

So You're A Director Who's Been Offered a Contract...

A Checklist

Hello fellow Equity members! If you work as a director, this guide is for you!

This handy checklist will help you keep track of what you need to know whenever a gig comes your way. Checklists for Choreographers, Fight Directors, and Intimacy Directors can be found [here](#).

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Know Your Agreement

Every artist should know their agreement, but as a director, working in a leadership position, it's especially important for you to be informed. Most agreements contain sections specific to directors on an Equity contract – citing all your rights and responsibilities.

Access the Canadian Theatre Agreement and search for the word “director” [here](#).

View all Equity's theatre agreements and engagement policies [here](#).

Did you know that the theatre has an obligation to consult with the director regarding the production and rehearsal schedule? Or that you can negotiate more than just your fees – such as your billing (including size and position in ads) and director's royalty in the case of an extension or revival? Or that you can be expected to promote the production with publicity appearances or press interviews?

That's why it's best practice to review the sections of the agreements that apply to you every time you're offered a contract. Know your rights and responsibilities!

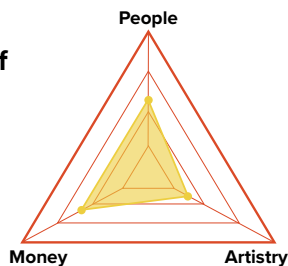
Initial Conversations

It's great to be asked if you're interested and available, but you also need to make an informed decision as to whether or not you say yes to a project.

As soon as you can, after an engager has asked about your interest and availability, ask to read the script.

- ☐ **How does it score in your triangle of people/money/artistry?**

If it's not for you, politely decline.



It's also important to understand how much time the theatre has allotted to the project, which might affect your decision. So ask...

- ☐ **What are the dates of the gig from auditions to opening?**
- ☐ **What are the key hard deadlines?**

Still interested...?

Info Gathering

Casting

- ☐ **Who has casting approval?**
- ☐ **Has anyone already been cast?**
- ☐ **Can you meet them before you agree to take the gig?**
- ☐ **When and where are auditions?**
- ☐ **Are your travel and accommodation covered?**
- ☐ **What are the deadlines and parameters for cross-casting, 'as cast' roles?**
- ☐ **What are company policies regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as the goals for this play?**
- ☐ **Are casting assumptions realistic?**
(eg. number of actors/characters, locals v. out-of-towners, Equity/non-Equity members)
- ☐ **Are you casting and/or rehearsing understudies, swings, etc.?**

Design

- ☐ **What design disciplines are proposed?**
(e.g. set, props, costumes, lights, sound design, composition, projection, video, animation)
- ☐ **Given the scope and scale of the project, are the budget and timelines realistic in your view?**
- ☐ **Are any designers already hired?**
- ☐ **Can you talk to them before agreeing?**
- ☐ **Do you have input on hiring the rest of the design team?**

Specialists & Consultants

- ☐ **Who else is planned for?**
(e.g. choreographer, intimacy, fight, dialect, text, movement, language, access/inclusion, subject area specialist, Indigenous Elder or other cultural consultant, health and wellness support, etc.)
- ☐ **How many hours have been budgeted?**
- ☐ **Is that realistic in your opinion?**

Script

- ☐ **What is your role in play development?**
- ☐ **Before agreeing, can you have a conversation with the playwright about the draft and its trajectory?**
- ☐ **Will the playwright be in residence during rehearsals?**
- ☐ **Will there be extra time for play development, workshops, readings, meetings?**
- ☐ **Who else is involved in the dramaturgy?**

- ☐ **What are the deadlines for drafts, anticipated changes, and rewrites?**
- ☐ **If it's a finished play, do you make the cuts?**

Artistic & Production Expectations

- ☐ **What is the theatre configuration?** (is it flexible)
- ☐ **Are there any production/artistic limitations due to a script licensing agreement?**
- ☐ **What are the company's stylistic expectations?**
(e.g. modern dress, traditional approach, etc.)
- ☐ **Will an intermission be required?** (whether in script or not)

Alternative Creation Process

- ☐ **When, where, by whom, and how will the performance be created?**
- ☐ **Is there extra creation time in the schedule for this process?**
- ☐ **Are you comfortable taking this on?**

Schedule

- ☐ **Can you get a draft schedule including tech?**
(as per agreements)
- ☐ **How much rehearsal time is there?**
- ☐ **How much time for tech, previews, notes, and so on?**
- ☐ **Is the schedule realistic for you?**
(Compare it to other gigs; consider running time and scope of show)

You Get the Offer

- ☐ **What is the offer?**
(eg. fees, travel, accommodation, per diem, non-monetary benefits)
- ☐ **What is the payment schedule?**
- ☐ **When will you receive the contract?**
- ☐ **Confirm dates, location, schedule** (ie. days, hours, tech)
- ☐ **What Equity agreement is the contract being offered under?** (we have many)
- ☐ **Review relevant sections of that agreement!**

Now Negotiate

Your right to negotiate above the minimums is a core privilege of Equity membership! Get creative!

