

ETIQUETTE 101: 20 BACKSTAGE RULES YOU SHOULD FOLLOW

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The success of a dance production, large or small, depends on everyone behind the scenes doing their part. While the Rockettes know what it takes to pull off a spectacular show (it takes more than 250 people to put on the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, including the cast and crew which “loads in” the production weeks before the show opens!), use this list of rules to help keep your show stress- and hitch-free:

1. Be punctual for “call time” (this is the time when you’ve been directed to arrive at the theater!).
2. Follow check-in procedure so that the stage management team knows you’ve arrived and are where you’re supposed to be.
3. Stay in your designated area so the crew always knows where to find you.
4. It’s important to stay safe and injury-free while hanging out backstage. If you know you have some downtime between numbers, wear a warm-up and/or leg warmers over your next costume—keep your body warm while you wait with noiseless full-body movements.
5. Wear shoes backstage to protect your feet.
6. Let crew members know when something breaks, spills or is missing.
7. Take time to wish fellow performers and crew members a good show. Dancers and performers usually have special phrases or rituals for this but most everyone considers it bad luck to say “good luck.”
8. Speak softly in backstage areas. Sound travels easily to the “house” where audience members are seated.
9. Bring something to do quietly during any downtime before or during the show.
10. Be respectful of the way others get ready for a show and give fellow performers space or quiet if they need it. Be conscientious of any superstitions others may have as well.
11. Keep your dressing area tidy and avoid letting your stuff spill over into your neighbor’s area.
12. Stay focused and calm, especially right before you go on stage and immediately after you come off stage, when nervous or excited energy is at its peak.

13. Know your show order and be ready for your cues and entrances. Everyone must bring their A-game!
14. Make sure your body is properly warmed up and that you stay warm as showtime approaches.
15. If you are in charge of your own props or costumes during the show, do a check or two to make sure everything is properly set before "curtain," when the show begins.
16. Do not touch or move another performer's props or costumes. If you feel something is out of place, let someone on the crew know.
17. Avoid bumping the curtains, legs, cyc and other theater drapery. The audience will see even the tiniest movement.
18. Be conscious of audience "sight lines" when you are onstage and off. If you can see members of the audience, they can see you.
19. Wait for an appropriate or appointed time to open any doors that lead from the stage to backstage so that light from offstage does not mess up the lighting onstage.
20. Always say "please" and "thank you!"