

COSTUME HEAD: JOB DESCRIPTION

PROFILE

The Costume Head is responsible for creating the look of each character according to the Director's *production concept* and within the budget by selecting clothes and accessories the actor will wear in performance. At Northumberland Players, the Costume Head usually serves as "wardrobe mistress/master" and hands over to dressers for the run.

The complexity of the job of Costume Head depends on the production:

- the number of characters,
- the number of costume changes, and
- whether it requires period costumes.

Depending on the complexity of the production, the Costume Head may have the assistance of Costume Assistants, Seamstresses, and Dressers.

Northumberland Players has a very extensive costume collection at Northumberland Players Costume House, 450 Campbell Street, Unit 4.

If costumes must be original designs requiring pattern-making and sewing, there are volunteers with the specialized skills who can be called on to do this.

The Costume Head begins work at the initial production meeting and finishes after the final curtain when all costumes are dispersed or returned to storage.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- collaborates with Director to design costumes reflecting the Director's production concept
- creates illustrations of costumes as required
- creates plans for obtaining or creating costumes and accessories
- develops plans for costume changes with Dressers

SKILLS REQUIRED

- strong visual sense
- knowledge of costume styles and how costume is used to develop characterization
- knowledge of costume fitting, alteration and construction
- sewing skills or someone else who has the skills
- attention to detail
- ability to work with a team and delegate tasks

WORKS WITH:

- Director
- Actors
- Costume House Volunteers
- Dressers
- Hair and Make-Up Head

TASK TIMELINE

The following checklists outline the specific tasks of the Costume Head during the various stages of the production.

Note that these tasks are not necessarily in chronological order. It is important to read over the timeline in advance and plan ahead to ensure that tasks are completed on time.

PRE-PRODUCTION PLANNING

Done	Task	Resources in Handbook
Preparation		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze the script and note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the lifestyles and personalities of characters - period and place of setting - any references to costume in dialogue - costume changes scene by scene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costume Script Analysis, p. 151
	attend first production meeting, to find out the production schedule and timelines, and subsequent meetings.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talk to the Director to discuss his/her production concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - overall style of production - period, place, and general impression - style, mood and basic concepts of costumes 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with the Producer, assemble a costume team according to the needs of the production: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costume Assistants Seamstresses Dressers. Give their names to the producer for the program. 	
Designing		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan how many costumes will be required for each character, and develop a <i>Costume Plot</i>* (see <i>Glossary for definitions</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costume Plot - Female, p.152 • Costume Plot - Male, p. 153
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare sketches or locate images of the designs for costumes. Add colour swatches, sample fabrics, details of fit, etc., if costumes must be made. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss colours and styles with the Set Designer so costumes work well with, and do not disappear into, the set. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the accessories that will be required to complete costumes. 	

