



MSU Denver Department of Theatre & Dance Theatre Program Standards

Adapted from Rocky Mountain Artists' Safety Alliance Community Standards for Theatre, Chicago Theatre Standards and Stanford Theatre Standards

The Department of Theatre and Dance have adapted the Chicago Theatre Standard, Rocky Mountain Artists' Safety Alliance Community Standards for Theatre, and the Stanford University Theatre Standards for use in Theatre Program Productions. The original documents were authored by representatives of Chicago and Colorado Theatre and performing arts companies, artists and administrators who volunteered their time, experience, and expertise to develop unified expectations and best practices in theatrical work.

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Declaration of Purpose

Arts environments require risk, courage, vulnerability, and investment of our physical, emotional, and intellectual selves. When creative environments are unsafe, both the artist and the art can become compromised. “Experimental,” “raw,” and otherwise high-risk material can veer into unsafe territory if there are no procedures for prevention, communication, and, when necessary, response. Understanding of such procedures is especially important in an educational environment where the power differential between artists is even greater than in a professional environment and where those learning may not be aware of their rights or safe pathways of communication. MSU Denver Theatre believes that explicitly teaching about safe conditions and response to unsafe conditions and harassment helps to maintain the integrity of the work and its participants while preparing participants for the professional world.

The MSU Denver Theatre document seeks not to define artistry, prescribe how it is created, value one kind of work over others, or stand as a legal document. It seeks to create awareness and systems that respect and protect the human in the art—to foster safe places to do dangerous things. MSU Denver Theatre seeks to foster awareness of what artists should expect and what organizations can strive to provide in their spaces.

The overriding tenets of the Standards are **communication, safety, respect, and accountability**.

MSU Denver Theatre Standards are not intended to supplant or replace any federal or state laws or MSU Denver Theatre University policies. All members of the MSU Denver Community are required to follow the **University Code of Conduct**. This document is intended to provide a framework for responsible creation of art that allows all participants to feel supported and provide direction to the existing resources for support within MSU Denver Theatre and the larger MSU Denver community.

Mission Statement

The Department of Theatre and Dance affirms its commitment to fostering a community that actively addresses issues of power and inclusion by forwarding social justice and equity at MSU Denver and beyond. We seek to uplift the thriving and belonging of all members through our practices, policies, and programs. MSU Denver Theatre seeks to nurture communication, safety, respect, and accountability of participants at all levels of theatrical production. The mission of MSU Denver Theatre is to create.

- **spaces free of harassment**, whether it be sexual or based on race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, color, or ability.
- **nurturing environments** that allow us to challenge ourselves, our audiences, and our communities; that support risk of mind and body; and that establish the freedom to create Theatre that represents the full range of human experience; and
- **a common understanding** of practices for Theatre environments, including written, reproducible Standards.

How to Use This Document

The following sections seek to define terms created for this document and provide a timeline for how the document is used from season-selection through strike.

Definitions

Participant	Someone who is engaged to participate in, administer, or support making Theatre. This includes actors, designers, directors, production staff, technical crew, box office staff, faculty, volunteers, and anyone involved in the work of the Theatre.
Actor	A performer in a live theatrical production.
Crew	A person participating in the offstage activities of a live theatrical production.
Casting Authority	An individual or individuals who determine which actors are cast in a production.
Production	A theatrical undertaking that results in one or more public performances.
Producer	Department of Theatre and Dance.

Terms Created for this Document.

The following terms and their meanings are used within each Standard of this document.

The Goal: Each standard will be introduced with a goal wherein a “creative problem” can be “solved.” Rather than creating a prescriptive action for every situation, a “goal” can be achieved in many different ways. The overarching goal is to create a participant-friendly space that values communication, safety, respect, and accountability.

The Standard: A general description of the collected suggestions of how to accomplish each goal. These “suggested solutions” are geared for all budgets, sizes, performance venues, production styles, etc.

Requires Disclosure: Disclosure assists prospective participants in making informed decisions when accepting auditions and offers and knowing what to expect before they walk into the room for the first time. Disclosure also helps MSU Denver Theatre assemble willing, able, and informed participants. If elements of the MSU Denver Theatre Standards are not achievable (if a rehearsal is outside without access to drinking water, for example), conditions should be disclosed to all participants. Items that MSU Denver Theatre must disclose to participants will be listed in the “requires disclosure” section of any given Goal.

Concern Resolution Path (CRP)

The Goal

The goal of the CRP is to provide a documented communication pathway to address issues in a production. The CRP seeks to inform participants what to do and who to address with serious issues and dispel the fear of reprisal for reporting issues of safety, harassment, or other serious concerns.

The Standard

The CRP should be printed and distributed to all participants and discussed on the first day of rehearsal. It should be clearly communicated that MSU Denver Theatre seeks to resolve concerns early, before the concerns escalate or participants or the production are put at risk.

What Is a Concern Resolution Path?

The CRP provides names and contact information for members of the organization and production who have agreed to be responsive to reported issues and work to resolve them. It consists of

- a written, clear, and transparently shared list of procedures for addressing a concern.
- a written, clear, and transparently shared list of persons to whom the concern should be addressed; and
- a commitment to give reported concerns priority and a reasonable timeline for resolution.

