

Theatre People: Technical Director

The Technical Director (TD) is one of the links between the designers who envision and depict the visual or sound elements of a show, and the production staff of the theatre who bring these elements to life. They plan, manage, and supervise all technical elements of productions. For every show, they help to make sure that the artistic vision is delivered on time and on budget. Between shows, they are responsible for monitoring technical and production equipment for the theatre and making sure it is maintained.

The Technical Director is generally employed full-time by a theatre. They work closely with the Production Manager, the contract workers in the props, paint, carpentry, wardrobe, lighting and sound departments, and creative teams.

Tasks and activities in a typical day

The TD's duties vary depending on the stage of the production, but they could overlap - maybe one show is in technical rehearsals, one is about to start rehearsing, and another is submitting designs! Some responsibilities are:

- Costing out shows - looking at submitted designs and consulting with production staff about how they might be built, and then doing research and math to figure out how much the materials and labour will cost to produce the designs
- Budgeting and tracking costs
- Creating production schedules
- Supervising installations, strikes (putting everything away) and technical rehearsals
- Working with departments to come up with innovative solutions to the challenges of a show
- Drafting and drawing to clarify plans
- Keeping an inventory of all production equipment, and making sure this equipment is maintained properly
- Planning longer-term improvements and maintenance of the theatre
- Staying up to date on new technologies and equipment
- Attending production meetings
- Prioritizing health and safety, ensuring a physically and mentally safe workspace for everyone with training, up-to-date equipment, and best practices

10 Skills that a Technical Director uses

- Time management
- Attention to detail
- Ability to multitask
- Collaboration
- Organization and scheduling
- Adaptability
- Managing stressful situations
- Leading and motivating a team
- Problem-solving
- Computer skills

Building Abilities

There are probably lots of things you are already doing, and things you can start to do, that will serve you in a career as a Technical Director:

- Take on leadership of projects
- Participate in team or group activities to practice team-building and working together
- Create and follow a budget for a project
- Watch plays or movies, noticing how the different elements work together
- Find organizational and time management systems that work for you
- Practice communicating effectively
- Participate in theatre at your school or in your community in any way that interests you to deepen your understanding!