Did you know you can bargain for:

- Increased fees (consider your expertise or specialization; scope of project; repeated engagements; out of town gig; other offers; profile of show, or just ask for more...)
- Better accommodations
- Higher per diem
- Billing and credit
- Access to show reports
- Additional artistic considerations, such as: scope of your prep work, role in play development, extra rehearsal days, a better schedule, an assistant, etc.
- Access/inclusion needs, including but not limited to:
 - On-site childcare, nursing room, babysitter \$
 - Provision for family to accompany you

- Non-stairs route to workplace, specialized copy of script, non-gendered bathroom
- Lunch delivered even if you pay
- Allergies, health/wellness considerations
- Religious/cultural needs (fasting, prayer, dates of respite)
- Other benefits:
 - ◆ Private workspace on site, access to computer, printing, phone service
 - ◆ Car service, cab chits, parking, bus pass, bicycle
 - ◆ More comps

You've Said Yes, Now Find Out More

Script

- ☐ **Get the version of the script that the theatre is producing, ASAP.**

Artistic Director

- ☐ **Book a one-on-one chat ASAP to discuss vision for the show, goals, challenges, anticipated audience response.**
- ☐ **Will the AD visit your rehearsals?**
- ☐ **How do they prefer to offer feedback?**
- ☐ **How can you reach them directly and privately if needed?**
- ☐ **Who at the company works with you on the casting process?**
- ☐ **Confirm who the stage manager(s) will be, when they start, and if there will be any ASMs.**

Scheduling Details

- ☐ **Who is your company contact regarding the rehearsal and production schedules?**
- ☐ **Confirm the milestone dates and put them in your calendar.** (e.g. design deadlines, etc.)
- ☐ **Confirm production meetings: when, who attends, who chairs. Can you Zoom in?**
- ☐ **Before rehearsals begin, break down the tech requirements and plan accordingly:**
 - Time on set with actors without tech
 - Hours for each component of tech
 - Time required for photo-calls, costume fittings, quick change rehearsals, rigging, projections, video, set changes, pyro, understudy rehearsals, fight calls, etc.
- ☐ **Before tech, talk through union scheduling requirements at this company with the stage manager and/or technical director so you understand the scheduling parameters.**

Engager Details

- ☐ **What will the first day look like?**
 - Respectful Workplace joint statement
 - Will there be a community/room agreement, read-through, speech from director, design presentations, etc.?
 - Who is expected to attend?
- ☐ **Will staff members visit rehearsals?**
- ☐ **During the process, are you expected to attend meetings with staff, board, donors; special events, media call, interviews, photo/video calls; Q & As, participation in promo activities, social media campaigns, and so on?**

- ☐ **Will there be a pre-show (curtain) speech, live or recorded?**
- ☐ **Do you have a say in the above?**
- ☐ **Does the engager issue T4As or equivalent proof of income?** (If not, keep your pay stubs.)

Contact Info

- ☐ **Get contact info for designers, stage management, company contact, cast, etc.**
- ☐ **Will the production use Basecamp or other project planning apps? Get registered.**

Health & Safety

Equity's collective agreements and engagement policies all include language that address health and safety in the workplace. Each province and territory will also have its own occupational health and safety legislation that protects all workers. Fundamentally, every worker across Canada is entitled to the Three Rights of Workers. They are the:

- Right to **KNOW** what hazards are present in the workplace.
- Right to **PARTICIPATE** in keeping your workplace healthy and safe.
- Right to **REFUSE** work that you believe to be dangerous to yourself or your co-workers.

Beyond these provisions, there may be more specific questions to ask...

- ☐ **Are there additional health and safety protocols during rehearsals, tech, and previews?**
(eg. masks, COVID testing, etc.)
- ☐ **Does the show require prop firearms? Whether firing or not, confirm who is in charge and what safety protocols are in place. Who involved has a firearms license?**

Respectful Workplace

Everyone collaborating on the project is responsible for creating and maintaining a respectful workplace: the theatre/engager, Equity, and the artists. As someone in a leadership position, you have an additional responsibility to set the tone for a respectful collaboration.

Before you begin rehearsals, reread Equity's [Member Guide to Respectful Workplaces](#) as well as the [Member Guide to Creating A Community Agreement](#) so you can do your part to lead a great creative space.

Additionally, it's important to know...

- ☐ **What is the engager's anti-harassment policy (required under Equity's agreements)?**
- ☐ **Who is the engager's contact person for reporting concerns of inappropriate behaviour?**
- ☐ **Are Equity's Not in OUR Space! materials easily accessible for everyone on the project?**

Finally... Have a Great Show!

This document was prepared by the Directors, Choreographers, Fight Directors, and Intimacy Directors Committee of Equity. Join us!

Equity members and staff collaborated to create this guide. It's based on experiences we've all had. Let us know if you find it helpful – or if we've missed anything. We appreciate and welcome corrections and additions. As our industry keeps changing, we will keep updating. You can let us know your thoughts by emailing communications@caea.com.

We want this guide to be for all of us – by all of us.