Structure

- Level One—MSU Denver Theatre recognizes that many concerns can be resolved through conversation with the parties involved. Whenever possible, participants should be encouraged to discuss challenges and concerns with one another. Sharing and hearing concerns with openness and respect can prevent situations from escalating further.
- Level Two—The following participants should be granted a certain level of authority and trust to determine whether a concern can be resolved at this level or if it needs to be sent to the next level. All concerns should be reported to Level Three, even if no action is required.
 - Deputy: cast member to be elected at first rehearsal
 - Production Manager: Megan Euler eulerm@msudenver.edu 303-615-0393
 - Director:
- Level Three—These participants should be considered capable of resolving issues that have not been resolved prior to reaching this stage. They are strongly advised to consult with each other and review the legal or other implications of any decision.
 - Production Manager: Megan Euler eulerm@msudenver.edu 303-615-0393
 - Department of Theatre & Dance Chair: Jacob Welch jwelch25@msudenver.edu

- Interim Dean of Students: Cynthia Baron baron@msudenver.edu 303-615-0220

- Level Four—MSU Denver Theatre is part of a larger university and there are many resources outside of the department umbrella that are open to students, faculty, staff, and other community members. If for any reason participants are uncomfortable approaching MSU Denver Theatre faculty and staff, they should reach out to one of these for assistance:
 - Students
 - Dean of Students 303-615-0220
 - The Office of Equal Opportunity 303-615-0036
 - Office for Diversity and Inclusion 303-556-5740
 - MSU Denver Counseling Center 303-615-9988
 - Health Center at Auraria 303-615-9999
 - Faculty/Staff
 - Human Resources 303-615-0999
 - Associate Dean for Faculty and Student Affairs, College of Letters, Arts and Sciences 303-605-5871

Communication

- The CRP will be verbally explained and provided in writing at the first rehearsal (digitally and/or in print). It will include the name, title, and contact information for every individual on the CRP.
- A copy of the CRP will be posted or otherwise available in the rehearsal and performance spaces.
- Participants are encouraged to report their concerns in writing for recordkeeping purposes.

Recordkeeping

- MSU Denver Theatre production manager maintains personnel files, maintains complaint files which are kept confidential and accessible to appropriate authorities.

Legal Remedies

- In the event of civil or criminal misconduct or liability, the MSU Denver Theatre is not a replacement for legal advice or action, nor does it stand in the stead of any local, state, or federal law.

Implementation Notes

- The MSU Denver Theatre production manager will complete a CRP with the names and contact information of all individuals who will serve on the path for each covered production.
- The CRP is a tool to help create communication pathways to prevent and resolve issues, not create divisions. To that end, nothing in the MSU Denver Theatre Standards encourages removing or marginalizing participants for mistakes, a momentary loss of temper, an argument (whether artistic or personal), a single unintentional injury, etc. The CRP is designed to provide pathways to respond to events, behavior, and conditions that create understood *unsafe* conditions, not *uncomfortable* situations. The function and goal of the CRP should be discussed at

the first rehearsal.

- Some individuals on the CRP will change with each production, and it will be updated for each production.
- All individuals listed on the CRP should understand their role in resolving concerns, the process for recording concerns, and the process for reporting those concerns to others on the path.
- The individuals listed on the CRP should be provided with resources and/or training in conflict resolution.

Deputy

The Goal

The goal of the Deputy is to create a confidential and peer-level liaison and reporting channel between participants and MSU Denver Theatre. Communicating concerns can be challenging. Participants often have long-standing relationships, aspirations for future collaboration, or a fear of being labeled “difficult.” Any of these might dissuade a participant from voicing a concern. The Deputy can help to alleviate this tension.

The Standard

The Deputy was inspired by the Actors’ Equity “Equity Deputy,” but the Deputy does not report to any outside regulatory body. The Deputy navigates the MSU Denver Theatre Standards for participants over the course of a single production, can serve as a reporting channel for an individual participant or an acting company when confidentiality is required or requested, and may also serve (alongside the director or stage manager) as a first contact when a concern cannot be resolved by an individual.

Role and Responsibilities of the Deputy

- Become familiar with the MSU Denver Theatre Standards and CRP.
- Help familiarize others with the MSU Denver Theatre Standards and CRP.
- Serve as a liaison between the cast, crew, director, and MSU Denver Theatre for issues brought to their attention by participants.
- Protect anonymity whenever possible.
- Report concerns, both their own and those reported by fellow participants, using the Conflict Resolution Path and communicate the resolution of such concerns to fellow participants as appropriate.
- Respond to concerns as quickly as possible (within 24 hours whenever possible).
- Commit with integrity and empathy to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of participants and discourage efforts (intentional or otherwise) to use the MSU Denver Theatre Standards to divide or create an atmosphere of “heroes and villains.”
- Engage the CRP if the director is unable, unwilling, or is the individual of concern.
- Understand that their role is not to solve problems or act in a judiciary role but serve as a confidential reporting channel and liaison.
- Understand that their role is one of service, and not a position of power or status.

Outside of the Deputy’s Scope

- The Deputy should not override traditional roles of the stage manager, director, or any other member of the organization.
- The Deputy should never create divisions or marginalize participants.

Stage Manager

The Goal

The stage manager (SM) plays no official role in the CRP or regarding the MSU Denver Theatre Standards.

The Standard

The stage manager's responsibilities with regards to the MSU Denver Theatre Standards are

- to read and be familiar with the Standards.
- to know and follow the CRP; and
- to document all blocking and choreography, including sexual content.

Notes

- As a student assigned to the production, the stage manager's relationship to the Standards is the same as any other student working in a performer or crew role.

The Standards

Auditions

The Goal

The goal of this standard is to help prospective participants make informed decisions about proposed productions' requirements and expectations. MSU Denver Theatre seeks to communicate what we expect of our participants and what those participants may expect of us. For this section, auditions may constitute interviews, readings, presentations of prepared pieces, improvisation, singing, movement, or similar activities involved in a casting process.

The Standard

Audition Notices and Invitations

MSU Denver Theatre intends to include the following information in audition notices and invitations:

- role(s) for which the actor is called and role(s) that already have been cast.
- any role that depicts a character with a specifically stated disability.
- the nature of the activity to be performed at the audition (i.e., sides from the play, choreography, improvisation, monologue, etc.).

