



History and  
Regional and Provincial  
Rules & Regulations

## ADFA HISTORY

When the High School Drama Festivals were started in 1960, there was no parent body, so Mr. Jack McCreath started building a zone-to-zone level until it was possible to build to a Provincial final in 1967. A Provincial High School Organization came into being and applied for grant assistance. However, by this time each zone had been receiving individual zone grants from the government for a number of years. Therefore, the H.S.F.A. was able to prosper on both the zone and adult levels.

ADFA had not been as fortunate. No zone Festival organization had ever existed in this province at the adult level. Communities sent plays to the Alberta Drama League final, with a winner being chosen to compete in the Dominion Drama Festival. The Alberta Drama League and D.D.F. became defunct, and the Drama Division of the Government of Alberta was asked to take on their Festival function at the one-act level.

The Drama Division continued to do this until 1968, at which time Mr. Walter Kassa wisely recommended that the Festival should be operated through an independent Festival body organized outside the direct control of the Drama Division. After an organizational meeting and a few false starts, the Alberta Drama Festival Association was incorporated in 1969.

Over the intervening years, ADFA has experienced a lot of growth and several setbacks. Finding money to fund the various activities has always been a problem. It has not always been easy to keep ADFA funded and thriving. With the support of the regions and local communities, as well as the efforts of many individuals and with the assistance of a yearly grant from the Provincial Association, the regions have grown in strength and vitality. We have seen the formation of new zones and numerous amateur community groups formed thanks to the original impetus of participation in the Festival. Thus, the Provincial Association has developed into a body united around the common goal of developing the participation of many in the cultural - human expression of theatre.

The Alberta Drama Festival Association (ADFA) is an umbrella organization for adult amateur drama activity in the province of Alberta. It was formed in 1969 to assume organization of the adult one-act drama festival formerly run by the Drama Division of Alberta Culture. ADFA is a non-profit association incorporated under the Societies Act of Alberta. There are no paid personnel. The ADFA Executive and the Regional Associations are made up of individuals who have chosen to donate their time and energy to the community theatre of this province.

The province has been divided into ten (10) regions. Within each region, various functions, workshops and activities are organized or developed. Each region has a committee that is autonomous and operates to encourage and develop the potential within that region. Each year, representatives from these regions organize their own festivals. From these festivals, one

play is chosen by an adjudicator to represent each region at the Provincial One Act Festival. Each of those chosen plays receives traveling expenses in order to participate in the Provincial Festival.

The Provincial Festival is meant to be a non-competitive celebration of drama. It provides an occasion for the coming together of all community drama groups in a festival situation. We have followed the practice of having one or two adjudicators at a festival. They publicly comment upon the performances and are available for more detailed private discussion with the individuals involved in each production.

Until 1976, the Provincial Festival was held yearly at the Banff School of Fine Arts. We found that due to the isolation of the location, needless expense, and assorted hassles, we would be better served by another location.

The Provincial Festival is now held in a different region each year. This enables a greater number of people to attend the festival as participants in performance or as part of the audience. With more participation, we are better able to achieve our goal of creating memorable experiences where people can grow and expand in their understanding of theatre. The regional location also enables an extensive amount of donation and voluntary assistance in the planning, promotion, and operation of the yearly festival.

Beginning in 2006, participants in the winning play at the Provincial Festival were awarded the opportunity to attend sessions at the Theatre Alberta sponsored Dramaworks or PlayWorks Ink programs in Edmonton and Calgary. The tuition, travel and accommodation expenses for participants were covered by the ADFA. Unfortunately, Theatre Alberta has suspended Dramaworks and PlayWorks Ink in the last few years.

