



STAGECRAFT
TECHNICAL SERVICES

Integrity and Trust in all we do

Terms and Lingo – The Roadie’s Lexicon for the Layman

A handy and fun selection of Terms and Lingo used throughout the industry, some serious, and some not so!

ACOUSTICS – the science of sound; invented to make otherwise good sound men look like complete fools.

AIR IMPEDANCE – also known as not plugged in.

APRON – front edge of stage.

BACKLOUNGE – rear section of a tour bus, generally the smoking area.

BACKLINE – band equipment which is not an actual instrument, but some type of reinforcement equipment, for example Amplifiers.

BAND ENGINEER – person who mixes the group.

BEST BOY – movie term for the lead assistant electrician answering to the gaffer.

BOAT ANCHOR – a piece of heavy equipment which isn’t performing to expectations and has been presumed dead, or is otherwise obsolete.

BUMPERS – sturdy frames from which speakers are hung.

BUS FACTOR – the degree to which bad movies improve due to extended bus rides. Lower bus factor is better, but requires better movies. Formula: $B = DMN/S$ Where: B = Bus factor, D = Bus time (# days on bus), M = Distance (# miles), N = Number of passengers on bus, S = Bus stock (# gallons of alcoholic beverages).

BUS STOCK – consumables stored in the bus.

BUS SURFING – the art of walking and/or standing upright on a moving bus.

BUS HAIR – what you get if you go to sleep with wet hair.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

Tel: 0845 838 2015
Fax: 0845 838 2016

Email: sales@stagecraft.co.uk
Website: www.stagecraft.co.uk

CABLE MONKEY – an entry level roadie position, one who wrangles cables.

CABLE RAMP – neither actually, a portable trough used to place cable to allow traffic to cross a cable run.

CABLE RUN – a path followed by two or more cables, usually on the floor.

CADILLAC – a large case generally used for large amounts of cable.

CAMLOC – 1) a proprietary connector by the company of the same name. Almost universally used for connecting heavy-load electrical equipment.

2) hardware used to bolt lighting trusses together.

CAN – a lighting fixture which contains one bulb.

CARP – a carpenter.

CASE – any box which protects its contents.

CHAIN BUCKET – a heavy canvas bucket which hangs from a chain-motor and collects its chain.

CHAIN RAIN – the sound one hears when a chain bucket is not used properly and the chain cascades from the bucket.

CHANNEL 2 – take a nap; monitoring management's walkie-talkie channel.

CHEESEBURGER – a proprietary clamp by Cheseborough which holds lighting pipes together.

CHOKER – the simplest application of a span-set, specifically: pass loop around pipe and back through itself.

COFFIN – a long narrow case for storing stands, lights.

COLOUR CHANGER – a light which changes colour by scrolling coloured gel in front of the lamp.

COM, I-COM – Intercom communication for those who must speak with others during performances and set-up.

COMPRESSOR – an audio effect which contains or limits the difference between the loudest and the softest volume of a particular instrument or signal.

CONDOMS – covers for sensitive equipment.

CONSOLE – mixing board – a large, expensive, complicated-looking object containing thousands of switches and knobs without which we would be forced to hear the music exactly as it was intended to be heard.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

Tel: 0845 838 2015

Fax: 0845 838 2016

Email: sales@stagecraft.co.uk

Website: www.stagecraft.co.uk

CONSOLE SHORT – operator error, also: pilot error.

CRAPPED OUT – dead, died. Beginning of transition to ‘boat anchor’.

CREW CHEW – food for the sound guys.

CREW ROOM – a dressing room for crew members only.

CUE – 1) a moment which tells an operator or musician when to begin a rehearsed event.

2) a speaker which operators use for nearby and accurate monitoring of a signal.

CURTAIN CALL – ‘encore’

DANCE FLOOR – area at the front of a trailer which is raised from the rest of the floor to accommodate the drive wheels.

DDL – Distance Delay Line. See Delay.

DELAY – an audio effect which repeats an original sound after a specified length of time determined by the user. A delay may repeat more than once. A delay which repeats before the previous repeat ends is called reverberation or reverb.

DEAD – without much reverb, usually outside.

DECAY – the time a reverberation is sustained, measured from the initial sound until to the last of the reflected sound ends.

DEAD CASE – an empty box which can be stored out of the way until load-out.

DECK – the stage.

DIMMER, DIMMER PACK – a voltage controller for heavy-duty lights.

DIRECT BOX – a device used to connect musical equipment into a sound system without the use of a microphone.