- any potential stage combat, feats of physical daring, nudity, partial nudity, sexual content, or other reasonably-understood high-risk activities in the production.
- an assertion that prospective participants may discuss casting concerns with the director or production manager without fear of losing future opportunities.
- if the audition will be recorded.
- the names of the director(s) and any of the artistic team known at the time of auditions; and
- the names and roles of those who will be present at auditions.

Auditions

- MSU Denver Theatre will provide a safe space for the audition, including.
 - a smoke-free environment.
 - a clean space with sufficient lighting and safe temperature; and
 - a safe surface for dance calls if applicable.
- MSU Denver Theatre will not ask prospective participants to attend more than three (3) audition calls for a single production without advance notice.
- Audition calls, including callbacks, should be no longer than six (6) hours and should not run later than 10pm.
- Required materials (scripts and sides) should be provided at the audition.
- MSU Denver Theatre will endeavor to provide full scripts for review in the department office prior to auditions whenever possible.
- MSU Denver Theatre will not ask prospective participants to perform violence or sexual contact as part of the audition.
- MSU Denver Theatre will not ask prospective participants to disrobe at an audition. (See the Sexual Content and Nudity Standard.)
- MSU Denver Theatre will do our best to confirm with the prospective participants that they have reviewed the supplied materials and are aware of the requirements as outlined in the audition notice or invitation.
- MSU Denver Theatre will not record auditions unless specified in the notice or invitation. If recordings are made, there will be written assurance that the recording will be used privately among casting authorities and destroyed/deleted after the completion of casting.
- MSU Denver Theatre will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations to facilitate access, such as allowing interpreters when necessary, holding auditions in accessible facilities, and providing audition materials in advance to artists with disabilities.
- Disclosures should be clearly posted at all auditions and callbacks.
- Prospective participants may discuss casting concerns with the director or production manager without fear of losing future opportunities.

Requires Disclosure

- If scenes of violence, sexual content, or other choreography will be a part of the production.
- Whether or not understudies will be engaged for the production.
- Who is in the audition room.
- If an audition will be recorded.
- If known, when callbacks are scheduled.

Standby Actors

The Goal

Standby Actors will be incorporated into the ensemble when possible. If they are not part of the ensemble MSU Denver Theatre seeks to provide ways to prepare, include, and inform standby actors so they are ready to save the day.

The Standard

If standby actors are engaged, the following guidelines can help ensure that they are effective and productive members of the production and are given an opportunity to succeed.

- Standby actors should be part of the ensemble.
- Standby actors should always be cast following appropriate race, gender, ethnicity, and vocal range to the role they are covering.
- Standby actors should have a written agreement detailing expectations.
- Standby Actors should be introduced to the Deputy and should have the CRP explained to them.

Requires Disclosure

All the following will be disclosed at auditions:

- whether standby actors will be engaged for the production.
- any specific skills required (dialect, combat, singing, sexual content and nudity, etc.).
- what support the standby actors will receive (e.g., work with dialect coach, choreographer(s)).
- which role(s) the standby actor is expected to cover
- general rehearsal schedule including (in a general sense) when standby actors are in rehearsals, if different from ensemble.
- whether a put-in rehearsal will be scheduled if advance notice allows; whether costumes will be provided, or if the standby actor wears the costumes of the actor being covered.
- If an actor leaves a production, whether the standby actor will replace that actor, or the role will be recast.

Implementation

- Standby Actors need to be at the performance venue 30 minutes prior to each performance.
- Standby actors need to be off book for their covered role at the same time as the rest of the cast.
- Standby actors are expected to be performance ready by first dress.
- If a character has audio and/or video in a production, MSU Denver Theatre will make every effort to record alternates of these using the standby actor.

Functional Access

The Goal

All of us have different access needs. For some these needs may not be met by the Standards listed in this document. MSU Denver Theatre endeavors to support the access needs of all participants so that every person can have full and equal opportunity to participate and enjoy MSU Denver Theatre auditions, rehearsals, and performances.

The Standard

MSU Denver Theatre makes access a regular topic at faculty, staff, and production meetings and consults with the Access Center to be aware of the most current practices around providing access for all. MSU Denver Theatre seeks to provide access in communication, as well as around physical and medical needs by providing support and services, as determined by the individual, in support of full and independent participation.

MSU Denver Theatre promote basic access by providing the following:

- Confidentiality – MSU Denver Theatre will collaborate with participants to provide access while disclosing as little or as much about an individual as desired by the individual.
- Option for video audition.
- Option for large print sides, scripts.
- Requests for information about allergies or medical concerns in a confidential manner.
- Access check prior to every meeting, rehearsal, or performance.
- Option to provide access information through authority not part of creative process.
 - Access Center
 - Production Manager
 - Dean of Students Office
 - Other MSU Denver Theatre faculty or staff.
- Consideration of physical access needs when assigning rooms for rehearsals.
- Reevaluation of access needs as participants needs change throughout the process due to any factors.

Requires Disclosure

- If any aspect of this Standard cannot be achieved because of the nature of the

rehearsal or performance space, it will be disclosed to all prospective and active participants. For example, if a rehearsal or performance space is not accessible by wheelchair MSU Denver Theatre will disclose that as part of all notices.

Collaborating with Theatre Artists

The Goal

Many aspects of a production are being created simultaneously, and the creators are likely to have only limited information about the specifics of how other artists are working on any given project. Ideally all artists will treat each other and each other's process with respect and care.

The Standard

Artists can show respect and care for each other in a variety of ways. MSU Denver Theatre endeavors to provide some specific ways in which this can be done and encourages artists to develop their own ways of showing respect to other team members and the process.

