



The Empty Space Standards

Declaration of Purpose

Arts environments require risk, courage, vulnerability, and investment of our physical, emotional, and intellectual selves. The Empty Space has a history of authenticity and risk on our stages. We are proud of that legacy and seek to nurture spaces with strong safety nets that support that ethos without compromising a visceral and authentic experience for artists and audiences.

When creative environments are unsafe, both the artist and the art can become compromised. Spaces that prize “raw,” “violent,” and otherwise high-risk material can veer into unsafe territory if there are no procedures for prevention, communication, and when necessary, response. Too often, artists have been afraid to respond to abusive or unsafe practices, particularly where there is a power differential between the people involved. Artists have been afraid that speaking out will ruin a show or harm their reputations, and artists subjected to extreme abuse sometimes leave the craft, cutting their careers short. We believe that even in the absence of high-risk material, having pathways for response to unsafe conditions and harassment help to maintain the integrity of the work, its participants, and the organization.

The Empty Space Standards strives not to define artistry, prescribe how it is created value one kind of work over others, or stand as a legal document. It seeks rather to create awareness and systems that respect and protect the human in the art – to foster safe places to do dangerous things.

The Empty Space Standards are adapted and, in some cases, borrowed directly from the Chicago Theatre Standards (CTS). The CTS is authored by representatives of Chicago theatre companies, artists, and administrators who volunteered their time, experience and expertise over the course of two years. It has been tested over the course of a year by 20 Chicago theatres and vetted by a variety of industry and legal professionals. We encourage you to view the CTS at notinourhouse.org.

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

History

The Empty Space opened its doors on January 2, 2003, and incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit the following year. Our theatre’s name is derived from the 1968 book written by Peter Brook, "The Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate", and specifically the first few lines of the book: "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged."

Our earliest vision for The Empty Space helped coin our tag line "Setting Theatre Free." We believe that financial barriers should not prevent people from experiencing live theatre, so patrons were admitted freely into the theatre and encouraged to donate after the show, if they saw fit. We created an art gallery to coexist with theatre productions, which gave even more artists opportunities to develop their crafts. From there, the idea of setting theatre free evolved into setting theatre free from not only monetary affordability, but free from judgement, free from commercial expectations, and free from traditional and expectational views on what theatre should be.

Today, we stand by our commitment to ensure theatre is affordable to everyone. Our admission prices continue to remain low, and we personally reserve at least ten seats for every performance for pay-what-you-can patrons. In addition, our art exhibitions never require an admission fee, along with many of our special events and fundraisers. The generosity of our patrons has allowed us to continue this practice, while still ensuring our production values remain high. Since its founding, and at the writing of these standards, The Empty Space has mounted more than 300 productions, 200 art exhibits, has had over 200 volunteer board members, actors, and technicians, and more than 50,000 patrons.

Mission Statement

The Empty Space's mission is to provide professional quality live theatre to the community of Bakersfield and to create an opportunity for local actors, directors, and technicians to work in a creative environment that allows them to express themselves and their artistic ideas while encouraging them to continue to study and improve their craft.

As part of our mission, the Empty Space is committed to:

- ***Spaces free of harassment***, whether it be sexual, or based in 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.
- ***A common understanding*** of practices for theatre environments, including written, reproducible standards available at no cost; and by
- ***Peer support*** through mentorship and collaboration through online communication and community outreach.

Using the Empty Space Standards

The Empty Space Standards (ESS) will almost always be referred to using the acronym *ESS* throughout the entirety of the document.

Empty Space and *Empty Space Productions* are used synonymously to denote Empty Space Productions, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

The following section is intended to provide a brief definition of terms used throughout the ESS.

Definitions

Actor: A performer in a live theatrical production.

Casting Authority: An individual or individuals who determine which actors are cast in a production.

Participant: Someone who is engaged by a producer to participate in, administer, or support making theatre. This includes actors, designers, directors, production staff, box office staff, board members, volunteers, donors, and anyone involved in the work of the theatre.

Production: A theatrical undertaking that results in one or more public performances.

We/Our: Perspective of Empty Space Productions

Concern Resolution Path (CRP)

The goal of the CRP is to provide a documented communication pathway to address issues in a production or within the organization. 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 CRP is a tool to help create communication pathways to prevent and resolve issues, not create divisions. To that end, nothing in the ESS encourages firing 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 reasonably understood *unsafe* conditions, not *uncomfortable* situations. The function and goal of the CRP shall be discussed at the first rehearsal.

The Empty Space's Concern Resolution Path shall be printed and distributed to all participants and discussed on the first day of rehearsal. It shall be clearly communicated that the Empty Space seeks to resolve concerns early, before participants or the production are put at risk and before the concern escalates.

