

## BACKDROP UNFOLDING

Make sure the floor is clean and debris-free (covered if necessary, swept, mopped, and clear of liquid, sharp objects, and other clutter) to ensure that the backdrop will remain clean and undamaged. Remove the backdrop from the box and examine it for any obvious shipping damage. Take note of the exact way it is folded. You will want to remember this so you can duplicate it after the drop is used and you are ready to pack it up—however, for your benefit, step-by-step instructions have been included below. We recommend moving all set pieces away from the area where you are unfolding, mounting, and refolding the backdrop.

## HANGING AND USING THE BACKDROP

### How a Backdrop Hangs:

Approximately every 12" along the top edge of the backdrop, there is a pair of tie lines, each about 12" long, which give support to the backdrop. We have included additional tie lines in your *white Important Document envelope* for your convenience, should any of the currently-attached lines need to be replaced.

**Make sure that all set pieces are a minimum of 12" away  
from the backdrop at all times!**

### Systems for Hanging:

The type of **support rigging** in your facility will determine how the backdrops are secured. They will either be rigged to a **fly** system, a **dead hung** system, or you will need a **pipe and drape** system.

- A **fly system** means that the batten (typically steel pipes) raises and lowers using a series of ropes, pulleys, and counterweights or motors. This allows the backdrop to be hung easily and safely.
- A **dead hung system** means that the battens are fixed near the ceiling and do not move. A task/OSHA-approved ladder or lift must be employed to install the backdrop.
- A **pipe and drape system** is commonly used by **event companies or companies that don't have any rigging** above their performance space. The pipe and drape system is a series of upright and crossbar metal pipes that connect and create a rectangular frame with large metal "feet" or bases that keep the structure vertical. A task/OSHA-approved ladder or lift must be employed to install the backdrop. (These can be rented from local event companies in your area.)

### Hanging a Backdrop from a CURTAIN TRACK:

Slip one of the tie lines through an eyelet or a chain link on the track carrier. Then, tie the two lines into a bow, allowing one set of tie lines per carrier. **Make sure someone is relieving the weight of the backdrop while you are tying the lines to the eyelet system.**

### Hanging a Backdrop from a FLY SYSTEM:

Lower your pipe batten to approximately 3' from the floor. Start in the **center** of the backdrop, which is denoted with a **white string**. Begin working your way out, tying all of the tie lines in a bow (as you would a shoestring). Once every tie line is fastened to the batten, gently push the bows towards the outer edge to make sure they are taut. Then, slowly raise the pipe up off the floor using the system's controls (counterweights or motorized). Make sure you add enough weight to the system to counterbalance the weight of the backdrop and secure the line once the drop is in place.

### Hanging a Backdrop from a DEAD HUNG SYSTEM or a PIPE AND DRAPE SYSTEM:

Using an A-frame OSHA approved ladder, or other approved lift, secure the tie lines around the pipe by tying a bow, moving from one end of the pipe batten to the other. Fasten the lines as you would tie a shoestring, lifting and tying as you go. **Have a second or third person on the floor lift the drop to relieve some of the weight.** Allowing the entire weight of the backdrop to hang from a single grommet and tie can cause a tear. If you feel resistance as you lift the backdrop, do not force, jerk, or tug it. Investigate the problem before you continue. Make sure you follow these steps when taking it down as well.

### Pipe Pocket:

The pipe pocket is a separate 3-1/2" pocket sewn onto the backdrop, with an opening on either end. It is fully stitched along the top of the pocket and stitched every 12" - 18" along the bottom. The pocket is designed to support hanging-pipes, which are inserted from each end and runs the entire width of the backdrop. Once inserted, the pipes will add weight to the backdrop and help eliminate wrinkles and reduce movement during your production.

The suggested pipe to be used is 1/2" EMT (electrical metallic tubing) with EMT connectors. Rigid pipe may be used for additional weight. (Many who use rigid pipe only put one 10' section in each end of the backdrop.) The 1/2" EMT comes in 8-10 foot lengths and is connected with EMT connectors. These items can be purchased in the electrical department at your local hardware store.

