



Backstage Etiquette • What you need to perform your best

(adapted from the Radio City Rockettes - *20 Backstage Rules You Should Follow*)

The success of any production, large or small, depends on everyone behind the scenes doing their part. The Rockettes know what it takes to pull off a spectacular show and their dance company uses a simple list of rules to assure their show is stress and hitch-free:

1. Be punctual.

For everything and anything: know your call time, the show order (posted nearly everywhere backstage), the entrance time for your dance and the finale schedule. Stay backstage in your designated area or with your group so the directors and backstage crew always know where to find you. Make sure to **account for one another onstage** and **let the stage manager know that everyone is there (stage right and left) and ready to go on cue.**

2. Be aware.

The stage is a crowded, busy, active place with blinding bright lights and instant dark...always when you least expect it. **If you're telling yourself that you're not in anyone's way, you definitely are.**

- Stand back behind the **ready line** (marked with tape on the stage wing floor). Many numbers include multiple entrances, exits and/or all-out sprints through the wings. **Avoid being in the way.**
- If you can see members of the audience, they can see you. Be conscious of audience **sight lines** (also marked with tape near the curtain and in each of the wings) when you are onstage.
- **Always stand up backstage.** Bright stage lighting makes it difficult for a performer to see anything when they exit the stage. Sitting on the floor to relax, stretch, flex or warm up guarantees that you will vanish to become a dangerous obstacle below everyone's sight line.
- **Stay clear of the curtains, theater drapery and equipment.** The audience will see even the tiniest movement. The cyc (that thin white curtain at the back of the stage) is very easily damaged. Floor mics for tap numbers are very expensive and very easily damaged.
- **Enter and exit quickly but quietly.** Open backstage doors carefully so that you aren't opening them into someone's face and so light from offstage does not affect the lighting onstage.
- **Keep hallways and entrances clear backstage** for fast stage transitions or fast costume changes.
- **Let crew members know** if something is misplaced, breaks, spills or is missing so it can be promptly repaired or replaced. The stage manager can give you extra time for a costume change or if something needs to be fixed but only if the crew is aware.
- **The stage is for performers only.** There is no backstage access during or after the show. Let family members and friends know not to attempt to come backstage.

Trust us, we've heard every excuse in the book.

3. Be quiet

Stay silent backstage. Sound travels easily to the house where the audience is seated. If you absolutely must talk, speak very softly. Cell phones are strictly prohibited. Respect the work of your fellow performers. Don't talk, text, email, or eat while they're performing. Leave the cheering and applause to the audience. You are there to perform not yell encouragement. Instead, find your friends in the dressing room afterwards to tell them just how amazing they were!

4. Be safe and injury-free.

Make sure your body is properly warmed up and that you stay warm as show time approaches. You can ask the stage manager for permission to warm-up quietly on stage before the opening curtain or during intermission but be cautious and avoid over-extending or overstressing. If you're warming up, do it upstage, not near the curtains. Avoid running, leaps, somersaults, flips or tumbling moves.

5. Be organized.

Make sure you have enough time for costume changes and getting into the wings. The show sequence always includes at least 2 dances between each number, which should be plenty of time. **If you need more time, let your teacher(s), your company director or the stage crew know** - we'll have the solution.

- Make sure your personal props or costumes are properly set before the show begins.
- Organize your costumes in the order of the show.
- Always be ready to go for your next dance. If you're in more than 1 dance, change immediately into your 2nd or 3rd costume once you get backstage.
- If you have hair or makeup that's going to be challenging, see your teacher(s) and they'll help your transition into your next dance.
- **PUT YOUR NAME IN ALL COSTUMES & SHOES!** We can only return things that you left backstage between rehearsals or shows if we know they belong to you. We maintain a *Lost and Found* box but that isn't the best storage option.

6. Be considerate.

WATER ONLY BACKSTAGE OR IN THE THEATRE! Food is only allowed in the dressing area as long as you are considerate to those around you. Clean up around your area backstage. Any and all food items must be in the trash before you leave the theatre.

7. Be conscientious.

"Please" and "thank you" go a long way to accomplishing everything you want. Respect the way every performer gets ready for a show. Leave other performer's costumes or props alone. Take time to wish your fellow performers and crewmembers a good show (always "break a leg," never "good luck").

The stage managers, stage crew, light and sound techs have one and only one job: to make you look as good as possible. Listen to them. Respect them. Appreciate them. When a crewmember tells you to do something, trust that the only reason is for the good of the show.