



# 2023-2024 MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

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## One Act Play Rules, Policies and Bylaws

### General Information

[www.mshsl.org/governance](http://www.mshsl.org/governance)

#### See Bylaws:

[100 Bylaws](#) / [200 Bylaws](#)

**101:** Age

**102:** Attendance

**103:** Credit Requirements

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**105:** Grade Level

**106:** Graduates of Secondary Schools

**108:** Scholastic Eligibility

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**111:** Transfer and Residence

**205:** Chemical Eligibility

**206:** General Eligibility Requirements

**209:** Sexual/Racial/Religious Harassment

### Rule Interpretations

#### **Are Fine Arts (including One Act Play) participants subject to the transfer bylaw?**

No. The current MSHSL Transfer [Bylaw 111](#) applies only to athletics.

#### **May students who are enrolled in grades K-6 compete in MSHSL One Act Play Contests?**

No. Minnesota State High School League General Eligibility [Bylaw 105](#) states that "Elementary students in grades K-6 are not eligible to participate in any League activities." Only students in Grades 7-12 may compete and only when they meet other eligibility requirements.

#### **Must my one act play students meet all applicable local and League eligibility rules?**

Yes. Check with your Activities Director to determine that all Official Company members are eligible to compete at one act play contests and festivals.

**Note: The interpretations here are provided for informational purposes. Activities Directors are responsible for interpreting general League bylaws.**

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## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

**REGION:** The term "Region" will refer only to the administrative Region and all administrative functions of the Region.

**SECTION:** The term "Section" will refer to all geographic grouping of schools for competition. In some Sections, there may also be Subsection competition or Section preliminary competition. Schools will be placed into competitive Sections every two years with an equitable number of schools in each competitive section based on the number of schools registered.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPECTATOR CONDUCT

In order to elevate standards of sportsmanship and encourage the growth of responsible citizenship among the students, member schools, fans and school personnel, the MSHSL held a Sportsmanship Summit and asked student participants to identify behavior expectations they felt should be in place at every school event.

These minimum behavior expectations provide a foundation upon which member schools, conferences, administrative regions and the League's Board of Directors can build specific guidelines for activities under their control.

MSHSL [Bylaw 409](#), **RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATING TEAMS, STUDENTS AND SPECTATORS**, speaks to this issue, directly, and [Bylaw 409-2](#) specifically states that, **"School officials shall be held responsible for the proper conduct of teams, team members, students and home spectators regardless of where the contest is being held."**

In all MSHSL activities, each participating school shall designate a person or persons from that school to serve as crowd control supervisors or chaperones. MSHSL tournament staff may require school administrators to contact the tournament manager prior to the start of the tournament game so that they can be immediately contacted to respond to behavioral issues regarding their team members, students and/or spectators at the tournament site. Each supervisor or chaperone should be immediately identifiable to the students and to the tournament site ushers and other security personnel. This will help to coordinate crowd control between school supervisors and tournament site personnel. 8/9/2005

## MSHSL MINIMAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR REGULAR AND POST-SEASON TOURNAMENT COMPETITIONS:

Respect the American flag and the National Anthem.

- Spectators must wear clothing that covers the entire torso. Those who do not comply or who wear clothing that is vulgar, obscene or that in some other way inappropriate, as determined by

school/tournament personnel, will be removed from the arena/stadium if they do not cooperate with this behavior expectation.

- The use of appropriate language is always expected. Profanity, negative chants, booing, trash talk, name calling, personal attacks or other acts of disrespect are unacceptable and must be immediately addressed by school and/or tournament administrators.
- Respect the game/contest. Under no condition shall anyone other than the members of the official squad enter the playing surface. No one may interfere with the contest in any way.
- Handheld signs, which do not obstruct the view of others, will be permitted provided they are in good taste. Signs, message boards, “white” boards or other similar items contest/tournament officials deem to be in poor taste will be removed.
- Signs on sticks, balloons, or any other type of artificial, celebratory items are not permitted.
- Artificial noise makers (i.e. megaphones, cowbells, sirens, whistles, thunder sticks, and other similar items) are not allowed.
- Laser lights are prohibited.

#### MSHSL MINIMAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS DEVELOPED BY STUDENT ATHLETES (5/31/23)

- [Behavior Expectations](http://www.mshsl.org/behaviorexpectations) (www.mshsl.org/behaviorexpectations)

**THANK YOU** for supporting your student athletes and fine arts participants and for providing a positive environment in which educational activities are conducted.