To begin, insert the 1/2" EMT into the pipe pocket. You need more than one person for this operation. Applying duct or gaff tape on the leading edge and all connectors of the EMT will soften sharp edges on the pipe, preventing the tubing from hanging up and tearing the drop. If the tubing does hang up, STOP! Don't force it. Investigate the problem before you proceed.

After inserting your first length of tubing, connect your second length using the EMT connector. Once both pieces of the tubing are in the connector and the screws have been tightened, apply duct or gaff tape around the connector. (Tape should be used on any pipe applications.) This will soften any sharp edges and eliminate hang-ups.

As the pipe is pushed through the pocket, "bounce" the start of pipe along the way to help it avoid snagging.

Once you have inserted the pipe for the full length of the backdrop, place one person on each end and have them firmly pull on either end of the pocket. This is known as "stretching" the drop and can help eliminate wrinkles. Please do not overstretch or aggressively stretch as you can

damage the backdrop. Also remember, if the drop has a chance to "hang" for a while, the majority of wrinkles will disappear naturally. Plan to allow time for the backdrop to settle before opening night.

**DON'T FORGET**, when taking down the backdrop, first remove the pipe before detaching the backdrop from the batten.

#### Steaming a Backdrop:

Some backdrops may arrive with slight wrinkling or creasing. While most wrinkles will resolve themselves after the drop has hung for a while, more stubborn creases may require the use of a steamer. A standard commercial steamer with a plastic head is the best tool for this task. (Please do *not* use a steamer with a metal head.) To steam, position yourself on the *back side* (the unpainted side) of the backdrop and carefully run the head of the steamer up and down, working from one side of the backdrop to the other. To avoid costly damage charges, please never apply steam to the painted side of the backdrop and please do not iron your backdrop!

#### Modifying the Backdrop for Your Use:

- ALTERING THE SIZE FROM THE TOP

TheatreWorld Backdrops strictly forbids altering the backdrop from the top and/or deviating from hanging the drop by the provided grommets and ties for **ANY** reason. Folding the top and hanging via clamps or any other device compromises the security of the backdrop and significantly increases your chances of damaging it and incurring repair or replacement fees, which can be costly.

- ALTERING THE SIZE FROM THE SIDES

In the event the backdrop is too wide, simply fold back the side (or sides) of the backdrop that you wish to hide and tie the lines to the batten.

- ALTERING THE SIZE FROM THE BOTTOM

**Clean the stage under the backdrop or add a plastic drop cloth underneath** and then fold the bottom portion of the backdrop up and behind. Fold as concisely and neatly as possible, keeping the painted side interior to the fold. A pipe can be laid on the back side (unpainted side) of the backdrop for weight. Backdrop movement may damage the painted area of the backdrop if you fail to provide a protective barrier.

#### Lighting a Backdrop:

Lighting instruments should distribute a general, even light over the surface of the backdrop and eliminate shadows from any wrinkles or unevenness on the surface. Try using different colored gels or lights to create drama and effects on the backdrop. Please note that backlighting will not work as the backdrops are opaque. All backdrops are hand-painted muslin canvas and not see-through like a cyclorama or scrim. **Be sure to place the backdrop at a minimum of 24" from any incandescent lighting source, such as a lamp or PAR can.** LED lights and low-heat emitting lights should be placed a minimum of 8" away from the backdrop.

## STEPS FOR FOLDING/RETURNING THE BACKDROP

1. Lay backdrop on a clean, smooth surface with the painted side up.
2. Fold the backdrop in half widthwise.
3. Continue to fold the drop in half widthwise, using the parallel fold method, until it is approximately 36" wide and 6 grommets are showing at the top.
4. Fold the remaining amount by **thirds**, starting with the right side, then the left.
5. Roll the backdrop from the bottom up to the top evenly and smoothly in a "rolled sleeping bag" fashion until the drop is fully rolled to the top.
6. Re-tie the support string around the rolled backdrop.
7. Replace the drop into the cotton travel bag.
8. Place the backdrop back into the original box.
9. Seal the box properly with packing tape.
10. **Place the return shipping label directly on top of the old shipping label.**
11. Take the box to a UPS location, unless you have requested for TheatreWorld to schedule a UPS pick-up for you or you have a regularly scheduled UPS pick-up at your location.