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 with whom the concern should be addressed.
- A commitment to give reported concerns priority and a reasonable timeline for resolution.

Structure

- **Level One**—We recognize 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 Level Two contacts are 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 shall be reported to Level Three contacts, even if no action is required. Level two representative may include:
 - Confidential Cast Representative
 - Stage Manager
 - Director
- **Level Three**—The contacts at this level are considered the final level of the path, capable of resolving issues that have not been resolved prior to reaching this stage.
 - Executive Director
 - Communications Director

Communication

- The CRP shall be verbally explained and provided in writing at the first rehearsal (digitally and/or in print). It shall include the name, title, and contact information for every individual on the CRP.
- A copy of the CRP shall be posted or otherwise available in the rehearsal and performance spaces.

- Participants should be encouraged to report their concerns in writing for record keeping purposes.
- 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.

Record keeping

Empty Space Productions shall maintain personnel files, which will include reported concerns. Such files are to be kept confidential and accessible only to the individual(s) responsible for investigating concerns and maintaining the files.

Legal Remedies

In the event of civil or criminal misconduct or liability, the ESS is not a replacement for legal advice or action, nor does it stand instead of any local, state, or federal law.

The Role of the Stage Manager Regarding the ESS

The Stage Manager (SM) is traditionally the primary communication conduit between participants and producers as well as between actors and directors; and so, plays a crucial role in executing the ESS. If a production does not have a traditional stage manager, the responsibilities of the stage manager shall be assumed by the production’s director with approval from either the Artistic or the Executive Director. If a director assumes the responsibilities of the SM, they may choose a designee(s) to assist with the responsibilities of the role but are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the standards are adhered to.

The Stage Manager’s responsibilities with regards to the ESS are:

- Read and be familiar with the ESS.
- Know and follow the Empty Space’s published CRP.
- Ensure that consent is discussed before scenes of sexual content and nudity and document applicable specifics.
- Document all choreography, including sexual content.
- Allow for the selection of the Confidential Cast Representative (CCR) during the first week of rehearsal.
- Work with and communicate with the CCR, particularly regarding any raised concern.

SMs should have access to the script, or known scope of a production, before they agree to participate.

Confidential Cast Representative (CCR)

Inspired by the Actor’s Equity’s “Equity Deputy,” the goal of the Confidential Cast Representative (CCR) is to create a confidential and peer-level liaison and reporting channel between participants and the Empty Space. 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 CCR can help to alleviate this tension.

The CCR navigates the ESS for participants over the course of a single production or can serve as a reporting channel for an individual participant when confidentiality is required or requested, and may also serve (alongside the stage manager) as a first contact when a concern cannot be resolved by an individual.

Role and Responsibilities of the Confidential Cast Representative (CCR)

- Become familiar with the ESS, CRP, and any related policies and procedures provided by the Empty Space.
- Help familiarize others with the ESS, CRP.
- Provide contact information and availability for consultation outside of rehearsal/performance space/hours.
- Serve as a liaison between the cast, crew, stage manager, and the Empty Space for issues brought to attention by participants.
- Protect anonymity whenever possible.
- Report concerns, both their own and those reported by fellow participants, using the CRP, 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 well-being of participants and discourage efforts (intentional or otherwise) to use the ESS to divide or create an atmosphere of “heroes and villains.”
- Engage the CRP if the SM 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 CCR’s Scope

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

Selecting a CCR

- The CCR shall be chosen by secret ballot during the first rehearsal by cast members of the production.
- If a getting acquainted period is necessary (where participants do not know one another), a CCR may be chosen by the end of the first week.
- Every effort should be made to secure a CCR for each production, but if a CCR is not chosen for a production, concerns should be referred to the reporting parties on the individual production’s CRP.

Auditions

To help prospective participants make informed decisions about proposed productions’ requirements and expectations, we seek to communicate what we expect of our participants and what those participants may expect of us. For the purpose of this section, auditions may constitute interviews, readings, presentations of prepared pieces, improvisation, singing, movement, or similar activities involved in a casting process.

Audition Notices and Invitations

We intend 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.
- An assertion that prospective participants can decline auditions without fear of losing future audition invitations.
- Disclosure if the audition will be recorded.
- The names of the director, casting authority, and producer, and if known, the names of the production's design team, including choreographers.
- When possible, a full script will be offered to potential participants if requested.
- If known at the time of the notice, names of the production's design team, including choreographers will be included.
- If known, when call backs are scheduled.