## One Act Play Information – Contest Rules

### SELECTION OF MATERIAL TO BE PERFORMED IN ONE ACT PLAY CONTESTS

- **A production may use any genre of literature except musicals, operas, or operettas (as designated by the author, publisher and/or rights holder) so long as permission has been obtained from the author and/or publisher to produce, adapt (if applicable, and/or cut (if applicable), and perform.**
- Productions may be either serious or comic or any combination.
- Plays composed by the production's director or cast should be identified in the author line ["by "] as "Original Production."
- *Directors are expected to select, edit, and adjust subject matter, language, and gesture to local standards. The play is a representative of the school and community that support the activity and should reflect their standards. It is important to remember that contests are often attended by students younger than high school age. A statement certifying that the contest production is representative of the school and community standards in its use of subject matter, language, and gesture must be submitted to the Manager of the first level of MSHSL One Act Play competition by the participating School Principal or Superintendent and Director. **This signed certifying statement form must be submitted to represent the school** at all levels of competition for which the school qualifies, though production modifications may be made to reflect critiques received.*

#### Rule Interpretations:

##### **Must plays used in One Act Play competition come from published sources?**

One Act Play rules do **not** require the performance of a published script. In fact, original compositions may be performed. The One Act Play selection requirements indicate that, when plays or other texts with currently-effective copyrights are used, required royalty fees must be paid and permission must be received to perform or to adapt the text and/or to “cut” the script if cutting is done. It is important to secure this permission as soon as possible, preferably before beginning production work! You must have this permission in writing and with you at any contest

performance.

**May we perform several short plays within our thirty-five minute time limit?**

Yes, so long as all other requirements (total cast size, time limit, permissions to perform, etc.) are fulfilled.

**The script we are performing for contest contains, within the actual text, permission to cut the play for time. Is that sufficient to meet the "permissions" requirements, or must I get a separate statement from the publisher or playwright?** Carrying with the Director, should questions arise, that published general statement of permission is sufficient.

**Is it within the guidelines for "ad-libs" verbal additions to the script? This might include a "hello," audible conversation while on a phone, or small talk in a waiting room.** Such "ad-lib" sounds would be considered incidental and are part of a character's natural reaction to a situation or verbal or nonverbal cue.

**May we do the same play we did last year?**

It is not against the Rules.

**May schools ignore paying royalty and seeking permission if a play or text is in the "Public Domain"?**

Yes, if the script is not under current copyright protection. Directors are reminded that one cannot assume that, because a play is old, it is in "Public Domain." An adaptation or translation may still be under current copyright.

**Might some plays in which scripts contain music be acceptable selections?**

Yes. *Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River Anthology* is an example of a "play with music," as are many others. The designation of the rights-holder or playwright is used to determine that a play is a musical, opera, or operetta. If clarification is needed, consult League staff.

## MUSIC

Except that the literature selected shall not be all or part of a musical, an opera, or an operetta as signified by the rights-holder/publishing agent, all other uses of music are permitted. **If questions exist regarding use of music, whether in a published script or an original or adapted work, League staff should be consulted well in advance of the contest.**

### Rule Interpretations:

**If we plan to use live musical accompaniment, is the host school responsible for providing a piano for us?**

No. Schools using live musical accompaniment should plan to provide all needed instruments, amplification, and other equipment.

**If we are using pre-recorded music, are we responsible for providing the equipment to play the recording and to patch into the contest site's sound system?**

The Contest Manager can advise you of available sound equipment and system specifications. Remember that this must be set up and checked during the ten-minute set-up time!

**If pre-recorded music (and sound effects) is created and recorded live for our production, must it be performed by Official Company members?**

No. You may use available resources and persons to make such recordings before arrival at the contest site.

## **COPYRIGHT**

The participating school must certify (on the *Play Safety & Selection Certification Form*) that it has fulfilled its legal production responsibilities such as royalty payment, securing permission to perform, to produce, and/or cut, etc. Plays may not be performed if such permission has not been obtained. Directors must have this permission on file and a copy available at all competitions.

## **OFFICIAL COMPANY FOR COMPETITION**

The Official Company (students in the cast and student support personnel) participating at MSHSL contests and festivals must not exceed twenty (20) students. The Director may determine the actor/support personnel breakdown as s/he wishes. If more than twenty (20) cast and student support members are used, the play will be disqualified.

- Each cast member may play an unlimited number of roles.
- Students performing as live off-stage voices and/or musicians must be counted among the total 20.
- Substitution for originally designated Original Company members is permitted.
- No more than one Director and *one* additional *non-student* adult representing the participating school may assist the students with setup, on-site preparation, performance, or teardown at contests and festivals.
- No other auxiliary students or adults may assist during the actual contest or festival.

### **Rule Interpretations:**

**May students or adults (beyond my limit of 20 plus one adult helper) help prepare? For example, may I have a student or adult choreograph, create costumes, or do hair and makeup so long as this student or adult is not on stage or backstage helping during the contest itself?**

While additional students or adults may assist in the "at school" or "off site" preparation (choreography or makeup, for example) of the production and are welcome to attend contests as audience members (including purchasing tickets when admission is charged as it is at the State Festival). They are not "Official Company" members or the single designated "non-student adult" assistant; they may help load into the building or load materials back into transporting vehicles, but they may *not* enter backstage, technical booths, or stage areas.