- If any artist has a question or concern about an artistic element that they see or hear about, they should always start by asking for more information. This includes performers asking about choreography, a potentially binding costume, or a piece of scenery that will be difficult to navigate. It also includes designers asking about how other designs or movement will affect their designs.
- Fittings require particular care.
 - Designers and costume construction artists should be aware that their conversation may exclude performers by use of technical language and make efforts to include performers in the conversation.
 - Designers and construction artists should also communicate with performers about how they will be touched during a fitting and give performers the opportunity to voice concerns or stop the process if uncomfortable using the term "button."
 - Performers should be considerate of the conversations happening between the costume artists and wait for appropriate breaks to ask questions or provide information about staging that may impact the costume.
- Technical Rehearsals are a time of great excitement when all the design elements are coming together. This time also requires that various artists practice restraint when collaborating with one another.
 - Performers should respect the work of those creating scenic, prop, and costume elements, not touch items until instructed to, and not touch items that are assigned to other performers or crew. This will reduce the risk of damage or loss of any individual item.
 - Often during tech rehearsals performers are asked to wait for significant periods of time. This is so that other artists can do the work that they have been waiting to do. Please respect their process and allow them the time to make the whole production shine.
- Opinions about production elements often vary widely among those working on

any given production. However, all artists should be aware that those who have created each production element have invested a significant amount of time, energy, and care into that creation. If there are concerns that relate to the functionality of the show those need to be addressed. However, artists should avoid expressing dislike of production elements publicly.

Basic Health and Safety

The Goal

Health and Safety problems are often preventable with careful planning, and MSU Denver Theatre endeavors to create spaces and processes for auditions, rehearsals, and performance that are as physically safe as possible.

The Standard

MSU Denver Theatre makes health and safety a regular topic at faculty, staff, and production meetings and maintains awareness and procedures that always contribute to a safe environment. MSU Denver Theatre seeks to prevent injuries, identify and remedy situations that might be considered unsafe or unhealthy, respond to injuries and medical events, and seek medical attention when required.

MSU Denver Theatre promotes basic health and safety practices by providing the following:

- toilets and sinks with soap and towels or a hand dryer.
- access to drinking water or disclosure of lack of availability.
- a reasonable working temperature (avoiding inclement weather or unsafe temperatures outdoors).
- lighting suitable for the work being conducted.
- clean and well-maintained rehearsal space.
- floors and traffic routes that are free from undue obstructions and tripping hazards.
- functional, non-expired fire extinguishers.
- a suitably stocked first-aid kit.
- an insurance policy that covers on-site injuries; and
- a plan for costume maintenance and laundry.

At or before the first tech day, a safety walk including all participants working in the space will be held by the technical director or production manager and include:

- fire exit locations.
- locations of first-aid kits.
- emergency procedures (including contact information for local police stations and the nearest ER).
- tripping or safety hazards in rehearsal settings and constructed stage settings.
- locations of restrooms.
- scenic units, stage floor surfaces, and special effects; and
- areas of potential hazard that have or may require glow tape, as well as an

opportunity for performers to point out where they need additional glow tape. If unsafe conditions are discovered, they should be immediately reported to the stage manager, who should keep a record of concerns and their resolution. The SM should also ensure that accident/incident reports are completed and submitted to the production manager for processing.

Requires Disclosure

- If any aspect of this Standard cannot be achieved because of the nature of the rehearsal or performance space, it will be disclosed to all prospective and active participants. For example, if a rehearsal or performance space is outdoors, participants will be notified in advance so that they can wear appropriate shoes and clothing for the weather and the surface (grass, asphalt, etc.).

Audience and Front of House

The Goal

Audience members are active participants in live performances. In recognizing this, we seek to create an environment in which audiences and artists can collaborate and share a space in a way that is both safe for all involved and conducive to the theatrical experience designed by the production's creative team.

The Standard

Productions are mounted in a wide range of venues, environments, and types of interaction with audiences. This standard defines them as follows:

A **traditional audience environment** is understood to be a performance that takes place in a Theatre where the audience space and the performance space are defined and primarily separate from one another. In a traditional audience environment, actors are not typically expected to directly interact with the audience.

A **nontraditional audience environment** includes but is not limited to site-specific Theatre, performances with direct audience interaction, promenade Theatre, and performances where the actors move throughout and/or interact with the audience.

An **online audience environment** includes but is not limited to Zoom, Zoom Webinar, YouTube, Vimeo, Google Hangout, or any other production presented online.

Preproduction

The type of audience environment will be disclosed to the participants at the time of audition/commitment, or as soon as known.

Preview Performances

Nontraditional audience environments may require that special attention be paid to the preview process to create the desired audience interaction. Preview performances for productions with audience engagement are strongly recommended.

Performances

To the extent feasible without disturbing the artistic integrity of the production, the nature of any audience interaction or other nontraditional audience environment should be communicated to audience members before the performance begins. This allows the audience to be willing participants in the production and can help to prevent unexpected audience behavior during the performance. It will also allow audience members to make informed an informed choice based on their needs and comfort level.

For all public performances, including previews, MSU Denver Theatre marketing staff oversees the box office and front of house operations. This team

- attends at least one run-through or technical rehearsal prior to the first audience.
- informs the stage manager of any audience conditions that may impact the performance; and
- conducts a pre-performance meeting with all ushers and front of house staff prior to every show to cover.
 - building safety requirements and emergency plans.
 - audience configuration.
 - expectations of audience engagement; and
 - a prevention and response plan for frequent unacceptable audience behavior (drunkenness, inappropriate interactions with actors, etc.).

Dressing Rooms

The Goal

Performers need time and space to prepare for their performance. The space provided for this preparation should be safe, respectful, and, wherever possible, private.

The Standard

Even in the tiniest of spaces, privacy and concentration are important when preparing for performance. MSU Denver Theatre will endeavor to create a dressing room environment where all inhabitants recognize these values and participate in fostering a safe place for artists to prepare.