DISTRO – an electrical distribution panel, travelling or permanent.

DOG-HOUSE – an extension of a console case to allow transportation without disconnecting each cable.

DOORS – the time when the audience is allowed in the building.

DRESSING CABLES – laying cables & taping them down in a neat & orderly fashion.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

Tel: 0845 838 2015

Fax: 0845 838 2016

Email: sales@stagecraft.co.uk

Website: www.stagecraft.co.uk

DRESSING ROOM – the travellers private haven from the hurly-burly chaos which is the theatre.

DRIVER – 1) one who drives a bus or truck.
2) a sound producing device, more commonly called speakers.

DRIVER'S WALL – the driver's side of a truck's trailer.

DRUM FILL – monitors placed to the sides of the drummer.

DUMP – lose memory or quit working.

ENGINEER – technical sounding name for someone who has perfected sleeping with eyes open.

E-TAPE – poly-vinyl-chloride tape, produced as temporary electrical insulation, but used for nearly any task.

FAIR DATE – a show which takes place as a side attraction at a state, county or local fair.

FAN-OUT – an end of a multi-signal cable at which all signals are available as single connections.

FEEDER – thick cables which are used to carry power from a distribution panel to the stage equipment.

FIRE LANE – a passage which must remain clear for the unlikely event of an emergency.

FLAT – a façade for stage scenery.

FLUSHER – a toilet which is connected to running water.

FLY DATE – a show to which a minimum of equipment and personnel is taken.

FLY RAIL – a pipe which hangs horizontally over a theatre stage and can move vertically 25-50 feet to allow set pieces, curtains and other effects to be lowered quickly and quietly into place.

FOCUS – 1) the act of adjusting lighting fixtures to fit the venue of the day.
2) the period of time when these adjustments take place.

FOH – 'Front of House' where the paying customers sit, specifically: the area where the audience, sound engineer and the lighting director set up their consoles, hopefully strategically located for a view of the stage from its centre. Sometimes refers to the mains speakers and amplifiers.

FOUR BANGER – 1) a four-channel fanout.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

2) a four outlet electrical box.

GAFFER – theatrical term for ‘head electrician’ – often relating to lighting equipment.

GAFF-TAPE – ‘gaffer’s tape’, two-inch wide cloth tape, can be used by a roadie to fix anything. Which similar to duct tape, gaffer’s tape leaves less residue behind, has a non-reflective appearance, and is easier to tear.

GATE – an audio effect which allows or prevents a signal passing a certain a certain point in a signal path. A gate’s status (open or closed) may be set to switch based on its own signal, the signal of another instrument, or in some case physical input such as pressure pads or proximity sensors.

GEAR – any equipment which is not junk.

GEAR-HEAD – person with no sense of the world outside of their profession, usually obsessive guitarists.

GEL – a thin film of coloured material, similar to cellophane but with a much higher melting point; used for colouring lights.

GIG BAG – a waist-worn pouch which contains items imperative to a gig.

GOPHER – one who fetches things.

GREENIE – small green-handled standard screw-driver.

GRIP – theatrical term for a movie set carpenter.

GROUND RIGGER – rigger who stays on stage or show floor to assemble chain, rope and shackle set which they help high-riggers pull up and hold in place.

HEADSET – speaking and hearing piece one wears to use I-com.

JAMMUS-INTERRUPTUS – what happens when the band runs past their allotted soundcheck time.

KABUKI – a drape inspired by Japanese theatre which falls from the top and is pulled off stage.

KIT – a drum-set.

LAM – laminate, a laminated back-stage pass – also used as a bargaining aid with enthusiastic punters.

LIVE – a highly reflective room.

LOAD BAR – an aluminium bar used to secure loads in a trailer.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

LOADERS – people who handle equipment on/off the truck.

LOAD-IN – the early part of set-up, generally until the riggers are finished.

LOAD-OUT – the period of time from walk-out until the stagehands are released.

LOAD STRAP – a wide ratcheted strap used to secure loads in a trailer.

LONG RAMP – a 12-to-16 foot aluminium ramp used to access trailers and stages with wheeled gear.

LOOM – any number of cables fastened together in a bunch.

LOUDSPEAKER – device used to provide of means of converting electrical energy into mechanical energy (sound).

MEAL TICKET – 1) a method caterers use to count to count meals
2) the stars of a production.

MEAT RACK – a large square frame used to transport lighting instruments.

MEAT LOCKER – term used to describe the ambient temperature of a healthy tour bus.

MIS-PATCH – connection made improperly.