**May a student who is over eighteen be the additional adult?**

No. The Rules limit this to one *non-student* adult.

**If a student in my one act play company becomes ill or ineligible and cannot perform, must our contest appearance be cancelled?**

No. The Director **may** change one or more company members between contests and perform. If an **entire** production is unable to appear at a contest for which it has qualified to advance, however, the play that ranked next may perform in its place. The "no alternates" rule applies only to **individual** events at State Tournaments.

I know the Rule says that "No more than a Director and one additional non-student adult representing the participating school may assist the students in setup and preparation for and during the performance at contests and festivals." May we "tag team" the adults helping with preparation at the Contest Site; for example, may two adults help with makeup and hair styling and then leave the preparation rooms, then two others come in to do voice warm-ups and concentration exercises, and then two others help set the stage? We would never have more than two adults with the students at any single time, including the Director(s), but we like to get as many people involved as possible. Would this be acceptable?

No, for student participant safety and control of the preparation areas, a play may be assisted only by the Director and one additional non-student adult. Similarly, additional students may not enter the preparation rooms or backstage to congratulate or bring well-wishes to the Official Company before or after the performance.

It is permissible to have others (a bus driver, for example, or additional individuals who come along) help load materials from vehicles *into the building*, but then they must absent themselves from the preparation rooms, backstage areas, and/or the stage. They may also help load materials back into vehicles after the contest or during contest breaks that have been designated for out loading. But the same Official Company and the two designated adults (a Director and one other) may be in preparation rooms, in the control booths, backstage, or on stage at any time the Company is preparing for or performing their play.

**When Contests Officials (such as is the case at the State Festival) issue participant passes to the Official Company and the two designated adults, may we give those passes to others during our school's backstage and performance time so fans can avoid paying admission when they are there just to see our show and then return the passes to the participants when the play is over?**

No. When admission is charged, observers and fans are expected to pay the admission charge to support the activity.

## TIME LIMITS

- The maximum playing time is 35 minutes at all levels of competition -- i.e., Subsection, Section and State or Preliminaries and Finals. Timing begins with any lights, words, actions, or sounds that help to establish the mood. An adult (not a Director or Judge of the contest) shall be designated as the Official Timer and shall be provided with a stopwatch. Preset lighting is allowed. **However, a black out *must* occur after the preset so official time can accurately begin at first light (not the preset). PLAYS EXCEEDING THE TIME LIMIT MUST BE DISQUALIFIED.**
- For each play, including the first play of the day and the first play following any break in the day's schedule, there is to be a ten minute maximum setup and/or preparation time after the stage is clear. Play director and crew should be notified as to when their set up time begins. All *technical aspects* of a school's production must be completed during the ten (10) minute set-up time restriction. No *permanent* placement of technical aspects may occur until after the ten ten minute time has begun. Time will be provided by the Contest Manager for schools to inspect and understand the site's lighting and sound equipment. **Failure to follow this setup/preparation time limit must result in disqualification.**
- While there is no maximum time limit for clearing the stage after a production, the Director and his/her students are expected to clear the stage as quickly as possible after their production is completed.

## ROYALTY

Royalty (if required) and all other expenses of production must be paid by the school presenting the play.

## REGISTRATION AND CERTIFICATION OF PLAY

Data regarding the play must be submitted to the Contest Manager at least one week before the contest. This is to include the following items:

1. *Play Safety & Selection Certification Form* signed by Principal or Superintendent and Director, verifying:
  - A. That safety measures have been observed;
  - B. That the play meets local standards; and that royalty, permission to cut, etc., have been secured. **NOTE:** Directors must obtain royalty agreement and permission to cut or adapt. Directors must have a copy of this permission on file and with them at all competitions.
2. Two copies of the *Registration Form* including:
  - A. Title and author of play;
  - B. Name of Director;
  - C. The official cast and support personnel (limit of 20);
  - D. A well-drawn floor plan;
  - E. Well-approximated playing time;
  - F. Sound requests;
  - G. Plot for lighting desired;
  - H. Statement regarding firearms, potentially dangerous weapons, and live flame; and
  - I. Credit line: "Produced by Special Arrangement with\_\_\_\_\_."

### Rule Interpretation:

**If one or more of my Official Company members prefer to be called by a name other than the name in their official school records, may I register them by their preferred name(s)?**

Yes. Just be certain that your Activities Director and other appropriate administrators are aware that a name that appears on the contest program is an eligible student's preferred name so potential issues about eligibility are resolved and clarified.

