

LIGHTING DESIGNER/OPERATOR

The area of lighting could be the responsibility of two people. The lighting designer would create the lighting design and lead to the execution, then hand the lighting over to the second person – the operator – who would actually run the lights for the performances. Both individuals would be involved in striking of the lights. The following outlines the duties of the lighting designer/operator.

PLANNING

1. Become thoroughly familiar with the play. Scripts are available from the administrative producer.
2. Attend planning meetings with the director, producers and crew heads to discuss basic production schedule and deadlines.
3. Obtain the floor plan and cross section of the theatre showing the hanging positions from the properties manager. Obtain similar plans of other theatres in the event of festival or touring situations.
4. Obtain instruments, schedule sheets, pre-set cue sheets and electrical plots.
5. Confer with the director and the designer to ascertain the style of the production, dramatic importance of areas, color, intensity and apparent source of light and shadows.
6. Ascertain complexity of lighting task and acquire assistants and or lighting operator(s).
7. Check to make sure you have enough safety chains/cables for lighting instruments.

WORK

1. As soon as available obtain a floor plan and cross section view of set from the set designer – study the model.
2. Begin to design a working (rough) lighting plot and instrument schedule chart based on design discussion with the director.
3. Based on this working plot experiment where necessary to check out angles, effects, etc. Get an okay from set designer and director where appropriate.
4. Attend appropriate rehearsals to get general impression of action as it relates to lights.
5. From instrument schedule chart ascertain number of lighting instrument types, lamp wattages, gels, circuits and dimmer assignments, gobos, hanging positions, cables, etc., which will be required.
6. Determine as soon as possible equipment and/or supplies, which need to be repaired, bought, rented or borrowed.

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7. Generally consider the cleanliness of lenses and reflectors: condition of lamps or plugs and clean or replace as necessary.
8. The entire lighting system (dimmers and lights) is under the jurisdiction of the properties manager. Consult with him/her regarding the need for repair, adjustments, or purchases.
9. Although the lights and gels are bought by the properties manager under season supplies, special purchases may be necessary which are then debited to the current production. Check purchasing system with administrative producer and properties manager. Order any special equipment early – gobos etc.
10. Confer as early as possible with costumes, props, set décor and set designers regarding coordination of colors and textures.
11. With assistant (operator) begin as soon as possible to hang equipment. Coordinate the timing of this work with rehearsals and work parties to avoid interfering by having lights going on and off, using ladders, and creating noise etc.
12. Usually the execution of a lighting design follows these four steps:
 - a. Hang instruments, plug into a circuit, patch into hot line and rough focus. Unplug. Circuits 49 – 72 can take 1200 watts maximum
Circuits 1 – 48 can take 2400 watts maximum
BE AWARE OF DIMMER LOAD LIMITS.
 - b. Sort out circuit assignment and plug instruments into correct circuits. (a) and (b) are often done together.
 - c. Sort out dimmer assignment and patch in instruments/circuits to assigned dimmer.
 - d. Sort out gel assignment, barn doors, shuttering, focus requirements and begin one instrument at a time to gel and ‘fine tune’ the focusing and beam shaping.
 - e. Safety chain all instruments to pipes.
13. In conjunction with the director, assistant to director and technical producer, prepare a Lighting Operators script with rough cues, sequences and levels recorded in pencil.
14. As early as possible show progress to the designer and director for their approval. Try to coordinate this process with rehearsals and work parties so as to interfere as little as possible.
15. With director’s permission begin to integrate lights into rehearsals. Arrange a time when you can have the theatre to yourself to focus and fine tune without interruption.
16. Prior to first tech rehearsal (or cue to cue run through) all lights should be working properly – barring minor adjustments.
 - (a) Arrange with director a cue to cue for just lighting. This is particularly important when the lighting plot is complicated. At this time levels can be set and ready for the full cue to cue involving all the other technical people.
17. **FIRST** technical rehearsal the director, stage manager, lighting operating, sound person, and any other running crew gets together for the process of setting cues.

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No actors will be present at this rehearsal. This information should be penciled in the lighting operator's script and/or cue sheet.

