

Shanley Theatre Guidelines

For Theatrical Productions in Shanley Pavilion
Updated September 2023

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Reservation Process

Reservations can be made in-person, by phone, by email or online at:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/norris/events/>

Production Timeline

Up to 1 Year in Advance – Advance Scheduling

Up to 1 Quarter in Advance – Schedule Pre-Production Meetings

Use the [Student Theatre Pre-Production Intake Form](#)

6 weeks before load in – Pre-Production Meeting #1

3 weeks before load in – Drawings submitted

2 weeks before load in – Pre-Production Meeting #2

Week of show (typically a seven-day reservation)

Sunday – Load-In, beginning at 4pm

Saturday – Final Show

Sunday – Load-Out. Space must be completely vacated by 2pm on the following Sunday. Two group representatives must meet with Norris staff for a venue walk-through at 2:00pm on the Sunday of strike. Keys returned to Norris Center Desk by 3:30pm.

Theatre Dashboard

For helpful documentation and links, please check out the [Student Theatre Dashboard](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=0a208ab3d5fb4db484584d4dc2649128)
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=0a208ab3d5fb4db484584d4dc2649128>

Pre-Production Meetings

To plan for a successful production, you are required to schedule two mandatory pre-production meetings with Norris staff. **It is the responsibility of the Director, Producer, Production Manager, and/or Stage Manager to schedule these meetings. If the meetings are not scheduled with our team, your reservation is subject to cancellation.**

Meeting #1

- Timeline: Approximately six (6) weeks before load-in.
- Required to Attend: Director and Producer
- Typically attending from Norris: Event Planner, Production Manager
- Purpose: To review the production aspects of the show. It is the responsibility of the Director and Producer to disseminate the information contained in these policies to anyone working on the production.

Between meetings, the following materials should be submitted to staff as PDFs:

- Scenic Ground plan
- Scenic Section view (if you have it)
- Scenic Renderings
- Lighting Plot

Meeting #2

- Timeline: Approximately two (2) weeks before load-in.
- Required to Attend: Director, Producer, Lighting Representative, Scenic Representative, Sound Representative, Technical Director, and Stage Manager.
- Typically attending from Norris/Northwestern: Event Planner, Production Manager, Environmental Health and Safety Representative
- Purpose: To finalize the production aspects of the show. At the second pre-production meeting, the following items will be covered:
 - A review of the theatre guidelines
 - Safety and fire code
 - Venue access procedures
 - Load-in/out procedures
 - Revisions of any submitted materials
 - Any questions about submitted materials

Rates and Fees

Rental fee: Norris assesses a nominal fee to cover expenses related to upkeep of the venue and AV equipment. Please refer to the [Norris Rates Page](#) for current rental rates.

Dumpsters: A dumpster can be arranged with Norris staff for scenic and other large materials to be disposed of. This is paid for by the chartstring of the student organization that is sponsoring the production. A plan for trash disposal must be discussed at the Final (2-Week) Production meeting. Please refer to the [Norris Rates Page](#) for current rental rates.

Facility and Safety Guidelines

Role of Norris Satellite Venues: Norris staff are responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the facility and events. Specific questions during rehearsals and performances should be directed to the Performance and Satellite Venues Event Planner and Production Manager; contact information is posted at the end of this document.

Keys: To obtain a key to Shanley, the designated contact (as discussed in the final production meeting) must check out a key at the Norris Center Desk. Groups are responsible for keeping the venue locked when not in use and must return the key by 3:30pm on the following Sunday.

Two People: Always have at least 2 people working in the space.

Outdoors: Items are prohibited from being stored on the exterior AT ANY TIME. All items required for the show must be kept in Shanley. Any items left outside of Shanley will be subject to removal and disposal and could result in a fine assessed to the group.

Shanley Equipment: Norris maintains a small amount of equipment that is clearly labelled, typically painted green, and meant to stay in Shanley. **Shanley equipment may not be removed from the space or utilized in another venue at any time. Removal of Shanley equipment will result in fines equal to the full replacement cost of the item. The group utilizing Shanley is responsible for securing the space while they have keys and ensuring Shanley equipment is not removed by their own team or other groups.** This does not apply to equipment labelled "StuCo", which is managed by the StuCo equipment managers.