Auditions

- We intend to provide a safe space for the audition including:
 - A smoke-free environment.
 - A reasonably clean space with sufficient lighting and safe temperature.
 - A safe surface for dance or fight calls, if applicable.
- We will not ask prospective participants to attend more than three (3) audition calls for a single production.
- Audition calls should be no longer than three (3) hours, and should not run later than 11pm.
- Required materials (scripts and sides) shall be provided at the audition.
- Prospective participants will be informed of who is in the audition room.
- We will not ask prospective participants to perform violence or sexual contact as part of the audition without disclosing this expectation in the audition notice or invitation.
- Any physical contact required for an audition shall be disclosed and choreographed. Actors shall not be asked to improvise violent or sexual contact.
- We will not ask prospective participants to disrobe at an audition.
- The casting authority should confirm with the prospective participant that they have reviewed the supplied materials and are aware of the requirements as outlined in the audition notice or invitation.
- Auditions shall not be recorded unless specified in the audition notice, or without receiving consent from individual participants at the time of auditions. 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.
- We 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 shall be clearly posted at all auditions and callbacks.
- We will not charge prospective participants a fee to audition.
- Prospective participants may decline audition invitations or casting offers without fear of losing future opportunities, and will not be asked to explain their reason.
- Once casting is complete, the show's production team shall notify those who were not cast.

Agreements

We will provide each participant with a document outlining our mutual expectations for each production. These agreements do not imply that participants are employees, but seek to provide information about the terms of the participant's role in the production. These written agreements are to be signed by the participant at the beginning of the rehearsal process.

Agreements shall include, at a minimum, the following disclosures:

- **Responsibilities**—a general outline of the responsibilities of the participant.
- **Schedule**—the basic schedule information (start date, whether the rehearsals will be the day or evening, proposed hours--per--week, dates/hours of tech) and the possibility of extensions.

Understudies

Being an understudy is a tough job, and the job can be made more difficult if the understudy is not kept in the loop throughout the production process. This standard seeks to provide ways to prepare, include, and inform understudies so they are ready to save the day.

Engaging understudies is strongly encouraged. The following guidelines can help ensure that they are effective and productive members of the production, and given an opportunity to succeed.

- Understudies should have a written agreement detailing expectations.
- Understudies should be introduced to the CCR and should have the CRP explained to them.

The following information and access shall be given to understudies for productions:

- If understudies will be engaged for the production (disclosed at auditions).
- Any special skills required (dialect, combat, singing, sexual content and nudity, etc.).
- What support the understudies will receive (work with dialect coach, choreographer/s, for example).
- Which role(s) the understudy is expected to cover.
- General rehearsal schedule including (in a general sense) when understudies are welcome into rehearsals.
- Whether a put-in rehearsal will be scheduled, if advance notice allows.
- Whether costumes will be provided, or if the understudy wears the costumes of the actor being covered, or if the understudy is expected to supply their own costume.
- If an actor leaves a production, whether the understudy will replace that actor, or the role will be recast.
- Understudies will have the opportunity to shadow the actors they are covering during a performance (understudy follows actor they are understudying backstage to learn required routines before, during and after the performance).
- Understudies will be allowed to observe any rehearsals when special skills (dialects, choreography, etc.) are being taught.
- Understudies will be provided a date by which they are expected to be off--book and performance ready.

- In the event a character has audio and or/video in production, (If a character leaves a voice mail, for example), backup recordings featuring the understudies shall be made in case they go on.

Basic Health and Safety

Performance day problems are often preventable with careful planning, and we endeavor to create spaces and processes for auditions, rehearsals, and performance that are as physically safe as possible.

We intend to make health and safety a regular topic at production meetings, and to maintain awareness and procedures that always contribute to a safe environment. We seek to prevent injuries, identify, and remedy situations that might be considered unsafe or unhealthy, and respond to injuries and medical events, and seek medical attention when required.

We will strive to promote basic health and safety practices by providing the following:

- Toilets and sinks, with soap and towels.
- Access to drinking water (clean tap water) or disclosure of lack of availability.
- A reasonable working temperature (avoiding inclement weather or unsafe temperatures outdoors).
- Lighting suitable for the work being carried out.
- Reasonably clean and well-maintained rehearsal space.
- Floors and traffic routes that are free from undue obstructions and tripping hazards.
- Functional, non-expired fire extinguishers that are inspected by a professional when required.
- A suitably stocked first-aid kit.
- An insurance policy that covers on-site injuries.
- A plan for costume maintenance and laundry.

At the first rehearsal and first tech day a safety walk will be conducted with the production crew and actors that will 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.
- Areas of potential hazard that have or may require glow tape, including the 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 maintain:

- Accident, incident, and first-aid reports.
- A checklist of first rehearsal and first tech rehearsal walk-throughs.

