

Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts

Frequently asked technical questions

Building and schedules

I rented the facility: can't I just come and go as I please?

You can use your rented facility at any time your contract allows. The schedule you dictate may require you to have crew members, ushers, security and additional staffing. We will determine the number of staffing needed to manage your event. In no case will you be allowed access to your rented space without the proper staff on site.

Why do I need to have security when it is just me and my small staff?

Our security personnel will make sure that the building is unlocked as your schedule dictates. Security will also allow your staff access to the facility, keep non-show people out, and provide easy contact with the rest of the Progress Energy Center departments. In no case will you be allowed access to your rented space without the proper staff on site.

Why can't I park right behind the theatre? There is plenty of room...

Depending on the performance schedule, there may be as many as 300 performers, musicians, technicians and other related show staff in the complex in addition to audience members walking through the parking areas. The area behind Fletcher and Memorial is the main service access to the entire Progress Energy Center. Vehicles for assorted vending, show equipment, emergency service, freight delivery and others need constant access to the building. This area must remain as clear as possible. The parking area behind Meymandi and the gravel lot across Salisbury Street are designated for production staff parking.

What time can I rehearse?

You can rehearse at any time you like on your contracted date(s). The schedule you set will require crew and security as determined by the Production Supervisor. You may also incur overtime charges.

Why do I need to take a meal break? Can't we just rotate crews?

Everyone needs to eat regularly, performers and crew alike. If you feel that you need to work continuously, we can call in another crew for you. The disadvantage to you is replacing a crew who has spent four or five hours learning about your show and staff with another group of workers who have to start that learning process from scratch.

Production Supervisor

Why do I need a Production Supervisor for my event? It's only me and my small staff...

The Production Supervisor ensures that your event happens as smoothly as possible from the time you come into the building until you leave. He or she may do many things behind the scenes to achieve this. The PS will coordinate having the appropriate crew to help put up, run and take down your show, help make the facility warmer or cooler, unlock dressing rooms and other doors, find trash cans, coordinate with the ushers to open the house for your show, and help keep your staff and ours safe, just to name a few of those tasks.

Where is the Production Supervisor in case I have a problem during our show or rehearsal?

Since the PS covers so much ground, he or she may be in their office, the lobby, the parking lot or anywhere in between. If you don't see your PS, someone on the auditorium staff can most likely find him or her by radio.

Electrical and Lighting

What equipment comes with the building and what would I have to pay extra for? Can I use all those lights that are up there?

When you rent the building for a show or rehearsal, you can use up to 70 stage lights and a control board at no extra cost. It doesn't matter which ones, just 70 total. We have many more stage lights available and can hang as many as you need. We do not provide gels, gobos, tape or other "expendable" goods unless otherwise arranged.

What is a Focus Call why do I have to have one?

Every show is different, yours included. Each show needs different areas of the stage lit in some specific way. The show prior to yours may have used the lights in a way that won't work for you. If you need lights for your show (and you will) then we will need to make sure the lights point to the right place. We do that in a Focus Call; where we turn on the lights one at a time and make certain the correct lights point at the right place.

Can I use a Follow spot?

Unlike the standard light fixtures that we set to light a particular area of the stage, you might use a follow spot to light a performer or speaker who is moving about the stage. If you or your designer decides that you should use a follow spot for your show, there will be extra charges for use of the follow spot and for the follow spot operator.

How do I communicate with the lighting person?

The person running the light board for your show will be wearing a headset, allowing communication with someone on your staff to coordinate when the lights turn on and off during your performance.

Who do I give my script to for the lighting cues?

You are responsible for how your show runs and when the light cues happen. Ideally, you will use your script as a reference and tell the light board operator when to execute specific light cues. If the performers stray from your script during the show, you can make the appropriate decision of which light cue to use.

Who will be writing light cues, and do I need them?