Dressing Room Electrical: 3 feet of clearance must be maintained in front of the electrical panels in the dressing room.

Sprinkler Pipes: Be aware of sprinkler heads when constructing scenery, building lighting positions, and hanging lights. Lights must be at least 18 inches away from sprinkler heads. Nothing can be tied or affixed to the sprinkler pipes.

Clean-up: The responsibility for cleaning and daily upkeep of Shanley is that of the group using the facilities at that time. Dressing Rooms must be kept free of trash and food. Make-up must be stored neatly. The custodial cabinet in the corner restroom must remain accessible.

Trash Disposal: Trash must be removed from Shanley daily to discourage pests. Daily trash and small items from strike must be disposed of in the dumpster at the Jacobs Center loading dock. In cases where there will be a larger amount of scenic or other materials to dispose of, an additional dumpster must be arranged with Norris staff with a chartstring provided by the sponsoring organization. A plan for trash disposal must be discussed at the Final (2 Week) Production meeting. Under no circumstance may trash or materials be left on the Jacobs Center loading dock that block access to the dumpster or other functional areas of the loading dock. Use of the Norris dumpster (or any other campus dumpster) to discard items from Shanley is prohibited.

Facility Issues: Please contact Norris staff to report any facility problems in Shanley such as lights out, clogged toilets, door/lock malfunctions, empty first-aid kit, etc.. Norris staff will be your main contact for any facility issues.

Emergencies: For all serious or life-threatening emergencies, call 911 from the nearest phone. A phone is located in the small window between the dressing room and the main room. Subsequently (and for all minor injuries where 911 is not called) students must inform Norris staff who will document the incident. Please report all incidents so that proper documentation and assistance can occur. Accidents happen. We need to know about them so that we can make sure that the injured party is properly cared for and medical bills are properly routed through NU. Reporting accidents will not jeopardize your ability to use NU facilities for student theatre. Conversely, NOT reporting incidents could lead to sanctions.

Space Layout and Egress

Layout

- Seating risers are provided in Shanley. The risers are not designed to be stacked and therefore must always be used on the floor, never on another stage or riser. Sponsoring organizations are not permitted to build their own seating platforms. Risers significantly cut down on the capacity of the space.
- Occupancy can be roughly determined by the following:
 - With Chairs: 1 person per 7 net square feet
 - With Chairs and Tables: 1 person per 15 net square feet
- No overselling and no standing room.

Exits/Entrances/Access

- There must always be aisle ways of at least 44 inches of clear space for exits.
- No blocking of any exit or fire extinguisher
- All exit signs should be visible from all seating angles. Exit signs shall never be covered, obstructed or dimmed.

- Every occupant should be able to see at least two means of egress from any place in occupancy
- Emergency lighting units shall not be covered or obstructed.
- The circuit breaker panels and the gate to the fire suppression cage in the dressing room must remain accessible.

Scenic

Any complex or unusual scenic requests should be presented to the Norris team as early as possible, to ensure adequate time for review, approval, and modification if necessary.

Rigging

- No scenic items may be hung from the ceiling, cable trays, or sprinkler pipes.
- All structures and hard scenery must be ground supported.

Platforms

- All platforms should be constructed securely, using accepted theatrical construction techniques.
- Platform height should not exceed 35”.
- Platforms must be free standing and cannot be connected to the building.
- Legs are to be secured to platforms using at least 2 bolts inserted and tightened at intersecting angles. Decking screws may be used with advance permission from the Production Manager and a safety plan.

Stairs and Ship Ladders

- All stair units and ship ladders should be built to acceptable theatrical standards.

Walls and Flats

- All walls should be constructed securely, using accepted theatrical construction techniques.
- Vertical structures cannot be connected to the building, and must be self-supporting
- All walls and flats should be properly supported, bracing with jacks or attaching to other wall units and platforms.

Paint

- Painting is permissible in Shanley Pavilion. The space must be returned to its original “Black Box” condition at the conclusion of the event with the space painted flat black.
- All wood stain, spray paint, aerosols and other potentially flammable chemicals require special storage procedures. Work with Norris team to determine proper use, storage, and disposal
- All spray paint should be done outside. Please put tarps down and/or take other precautionary measures to ensure that paint does not get on the sidewalks, roads, or exteriors of any building.