DURING REHEARSAL PERIOD

Obtaining Costumes	
<p>Attend a working production meeting of all team leaders to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plans for set design, set décor, costumes are all consistent with the Director’s Production Concept; • costume designs are reasonable and feasible within the timeline, workload and resources of the <u>Costume House</u>; • colour palettes are consistent and compatible; • plans fall within the budget. Added costs should be met by savings elsewhere if possible. Remind everyone to “Reduce and Re-use” wherever possible. • dates for move-in, build, fittings, painting, lighting hang, etc. are scheduled. <p>Attend additional meetings as required to share progress among all areas of the production</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take the necessary measurements of all actors. Measurements are much more useful than sizes, especially for women. Attend an early rehearsal to do this. Discuss costume requirements with each Actor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costume Plots, p. 152-3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide rehearsal costumes for special needs (e.g., full skirts, practical pockets, etc.). These are usually available in our costume collection. <p>costumes@northumberlandplayers.ca</p>	<p>Northumberland Players Costume House 450 Campbell Street, Unit 4, Cobourg 905-372-5856</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-ordinate with the Property Manager concerning costumes that are also <i>props</i>; i.e., clothes or accessories that are <i>discovered</i> or <i>carried</i> and handled onstage by actors. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make an appointment with the Costume House volunteers to see what costumes are available. They also have accessories, jewellery, fabrics and notions. Book a time or sign out costumes for fitting. Adjust plans to reflect what is available: costumes@northumberlandplayers.ca 	<p>Costume House</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a plan for obtaining each costume item and accessory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>find at The Costume House</u> - there are over 10,000 costumes! ○ borrow from actor's own wardrobe or other person (costume must be left with Costume Head for duration of rehearsals and performances); ○ make the costume; ○ buy at thrift shop; ○ buy new if the budget allows. 	<p>Northumberland Players Costume House 450 Campbell Street, Unit 4, Cobourg 905-372-5856</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with Costume House volunteers plan how costumes will be altered or constructed and find seamstresses if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costume Alteration/ Construction Plan, p. 154
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan how costumes will be purchased and who will do this. Ensure that all receipts are kept and that <u>no non-show items</u> are purchased on the same receipt. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> as costumes are obtained, record them on the Costume Record to facilitate the return of costumes after the show. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costume Record, p. 156
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book a time or sign out costumes for fitting. Adjust plans to reflect what is available: costumes@northumberlandplayers.ca 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> as costumes and accessories are obtained, complete Character/Scene Costume Details. Print hang tags on heavy paper and label hangers for dressing room rack, and backstage racks, if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character/Scene Costume Details, p. 157 Costume Hang Tags, p. 158
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> get separate receipts for all purchase (no personal items mixed in). Submit itemized Expense Forms, with all receipts attached, to the Producer for reimbursement. <u>Receipts cannot be reimbursed without an itemized Expense Form.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Expense Form, p.159 Cheque Request Form, p. 160
Costume Construction		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with permission of Costume House, make alterations to costumes that allow for fast changes;; e.g., velcro behind buttons. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arrange for a Seamstress to do the alterations and/or construction of costumes. Provide the patterns, fabrics and notions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costume Alteration/ Construction Plan, p. 154
	<p>hold a costume parade during rehearsals. Assess the suitability of each costume. Make any changes to the costumes as requested by the Director or the Actors.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> add details to Costume Record to keep track of costumes and accessories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costume Record, p. 156

HELL WEEK - THE FINAL WEEK OF REHEARSALS

Preparation		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organize costumes and accessories for costume changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> obtain costume rack sort everything for each costume change for all Actors use plastic bags for accessories hang costumes on hangers with hang tags sort by scene or by Actor but be consistent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character/Scene Costume Details, p. 157 Costume Hang Tag, p. 158
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk to Dressers to explain procedures and to develop a shift schedule so there are enough Dressers backstage for all performances. 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with Dressers and Actors, develop Costume Script summarizing changes especially for fast changes backstage. Actors will have personal preferences for how this should be done. For efficiency, assign Dressers to Actors. 	
Move-In		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transport costumes to the theatre and set up dressing room: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ rack for clothes ○ iron and ironing board ○ spot removal ○ lint roller ○ Static Guard ○ sewing kit ○ fusible hem tape ○ safety pins 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post Costume Scripts prominently in dressing room (and backstage, if necessary) because Actors can forget which costume to put on when rushed. Printing one Actor at a time and enlarging these can be useful, especially if there are many fast changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costume Script, p. 155
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if there are fast changes, with Stage Manager, set up changing areas with chairs and hanging places for each Actor in the wings. A second clothes rack might be useful. Ask for screws to be placed in flats, if necessary, to hold hangers. Ensure that there is enough light. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish procedures with Actors for getting costumes for changes and returning costumes to the rack both in the dressing room and backstage. 	
Rehearsals		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attend technical rehearsals in case there are problems to be solved. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rehearse fast changes in the wings before the dress rehearsal. Ensure that Stage Manager is aware of the fast changes required. Several run-throughs will be needed to become efficient. Encourage Dressers to make notes. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that costumes are set out and stored correctly. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tape sole of shoes with black hockey tape if shoes make too much noise on the stage. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depending on how much assistance they are providing, dressers may be given others tasks backstage by the ASM. 	

