demands, rehearsal expectations, actor needs, and any concerns that may affect the rehearsal environment or production before and after finalizing the cast. Directors are encouraged to make casting offers in phases when appropriate, allowing time for an actor to accept or decline before dependent or alternate casting

decisions are finalized. If an actor is offered roles in MPP productions with conflicting schedules, the actor should be provided with the relevant information and allowed to decide which role to accept. A director should not make that decision on the actor's behalf.

Casting communication should be handled respectfully, clearly, and in coordination with MPP's approved process – typically through email.

Read-Through

A read-through should be scheduled **at least one week before the official start of rehearsals**, when feasible. This gives the cast and production team an opportunity to meet, hear the script, understand the director's vision, ask initial questions, and prepare for the rehearsal process. Because the stage will not be available until the previous production closes, directors are encouraged, but not required, to complete table work with the cast individually or as a group before gaining full stage access.

The read-through is also an appropriate time to review:

- Director expectations.
- Rehearsal schedule.
- Attendance expectations.
- Conflict process.
- Communication channels.
- Production timeline.
- Tech week expectations.
- Outdoor performance considerations.
- Rain and weather planning.

Rehearsal Schedule

The rehearsal schedule is due to the cast and appropriate MPP staff **no later than the read-through**.

While the current production is running, directors should generally plan rehearsals around **Monday through Thursday evenings** and **Saturday or Sunday daytime rehearsals** where appropriate. Directors should coordinate with MPP staff if additional rehearsal time, indoor space, or alternate scheduling is needed.

The schedule does not need to account for every possible surprise, but it should give the cast, stage manager, and staff a clear understanding of the rehearsal plan and expectations. If you need assistance with creating a schedule in this time frame, please reach out to the artistic director or the production manager.

The rehearsal schedule should include:

- Rehearsal dates.
- Start and end times.
- Location.
- Scenes or acts being rehearsed when possible.

- Actors called for each rehearsal, when possible.
- Known conflicts.
- Planned run-throughs.
- Off-book date or dates.
- Tech week schedule.
- Performance dates.
- Planned rain days or makeup days.

When possible, directors should avoid unnecessary all-call rehearsals and should call only the actors needed for the material being rehearsed. This helps respect actors' time and keeps the rehearsal process more focused and efficient. Tentative dates are acceptable when they are clearly identified and communicated early to the cast.

Directors should build in flexibility where possible, especially for outdoor rehearsals and weather-related interruptions.

Schedule changes should be communicated as early as possible through the agreed communication channel (email, Discord, etc.). Last-minute changes should be avoided whenever possible, especially in an environment where cast and crew are balancing work, family, transportation, and other commitments.

Rain Days and Weather Planning

MPP performs and rehearses in an outdoor environment, so weather planning is an important part of the process.

Directors should make room in the rehearsal schedule for rain days, weather interruptions, or makeup rehearsals when possible.

If indoor rehearsal space may be needed, directors should reach out to MPP staff as early as possible. Indoor space may not always be available, but staff can assist with exploring options when given enough notice. Weather events are generally unexpected – but if there is a known issue in the forecast, directors should avoid waiting until the day of a weather issue to begin looking for alternatives.

Weather-related communication should be clear, timely, and consistent so cast, crew, and staff know whether rehearsal is continuing, moving, being delayed, or being canceled.

Rehearsal Expectations

Directors are expected to lead rehearsals in a way that is organized, respectful, and productive.

Directors should:

- Begin and end rehearsals as close to scheduled times as possible and use time efficiently.
- Communicate clearly with cast, stage management, and production staff.
- Respect actor conflicts that were disclosed and approved.

- Give actors enough notice when they are called.
- Keep production staff informed of needs or concerns.
- Avoid saving major problems until tech week.
- Maintain a rehearsal environment that is collaborative and respectful.
- Work with the stage manager or production staff when schedule, attendance, casting, or rehearsal concerns arise.

Directors should not be expected to solve every production problem alone, but they are expected to communicate concerns early so staff can help.

Directors should provide reasonable breaks during longer rehearsals and avoid repeatedly extending rehearsals beyond the communicated end time.

Set, Props, Costumes, and Design Needs

Directors should communicate production needs as early as possible. This includes set pieces, props, costumes, sound needs, music, special effects, fight choreography, intimacy needs, or any unusual staging requirements. Directors should make every effort to communicate early and thoroughly to their stage manager, costumers, and other staff regarding their vision and needs.

MPP staff may help source designers or production support. Directors may also recommend people they would like to work with, but those individuals should be discussed with MPP staff before being confirmed.