- Paint may not be discarded in any sink or drain, which is harmful to the plumbing and the environment. Brushes, rollers, and all other painting equipment can ONLY be cleaned in the large slop sink in the dressing room. The small dressing room and restroom sinks should not be used for rinsing painting equipment.
- Surplus paint must be removed from the venue by the end of each production, by the Sunday of your load-out at 2:00pm.
- You may dispose of paint yourself, or you may utilize Norris' FREE paint disposal service. Contact the Norris Facilities Manager, Tom Szymanski (tszymanski@northwestern.edu), in advance with the quantity of paint to coordinate a drop off at the Norris loading dock. Paint cans should be well sealed, and not be wet or leaking paint, and should ideally be placed in a bag to avoid leaks.
- Please note that disposing of paint down drains is harmful to the environment, and damaging to our drains. If you choose to dispose of excess paint on your own, you should use a [product to harden the paint](#) (available at hardware stores, or use cat litter), and then, after the paint has solidified, dispose of the re-sealed paint can in a dumpster. The Norris Theatre Cage may not be used to store or solidify paint for theatre group disposal.
- If paint cans are left at Shanley, or any Norris venue, your organization will be charged a \$20.00 per can paint disposal fine.

Props

- A prop list must be submitted at the Final Pre-Production Meeting.
- If Prop Weapons will be used, completion of the [Prop Weapons form](#) is required. Prop Weapons should be discussed with Norris staff as early as possible.
- Prop Alcohol must be discussed early in the process. Norris staff will work with you to determine proper procedures for use.

Lighting

- In order to assure that the light hang is safe and feasible, the lighting design must be submitted at the Final Pre-Production Meeting. Norris staff is happy to guide first-time designers and master electricians through best practices.
- There is a small stock of lighting instruments and cable provided in the space. Contact Norris staff if equipment needs repair.

LED Tape/Set Electrics/Wiring Devices

- All LED Tape, Set Electrics, Wiring Devices, etc. must be approved in advance. Drawings/diagrams of all tape/cable runs must be provided. This is a non-exhaustive list.
- The use of these in Shanley must be approved by Norris staff and is limited to Completely Pre-Fabricated devices
 - Completely Pre-Fabricated devices are store bought and require no alteration.
 - The sole exception to this includes LED tape with pre-established cut marks, which may be cut at marked cut points on the tape. Common construction for LED tape consists of a standard Edison plug, LED tape, and a remote for control

- Devices should only be secured to set pieces with hot glue, as tape can cause the tape to overheat
- Devices should not be secured to any elements of the building infrastructure, including flooring, walls, etc.
- Self-Fabricated LED Tape/Set Electrics/Wiring Devices are not allowed

Theatre Garages

Overview: There are three University-owned garages that are utilized by student groups for the construction and storing of scenery. The Norris Production Manager acts as a liaison between the student theatre community, the occupants of the adjacent office buildings, and the University.

Clean up: The group building scenery in the garage spaces is responsible for daily cleanup. All materials must be brought in at the end of each build day and the garages swept and cleaned. **No scenery, however large or small, may be left outside the garage or in the adjacent yards. Groups must be especially diligent not to leave screws or other sharp materials on the ground, in the yards, or on or near any nearby parking lot.** The overall responsibility for the garages (occasional deeper cleanouts, day-to-day space organization, etc.) lies with StuCo. Dumpsters may be arranged for garage cleanout through Norris staff.

Facility Issues: Please notify Norris staff of any facility issues, such as lights out, doors/locks malfunctioning, expired fire extinguisher inspection tags, empty first-aid kits, etc.

Walkthroughs: Norris staff will walk the garages every week to ensure no materials are left outside. Individual groups are responsible for costs/fees associated with disregarding these policies and for additional labor for cleanup.

Technical Equipment and Infrastructure

Users of Shanley are required to provide the majority of their lighting, sound, video, and other technical equipment, unless noted below. For the most up-to-date inventory, please consult the [Student Theatre Dashboard](#).