- Private dressing rooms are not an option given the space we have.
- Reasonable accommodation should be made to respect individual modesty, and designated space should be provided for participants to change clothes and prepare for their performance. This space will be referred to as a dressing room, even if it is not an entire room.
- Dressing rooms are to be color coded instead of the use of binary terms.
- Everyone entering the dressing room should knock and announce their name prior to entry.
- Non-actors (except for the SM team and wardrobe staff) should not be allowed in the dressing room during the time between 30 minutes before the performance begins and 30 minutes after the performance ends. If is not possible, communication between the dressing room inhabitants and those who need to

- pass through is encouraged to establish the least intrusive way to share the space.
- No food or drink other than water in a closable container should be in the dressing room at any time. Food and drink should be stored in the Green Room.
 - Where costumes are used, a clothing rack and hangers should be provided.
 - Recording by any means and posting any recordings or photos online are not permitted in the dressing room or backstage.
 - Reasonable accommodation will be made to respect the preferences of all participants sharing a dressing room, particularly regarding the discussion of reviews or who might be in the audience.
 - Inhabitants of dressing rooms should respect the property and personhood of fellow inhabitants by limiting their use of perfumes, smelly lotions or creams, and behavior such as talking on cell phones, playing music (without consulting dressing room mates), or other similar activities.
 - Any concerns related to the dressing rooms should be resolved (a) between its inhabitants, (b) with the consultation of the Deputy, or (c) according to the concern resolution path.
 - Where separate dressing and restrooms are available, actors should be allowed to occupy the dressing room in accordance with their gender identification.

Choreography: Nudity, Violence, Movement, and Physical Theatre

The Goal

Some forms of Theatre and styles of movement carry with them a greater risk of harm than others, and the goal of this section is to outline considerations specific to these forms of higher-risk Theatre, including onstage violence, sexual choreography and nudity, and physical Theatre. These forms share many of the same considerations, while some considerations are form-specific. The shared considerations also apply to other forms of physical Theatre, including dance and other forms of choreography, and this section may serve as a guide for these forms as well.

The Standard

In audition notices, auditions, offer discussions, agreements, standby actor preparation, rehearsals, tech, and performances, we intend to create a safe and respectful atmosphere for all participants. MSU Denver Theatre believes that communication, safety, respect, accountability, artistic freedom, collaborative integrity, and personal discipline are the cornerstones of this atmosphere.

Facilities

The following should be provided in all rehearsal and performance spaces in which high-risk physical Theatre takes place:

- first-aid kit, including cold packs.
- accident report forms.
- water.
- adequate on- and off-stage lighting.
- temperature control.
- ventilation.

- space for warm-ups.
- floors and surfaces that are clean, well maintained, and appropriate for the activity; and
- padded and/or glow-taped corners and hazards.

Equipment, Weapons, and Specialized Costumes

All specialized equipment and costumes should be:

- suitable for the required choreography.
- installed by a qualified rigger, if applicable.
- inspected/maintained by a trained technician before each use.
- inspected by any actors who use the equipment before each use; and
- handled only by those required to do so.

Preproduction and Auditions

- A designer or choreographer should be engaged for any production that includes weapons, hand-to-hand combat, sexual violence, specialized movement techniques, or any similar high-risk activity.
 - This designer/choreographer may be the production director, so long as the role is clearly communicated to all participants.
 - This designer/choreographer should be engaged as early in the production process as possible and be included in production and design meetings whenever feasible.
- At the time of audition, prospective participants should be notified about:
 - The nature of any specialized movement or physical Theatre (i.e., weapons, physical combat, sexual violence, tumbling, aerial acrobatics, dance, yoga, etc.) acknowledging that concepts may change.
 - The name and professional experience of the designer/choreographer if possible.
- At the time of audition, prospective participants should be asked to provide accurate descriptions of their physical abilities and limitations/injuries as they relate to the possible choreography.

Rehearsal

- The designer/choreographer should be introduced to the cast at the first rehearsal, or as soon thereafter as possible.
- A schedule for rehearsing all choreography should be established and followed.
- Adequate time should be allocated for stretching and warming up before all choreography rehearsals.
- Adequate time should be given to teach, rehearse, and adjust all choreography or movement techniques.
- Adequate time should be allocated at the end of rehearsal for cooling down, asking questions, and voicing concerns.
- Before work starts the actors, director, choreographer, and stage manager should agree to the requirements of the planned activity (kiss, slap, dance, etc.). Participants are then responsible for staying within those agreed-upon boundaries.
- A choreography captain (typically a cast member with experience in the form of

physical Theatre being taught) should be chosen to ensure that the choreography is rehearsed and does not change unintentionally. The captain should be empowered to notify the stage manager or designer/choreographer of any issues with the choreography.

- Choreography should be recorded (in writing or on video, if appropriate) so that performers and captains have a reference for maintaining the choreography.
- Time should be set aside at the beginning of rehearsal to run through choreography. These calls are particularly important before running the show. Calls should be conducted in a distraction-free, appropriately lit space.
- Actors should communicate any injury, discomfort, or fatigue experienced before, during, and after rehearsals.
- A 10-minute break should be provided after every 80 minutes of physical work.
- The director/choreographer and actors should agree on a vocabulary of safety (i.e., the word “bail” could be used to abandon a movement mid-execution).
- Regular rehearsal reports sent to the designer/choreographer should include notes to the designer/choreographer if any adjustments need to be made to the choreography or if any problems develop.
- A comfortable working temperature should be maintained in the rehearsal space. The nature of the choreography should be considered when establishing this temperature (warmer in the case of nudity, cooler in the case of highly physical activity, for example).