## SPECIAL RULES - SUBSECTION, SECTION AND STATE

1. Prompting from the wings is permitted.
2. Each cast must provide its own makeup, costumes, set, and properties.
3. The one act plays shall be judged for general effectiveness (which includes audience appeal), stage picture, blocking, characterization, stage business, pacing, interpretation, technical elements, and any other points that will help students to improve their craft.
4. The use of a sealed Director's Critique by a judge is optional. [A Director's Critique form is available to judges who wish to communicate with the Director about production aspects that when other forms of communication may not be appropriate for students or the general public to overhear.
5. Schools are urged to exercise moderation in the design and construction of scenery and lighting. Host schools are obligated only to provide the six basic lighting areas. Basic sound equipment will also be provided.
  - A. Schools may bring their own lighting equipment. If this is done, the school must contact the host school. Schools may also bring their own sound equipment. Any lighting additions or adjustments and sound setup and adjustment must be done within the 10-minute set-up time. **NOTE: All electrical equipment must be in good repair.**

It should be noted that plays at all levels of competition are expected to store their sets in a 10' x 10' or equivalent space.

**Rule Interpretation:**

**Do contest rules prohibit an off-stage or on-stage voices' being microphoned, such as to simulate an "announcer" or the "Voice of God"?**

The Rules do *not* forbid microphoning of or electronic distortion of a live voice during performance. Please remember that off-stage voices count as official cast members: no more than a total of twenty students may be involved in the production, off-stage voices included (though students may play more than one role). Directors **may** need to bring their own sound equipment to some contest sites. Directors are further cautioned that there is no guarantee that a soundproof area will be available offstage and that it may be safest to pre-record.

**IN ADDITION TO OTHER DISQUALIFIABLE VIOLATION LISTED ELSEWHERE IN THESE RULES, FAILURE TO CONFORM TO THE RULES LISTED BELOW WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION.**

1. The presence and/or use of any real food or beverages and deliberate breaking or smashing of objects during performances is prohibited.

**Rule Interpretations:**

**May popcorn or any other food be served, eaten, or otherwise used onstage during a One Act Play performance?**

No. Prop or "fake" food should be used and eating it should be pantomimed. You might also want to point out to the Contest Manager in advance that the "food" is not real.

**So our play will be disqualified if a sip of water is taken or a pitcher or glass onstage is filled with real water, juice, or another beverage?**

Yes. Like food, the presence and/or use of actual beverages is prohibited and drinking or pouring should be pantomimed. Again, it is wise to indicate your intention to "fake" the use of beverages to the Contest Manager in advance.

2. When each play is finished, the performing school must remove all set pieces, props, and costumes and, if necessary, sweep the stage to bring it back to neutral. This should be done within five minutes of the play's end. Because of safety and clean-up concerns and out of respect for host sites, items that cannot easily be cleaned up with a simple sweeping of the stage are prohibited. **Prohibited items include sprays, straw, glitter, confetti, sawdust, baby powder, cornstarch, etc.** It should not be necessary to mop or vacuum the stage floor or the area in front of the stage because of actions or substance deliberately used in contest performances. If questions exist regarding what materials are permissible, contact MSHSL staff well in advance of your first contest.
3. Live or dead animals may not be used in performances.

**Rule Interpretation:**

**May we use a real animal from a taxidermist which has been preserved and stuffed?**

No. A prop ("fake") animal is acceptable. If questions arise, contact League Staff well in advance of competition.



4. No curtain calls are permitted.

**Rule Interpretation:**

**I know that having a curtain call in a one act play contest results in automatic disqualification. Our school wants to perform George Hermann's *A Company of Wayward Saints* this year and, in it, the characters (not the actors out of character) would logically take a bow as the characters' *commedia dell' arte*-style performance concludes. In using this convention, as the script itself and its style suggest the characters might do, do we risk disqualification?**

The *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines "Curtain Call" as "an appearance by a performer (as after the final curtain of a play) in response to the applause of the audience." So long as the "curtain call" is performed as part of the text of the play and the characters who are actors (rather than the student contestant actors "out of character") bow within the context of and as part of the script, as they do in Hermann's play and numerous other plays about actors or plays, this is *not* a violation of the rules, but the rule *is* violated when the student actors in contest, after the play itself has concluded, "take a bow" as a response to or to elicit contest audience applause.

5. No videotaping or photographing of productions (including recording done on cell phones and other electronic devices) is allowed at any level of competition.

**Rule Interpretation:**

**Is there ever an exception to the "No videotaping or photographing" during competition?**

No. Due to copyright laws and the potential for distraction or interruption, it is absolutely forbidden by anyone in any competitive venue because it is illegal. Disqualification of the play (school) the person who is videotaping or taking pictures represents may be the immediate result. Directors, be sure your parents and spectators know this rule!