Equipment

- Several chairs, seating risers, and ladders are available
- No lighting console is provided in this space
- A small stock of incandescent lighting fixtures are available for use. These include ellipsoidals and fresnels.
- Several pipe, cheeseboroughs, and boom bases for constructing lighting positions
- Six runs of 6-circuit Socapex multicables are installed that run from the dimmer rack locations in the dressing into the main room via the cable trays.
- Several 2P&G (2 pin and ground) “stagepin” extension cables are available on the cable rack in the dressing room

- No sound equipment or infrastructure is provided

DMX

- A single 100ft. 5-pin DMX cable is installed that runs from the dimmer rack locations in the dressing room into the main room. The cable is long enough to reach most tech table positions.
- A single 50ft. 5-pin DMX extension cable is available for extending the installed DMX cable or other use

Power

- Power can be tied in using the company switches in the dressing room. Group is responsible for providing their own dimmer rack or distro and the necessary camlok cables.
- There are a handful of standard Edison outlets throughout Shanley that provide standard power

House Lights

- There are two sets of house lights, one fluorescent and one LED. Fluorescents are controlled via dimmer switches by the main entrance. LEDs are controlled via dimmer switch next to the dressing room entrance.

Safe Working Practices

General Guidelines

- Use two-person lifting - bend at knees, not back.
- No riding in the back of trucks when transporting set.
- No rolling tables, chairs or other objects on elevated stage or platform without proper edge guarding.
- No use of water around electrical equipment.
- Check power and extension cables for worn areas, exposed wiring, and broken ground pins. If cables are damaged, tape/tag/label them and let Norris staff know immediately. DO NOT break ground pins off any cables.
- Never connect multiple extension cords and/or power strips together. This increases the resistance of the cabling, which increases heat build-up within the cabling, and creates a greater risk of electrical failure and/or fire.

Heat/Cold Stress

- For productions working in the garages during hot and cold temperatures, it is advised that students review the [Heat Stress](#) and [Cold Stress](#) trainings provided by Environmental Health and Safety to ensure proper precautions are being taken.

Power Tools

- Power tools may be used in Shanley with the expectation that all safety guidelines and best practices are observed. Eye and ear protection MUST be worn if using any type of saws.
- Anytime power tools are being used, including during construction in the garages or offsite, it is required that all safety guidelines and best practices are observed.
- All tools must be unplugged at the end of the workday, including in garages.
- Norris staff can provide tool training and supervision with advance notice.

- All students are responsible for participating in the ~30-minute online Hand and Power Tool Safety training. Contact Northwestern's [Environmental Health and Safety](#) (EHS) team with a list of production team members to be enrolled in the training. It is the responsibility of the Producer or Production Manager to distribute these resources to their production team, and to maintain and submit a list of all students who have been trained and are authorized to use ladders during their production to Norris staff.

Ladders

- All students are responsible for their own adherence to the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) [Portable Ladder Safety](#) program. That includes completion of the online [Portable Ladder Training](#). Contact Northwestern's [Environmental Health and Safety](#) (EHS) team with a list of production team members to be enrolled in the training. It is the responsibility of the Producer or Production Manager to distribute these resources to their production team, and to maintain and submit a list of all students who have been trained and are authorized to use ladders during their production to Norris staff.
- Whenever an individual is on a ladder, a spotter must be steadying the ladder.
- When climbing or descending a ladder, you should maintain 3 points of contact (two hands, one foot/hand, two feet).
- Never stand on top two steps of the ladder.
- Keep your body within the rails of the ladder.
- [Environmental Health and Safety](#) (EHS) must approve ladders used as props or set pieces.

Cable Management

- All cables should be run in straight lines, crossing walkways in the shortest way possible, usually at 90 degrees.
- When crossing a walkway, cables should be taped down continuously with gaff tape.
- Cables should never cross at the top of the stairs, as this is a trip hazard that could cause someone to fall down the stairs. If crossing a staircase, the cables should cross along the inside of the stair (where the tread meets the rise).
- Cables should never have connections in the middle of a walkway. All connections should be made before or after it crosses.
- Never wrap cables around support beams or lighting positions. Cables should be secured with tie line, zip ties, or other similar methods.