Past Provincial Festivals have been held in the following locations:

1976	Medicine Hat		1989	Whitecourt		2002	Grande Prairie		2015	Red Deer
1977	Grande Prairie		1990	Lethbridge		2003	High River		2016	Grande Prairie
1978	Lethbridge		1991	Spruce Grove		2004	Hinton		2017	Medicine Hat
1979	Red Deer		1992	Medicine Hat		2005	Lethbridge		2018	Fort McMurray
1980	Medicine Hat		1993	Whitecourt		2006	Edmonton		2019	High River
1981	Grande Prairie		1994	High River		2007	High River		2020	Canceled
1982	Red Deer		1995	Westlock		2008	Fort McMurray		2021	
1983	Medicine Hat		1996	Medicine Hat		2009	Medicine Hat		2022	
1984	Fort McMurray		1997	Whitecourt		2010	Whitecourt		2023	
1985	Lethbridge		1998	High River		2011	Lethbridge		2024	
1986	Grande Prairie		1999	Calgary		2012	Camrose		2025	
1987	Red Deer		2000	Edmonton		2013	High River		2026	
1988	Calgary		2001	Medicine Hat		2014	Grande Prairie		2027	

The executive board members of the Alberta Drama Festival Association are a group of dedicated volunteers who have committed their energies to represent their regions and ADFA as a whole. The board operates to create the mechanisms for the Regional and Provincial Festivals. It also serves as a meeting ground for an exchange of ideas and insights into dealing with all of the problems and successes of amateur theatre organizations across the province. Meetings are held several times a year to discuss, plan and encourage each other in the development and growth of dramatic activities in our respective regions.

## OVERVIEW

1. The Alberta Drama Festival Association (ADFA) stages, in a different host community each year, a Provincial Adult One Act Drama Festival, which is the culmination of activities fostered by the Association at the Regional level. The dates and the location for the Provincial Festival are chosen by the ADFA Board of Directors.
2. The Alberta Drama Festival Association has identified the following regions for the mounting of Regional Festivals across the province:
  - a. Peace Country
  - b. North
  - c. Yellowhead
  - d. Big Valley
  - e. Heartland
  - f. Foothills
  - g. Chinook
  - h. Cypress
  - i. Edmonton
  - j. Calgary

Each of these regions should hold a Regional Adult One Act Festival of at least Two (2) plays. The Regional Festival is to be held prior to the Provincial Adult One Act Festival, ideally at least three weeks prior. A play from each Region (Outstanding Production) will be selected to represent that Region at the Provincial Festival. Selection must be by adjudication.

3. The representative play from each Regional Festival must recognize its commitment to participate in the Provincial Festival. Final decisions on the entries in the Provincial Festival will be made by the Association Executive. The Association will pay the entry fee for the Provincial Festival.
4. If a Region fails to mount a Festival, it is expected that any entries from that Region will participate in the **closest** geographical Regional Festival. They will be judged on their own merits at this Festival. If this is not possible, the Association Executive may, at its discretion, permit an entrant to proceed directly to the Provincial Festival.
5. A Regional Festival program may be augmented with showcase pieces for increased variety and entertainment value, at the discretion of the Regional Representative for the Regional Festival, and with the approval of the ADFA board.
6. Awards may be given at the discretion of the ADFA board, based on recommendations of the adjudicator, for merit in any aspect of the productions presented. This may also be done, based on the

recommendations of the adjudicator, at the Regional Festival level. The award categories can include the following:

- a. Outstanding Production
- b. Outstanding Performance (This can be distributed to two individuals of any identifying gender)
- c. Outstanding Technical Merit
- d. Outstanding Direction
- e. Outstanding New Work (A New Work is a piece that has never been published or previously produced)

## REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ONE ACT FESTIVAL RULES

1. Entries shall be one act plays. No adaptations or excerpts will be accepted. However, if the author has given written approval for the presentation of an adaptation that adaptation will be allowed to compete.
2. All entries must have a running time of at least ten (10) minutes and not more than sixty (60) minutes.
3. Setup time for each play shall be limited to a maximum of ten (10) minutes; strike time shall be a maximum of five (5) minutes. A technical rehearsal time of not less than sixty minutes (60) minutes will be scheduled for each play.
4. Both Cast and crew must be comprised predominantly of adults. The plays may come from organized amateur theatre troupes, non-professional groups, higher educational institutions or any other community group or individual not involved in professional theatre. Any full member of a professional Performing Arts union is prevented from participating in ADFA sponsored one-act play festivals.
5. Each performing group will pay a non-refundable fee of \$25, which will make them a member of ADFA. In addition, each Region may charge \$25 for entry into the Regional Festival. Any individual wishing to have a vote at the ADFA AGM will have to purchase an individual membership for \$5, which will be forwarded to the Provincial treasurer. Entrants must sign registration forms stating that they have read and understood the Festival rules.
6. Groups entering the Regional Festival and the selected entries in the Provincial Festival must provide a clean copy (not a photocopy) of the script for the adjudicators at least two weeks before the Festivals.
7. The participants in a play entering any Festival are responsible for supplying and transporting to and from that Festival any set, furniture, properties, etc. (assistance with travel expenses to the Provincial Festival will be considered by the executive upon presentation of a completed expense form).
8. The adjudicator shall select one play from each Region to represent that Region at the Provincial Festival. The adjudicator at the Regional Festival shall also rank the other participating plays in case the chosen play cannot attend the Provincial Festival.

## FUNDING POLICY

Reimbursement for Provincial and Regional Festivals are made on a Deficit Recovery basis.

ADFA will reimburse the hosting organizations of both Regional and Provincial Festivals for expenses incurred over and above income for the following:

- Venue Rental
- Promotions (maximum \$1,000)
- Adjudicator (\$300 per session plus accommodations and travel expenses. A session is defined as a group of plays performed in one time period. A Festival may have more than one session if performances are held in multiple blocks. For example, if the Festival has performances on Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening, that is considered three sessions.)
- Festival Awards (\$500 maximum. Cash awards to performers are not allowed.)
- Front of House (Tickets, programs, name tags, etc.)

In addition, hosts of Provincial Festivals **may** be reimbursed for other expenses, such as social events, participant dinners, green room snacks, etc. subject to Board approval.

Ticket sales will be taken into consideration when reimbursing hosting groups. A detailed financial statement will be required when applying for reimbursement.

Cast and crew of plays participating in Provincial Festivals will be reimbursed for the following expenses, with Board approval, upon presentation of completed expense forms.

- Accommodations (participants are expected to share hotel rooms, minimum 4 to a room)
- Travel expenses at \$0.40 per kilometer
- A per diem of \$50.00 per day to help cover meals (This per diem will be prorated if breakfast is provided with hotel room and if a banquet is provided for the participants)

**All expenses are subject to approval by the ADFA Board of Directors.**

## FUNCTION OF THE ADJUDICATOR

The most important function of the adjudicator is to serve as an educator. True, they must recommend outstanding plays, but adjudication without a carefully prepared critique, which teaches as it criticizes, deprives play festival participants of a most valuable feature: the opportunity for qualitative improvement.

An effective critique requires, among other things, extensive knowledge of all styles and types of drama, an understanding of the physical theatre with special concern for limitations often imposed upon the various performing areas in the province. The successful adjudicator must be able to discuss the plays they have seen in a firm but courteous manner. They must be objective, direct, and detailed in their criticism without imposing personal opinions dictatorially.

The adjudicator has the special responsibility of evaluating seriously the efforts of the director and their company, and of treating them and their performances with respect. Through many hours of rehearsal, they have sought to perfect creative performances, not only to be a Regional representative, but for the satisfaction which comes through the search for perfection in the arts. The adjudicator must be familiar with the guidelines of the Alberta Adult One-Act Drama Festival and Alberta Drama Festival Association, and understand limitations imposed on directors. To treat such effort casually would defeat a most important function of the adjudicator.

The adjudicator should use their skills and experience to make each Festival a pleasant and richly educational experience in the lives of participants as they seek to understand more fully the art of theatre.