THE RUN

Performances	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costume Head or designated Dresser should arrive an hour before the show to check the costumes and assist actors with dressing.
	ensure that costumes are located correctly in dressing room or backstage as needed for each change.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that Dressers are available for emergency repairs or clean-up.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pick up costumes and hang them up after each change. Press if necessary. Make sure they are hung up according to the hang tags.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrange for washable costumes to be laundered and pressed between performances or at least between weekends, and spot clean others - the Actors will appreciate this! <u>Spraying with diluted cheap vodka will remove perspiration stains and odour</u> after each performance, but will not clean costumes.

THE STRIKE

After Final performance		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collect and sort all costumes and transport costumes and supplies from the theatre. It is best to do this in your own vehicle. Ensure that everything is sorted out, put away and/or returned within 2 weeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costume Record, p. 156
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • launder clothes or take them for dry-cleaning. If dry cleaning, specify no pressing for vintage garments. 	Baker Cleaners 12 Elgin St E, Cobourg 905-372-1255
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dispose of all costumes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ return clean borrowed clothes to their owners ○ resell purchased clothes (sometimes actors want to buy them) ○ return all other costumes and accessories to the Costume House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costume Record, p. 156
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep all receipts. Submit itemized Production Expense Forms, with all receipts attached, to the Producer for reimbursement. <u>Receipts cannot be reimbursed without an itemized Expense Form.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Expense Form, p. 159 • Cheque Request Form, p. 1160



COSTUME PLOT - FEMALE

Production: _____ Written by: _____

Costume Head: _____ Page: _____ of _____

Actor:			Character:	
Height:	Bust:	Waist:	Hip:	Skirt Length:
Dress Size:	Pant Size:	Sweater:	Other:	
Allergies:			Pierced Ears: Y ____ N ____	

Requests / Fitting Notes:

Costume #	Act/Scene	Description	Notes



COSTUME PLOT - MALE

Production: _____ Written by: _____

Costume Head: _____ Page: _____ of _____

Actor:			Character:	
Height:	Chest:	Waist:	Shirt Size:	Jacket:
Pant Size:	Inseam:	Shoe Size:	Other:	
Allergies:			Pierced Ears: Y _____ N _____	

Requests / Fitting Notes:

Costume #	Act/Scene	Description	Notes

COSTUME ALTERATION/CONSTRUCTION PLAN

Production: _____ Written By: _____

Costume Head: _____ Page: _____ of _____

Character	Item	1 st Fitting Notes	Sew	Final Fitting	Complete

COSTUME SCRIPT

Production: _____

Costume Head: _____ Page _____ of _____

Scene	<i>Character</i>						
<i>Action/Setting</i>							
Scene Change							
<i>Action/Setting</i>							
Scene Change							
<i>Action/Setting</i>							
Scene Change							
<i>Action/Setting</i>							

1. Identify costume for each actor for each scene.
2. Note when costume change is required between scenes, where change will be done (in wings or dressing room), and whether a dresser is required
3. Highlight any "fast changes". Discuss these with the stage manager. Record time required for 'fast changes'.



CHARACTER/SCENE COSTUME DETAILS

Production: _____ By: _____

Costume Head: _____ Dresser: _____ Page ___ of ___

Character:		Act:		Scene:	
Garments:					
Accessories:			Footwear		
Undergarments, Hosiery			Hat, Coat		
Other (e.g., wig)					
Change Dressing Room		OR	Fast Change Backstage:		
Notes for Dresser					

Complete the details and copy to a Costume Hang Tag. Attach Hang Tag to the coat hanger

COSTUME HANG TAGS

<p>O</p> <p> northumberland players</p>		<p>O</p> <p> northumberland players</p>	
Character		Character	
Act	Scene	Act	Scene
Dressing Room OR Backstage		Dressing Room OR Backstage	

<p>O</p> <p> northumberland players</p>		<p>O</p> <p> northumberland players</p>	
Character		Character	
Act	Scene	Act	Scene
Dressing Room OR Backstage		Dressing Room OR Backstage	



CHEQUE REQUEST FORM

Date		<i>For office use</i> <i>Cheque #</i>
Requested by		
Payable to	Name	
	Address	
	Telephone	
Production <i>(if applicable)</i>		
Details	(attach and itemize receipts)	
Date needed		
Amount		
Signature		

Please submit this form, with receipts attached behind, to the treasurer.