Performance

- Choreography calls should occur before every show and should take place in a focused environment free of interruptions or distractions.
- Performance reports should include the designers/choreographers, noting any issues that arise and any actor injuries (whether related to the choreography or not).
- Performers should have a communication plan with the stage manager to report (on the day it occurs) any inappropriate or potentially unsafe changes in the performance of choreography and/or use of equipment or weapons.
- A comfortable working temperature should be maintained in the space. The nature of the choreography should be considered when establishing this temperature (warmer in the case of nudity, cooler in the case of highly physical activity, for example).
- The stage manager should check in before and after performances with each actor involved in the choreography, confirming that the choreography is maintained, and consent/boundaries have not been overlooked.
- If any choreography is altered during performance, actors should notify the stage manager and/or Deputy as soon as possible.

Specific Considerations: Violence

The Goal

Onstage violence can include a shove, a slap, the use of weapons, elaborate fight sequences, sexual violence, and more. We believe that performers should not routinely

incur pain, bruises, or other injury while enacting violence. Our intention is to prepare for and mitigate the risks of onstage violence to create a safe space in which to take artistic risks.

Implementation Notes

- It can be helpful to assign a fight captain who is not involved in the fight choreography, so that the fight captain could observe the choreography from the outside (off-stage during performances, if possible).
- The stage manager should have a good line of sight to any fight choreography so that they can monitor and discuss any changes during the run of the show.

Specific Considerations: Sexual Content and Nudity

The Goal

Sexual Content and Nudity (SC/N) require careful consideration as early as the season selection process. Artists in scenes with SC/N take great personal risk, and our goal is to allow them to take that risk in an environment that is as safe, supportive, and comfortable as possible. SC/N should only be included in a production when it can be done responsibly and according to the following recommendations. MSU Denver Theatre seeks to replicate the staffing, conditions, detail, documentation, and accountability traditionally employed for fight choreography for scenes with sexual choreography.

Preproduction and Auditions

- Discussions around sensitive requirements and how they will be handled will begin during season planning pre-production meetings.
- SC/N should not be required or requested at any audition.
- Actors performing nude must be at least 18 years old and should provide proof of age at the audition.
- Actors who will be asked to perform SC/N as part of the production should confirm consent to performing SC/N at the time of audition.
- When sexual choreography is required, prospective participants should be auditioned using nonsexual choreography to determine physical control.
- If a full script is made available to prospective participants, language like the following should be included: "Please read the script closely and confirm that you are comfortable working with this material. Feel welcome to bring questions about content to the audition process. Your level of comfort with the content of this script will not impact your casting consideration for future productions."
- Crew who will be working with the performer or required to view the sexual content and nudity should be made aware of the content at the time of their commitment to the project and provided access to the script at that time.

Rehearsal

- Prior to rehearsing scenes with SC/N, the actors, director, choreographer, and stage manager should discuss the content and create consent for the rehearsal. Participants should build consent and discuss boundaries before rehearsing scenes with SC/N. A safe word (such as "hold") should be established for SC/N rehearsals.
- Initial SC/N rehearsals should be closed, such that only participants involved in the

scene are present. SC/N rehearsals should be opened after agreement by the stage manager, director, and actors involved. The stage manager should be present at all rehearsals where SC/N is rehearsed.

- Stage managers should document the terms of consent and details of sexual choreography. This should include a time limit for rehearsing SC/N.
- Actors performing nude scenes should be allowed to have and wear robes or other coverings when not rehearsing.
- Actors should never be nude backstage.
- Actors should have the option to decline SC/N elements added after audition disclosure.
- Nude actors should not be photographed or recorded on video at any time during rehearsal, tech, or performance.
- Actors, directors, and choreographers should have equal status in devising SC/N scenes.

Tech

- Nudity during technical rehearsals should be limited to those times when it is necessary. Flesh-colored clothing or a robe may be worn when nudity is not required.
- Technical rehearsals should be closed to visitors during scenes with SC/N.
- The stage manager should be vigilant in identifying and resolving potential physical hazards for nude actors, such as splinters and rough edges.

Performance

- Only participants whose presence is required should be present in the wings or in any backstage space with a view of the stage.

Consent

MSU Denver Theatre believes that building consent among participants is an important part of creating an atmosphere of trust and communication. MSU Denver Theatre intends to recognize the following practices when building consent among participants:

- A consent-building conversation should specify the range of contact that is acceptable (e.g., anything but bikini area is within the range, or kissing is always closed mouth, etc.).
- Boundary Practice should be a regular occurrence.
- The boundaries may change over the rehearsal process, either narrowing or broadening, but any change to the boundaries should be discussed and agreed upon before the rehearsal.
- There should be an opportunity to discuss potential boundary violations at the end of each rehearsal and performance.
- The agreed-upon structure of intimate contact should be maintained once a show is in production.
- Actors should inform the stage manager and their scene partner(s) if they are sick (sore throat, cold sore, etc.), and alternate choreography should be defined for sick days.
- Crew are also part of the consent conversation, and their boundaries may change throughout the process. Crew should be in touch with the SM or production manager with any concerns.

Requires Disclosure

- SC/N should be disclosed in notices and invitations and at auditions.
- Actors or designers should be made aware of SC/N prior to accepting their roles.
- Designers should receive disclosure of SC/N and known design requirements.
- Crew should be made aware of the content at the time of their commitment to the project.

Specific Considerations: High-Risk Physical Theatre

The Goal

High-risk physical Theatre uses performance techniques that carry with them a greater chance of injury than traditional Theatre practices. This includes but is not limited to acrobatics, tumbling, performing on silks or other equipment, and performing in motorized set pieces. This type of work should not be undertaken without the extra attention, staff, equipment, and precautions needed to do so safely.

Sexual Harassment

The Goal

We seek to understand sexual harassment as it pertains to the Theatre, provide procedures to prevent it, and outline recourse when it occurs. We recognize the potential for harassment in rehearsal, during performance, and outside the Theatre among participants, staff, faculty, and audience members. We acknowledge Theatre environments can court confusion about the difference between chemistry, artistic freedom, and harassment; we believe participants can be bold and live “in the moment” of theatrical material while maintaining choreography, fellow participants’ safety, and agreed-upon boundaries.

