



SoundGirls Best Practices Guide

Creating Safe, Respectful & Professional Touring Environments

A Resource for Production Managers, Tour Managers, Production Companies, Venues, and Artists

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Introduction

Live entertainment is built on trust, preparation, communication, and teamwork. Every successful show depends on professionals working together under demanding conditions, often with long hours, extensive travel, and rapidly changing environments.

Production managers play a critical leadership role in shaping crew culture. Their decisions influence not only the success of a production, but also whether crew members feel respected, supported, and able to perform at their highest level.

This guide offers practical recommendations for creating professional workplaces where everyone—including women, transgender and gender-expansive people, people with disabilities, neurodivergent professionals, parents and caregivers, people of all faiths, races, cultures, ages, and backgrounds—can thrive.

These practices are not about lowering standards or creating special treatment. They are about removing unnecessary barriers, promoting professionalism, and ensuring that every qualified crew member has the opportunity to succeed.

Core Leadership Principles

Every decision should reinforce these principles:

- Lead with professionalism.
- Treat every crew member with dignity and respect.
- Build trust through clear communication.
- Address problems early.
- Protect confidentiality.
- Evaluate people by their work—not assumptions.
- Foster a culture where asking questions is encouraged.
- Recognize that safety includes both physical and psychological safety.

Before the Tour

Production managers should establish expectations before rehearsals begin.

Recommended practices include:

- A written Code of Conduct.
- Clear anti-harassment policies.
- Confidential reporting procedures.
- Emergency contact information.
- Local emergency resources.
- Mental health resources.
- Accessibility planning.
- Hotel and transportation planning.
- International travel briefings where applicable.

Crew members should know who they can contact if concerns arise.

Communication & Crew Culture

The strongest crews communicate openly and respectfully.

Production managers set the tone by:

- Listening first.
- Communicating expectations clearly.
- Giving constructive feedback.
- Correcting inappropriate behavior immediately.
- Encouraging questions.
- Treating mistakes as learning opportunities whenever possible.

A respectful workplace improves efficiency, morale, and safety.

Supporting Women

Women continue to experience barriers in live production, including assumptions about technical ability, unequal access to leadership opportunities, and harassment.

Production managers can help by:

- Assigning work based on qualifications.
- Rotating leadership opportunities.
- Addressing sexist behavior immediately.
- Avoiding comments about appearance.
- Supporting mentorship and career development.
- Ensuring women are included in technical decision-making.

Supporting Transgender & Gender-Expansive Crew Members

Professional respect begins with recognizing each person's identity.

Best practices include:

- Using a person's chosen name and pronouns.
- Respecting privacy regarding transition or medical history.
- Never disclosing someone's previous name or gender history.
- Providing private rooming options whenever possible.
- Offering gender-neutral or single-user restrooms when available.
- Planning ahead for venues where facilities may be limited.
- Researching local laws and customs before international travel.

Simple, respectful communication builds trust and strengthens teams.

Accessibility & Disability Inclusion

Accessibility improves the workplace for everyone.

Production managers should:

- Ask privately whether accommodations are needed.
- Ensure accessible transportation whenever possible.
- Confirm accessible hotel rooms.
- Consider venue accessibility.
- Communicate schedules in advance.
- Provide accessible documents when feasible.

Accessibility should be part of planning—not an afterthought.

Neurodiversity

Many highly successful audio professionals are neurodivergent.

Helpful practices include:

- Providing written schedules.
- Explaining changes clearly.
- Limiting unnecessary last-minute surprises.
- Offering quiet workspaces when available.
- Giving clear expectations.
- Recognizing that different communication styles can still be highly effective.

Pregnancy & Caregivers

Support may include:

- Lactation space.
- Schedule flexibility.
- Childcare considerations.
- Additional recovery time.
- Safe lifting alternatives when medically necessary.

The goal is supporting qualified professionals—not making assumptions.

Mental Health

Touring can involve:

- Fatigue
- Isolation
- Burnout
- Anxiety
- Sleep disruption

Normalize:

- Taking breaks.
- Asking for help.
- Supporting one another.
- Utilizing available mental health resources.

Healthy crews perform better.

Religious & Cultural Inclusion

Respect:

- Religious observances.
- Dietary needs.
- Prayer practices.
- Cultural traditions.

Whenever practical, small accommodations foster a more inclusive and respectful environment.

Age Inclusion & Mentorship

Great crews include both experienced professionals and those entering the industry.

Encourage:

- Mentorship.
- Knowledge sharing.
- Cross-generational collaboration.
- Leadership development.