Directors should avoid making promises to cast, designers, or volunteers about what MPP can provide before confirming budget, staffing, and feasibility with production leadership.

All design and production choices should consider:

- Outdoor performance conditions.
- Storage and transportation.
- Weather.
- Safety.
- Budget.
- Volunteer capacity.
- Setup and strike time.
- Audience visibility and sound.
- Long-term use of MPP resources.

Directors and production-team members may not paint, attach materials to, remove, modify, drill into, or otherwise alter any permanent or structural element of the stage, stagehouse, backstage area, equipment, or facility without prior approval from the Production Manager or designated MPP staff member.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, costumes, props, set pieces, equipment, and other items created or purchased using MPP funds become the property of Montford Park Players.

Playbill Materials

If you'd like to provide a director's note for the playbill, it must be provided **no later than two weeks before the show opens**.

A play synopsis for the playbill must also be provided **no later than two weeks before the show opens**.

Directors should provide these materials by the requested deadline so staff has time to edit, format, proof, and finalize the playbill before opening.

Stage Access and Production Transition

Directors should plan with the understanding that their incoming production will have full access to the stage beginning **the Sunday before opening**, unless otherwise communicated by MPP staff.

The expectation is that the previous production will strike on **Saturday night after closing or Sunday morning**, depending on the needs of the production, weather, staffing, and timing.

Communication between the outgoing and incoming productions is highly encouraged to support a smooth transition, efficient use of time, and clear expectations around strike, load-in, shared resources, storage, and stage readiness.

Directors should coordinate with the Production Manager and appropriate production staff regarding stage access, load-in timing, set placement, storage, technical needs, and any concerns that may affect the transition between productions. Incoming productions should respect the needs of the current production until it closes, and outgoing productions should complete strike and transition responsibilities promptly so the incoming production can begin its stage work.

Following the final performance, the director should work with the Production Manager, Stage Manager, and production team to complete strike and closeout responsibilities within the timeframe established by MPP.

Responsibilities include, as applicable:

- Resetting the stage and removing temporary additions.
 - Returning costumes, props, weapons, equipment, keys, and borrowed materials.
 - Clearing backstage, dressing, rehearsal, and storage areas.
 - Reporting damaged or missing items.
 - Coordinating anything approved to remain for the next production.
 - Submitting outstanding receipts or expense documentation.
-

Tech Week

Tech week requires clear communication, preparation, and flexibility from the director, cast, stage manager, designers, and production staff.

Before tech week begins, directors should work with production leadership to ensure:

- The show has been fully blocked.
- Major staging issues have been addressed.
- The cast understands tech week expectations.
- Designers and production staff know what is needed.
- Props, costumes, sound, set, and other technical elements are on track.
- Any major concerns have been communicated early.
- The schedule has been clearly shared.
- The production has coordinated stage access and transition needs with the Production Manager.

The **Monday of tech week**, MPP staff will speak with the cast and crew to set expectations around props, stage use, costumes, chores, donation collection, backstage responsibilities, and other performance-related procedures.

Tech week should mirror production nights as closely as possible. The goal is to begin the run at the regular performance start time of **7:30 PM** so the cast, crew, and production team can establish the rhythm of an actual performance night.

On **Monday of tech week**, call should generally be around **6:00 PM** to allow time for staff talks, expectations, setup, and preparation before the run begins.

Tuesday through Thursday call times may be adjusted as needed by the director and production team, but should allow enough time for setup, notes, preparation, and a timely **7:30 PM** run whenever possible.

Tech week should not be the first time major production needs are shared with staff.

Directors should be prepared for tech week to involve problem-solving, timing adjustments, and collaboration. The goal is to support the production while respecting the time and energy of the cast, crew, volunteers, staff, and audience.

Post-Production Review

Following the close of the production, the director will participate in a post-production review or After-Action Review with appropriate MPP staff. The review may address planning, communication, budget, production support, safety, weather, technical operations, successful practices, and recommendations for future productions. This review should generally occur within one month after closing, allowing time for cast and crew feedback submitted through the anonymous post-production survey to be reviewed.

Director Acknowledgment

By accepting a paid 1099 directing role with Montford Park Players, the director acknowledges that they have reviewed and understand the expectations outlined in this packet.

The director understands that they are representing Montford Park Players through their production and agrees to work in alignment with MPP's mission, policies, values, artistic goals, and community-centered culture.

The director agrees to communicate clearly, plan thoughtfully, work within MPP's structure and resources, and collaborate respectfully with staff, cast, crew, volunteers, and production leadership.

Director Name: _____

Production: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____