Again, you are responsible for how your show runs and when the light cues happen. If you need the lights to come on at the beginning and turn off at the end, we can easily provide that. If you need the lights to come up or down in specific ways to enhance your performance, then you need someone responsible for the design of the lighting. We do not provide design services, but can recommend a designer if you need one.

Can you make my show look like ... (the Emmy Awards, David Letterman, Saturday Night at the Apollo...)?

The PECPA does not own the lighting equipment to create such a show, but we can rent it for you. The lighting for most of those TV shows and live concerts might be worth a half million dollars or more; so the rental expense might be in the thousands of dollars.

What about all the colored lights?

Making the lights we have red or blue or many other colors involves putting a sheet of plastic "gel" in front of the light fixture. You can buy over 400 colors of gel from any theatrical supply company. We will not supply gel unless specifically arranged in advance.

Can I bring in my own or other rented equipment?

You are very welcome to bring in other equipment for your show. Though we see and use a huge variety of lighting equipment on various touring productions, you should also bring someone who knows how to set that equipment up and operate it just in case it is unfamiliar to us.

Scenery and Rigging

Why do I keep hearing about Flame Retardant treatments?

Our local Fire Marshall is very insistent that we comply with applicable Fire Codes. In part, our local codes require that all set and scenery pieces, and all curtains, banners and the like are either inherently flame retardant, or treated with painted on or immersion flame retardant chemicals. Please be prepared to provide us with certificates, receipts or some other proof that your scenery has been treated in some approved fashion. We reserve the right to The alternate options will be removing the items in question, or hiring Fire Watch officials for both sides of the stage.

How do I unload my scenic or musical equipment?

We are quite happy to help you unload and install any scenery or equipment that you want to bring in. It is best for you to also have a person from your staff, familiar with your scenery, designated to oversee this process.

Do I have to use the auditorium staff to set up my show?

If your scenery or other equipment requires using the fly system, orchestra pit or other PECPA Center facilities, then you will need to use one or more “house” people to operate that equipment.

Can we move the curtains to another place?

We can put up, move or take down any of the curtains in the theatre. That process would most likely involve six or more people which you would be responsible for paying. It may also require us to “restore” those curtains after your performance, at an additional expense to you.

How can we hang our scenery or banners?

There is a great variety in scenic possibilities, but you will probably need to have a minimum of three extra “house” crew members to safely achieve your desired effects.

Can our crew operate the fly rail? Or fly the Main Curtain?

No. Operating “house” equipment will require a “house” crew member.

Can we drill or screw into the stage?

In Memorial or Fletcher, you are allowed to use up to 2” fasteners in the stage floor, which would need to be removed when you leave. In Meymandi and Kennedy, you are not allowed to use screws or drill into the floor in any fashion.

Can we paint the stage?

You are not allowed to paint any portion of the Progress Energy Center. Should you choose to do so anyway, you will incur substantial repair charges.

Can we paint out in the loading area or parking lot?

Weather permitting, you can paint scenery, props or costumes in these areas as long as you use plastic or paper to protect the floors, parking lots and walls as necessary. Again, should you not use great care, you will incur substantial repair charges.

Sound and Video

Do I even need sound equipment?

Depending on your event, and the venue you are using, you may not need any sound equipment. We will work with you to ascertain what equipment and staffing you will need to put on a great show.

What equipment comes with the building rental and what will I have to pay extra for?

No sound, communication and video equipment is included with the building rental. You will be charged a rental fee for any equipment you want or need to use. We own a large supply of sound and communication equipment, but if you need video equipment, you will need to rent it, or we will rent it for you. Any equipment you need to use will most likely also require one or more technicians to set up and operate it.

What equipment will I have to rent?

If your event features any video presentation, you will need to rent that equipment. If you have someone speaking and they need a microphone, you will need to rent the microphone and our “basic sound” package, which includes a mixer, speakers and amplifiers. Any music or sound effects you require will need the addition of a playback device. If your event needs multiple staff members that need to communicate during the performance, you will need a headset system.

Can I bring in my own or other rented equipment?

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