MOLES – a lighting affray made by Mol-Fay

MONITOR – 1) a speaker which provides a specific mix for a musician onstage.
2) a video screen.

PASS – a permit to access certain areas of a production.

PASSENGER WALL – the passenger's side of a truck's trailer.

PATCH – 1) a place where dozens-to-hundreds of connections are made.
2) the act of connecting said connections.

PATCHBAY – panel with mounted connectors to facilitate connections to a rack, or internal configurations.

PD – 1) per diem – a cash stipend given to a roadie to cover their daily expenses.
2) power distro.

PICKLE – a hand-held controller for a lifting motor.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

Tel: 0845 838 2015
Fax: 0845 838 2016

Email: sales@stagecraft.co.uk
Website: www.stagecraft.co.uk

PINK NOISE – sound which contains audibly even level of all frequencies across the audible spectrum.

POD – a large lighting array usually containing 24 cans.

POINT – the place where a lifting motor is hung from a buildings structure.

POT – short for potentiometer; used to raise or lower sound levels.

PUNTERS – fans.

PUSHERS – stage-hands that move gear between the show floor and the loading area.

PYRO-PYROTECHNICS – gear which will explode, if you handle it right.

RACK – case containing sensitive electronic equipment.

RACKS'N'STACKS – speakers and amplifiers.

REVERB – generic terms describing sounds made by one type of audio effects processing called a reverb. Reverbs simulate the sounds created by various room shapes and materials. A reverberation is a sound whose echo does not end before the next echo begins. Not to be confused with delay.

The Big 5 – the standard reverb presets.

- HALL – cavernous reverb such as found in gymnasiums and arenas.
- PLATE – a reverb which simulates an early analog reverb which consisted of a metal plate stimulated by a sounds physical wave.
- SPRING – a reverb which simulates an early analog reverb which consisted of a spring stimulated by sound's electrical signal.
- SMALL ROOM – a reverb which simulates a small tiled room such as a bathroom or elevator.
- LARGE ROOM – a reverb which simulates a large empty space such as an indoor racket ball court or an enclosed stairwell.

RF – radio frequency – 1) any amount of wireless equipment
2) Electromagnetic interference in a wireless signal.

RIG – any conglomeration of gear, from guitar amps to lighting systems.

RIGGER – a person who climbs into a building or structure's overhead support and suspends a show's points in the air.

RISER – a short stage, usually 4'x8' or 8'x8'.

ROCK BOX – a low-slung trailer with extra height and a dance floor.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

Tel: 0845 838 2015
Fax: 0845 838 2016

Email: sales@stagecraft.co.uk
Website: www.stagecraft.co.uk

ROPE LADDER – a retractable ladder with aluminium rungs and wire rope which lighting personnel use to access their rigs once flown.

RUN – 1) a path defined by one or more cables.
2) a series of shows.

RUNNER – a local-native guide who performs delivery and pickup tasks for a production. Does not travel with the production.

SCHOOL DAY – a show at a school, college or other educational institution.

SET – 1) the stage equipment of a production.
2) time the band plays between breaks.

SET CHANGE – this is the process of clearing the stage of the previous act's gear and preparing the stage for the next act.

SIDE FILL – monitors placed on the sides of stage to supplement individual wedges.

SINGER – a musician rarely skilled in the use of the human voice as a musical instrument.

SLACK – 1) excess cable.
2) lazy.

SMART WHEELS – wheels which can swivel directions.

SNAKE HEAD – a patch point where most of the stage connections are made.

SNAKES – any multi-signal cable, usually more than 16 channels.

SPAN-SET – an extremely strong loop of nylon fabric used to fashion lifting points on equipment.

SPARK FAIRY – a lighting person.

SPARKY – electrician or other person involved in electricity or electronics.

SPIKE THE STAGE – means to mark the position of items that will be moved so that they can return to their original position during 'set change'.

SPL – Sound Pressure Level – means of defining and measuring sound levels. This method had determined that a producer's threshold of hearing is equal to the engineer's threshold of pain.

SPOT-OP – spotlight operator.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

Tel: 0845 838 2015
Fax: 0845 838 2016

Email: sales@stagecraft.co.uk
Website: www.stagecraft.co.uk

SPOT BAY/SPOT TOWER – area reserved for the spotlight(s) and operator(s). Can be a riser, scaffolding, or purpose built area.

SQUINT – lighting person.

STACK – array of speakers, whether flown or stacked.

STAGE DIRECTIONS – directions as one stands on stage facing the audience at the main microphone.