The Standard

Clear boundaries should be established and agreed upon among all participants involved, both in rehearsals and performance, particularly in scenes depicting violence, sex, intimate contact, abuse, or gestures of intimacy.

Harassment in a broader sense includes, but is not limited to,

- inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, innuendoes, or taunting about a person's gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic background, color, place of birth, citizenship, ancestry, creed, or ability.
- persistent unwanted questions or comments about a participant’s private life outside the boundaries of consent established in rehearsal; and
- posting or displaying materials, articles, graffiti, and so on, which may cause humiliation, offense, or embarrassment on prohibited grounds that are outside the parameters of the production. A production about pornography, violence, or racism may involve such images in the rehearsal space or in a dramaturgy packet, but such images are not appropriate for open display in dressing rooms, bathrooms, or other similar spaces.

Sexual Harassment in a theatrical environment:

- In a theatrical context, harassment can be additionally defined as one or a series of comments or conduct of a gender-related or sexual nature outside the boundaries

of consent or production content which is known or ought to reasonably be known to be unwelcome/unwanted, offensive, intimidating, hostile, or inappropriate. It is worth noting that the higher the emotional/sexual risk a production asks of its artists, the greater the diligence needed from each member of production and artistic staffs to foster an environment of emotional safety.

- Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to.
 - unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes, or taunts about a person's body, attire, gender, or sexual orientation outside the boundaries of consent or production content.
 - negative stereotyping of race, gender, gender identity, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, ability, or other status protected by law outside the boundaries of consent or production content.
 - any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact such as touching, kissing, massaging, patting, hugging, or pinching outside the boundaries of consent or production content.
 - unwelcome inquiries or comments about a person's sex life or sexual orientation outside the boundaries of consent or production content.
 - leering, whistling, or other suggestive or insulting sounds outside the boundaries of consent or production content.
 - inappropriate comments about clothing, physical characteristics, or activities outside the boundaries of consent or production content.
 - posting or displaying materials, articles, or graffiti that are sexually oriented outside the boundaries of consent or production content.
 - requests or demands for sexual favors, especially those that include, or imply, promises of rewards for complying (e.g., advancement opportunities) and/or threats of punishment for refusal (e.g., denial of advancement or opportunities) outside the boundaries of consent or production content.
 - attempting to engage in sexual behaviors offstage that are choreographed for the stage.
 - suggesting an actor who appears naked onstage or in rehearsal is not allowed physical boundaries and/or privacy backstage or in the dressing room, and/or not respecting those boundaries.
 - intentional failure to observe the dressing room Standards laid out in this document.
 - inviting an actor to rehearse sexual content outside of scheduled rehearsals.
 - repeated invitation/suggestion to take relationships of a sexual nature beyond the stage.
 - using the text of a production that is sexual, violent, threatening, or offensive in offstage discourse; and
 - improvising sexual content without expressed consent.

Participants have the right to be free from:

- Sexual solicitation or advance made by a person in a position to confer, grant, or deny a benefit or advancement outside production content.
- Reprisal or threat of reprisal for the rejection of a sexual solicitation or advance

where the reprisal is made by a person in a position to grant, confer, or deny a benefit or advancement outside production content.

Any of the behaviors outlined here have the potential to create a negative environment for individuals or groups. It should be noted that a person does not have to be a direct target to be adversely affected by a negative environment. It is understood that creative atmospheres are not always “emotionally sanitary”—they can safely be bawdy, profane, vulgar, and challenging. We assert that having (a) a practice of building consent and (b) an environment that allows for response to clear boundary violations can broaden our opportunity to be challenging and fearless in our work.

Concerns about harassment, safety, or a negative environment should be reported using the Concern Resolution Path (starting with level one wherever possible), and all concerns should be treated with the utmost respect for the safety and wellbeing of all participants.

In the event concerns about harassment, safety or negative environment cannot be worked through the Department reserved the right to remove any actor from a production at any point.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Representation

The Goal

Theatre engages the full spectrum of humanity. Telling the stories of complex human experience often includes representations of violence, racism, homophobia, abuse, and other challenging content. We seek an ethical atmosphere when engaging in this content, working with diverse groups of participants, and particularly when producing culturally sensitive work.

The Standard

We make the following commitments to all participants who collaborate with us:

- When invited to audition or participate, prospective participants have the right to make inquiries about how their cultural personhood will be used within the production, particularly when the work will be devised (when there is no script at the time of audition). Inquiries will receive a thoughtful response and will remain confidential.
- Sometimes a potential participant discovers in the course of auditioning that they are uncomfortable with production elements as they relate to their personhood. Prospective participants may discuss casting concerns with the director or production manager without fear of losing future opportunities.
- Whenever possible, diversity and inclusion should be considered both in casting and in assembling production and design teams. Culturally specific work should seek production personnel who can speak to that cultural experience.
- During the rehearsal process, participants should voice concern if they feel

uncomfortable with the use of their cultural personhood, which may include:

- costume pieces that can be understood as culturally demeaning which were not disclosed at audition/casting and could not have been expected by a reading of the script or otherwise available materials.
- staging (culturally based violence or abuse, for example), which was not disclosed at the time of audition/casting.
- accents or dialects to underscore a cultural representation not disclosed at the time of auditions/casting; and
- make-up that can be described as “black face,” “brown face,” or similar portrayal, which was not disclosed at the time of audition/casting.
- When staging scenes of cultural violence, or other culturally charged narratives and language, MSU Denver Theatre will follow the same practice of consent building outlined in the Sexual Content and Nudity standard. Disclosure of this type of performance will be made at the audition or time of commitment, and the emotional risk associated will be recognized throughout the process.
- MSU Denver Theatre seeks to address concerns with generosity and humility through the channels of the Concern Resolution Path as outlined in this document.