6. Firearms, live ammunition (including bullets used as props), blank cartridges, or potentially dangerous weapons are prohibited. No real gun, cap gun, rifle, or pistol (including starting pistols) may be used in any way, regardless of whether the firing pin is removed. Use of any of these weapons will result in immediate disqualification. Prop or mock-up weapons *are* permitted.

**Rule Interpretations:**

**May we modify a real gun so it cannot shoot bullets and use that as a prop in our one act play?**

No. Directors are advised to use prop ("fake") guns they have purchased or constructed. Though in the cases of most "potentially dangerous" items, a school's sign-off on the *Safety and Play Certification Form* is sufficient, the use of real firearms and ammunition, whether or not they have been disabled, *is specifically forbidden under any circumstances*.

**May we use a real, sharpened hatchet or ax onstage during contest?**

Such real, sharp objects have consistently been considered violations of the rule that reads: "potentially dangerous weapons are prohibited." Mockups or dulled real objects should be used and noted on the "Play Safety and Selection Certification Form." Ultimately, the safety requirements for items used in one act plays are met when the school signs off on (and takes full responsibility for) their use. For the safety and assurance of contest participants and attendees, great caution should be exercised in the use, transport, and storage of even seemingly dangerous objects.

**May we use a garden shears or a pair of scissors in our play?**

MSHSL Safety Requirements are met when the school signs off on items that might be perceived to be dangerous EXCEPT in the case of firearms and ammunition. The garden shears or scissors should be addressed on the *Safety and Selection Certification Form*. Ultimately, the safety requirements for items used in one act plays are met when the school signs off on (and takes full responsibility for) their use. For the safety and assurance of contest participants and attendees, great caution should be exercised in the use, transport, and storage of even seemingly dangerous objects.

7. The use of any live flame or fireworks is prohibited.

**Rule Interpretation:**

**We wish to use a fake cigarette that appears to puff "smoke." Does that violate the rule?**

So long as the "cigarette" does not involve any actual flame or fire, it does not violate the rules. The matter of whether or not your school approves of presenting a student who appears to be "smoking" is one you should discuss with your administrator when he or she signs the Selection and Safety Form that you must submit to the first level of competition.

8. Strobe lights or anything creating a strobing effect, smoke, hazers, and fog shall not be permitted in MSHSL One Act Play productions at any level of competition.

**Rule Interpretations:**

**I realize that one cannot use a fog machine in one act play competitions. May we use dry ice instead?**

No. The health and safety risks of dry ice parallel -- in fact, **exceed** -- the use of a fog machine. For that reason, we would rule the use of dry ice a violation of rules and cause for disqualification.

**We won't use a strobe, but can we create the same strobe effect using some other technique or light device?**

No. Strobe effects and lights can create health issues.

**We want to simulate the embers of a fire. May we use amber fairy lights that won't actually be strobing; more like a throb (a soft on and soft off) to simulate the glow of an ember?**

The prohibition of strobe lights and similar effects is designed to avoid the potential health risks associated with regular flashing or strobing of lights at high enough intensity. Assessing the safety or danger of "throbbing" lights is not possible without seeing their actual use in rehearsal or performance. That said, it is likely not worth the risk (Directors have enough to worry about at contests without adding disqualification questions!). In these situations, it is better to use a soft amber light that does not flash/throb but simply glows constantly. Just as the League advises that actors simulate drinking, eating, or lighting candles without actually doing so (judges and managers understand that rules do not allow the real actions), we would advise that, if you need anything at all to simulate an active fire, a small orange-yellow glow (perhaps with a battery device to avoid cords) would be sufficient and would be acceptable, but any patterned variation of light is risky and could result in uncomfortable rule issues that are easily avoided.

**May we use laser guns in our one act play?**

A distinction must be made between laser WEAPONS (that may cause damage and even death) and laser tag toys (and "pointers") that emit light but not actual laser rays. The latter are fine because they pose no danger with normal use. Laser guns that cut or damage are forbidden. As with all items that may appear dangerous in one act plays, the school accepts responsibility for their use on the *Safety Certification Form*.

9. Eliciting on-the-spot and/or active audience involvement is not permitted.

**Rule Interpretations:**

**May one or more of the actors be positioned in and deliver lines from the house (audience)?**

Yes, so long as the cast does not interact with or elicit response from audience members. It may be wise to clear the surrounding seats to avoid the impression of using audience participation.

**Though "Eliciting on-the-spot and/or active audience involvement is not permitted." Is it acceptable for a show to break the Fourth Wall so long as audience members are not directly asked to do anything?**

"Breaking the 'Fourth Wall'" or presenting/speaking directly to the audience as a narrator is certainly permitted so long as the official cast member does not ask a question or encourage interaction that audience members might reasonably interpret as a request for audience response or participation. Caution is always urged that a cast avoid giving audience members any impression that they are being asked to respond.