18. At SECOND tech rehearsal or cue to cue run through with actors, the specifics of all lighting cues, sequences and levels are checked and noted as final – subsequent rehearsals are for refining the moving from one cue to the next – changes should be kept to a minimum. Be on hand for notes from the director each night during tech rehearsals. Record all cues and levels in the event someone else has to run the board.
19. All lighting cues should be numbered and noted for permanent record on a cue sheet and any changes should be noted on instrument schedule sheet.
20. Be prepared to install backstage work lights, practical plugs or lights (floor lamps etc.) on set.
21. By preview night all cues, sequences and levels should be final and running smoothly. Any changes should be of the artistic emergency nature and be instigated by the director. Inform house people not to turn house lights off or on.

Contact person if you have problem with system are Dave Brotsky at 545-6428 or Dhugael McLean at 1-250-868-9394.

RUN

Once the run begins the lighting designer's job is finished and the lighting operator takes over. Generally there should be only one lighting operator per show. Two operators, trading nights, leads to sloppiness and inconsistent lighting changes – this should be avoided whenever possible. However, assistant operators may be required for complex shows where re-patching or extra dimmers are needed. In these cases tight teamwork needs to be established.

The following is a checklist that should be religiously adhered to – no lights – no show.

1. Be at the theatre one hour before each performance.
2. Turn on board and let the power packs warm for 5 minutes. Turn all lights on at 15% to 20% for 10 minutes to warm up the bulbs.
3. Cross checking with the instrument schedule chart, see that all circuits are patched in correctly and on/off switches are in correct position.
4. In a cursory fashion visually check instruments, extensions, etc. to see that all appears to be in order.
5. With the help of an assistant turn on each instrument to see if it still burns, if gels focus, shuttering is still in order.
6. When all instruments and effects have been checked make any corrections.
7. Leave all instruments burning for 15 to 20 minutes at half intensity to thoroughly warm up the equipment.
8. Run through your cues. At 30 minutes to curtain preset should be on and house lights up full.

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9. When given warning cue by the stage manager that the house is to open, go to first cue. Check that the house lights are at right level, set warming lights at right level, ensure that all work lights are off and any backstage lights are on.
10. Lights in the lighting and sound booth should be restricted to dim light. Keep conversation quiet as audience enters theatre. If anyone other than booth crew is in the booth ask the stage manager to handle it.
11. Be on head set as instructed by stage manager, standing by to begin show.
12. Leave the booth ONLY during intermission and in the case of emergency.
13. Food, drink and smoke are NOT compatible with electronic equipment. Accidents with serious consequences can happen sometimes while a show is in progress therefore, abstinence is the rule.
14. Do not allow “visitors” in the booth while the show is in progress. Please inform the stage manager.
15. During the play stay on headset and obey cues from stage manager. Make note of any problems and rectify them as soon as possible.
16. After the play, attend to any problems. Turn off console. Turn on house lights in booth and turn them off in auditorium as you leave. This way the cleaning people can turn on the auditorium lights to clean. See that the control booth is locked before leaving the theatre.
17. The director’s script, cue sheets and instrument schedule are indispensable items. Be sure that these items are kept in a safe place from night to night.

STRIKE

1. Both the designer and the operator(s) should be on hand for the strike.
2. All equipment, instruments, gels, barn doors, cables, etc. must be returned to proper storage areas. Make any necessary repairs.
3. Find out if any upcoming rental can use your lighting plot before you strip the patch panel.
4. Leave gel cabinet and control both orderly.
5. Raise all electric buttons to pin rail height and tidy up all ropes.
6. Report any equipment in need of major repair, etc. to properties manager.
7. Ensure that any equipment rented or borrowed is returned in good condition as per agreement.
8. In the event of any damage to rented or borrowed equipment restitution plans should be made in consultation with the producers.
9. Lighting plots and instrument schedules could remain at the theatre for future reference by others.
10. Submit any bills or receipts and job description manual to administrative producer. Return the key to the Key Master or the Producer.
11. Clean up the booth. Put away cords. Tidy shelves, vacuum booth.