## ADJUDICATION GUIDELINES

### 1. Adjudicator **SHOULD**:

- a) Realize that you should be critically constructive. Help the director and actors with sound suggestions which they may use to improve their work.
- b) Understand that most actors try as hard as they know to be effective.
- c) Whenever possible, find something about the performance which you can honestly commend.
- d) Be specific in criticizing the production and use examples from it.
- e) Keep your personal opinion of the playwright and script to yourself.
- f) Request to stop the Festival if audience behavior makes it difficult for you to hear or concentrate on the performance.

### 2. Adjudicator **SHOULD NOT**:

- a) At any time comment about the play. It may not be the best play for a particular cast to produce at a particular Festival, but the adjudicator has no responsibility in a Festival to be publicly critical of the director's choice of play.
- b) Criticize only in a negative way. Try to be constructive. It is your duty to help the director to improve their work.
- c) Make a "performance" of your critique. Do not "act a role" before a captive audience.
- d) Re-direct the plays. Suggestions are always in order, but let the director interpret them for their company and use them as they see fit.

e) Embarrass the director or actors, during either public or private adjudication. This includes use of sarcastic, ridiculing or belittling remarks.

f) Make any of the following or similar remarks:

"I didn't like your play."

"I would (or would not) have done it this way."

"This play did not challenge the actors."

"You should have tried a newer play. This one has been done so often."

"What can you expect with a play by this author?"

"I'm so tired of seeing that play."

"As an actor, you were playing to type (or were typecast)."

"You were not the right actor for this role"

"This role is beyond your capabilities as an actor."

"I didn't like your interpretation of this role."

g) Spend critique time trying only to justify your decision.

h) Under **no** circumstances give play directors your worksheets or notes. If you care to provide a written critique, do so only after you have had time to carefully consider the written commentary and how it might be interpreted.

# ADJUDICATOR STANDARDS FOR EVALUATING

## 1. ACTING

a) **Voice:** Could you hear the actors distinctly? Was the rate too fast or too slow? Was there a variety of rate and inflection? Was pronunciation and articulation properly done for each character? If dialect was used, was it done correctly and naturally?

b) **Characterization:** Was there a complete bodily and mental recreation of the character by the actor? Were their reactions to other actors correct and effective? Did we "believe" the actor's characterization all the time they were on the stage?

c) **Movement:** Were the movements of the actors in keeping with their characters? Was there a great deal of random movement? Was the pantomime accurate and convincing? Did the actor have a well-controlled body?

d) **Contrast:** Were there clearly contrasting moods in the dialogue? Were emotional transitions natural and effective? Were the lines delivered in a manner natural to the characters in the play?

e) **Ensemble:** Was there a smoothness of action that indicated adequate rehearsal and close co-operation and understanding of the play among the actors?

f) **Timing:** Did the actors pick up cues properly? Was the production static in places because the actors seemed to lack a correct sense of pace?

g) **Motivation:** Was there a logical reason for all business and movement by the actors, consistent and in keeping with the characters in the script?

## 2. DIRECTING AND STAGE MECHANICS

- **Set:** Did the set satisfactorily represent the idea of the play? Were the furniture and props used in a way that assisted but did not hinder the action?
- **Lighting:** Did the lighting effects blend harmoniously and unobtrusively into the action of the play?
- **Make-up:** Was the make-up natural and in keeping with each character and style of production?
- **Costume:** Were the costumes for each character correct as to colour, style, and period?
- **Business:** Were exits and entrances properly timed? Did the actors frequently cover or mask each other? Was the business properly motivated? Was the designed business adequate to bring out the idea of the play?
- **Tempo:** Did the production drag? Was it too fast to follow intelligently? Was the pace of the production in keeping with the general idea of the script?
- **Picturization and Composition:** Were the actors grouped to give proper emphasis to the right characters at the right time?
- **Plot:** Was the dramatic action of the script clear?
- **Theme:** Was the main idea of the play brought out clearly?

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