This prohibition includes, of course, both spoken language and visual cues (such as holding up cards that read "Boo!" or "Applaud" in a melodrama) and making directional gestures that suggest the audience should "join in." If you have a specific situation in a script you are considering, feel free to contact the Rules Clinician or League Staff any time.

**One Act Play Information - Minimal Equipment & Facility Requirements For Contests**

All schools may host a one act play contest if these equipment requirements are available. These facilities must be available to and communicated with all participating schools before hosting a contest:

1. Lighting equipment to cover six basic acting areas with individual area dimming control
2. Masking for wings (drapes, preferably black)
3. Masking for upstage area (across the back a traveler with curtains, preferably black, or a cyclorama of scrim or muslin)
4. Individual rooms for each participating school to use for costumes and makeup preparation
5. Adequate storage area for scenic units with adequate space for shifting between shows
6. A public-address system with quality sound equipment is recommended. The sound equipment available and any limitations must be communicated to the directors of the competing schools.

**Rule Interpretation:**

**May the host school pre-hang (before their own ten-minute setup time) a scrim, backdrop, or other set pieces or pre-focus/pre-set lighting equipment or lighting effects and projection**

**equipment/projections for use in their own show but refuse to make such equipment and effects available to other participating plays?**

No. The ten-minute setup time for materials and effects uniquely reserved for any contest production must be observed by all participating schools.

## **One Act Play Information – Subsection and Section Regulations**

1. At all levels of competition, a Rules Committee shall be designated to enforce contest rules. The Rules Committee / Contest Manager at each level of competition must enforce all contest rules. When a rule has been violated, disqualification must be the result. The Rules Committee will receive and act upon any and all protests PRIOR to the tallying of results.
2. The number of plays to advance from Subsections shall be determined by the Region Committee. Recommendation: No more than eight schools should be involved in any competition. When more than eight, it is strongly recommended that a Subsection (or an additional Subsection) be created.
3. Only one play shall advance from the Section to the State Festival.
4. The time and date for holding the One Act Play Contest will be determined by the Region Committee.
5. When two or more judges are employed, Judges shall rank the competing plays, numerically, without conferring.

### **ORAL CRITIQUES – SUBSECTION AND SECTION**

Oral critiques are optional at all levels of competition prior to the State Festival. Each section can determine whether to use oral critiques. IF oral critiques are used, the following procedure must be used at every level of competition:

1. Oral critiques are limited to the official company (up to 20 students and 2 adults).
2. One judge presents the critique.
3. Other judges are not present during the critique.
4. Judges may rotate critique assignments throughout the day.
5. Audience members are never present for the critique.
6. There is a ten-minute time limit for the critique.

### **INFORMATION RELATING TO PLAYS**

At all levels before the State Festival, no information shall be given to identify the play with the school. The name of the play and author must be included in the program.

### **RULES COMMITTEE**

In advance of the Subsection or Section contest, the Rules Committee shall be selected by the Contest Manager from participating One Act Play Directors. The Committee must include at least three participating Directors who are knowledgeable in the contest rules. An alternate Committee Member must also be named. If any of the Committee Members cannot serve due to a conflict of interest, the alternate must serve on the Rules Committee. At the State Festival, the Rules Committee shall include the One Act Play Rules Clinician (or designee), and two other individuals who are knowledgeable about the One Act Play Rules.

## PROTESTS

All protests involving One Act Play contest rules must be presented to the One Act Play Contest Manager **prior to the announcement of results for that contest. No results shall be announced until the dispute is resolved by the Rules Committee.** The Contest Manager will convene the Rules Committee to review the allegation. Protests raised after the announcement of results will not affect the outcome of that contest, but *may* affect advancement to the next level of competition. The final decision is made by the Region Committee.

## PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH DISPUTES

All disputes involving the One Act Play Contest shall be directed to a Contest Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will review the allegation and make a recommendation to the One Act Play Contest Manager, who must disqualify an entry for a confirmed violation of the rules. Such procedures must be completed prior to the announcement of results.

The Rules Committee may consult with the Timekeeper, Contest Manager, Judges, or backstage personnel about the alleged violation. Rules Committees may also contact MSHSL One Act Play officials for assistance in reaching decisions. A decision must be made and communicated to the Director prior to the announcement of results.

## One Act Play Information – Judges

### JUDGES REGISTRATION

A listing of registered One Act Play Judges is available on the MSHSL web site. Judges working at the Subsection, Section and State levels must be fully "Registered."

1. Requirements and Qualifications:
  - A. The judge must have a minimum of three years teaching and/or directing experience.
  - B. The judge should possess a personality which will assure the giving of constructive criticisms and encouragement to the young actors/actresses; and
  - C. The judge should possess a vocabulary that will make it possible for her/him to record her/his impressions clearly and concisely.
2. Judges must register on the MSHSL website, pay a fee for a two-year cycle, pass a test, and have attended an official MSHSL workshop in order to be a "Registered" Judge.