If any aspect of this Standard cannot be achieved because of the nature of the rehearsal or performance space, it shall be disclosed to all prospective and active participants. For example, if a rehearsal or

performance space is outdoors, participants should 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

Audience members are active participants in live performance. 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.

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.

Preproduction

The type of audience environment should be disclosed to the participants at the time of audition, 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 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, the Empty Space shall designate an individual(s) to oversee the box office and front of house operations (usually Personnel Director or designee). This individual(s) shall be expected to:

- Attend at least one run-through or technical rehearsal prior to the first audience.
- Inform the stage manager of any audience conditions that may impact the performance.
- Conduct a pre-performance meeting with or provide written instructions to any and 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.
- A prevention and response plan for frequent unacceptable audience behaviors (drunkenness, inappropriate interactions with actors).

Dressing Rooms

Performers need time and space to prepare for their performance. The space provided for this preparation should be safe, respectful, and wherever possible, private. Even in the tiniest of spaces, privacy and concentration are important when preparing for performance. We 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.

- Children under the age of 18 should be given private dressing room accommodations whenever possible.
- Reasonable accommodations should be made to respect individual modesty, and designated space shall 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.
- Non-actors (except for the SM and Director) 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 it 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.
- Where costumes are used, a clothing rack and hangers shall be provided.
- While in dressing rooms, please be considerate of fellow actors before taking any recordings or photos. Ensure that you have permission from all individuals included in the photo/video, including people who may appear in the background.
- Reasonable accommodations shall 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 shall respect the property and personhood of fellow inhabitants by limiting their use of perfumes, smelly or messy food, and behavior such as talking on cellphones, 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 CCR, or (c) according to the concern resolution path.
- Dressing room space shall accommodate a reasonable number of participants' personal belongings.
- While it is always advisable to leave valuables at home, provisions shall be made for a reasonable quantity of "valuables" to be collected before and returned immediately after each performance. The Empty Space shall not be responsible for any missing valuables.
- Where separate dressing and restrooms are available for men and women, actors shall be allowed to occupy the dressing room in accordance with their gender identification.

Choreography: Nudity, Violence, Movement, and Physical Theatre

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.

In audition notices, auditions, offer discussions, agreements, understudy preparation, rehearsals, tech, and performances, we intend to create a safe and respectful atmosphere for all participants. We believe 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
- Telephone for emergencies
- Adequate on-and off-stage lighting
- Temperature control
- Ventilation
- Space for warm-ups (at the Empty Space, this is usually on stage prior to house opening)
- Floors and surfaces that are clean, well maintained, and appropriate for the activity
- Padded and/or glow-taped corners and hazards
- Proof of liability insurance

Equipment, Weapons, and Specialized Costumes

All specialized equipment and costumes should be:

- Suitable for the required choreography.
- Inspected by any actors who use the equipment before each use.
- Handled only by those required to do so.

Preproduction and Auditions

- A designer or choreographer shall 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 or may not be the production's director or an actor in the production, so long as the role is clearly communicated to all participants.
 - This designer/choreographer shall 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 shall 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 shall be asked to provide accurate descriptions of their physical abilities and limitations/injuries as they relate to the possible choreography.

Rehearsal

- The designer/choreographer shall be introduced to the cast at the first rehearsal, or as soon thereafter as possible.
- A schedule for rehearsing all choreography shall be established and followed.
- Adequate time shall be allocated for stretching and warming up before all choreography rehearsals.
- Adequate time shall be given to teach, rehearse, and adjust all choreography or movement techniques.
- Adequate time shall be allocated at the end of rehearsal for cooling down, asking questions, and voicing concerns.
- Before work starts the actors, director, and choreographer shall 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 shall 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 shall 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 shall agree on a vocabulary of safety (self-care cue). The self-care cue should be agreed upon at the first rehearsal or before any choreography is conducted.
- Regular rehearsal reports should be sent to the designer/choreographer and 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.

Performance

- Choreography calls should occur before every show and should take place in a focused environment free of interruptions or distractions.
- Performance reports shall include the designers/choreographers, noting any issues that arise and any actor injuries (whether related to the choreography or not).
- Performers shall have a communication plan to report to participants on the CRP (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 shall be maintained in the space. The nature of the choreography should be considered when establishing this temperature.
- 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 participants on the CRP as soon as possible.

Specific Considerations: Violence

Onstage violence can be 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.

- It can be helpful to assign a fight captain who is not involved in the fight choreography, so that the fight captain can 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

Sexual Content and Nudity (SC/N) requires 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. We seek to replicate the conditions, detail, documentation, and accountability traditionally employed for fight choreography for scenes with sexual choreography.