First Rehearsal Implementation

A script should be delivered by an MSU Denver Theatre staff or faculty representative on the first day of rehearsal for performers and Stage Management and the first day of Technical Rehearsals for all crew to set the tone for handling issues throughout the rehearsal/performance process.

Critical elements included in the First Rehearsal Presentation are:

1. Tell the company of this production why we are using the MSU Denver Theatre Standards.
2. Distribute the Concern Resolution Path (CRP). The CRP documents communication pathways for resolving concerns before they get out of hand, to inform participants who to talk to if issues arise, to avoid repeated unsafe practices, and to mentor those who violate boundaries.
3. Discuss the Deputy. The Deputy is a confidential liaison (reporting channel) between participants and those on the Concern Resolution Path. The Deputy does *not* decide who is right and wrong, or even necessarily solves problems, but helps to ensure that communication paths are open. The Deputy is elected at First Rehearsal by the company.
4. Point out areas of the MSU Denver Theatre Standards that are particularly pertinent to the production. If there are high-risk elements in the production (sexual content, fights, nudity) suggest that the participants read those sections of the document in the interest of letting them know that safety protocols have been a part of the planning process for the production.
5. MSU Denver Theatre will distribute this document electronically and make it available

in the Cast/Crew Resources Folder on the production Google Drive.

Appendix of Forms and Supplemental Support

MSU DENVER THEATRE STANDARDS Concern Resolution Path

Creating a safe and comfortable environment for all members of our team is important to this company. We take concerns seriously and seek to address issues in a sensitive and timely manner.

**In case of physical emergency or criminal activity, call 911.
Then use the CRP to report the incident to MSU DENVER
THEATRE staff and faculty.**

The following individuals are available to help you resolve any concerns or issues that may arise. We encourage concerns of level 2 and above to be made in writing (email or hardcopy) when possible.

Level One

If you feel comfortable doing so, we encourage you to first directly address your concern with the individual(s) involved. This helps to foster an honest and open community and is often the fastest path to a resolution.

Level Two

If you are not comfortable directly addressing the individual(s) involved, or if no resolution can be agreed upon, your next points of contact can be any of the following:

NAME: Megan Euler
TITLE: Production Manager
EMAIL: 303-615-0393 eulerm@msudenver.edu
PHONE #: 650-725-2398

NAME:
TITLE: Director
EMAIL:

NAME:
TITLE: Deputy
EMAIL:
PHONE #:

NAME: Jacob Welch
TITLE: Chair, Theatre & Dance
EMAIL: jwelch25@msudenver.edu
PHONE

Level Three

If an issue is not resolved through Levels One and Two, or if you are an individual named in Level Two who needs assistance to resolve the issue, your next points of contact can be any of the following people. The contacts at this level may consult with each other and review any legal or other implications of any decision.

NAME:
TITLE:
EMAIL: EMAIL:
PHONE #:

NAME:
TITLE:
EMAIL:
PHONE #:

NAME/TITLE:
EMAIL:

Level Four

MSU Denver Theatre is part of a larger university and there are many resources outside of the Department umbrella that are open to students, faculty, staff, and other community members. If for any reason participants are uncomfortable approaching MSU Denver Theatre faculty and staff, they should reach out to one of these for assistance:

- Students
 - [The Office of Equal Opportunity](#) 303-615-0036
 - [Office for Diversity and Inclusion](#) 303-556-5740
 - [Dean of Students](#) 303-615-0220 303-615-0600
 - [MSU Denver Counseling Center](#) 303-615-9988
 - [Health Center at Auraria](#) 303-615-9999
- Faculty/Staff
 - [Human Resources](#) 303-615-0999
 - [Dean College of Letters, Arts and Sciences](#)

Oops and Ouch: One way to manage negative comments or actions in real time

MSU Denver Theatre would like to recommend a system of “Ouch” and “Oops” to manage negative comments or actions in real time. For instance:

Speaker A is trying too hard to be funny and makes a thoughtless remark. Speaker B says “Ouch!” This cues Speaker A to realize that the funny remark was potentially hurtful. Speaker A says “Oops” to indicate recognition and regret. Then there is a Pause.

It is up to the Ouch-caller whether this moment requires some conversation. So, there is a conversation, or the Ouch-caller says “Cool, let’s move on.” But the decision to move on must come from the Ouch-caller.

Please note that anyone in the room can call “Ouch.” It does not have to come from the person who is the focus of the potentially hurtful remark.

Any questions or discussion?

- The most common *question* is: “Sometimes I do not realize there was an “ouch” until I am trying to sleep that night. Can I bring it back later?”
- I say “Yes. If you have felt an ouch and did not say anything, please do bring it to whomever you are comfortable with on the leadership team. We want to know, and we will figure out how to address it.
- ****Most common *comment*** is “If anyone is thinking this feels like overkill, let me tell you what happened to me last week at blahblah (insert bad story here). If something like this had been set up in advance, I bet it would not have happened.”

Thank you. May I ask that we pledge to each other that we will work together to promote an environment where it feels safe to speak up, and that we will welcome any reminder to maintain a positive and respectful room. If you so pledge, please say “I do.”

Thank you. If an experience ever feels larger than an Ouch-Oops moment, please know that concerns about harassment, safety, or a negative environment may be reported through several channels.

Sometimes saying “I am Sorry” is not enough. The ouch called has the right to identify what is or is not enough.

1. For cast members:
 - a. the director.
 - b. the Deputy (a member of the cast who agrees to be a conduit to bring cast questions or concerns to the director or to MSU Denver Theatre administration); or
 - c. if you do not feel comfortable reporting to either your director or to the Deputy, please report to either Megan Euler (production manager) or to Jacob Welch, Chair Department of Theatre & Dance
2. For production team:
 - a. Megan Euler (production manager); and
 - b. Jacob Welch, Chair, Department of Theatre and Dance