Lighting

- Ensure lighting fixtures are clear of anything that could ignite, including paper, plastic, flammable set pieces and props, etc.
- All lighting fixtures should be wrench-tight with safety cables wrapped around their position.

Sound

- High noise levels can result in hearing damage and hearing loss. Double-check levels on all sound equipment before testing. Best practice is starting equipment at a low level and gradually increasing the volume.

Special Considerations

Animals: No live animals are to be used in any production.

Fog & Smoke: Smoke/haze machines of any kind are prohibited.

Loss of Materials: Norris University Center will not be held liable for items lost, damaged, or stolen while stored in the Norris University Center or Shanley Pavilion.

Heat Producing Elements: Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, space heaters, open flame, lanterns, ovens, kitchen appliances, hot plates, cigarettes, candles and matches. Open flame and pyrotechnics in any form are prohibited.

Alcohol: No alcohol is permitted in Shanley at any time. The sponsoring organization is responsible for publicizing the alcohol ban to its patrons. The sponsoring organization will make a good faith effort to prevent audience members from bringing alcohol into Shanley, including monitoring audience members as they enter the facility and providing trash barrels for the disposal of any alcohol. A Norris staff member will observe each performance; instances of audience non-compliance will be reported to the Norris team, who will work with the sponsoring organization to resolve the issue for the remainder of the performance run. Instances of non-compliance of the alcohol ban by any members of the sponsoring organization's production team can lead to the cancellation of any remaining performances and may prevent the sponsoring organization from being able to reserve Shanley for future productions. Evidence that the production team or cast has brought alcohol into any venue will be sent directly to the Office of Community Standards.

Damages and Fines

Strike

- The sponsoring organization is responsible for the transporting of materials from Shanley to its ultimate destination. Norris Staff will not assist in the transportation or strike of sets, props, etc. **If required to do so to prepare the Shanley for the next group, the organization responsible for the equipment will be billed for labor costs and jeopardize future reservations.**
- Strike includes the removal of all non-Shanley equipment, trash, scenic, prop, and costume materials and the sweeping of all floors. If the floors or walls were painted for the production, they must be painted over with flat black latex paint upon strike.
- Shanley must be returned to the condition in which it was originally received.
- Space must be completely vacated by 2pm on the following Sunday. A group representative must meet with a Norris staff member for venue walk-through at 2:00pm on the Sunday of strike.
- Norris staff will conduct a checkout at 2pm on the Sunday of strike. A full checkout list can be found on the [Student Theatre Dashboard](#). The group is responsible for completing the items on this checkout list. Norris staff will perform a checkout to ensure these expectations have been met.

Damage

- Fines resulting in damage to Northwestern property will be assessed at the cost of repair by University Facilities. These fines are non-negotiable and will be billed to the organization's SOFO account. **When in doubt, ask before doing.**

General Violations

- Violations can consist of any deviation from these guidelines and will be assessed at the discretion of Norris staff and in consultation with Environmental Health and Safety and Campus Life. In extreme cases, staff will consider cancellation of performances and/or suspension of future reservations by the student organization. Examples of typical violations:
 - Unsafe set construction, lighting, or sound practices.
 - Altering permanent infrastructure or Northwestern owned equipment, including but not limited to cable trays, doors and windows, Shanley lighting equipment, furniture, etc
 - Inconvenience to neighbors of Shanley (noise, clutter in outdoor areas, etc.)
 - Violation of alcohol policies
 - Improper handling or storage of prop weapons
 - Not following through on agreed upon expectations.
- Individuals and student theatre groups understand that a student, group of students, student organization, or the University may file a complaint against a student, group of students, or student organization for any alleged violation of University rules and regulations as outlined in the Northwestern University Student Handbook.
- **It is the responsibility of student theatre groups to uphold and comply with all University rules and regulations and community expectations for behavior and conduct as outlined in these policies and the Northwestern University Student Handbook**
[\(https://www.northwestern.edu/communitystandards/student-handbook/\)](https://www.northwestern.edu/communitystandards/student-handbook/).
As such, the Norris University Center does not limit creative expression but does require notification for approval in the event of adult themes, prop weapons, or other special considerations.

Contact Information

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