- SR – STAGE RIGHT – your right
- SL – STAGE LEFT – your left
- US - UPSTAGE – behind you
- DS – DOWNSTAGE – in front of you
- CS – CENTRE STAGE – where you are/most toward the centre
- OS – OFF-STAGE – away right or left/furthest from the centre
- MS – MID-STAGE – see centrestage
- BS – BACKSTAGE – does not apply to a position on the stage but rather refers to the area behind the stage (or sometimes beside the stage) that is used for dressing rooms, storage, production equipments, etc. This area is not viewable by the audience.

STAGE HANDS – people who move gear on/off stage.

STAGE MANAGER – person who directs people & equipment on/off stage, set changes etc.

STAGE OFFERING – a gift from a fan to an artist.

STAGE PLOT – a rough map of the placement of the backline, etc. on the stage.

STEWARD – the chief of the local tribe of stagehands.

STRIKE – remove an object. 'Strike the drummer's vocal mic'.

STUPID WHEEL – a wheel which cannot swivel directions.

SUB-SNAKE – a shorter, kinder, simpler snake.

SWAG – 1) any free item gained from a benevolent venue or vendor.
2) a bit of excess cable deliberately left to allow movement.

SWAG THEORY – educated guess at problem solving.

SYSTEM ENGINEER – person responsible for configuring and proper operation of the system.

T – an adaptor to allow more than one cam-lock to a particular connection.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

Tel: 0845 838 2015
Fax: 0845 838 2016

Email: sales@stagecraft.co.uk
Website: www.stagecraft.co.uk

TAILS – PIGTAILS – thick cable with connectors at one end and bare wire at the other – to connect into electrical panels.

TEABAG – an English person.

TECH – person with technical knowledge of/part of the system.

TECH CASE – work box or gig bag.

TIE-IN – 1) an electrical distribution panel.
2) an interface between two separate systems.

TRAP CABINET – a trapezoidal speaker enclosure (viewed from top).

TRAP CASE – a case for carrying a drum kit.

TRAP KIT – a jazz name for a 4 piece drum set.

TRUCK MEAT – people to help push in or lifting exceptionally heavy gear in a truck.

TRUSS – 1) custom lightweight aluminium box truss used for hanging lighting instruments.
2) any lighting stuff seen through the eyes of a sound guy.

TRUSS RAT – lighting person.

TRUSS WARMERS – lights used to light lighting trusses.

TRUSS SPOT – a spotlight hung in a lighting truss over the stage.

TWEAK – 1) small or slight adjustment.
2) trick adjustment.
3) small screwdriver.

TWIN – a series of speaker and amplifier combinations produced by Fender Amplifiers for guitar.

TWIST LATCH – an aluminium catch which uses a twisting action to secure itself.

TWIST LOCK – connector which uses longitudinal twisting action to secure itself.

TWO-FER – a two signal cable.

UNIVERSAL ADJUSTER – a hammer.

VERB – see REVERB.

VIDIOT – video guy.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

WALK-IN – music which gets played through the sound system after doors and before the first act.

WALK-OUT – music (usually different from the starring act in both style and taste) to encourage the audience to leave the building in a prompt and orderly fashion.

WEDGE – a stage monitor.

WET – very reverberant, especially when heavy high frequencies, like a gym shower or cave.

WHEELS TO THE SKY – truck loading term which describes placing a box upside down.

WHITE NOISE – sound which contains electrically even levels of all frequencies across the audible spectrum.

WIGGLY LIGHT – any of several moving computer-controlled lights.

WINGS – SOUND WINGS – extensions of a stage used to stack speakers.

WORK BOX – a case which contains a technician's tools and/or equipment.

WORLDS – chiefdoms actually, named for their vast differences.

- MONITOR WORLD – this is where what the musicians can hear on stage gets decided.
- DIMMER BEACH – where roadies control enough lights to heat your garden.
- GUITAR LAND – often enough guitars to trade for half a small nation.
- VIDEO WORLD – TV's and DVD Players and remote controls.
- LASER-LAND – a frightening place where brave folks mix water and high voltage.

Y-CABLE – a cable which is shaped like a Y, it joins two signals or it splits one signal to two places.

Z-BAR – a short microphone stand (shaped like a Z) generally used to position microphones on guitar cabinets.

Stagecraft Technical Services Ltd.

Tel: 0845 838 2015
Fax: 0845 838 2016

Email: sales@stagecraft.co.uk
Website: www.stagecraft.co.uk