Preproduction and Auditions

- 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.

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 self-care cue (an agreed upon word not in the production that halts all activity) shall be established for SC/N rehearsals.
- Initial SC/N rehearsals shall be closed, such that only participants involved in the scene are present.
- SC/N rehearsals shall only 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. If the presence of the SM during early choreography of SC/N consent creates an uncomfortable environment for the actors

performing such content, the SM can be excluded and brought in when agreed upon by the participants.

- Terms of consent and details of sexual choreography should be documented.
- Actors performing nude scenes shall be allowed to have and wear robes or other coverings when not rehearsing.
- Actors shall have the option to decline SC/N elements added after audition disclosure.
- Nude actors shall not be photographed or recorded on video at any time during rehearsal, tech, or performance without their consent.

Tech

- Nudity during technical rehearsals shall be limited to those times when it is absolutely necessary. Flesh-colored clothing or a robe may be worn when nudity is not required.
- Technical rehearsals shall be closed to visitors during scenes with SC/N. If a visitor is invited to a technical rehearsal where SC/N occurs, the actors shall be notified in advance.
- 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. Gawkers should be dispatched.

Consent

- We believe that building consent among participants is an important part of creating an atmosphere of trust and communication. We will engage a person trained in intimacy design when such design is required. We intend to recognize, at a minimum, the following practices when building consent among participants:
- A consent-building conversation and boundary setting exercises should specify the range of contact that is acceptable.
- The boundaries may change over the rehearsal process, either narrowing or broadening, but any change to the boundaries shall be discussed and agreed upon before the rehearsal.
- There shall be an opportunity to discuss potential boundary violations at the end of each rehearsal and performance.
- The agreed-upon structure of intimate contact shall 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.

Requires Disclosure

- SC/N shall be disclosed in notices and invitations and at auditions.
- Precast actors or hired designers shall be made aware of SC/N prior to accepting their roles.
- Designers shall receive disclosure of SC/N and known design requirements.

Implementation

- When sexual choreography is required, prospective participants can be auditioned using nonsexual choreography to determine physical control.
- Discussions around sensitive requirements and how they will be handled should begin during preproduction meetings.
- Intimacy designers should be engaged for the production and included in pre-production meetings.
- The Empty Space shall standardize communication and protocols with directors requiring SC/N.
- Actors, directors, and choreographers shall have equal status in devising SC/N scenes.
- A time limit for rehearsing SC/N should be established and communicated.
- Backstage areas and dressing rooms shall provide reasonable accommodations for modesty/privacy.

Specific Considerations: High-Risk Physical Theatre

- 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 shall not be undertaken without the extra attention, equipment, and precaution needed to do so safely.

Sexual Harassment

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, board, 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.

Clear boundaries shall 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.

According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is described as follows:

It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person’s sex [sic]. Harassment can include “sexual harassment” or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person’s sex [sic]. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general.

Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex [sic].

Although the law does not prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or

offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

The EEOC covers "employees" only, not contractors and volunteers. For that reason, this standard seeks to provide a definition for sexual harassment in the theatrical workplace for participants not covered by EEOC laws and other regulations, and to provide an understanding of and sensitivity to the nuances of a theatrical workplace.

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

Inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, or innuendoes or taunting about a person's gender, gender identity, sexual identity, 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.

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 workplace:

- 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 of each member of production and artistic staffs is needed 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 preference 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 is 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., job advancement opportunities) and/or threats of punishment for refusal (e.g., denial of job 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.
- 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. 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 and confidentiality for the safety and well-being of all participants.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Representation

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 Empty Space Standards does not dictate content, casting, design, or other production elements but seeks to create respectful, safe, and equitable environments.

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

- When invited to audition, 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 while auditioning that they are uncomfortable with production elements as they relate to their personhood. Potential participants have the right to decline casting offers without fear of reprisal such as losing future opportunities. It is not the participant's responsibility to explain why they chose to decline an offer.
- Whenever possible, diversity and inclusion should be considered both in casting and in assembling production and design teams. In particular, 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 reasonably 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.
 - Make-up that can reasonably 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, we 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, and the emotional risk associated will be recognized throughout the process.
- We seek to address concerns with generosity and humility through the channels of the Concern Resolution Path as outlined in this document.
- We seek opportunities to intern, mentor, include, and professionally engage participants of color at all levels of our organization.

"Ouch-Oops" Policy

The Empty Space seeks to create an environment where all participants feel safe to speak up and address negative or comments or actions in real time. To meet this goal, we have adopted a system of "Ouch" and "Oops."

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's a pause.

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

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.

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