Harassment Prevention & Response

Harassment includes:

- Sexual harassment
- Bullying
- Racism
- Homophobia
- Transphobia
- Ableism
- Retaliation
- Intimidation

When concerns are reported:

- Listen without judgment.
- Document the concern.
- Protect confidentiality.
- Follow established procedures.
- Follow up appropriately.

Ignoring problems often allows them to escalate.

Alcohol & Substance Culture

Many crew members choose not to drink or may be in recovery.

Production managers can foster inclusion by:

- Ensuring social events are welcoming to everyone.
- Avoiding pressure to participate in drinking culture.
- Reinforcing professional expectations both on and off the job.

Safety on the Road

Late-night load-outs and unfamiliar cities can create additional risks.

Consider:

- Well-lit parking.
- Secure transportation.
- Hotel arrival procedures.
- Walking in groups when appropriate.
- Emergency contacts.
- Safe communication methods.

Safety planning should be proactive.

International Touring

Before traveling internationally:

- Research local laws affecting LGBTQ+ people.
- Understand local customs.
- Review visa and documentation requirements.
- Identify emergency medical resources.
- Develop contingency plans.
- Brief the crew before departure.

Preparation reduces uncertainty and improves safety.

Hiring, Promotion & Leadership

Hiring decisions should be based on:

- Experience
- Skill
- Professionalism
- Growth potential
- Leadership ability

Avoid assumptions based on gender, age, disability, race, or appearance.

Invest in mentorship and advancement opportunities for all crew members.

Production Manager's Checklist

Before Rehearsals

- ☐ Review the Code of Conduct with all crew members.
- ☐ Share reporting procedures and emergency contacts.
- ☐ Confirm hotel assignments and accommodate privacy requests where possible.
- ☐ Verify transportation logistics.
- ☐ Review accessibility needs.
- ☐ Ensure credentials reflect preferred professional names where feasible.
- ☐ Communicate rehearsal schedules and expectations.

Before Each Show

- ☐ Review local venue emergency procedures.
- ☐ Identify accessible entrances, restrooms, and changing areas.
- ☐ Confirm parking and transportation plans.
- ☐ Check radio communication protocols.
- ☐ Verify hotel check-in information.
- ☐ Identify the nearest medical facility.
- ☐ Review any local laws or cultural considerations for international dates.

During the Tour

- ☐ Conduct regular crew check-ins.
- ☐ Address concerns promptly.
- ☐ Encourage respectful communication.
- ☐ Support adequate rest when possible.
- ☐ Promote mentorship and knowledge sharing.

- ☐ Reinforce that safety concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.

After the Tour

- ☐ Conduct a post-tour debrief.
- ☐ Invite anonymous feedback.
- ☐ Review incidents and lessons learned.
- ☐ Update policies and procedures for future tours.

Continuous improvement strengthens future productions.

Industry Resources

Audio Industry

- [SoundGirls](#) — International community providing mentorship, scholarships, networking, training, conferences, and career development for women and gender-diverse people in professional audio.
- [Women's Audio Mission](#) — Hands-on training, recording studios, internships, and career development for women and gender-expansive people in music and audio production.
- [Women in Live Music](#)
- [Women in Vinyl](#)
- [Beats By Girlz](#)
- [Women in Music](#)

Accessibility & Disability

- [Audio Accessibility Alliance \(AAA\)](#) — Resources, training, and advocacy for accessibility in live events and production.
- [RAMPD \(Recording Artists and Music Professionals with Disabilities\)](#) — Training, policy consulting, accommodations guidance, and a professional network supporting disabled and neurodivergent music professionals.

LGBTQIA+ Organizations

- [Voluminous Arts](#)
- [Spark the Noise](#)
- Pride in Music
- [Global Action for Trans Equality \(GATE\)](#)
- [Transgender Europe \(TGEU\)](#)

Mental Health & Wellness

- [Backline](#)
- [MusiCares](#)
- Tour Health Research Initiative

Hearing Health

- [Hearing Health Foundation](#)
- [Tinnitus Quest](#)

Final Thoughts

A successful production is more than a well-executed show. It is a workplace where people are respected, supported, and empowered to do their best work. By embedding these best practices into daily operations, production managers strengthen safety, communication, collaboration, and performance across the entire crew.

As the live entertainment industry continues to evolve, so too should the standards that guide it. By leading with professionalism, accountability, and respect, we help ensure that touring remains a sustainable and rewarding career for everyone.