### SELECTION OF JUDGES

ALL Judges at all levels of competition must be selected from the MSHSL published list of Registered Judges.

1. Judges for the Subsection and Section One Act Play Contests are selected by the Region and/or Section Committee. Directors should have input in the selection of judges for competitions in which they are involved
2. A list of recommended judges and/or oral critics for the State Festival shall be recommended by a periodically administered ballot of directors and by the One Act Play Advisory Committee. Based on those recommendations, judges for the State "A" and "AA" One Act Play Festival should be contracted by September. Section Judges should be contracted by November 1. It is strongly recommended that **judging panels should, to the extent possible, be gender-balanced and should not all be affiliated with the same high school, college, or university.**

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR JUDGES

The Section Contests are designed to stimulate interest in theatre, but it is necessary that they also have as one of their purposes the elimination of contestants for the State Festival. However, it should be

remembered that neither a Section Contest nor State Festival is strictly a competitive event. Rankings and ratings will be made solely based on performance and not on choice of play or theatrical style. Judges should have a well-established set of standards before judging the first production.

In judging the contests, Judges should adhere to the following:

- Each critic is employed to aid in a program of theatre education. The results of her/his judging can either be a help or a hindrance. Care should be exercised in the wording of his/her statements in order that they may be detailed, **constructive** and helpful. There is no place in Minnesota contests for unkind, sarcastic, caustic or other objectionable remarks. Be considerate in the type of comments given orally or written. Adverse criticism should be given when needed but presented in a constructive and helpful manner. **Comments should be detailed enough to qualify the ranking and rating given in order that directors and students may have sufficient suggestions to improve their works.**
- Judges must keep in mind that they are judging high school students and not college, university or professional groups.
- Judges should give close attention to the performance. Psychologically, students will accept an adverse decision if they feel the Judge has given them fair and unbiased attention
- All judges must use the approved critique sheet for all levels of competition -- Subsection, Section, and State. Rubrics have been established to help guide the judges in their evaluation of the play. A description of what to look for is included on the critique sheet. Judges will also include written comments to support their rankings. Each play is to be evaluated on its own merit. At the end of each contest, each Director will receive a copy of the critique sheets for her/his school's production. Judges will still independently rank each play to determine the outcome of the contest.
- The Judge must explain on the comment sheet what the performers need to do to improve their performance. There should be a definite correlation between the ranking and rating and the criticism and suggestions made. **JUDGES SHOULD AVOID GENERALIZED STATEMENTS AND BE SPECIFIC.**
- The use of the "Director's Critique" is optional. This form allows the Judge(s) to communicate with the Director about aspects of the production which may not be appropriate for students or the general public to overhear. Director critique forms are presented to the Director in a sealed envelope.
- Judges should arrive at contest site at least one-half hour before the first production and should help the Contest Manager keep the program on schedule.
- Judges are to rank and rate all plays without consulting with the other Judges.
- The Contest Manager is responsible for enforcement of contest rules; however, **Judges and Directors must report rule violations or rule concerns to the Contest Manager. This must be done prior to the tabulation of results for that contest. (Judges do not decide whether there is a rule infraction, but must report possible infractions to the Contest Manager). Student performers or other audience members can not register infractions.**

#### **JUDGING AT THE STATE FESTIVAL**

1. At the State Festival all performances shall receive constructive written criticism and suggestions from each of the three judges. Performances considered to be of superior quality by a minimum of two of the three judges shall receive a starred (\*) rating.
2. Each production will be orally critiqued for participants and audience members by the appointed Critic who is not one of the Judges.

## One Act Play Information – Subsection and Section Contest Scoring Procedures and Ranking

1. Although both rating (i.e., A, B, C) and ranking (i.e., 1, 2, 3) systems may be used, advancement to the next contest **must be based solely on RANK**.
2. The plays shall be ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and all others 5th.
3. If a play is disqualified, the results shall report NO judge ranks for that play and all other plays' rankings by individual judges shall be adjusted accordingly.
4. To determine the final ranking of several Judges, the Contest Manager shall total the rankings of each play and award **1st place to the play receiving the lowest total points**, second place to the second lowest, etc.

*Exception for SECTION CONTESTS: At Section Contests (Finals) ONLY, any play receiving first place rankings from a majority of judges shall be declared the Section Champion regardless of total ranking points and that play shall advance to the State Festival. Other plays will then be ranked according to items 3-6 listed here. If no play receives a majority of the first place rankings at Section Finals, the procedures outlined here in items C-G shall be used to determine all plays' final places.*

5. In the event of a two-way tie for a given place, the play preferred by two of three Judges shall be awarded that place.

