



## **Sample Job Description for Set Designer**

Please note that job descriptions vary considerably from theatre to theatre. This one is based on an actual job description for a community theatre set designer, and should be edited to match the needs of a particular company.

## Poorhouse Players

### Set Designer Job Description

The Set Designer works closely with the Director to put the Director's interpretation of the play into an overall visual presentation for the stage. To that end, he/she works closely with the other designers (lights, costume, make-up, poster design, foyer, or crew heads of props and set décor) to ensure an overall visual unity. Although the Set Designer is responsible for that visual presentation, the Director has the final say in all matters.

#### Planning

1. Become thoroughly familiar with the play.
2. Confer with Director and Technical Director to ascertain the Director's vision for the style of production, period, mood, dramatic importance of entrances, levels, acting areas, etc.
3. Provide input to the producers and crew heads regarding the production schedule and deadlines.
4. Check with the Business Manager or Technical Director regarding proper purchasing procedures.
5. Obtain floor plans and sectional drawings of the stage area in order to design within the space available. Obtain similar plans of other theatres in the event of festival or touring situations. In the event that this play will go on to festival, the dimensions of the festival venue's stage dimensions must be obtained before a set is designed, and it is also desirable to obtain the festival venue's stage dimensions. The Technical Director will assist with this information.
6. Proceed with research and begin rough sketches.
7. Work out rough floor plans, perspective sketches (if desirable) or rough model for further discussion with Director.
8. Participate in a meeting with the Director and other designers to confirm the requirements for set, lighting, sound, costumes, special effects, props, set décor etc.
9. Confer as early as possible with lighting, costumes, props, set décor people re the coordinating of colors, texture, styles, etc.
10. Confer as early as possible with the lighting designer regarding required effects and checking design for allowances for proper mounting of lighting instruments and masking.
11. Upon approval of Director, draw final floor plans to scale and give copies to Stage Manager, Director/Assistant Director, Technical Director, and others, as needed.
12. If appropriate, build either a white model or a detailed model of the set to be exhibited to cast and crew at first rehearsal.
13. Provide working drawings as necessary, i.e. front and rear elevations, construction drawings for special units. Include pictures, color swatches or samples of paints and other materials use for the finished look of set and decor items.

14. All final plans or changes are to go through the Director, the head of set construction and the Technical Director before presenting to the crews.

## **Working**

1. Be available for consultation with all departments and for production meetings.
2. Meet with crew heads and assist in preparation of detailed lists, pictures, sketches etc., where appropriate for props, set décor and set construction heads.
3. With the Technical Director, prepare cost estimate and materials list, and acquire same.
4. Attend or provide report to all production team meetings until the set design is finalized.
5. Stay abreast of requirements of all departments. To maintain unity, confer frequently with lighting, set décor, costumes, make-up, props, etc.
6. Confer with publicity coordinator as early as possible regarding poster and program design, and consult House Manager for possible continuance of visual themes.
7. Before the first rehearsal, meet with Director/Assistant Director, Stage Manager, Technical Director, head of set construction and head of set décor to tape out the set on stage, and/or rehearsal area, showing major levels, entrances, exits, windows, etc. Pull appropriate rehearsal furniture pieces from storage as needed.
8. Be aware that early set-up is helpful to actors and lighting crews, and ultimately makes for a better production.
9. Attend work parties for set construction and décor. Assist all related areas in an effort to stay ahead of production schedule.
10. Be on hand for trial and/or actual set up of set and/or parts thereof – inform key people of any changes.
11. Attend early blocking rehearsals to check on workability of design and inform Stage Manager or Technical Director of any changes.
12. Be prepared to oversee or do all final detail work on set, set décor items, props, furniture, etc. (i.e. wallpapering, upholstering, painting, shading, distressing, locating pictures on walls, painting set floor).
13. Encourage those involved toward a 98% completion of detailed work prior to first tech rehearsal – leave only small details for completion.
14. Attend all tech rehearsals, make notes regarding changes and confer with Director, Technical Director, Stage Manager and other Designers as required.

## **Run**

The Set Designer's job is completed by preview night except for emergencies or repair situations. The Set Designer should, however, be available at any time throughout the run for consultation or work.

## Strike

As a member of the production team the Designer needs to attend strike.

1. Consult with Technical Director and set construction head to ascertain what is to be saved and what can be destroyed, sold or recycled.
2. If desired, designs and model can remain at the theatre as reference and guidance for future set designers.
3. Ensure that all bills and/or receipts, job description manual and theatre key have been submitted to the Technical Director, Business Manager, or other designated person.

*There is to be no disposal or sale of any asset of the Poorhouse Players, without the express permission of a department head or director. There are no exceptions to this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, props, sound equipment, lighting equipment, tools or costumes.*