**EXAMPLE:** Because, in the example below, Play B is preferred by two judges (Judge X and Judge Y), Play B is awarded the higher ranking:

Judges' Ranks:	X	Y	Z	(total)
Play A	2	4	1	7
Play B	1	2	4	7

6. If a tie still exists or a tie involves more than two plays, it shall be broken by converting the judges' separate rankings of the plays to reciprocal fractions: 1 equals 1.00; 2 equals .50; 3 equals .33; 4 equals .25; 5 equals .20. Rank the plays according to the highest total. If any Contestants are still tied, use the Judges' preference.

**EXAMPLE:**

Judges' Ranks:	X	Y	Z	(total)	(place)
Play A	3	5	3	11	5
Play B	4	5	2	11	3
Play C	2	4	1	7	2
Play D	1	1	5	7	1
Play E	5	3	5	13	5
Play F	5	2	4	11	4

The tie for first place is broken in favor of Play D as a result of Judges' preference. The triple tie for 3rd place is broken by converting the ranks to fractions: Play A has .33, .20 and .33 for a total of .86. Play B has .25, .20 and .50 for a total of .95; Play F also has a total of .95. Thus, B and F are tied for 3rd place. That tie is broken in favor of Play B as a result of the Judges' preference. Judges X and Z preferred B over F, while only one Judge, Judge Y, preferred F.

7. If a three or four-way tie occurs with all plays having identical ranks, the tie is unbreakable. It will then be necessary for the Judges to confer and award the places to the tied plays.

## **One Act Play Information – Awards**

Only MSHSL awards may be presented at Subsection, Section or State Contests. Board Policies:

1. It will be a violation of League policy for a member school or a representative of a member school to establish, distribute or accept any awards not provided by the MSHSL for Section or State Tournaments.
2. All-star casts/performers will not be named in any MSHSL Tournaments.

### **Subsection and Section**

- First and Second place trophy and medals (company)

### **State**

- **Plaques:** Each production
- **Certificates:** Each student participant and Activities Director prints from the website (<https://www.mshsl.org/mshsl-certificates>)

## **One Act Play Information – Reports of Contests**

1. Immediately after a Section Contest, the manager must complete and submit the results electronically to the League Office.
1. Immediately after a Section Contest, the manager must manager must send a certified report to the Region Secretary.



- [MSHSL Behavior Expectations](#)

These policies “elevate standards of sportsmanship and encourage the growth of responsible citizenship among the students, members schools and their personnel,” consistent with the Minnesota State High School League’s Founding Purposes and the belief that sportsmanship needs to have a constant presence in all school-based activity programs. The League and its member schools work intentionally to create safe, welcoming and inclusive environments for fine arts activities and sports in our schools and competitions.

*School officials are responsible for the proper conduct of teams, team members, students, and home spectators regardless of where the contest is being held. (Bylaw 409).*

### Behavior Expectations

**To create safe, welcoming and inclusive environments in fine arts and sports in our school and competitions, I will:**

- Lead by positive example and demonstrate respect and support for others.
- Follow all MSHSL, school and venue expectations.
- Refrain from using profanity or ethnic, racial, religious, ability or gender-based comments, posts or messages directed at participants, directors, coaches, officials, spectators, or team representatives.
- Act as a responsible and respectful digital citizen who positively uses social media platforms.
- Speak or act in support of others when they are harmed by words or actions.
- Honor each contest and all involved, including participants, directors, coaches, officials, spectators, and team representatives.
- Hold high standards for myself, engage positively and demonstrate sportsmanship.

### Requirements of Attendees

**Prohibited Items**

- Flags, whiteboards, large signs on sticks, signs with vulgar, obscene or inappropriate language or images, or that obstruct the views of others or similar items
- Balloons, confetti, glitter, baby powder, pom poms or other similar celebratory items
- Artificial noise makers (i.e., megaphones, cowbells, sirens, whistles, thunder sticks and other similar items)
- Drones and laser lights
- Firearms or other weapons
- Vapes, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or illicit drugs
- The following are prohibited at MSHSL postseason events. These may be prohibited as determined by the venue during the regular season:
  - Backpacks and other bags
  - Outside food and drink
  - Cameras and tripods
  - Pets

**Dress Code/Attire**

- Spectators may not wear masks or costumes that limit the ability to identify individuals. Masking for medical purposes is allowed
- Spectators must wear clothing that covers the torso
- Clothing worn must not be vulgar, obscene, or inappropriate

**Behaviors**

- No one may interfere with the contest in any way
- Only members of the official squad may be on the contest surface
- The use of appropriate language is always expected. Profanity, negative chants, booing, trash talk, name calling, personal attacks or other acts of disrespect are unacceptable
- Respect the Flag and the National Anthem

\*Venues may have additional requirements and prohibited items.