



SO YOU WANT TO WORK IN A HAUNTED HOUSE

It's not easy to do!!! It's physically demanding and mentally exhausting. It requires focus, timing, concentration, self-discipline, commitment and the ability to take direction. Although our customers are having a blast, you may well be assigned to play the same part night after night. Chances are that you'll be in some weird costume, wearing special make-up, covered with some combination of blood, slime and oozing guts. Remember . . . this is show business.

Look at it this way . . . think of your favorite entertainer. Drake? Taylor Swift? Twenty One Pilots? Eminem? It doesn't matter. When you go to see them in concert, you expect to see a good show. It doesn't matter to you if it's the last stop on a year-long world tour. You want your favorite songs played fresh, with energy and excitement as though it were the first night of the tour, not the last. It doesn't matter if that band played that song 1,000 times before; you want it played the right way . . . don't you? Well guess what? Haunted House customers feel the same way about their scares. They don't care if this is the 100th time you're jumping out of that trap door, or if you've pulled the starter on the chainsaw 700 times over the last four nights; they deserve a great show!!! That's what they're there for and why they are paying money.

So, if you understand all this "show biz stuff" going in, if you have the qualities we just talked about, if you want to act, if you like Halloween and the Horror genre, and most of all if you want to entertain and scare people . . . then we want you!

ACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Spider Hill opens at 7:00 pm every Friday and Saturday in October. Everyone can begin arriving at 5:00pm but no later than 6:30pm. This is so you can get checked in, get assigned to your scare, then makeup and costume. You will do it in this order with the exception of the make-up and costume, you can do whatever is available. You are responsible for your costume and any props we issue you. Any props, costumes, or masks that don't come back, or come back damaged beyond what is considered reasonable wear & tear, could forfeit you from receiving a t-shirt/sweatshirt and could result in us asking you to not return. Once you are completely ready you should remain in the backroom or on the lawn outside the backroom. You must remain out of view of the customers. It is preferable that you use the restroom before makeup and costumes so that it limits the chance of customers seeing you.

At 6:40pm all actors will meet on the lawn outside the backroom doors. We will conduct our PRE-NIGHT RALLY. ALL ACTORS MUST BE IN THEIR SPOTS 15 MINUTES PRIOR TO OPENING!!!! This is so we can do our final pre-opening check. Making sure the scenes and scares are properly staffed is one of the basics, so please make sure you're where you are supposed to be on time.

MANAGEMENT & SECURITY

Management & Security will be constantly patrolling the attraction. Any customer problems such as accidents, customers smoking, touching, damaging, stealing props, or physically abusing the acting staff should be reported immediately. Sometimes people get really scared when you jump out at them and may hit you (or try to) in self defense. They also tend to cuss a lot. You will have to decide whether or not the incident was an accident or done on purpose to hurt you. If it's just an accident pat yourself on the back for scaring them and move on. However, If you decide that the incident was not an accident, you are to break character and remind the customer that touching the actors or props are not allowed. Then you should step back giving the customer plenty of room to leave your scare. Next you and only you need to immediately go to your ticket taker and let them know. Describe to the ticket taker something they're wearing or how many in the group something that will help us identify the customer. The ticket taker has a radio and will contact Security. We will know how to best handle things from there. You will need to return to your scare unless you're injured.

ATTENDANCE

If you have committed to working a scare and told us when you can work we are counting on you to follow through. So if something happens and you are going to be late, or if you are not able to make it on a particular night, you are expected to notify us ahead of time and let us know so we can find someone to cover your scene. Use the Spider Hill Actors page on Facebook to notify us. What generally happens is that you think that you are the only one calling in "sick" (so you can go to your friend's party) and therefore, won't be missed. The reality is that it is more like 3 or 4 of you that have called in, and that places a huge burden on the show. As you can imagine, being down that many actors makes a big difference in the quality of the show. This is truly an example of where you can make a big difference by doing the right thing and honoring the commitment you have made to the show. Although this is not exactly like a typical job, the same common sense rules that apply to any other job apply here as well so remember to call in (EARLY) if you are going to be late or not coming in at all.

STAYING IN CHARACTER

This is one of the most important parts of the job. People come here not only to be scared, but to be entertained. One of the things we do for our customers is to help them suspend their belief in reality. We want them to think that anything is possible at our attraction. One of the easiest ways of doing this is to always remain in character. Think about it. When was the last time you saw a vampire smoking a cigarette or a Graveyard Ghoul eating a tuna sandwich? When customers see that sort of thing, it takes away from the whole experience. We may not be as big as Statesville, but that doesn't mean we can't be as professional as Statesville. This means not only staying in character between groups, but staying in character and getting scares on your way to the bathroom. Staying in character is one way to insure that our customers are having an enjoyable and frightening time.

SMOKING, DRUGS, & AICOHOL . . .

There is absolutely no smoking allowed in any of the scares. This is just common sense, it's dark and things are flammable. If you are smoking, you're not scaring people and that's what you're here for. This also goes for vaping. As far as drugs and alcohol go there is no room for substance abuse. This is an attraction where you are constantly interacting with the public. In order to do so successfully, you need a clear head.

FOOD . . .

Scaring people all night can take its toll on you. After hours of jumping out at people, screaming and scaring them, your energy level tends to drop. We will provide for you at the beginning of the night a bottle of water and will provide a very small snack later in the evening. We highly encourage to bring your own snacks/food for a quick pick me up, or drinks to keep you going particularly if it is cold out. All food and drinks must be hidden completely out of sight of the customers. Never let the customers see you eating or drinking anything (other than blood or body parts). Remember . . . you're Monsters and Monsters don't eat or drink. Remember . . . in order to maximize the scares each customer experiences, we must take all five of their senses into account. Just because a scene looks good doesn't mean the scare can't be ruined by the customer seeing, smelling or hearing something they were not meant to experience. Never forget . . . the scare comes first. Don't miss scaring a group because you've got a turkey sandwich in your mouth. Use common sense!

AT THE END OF THE NIGHT

Because you have no idea when the last group of customers is coming through and exiting the attraction, it is important that you stay in your spot until you are officially relieved of duty for the night. This can only come from us. We will come around with a garbage bag so you can clean up any mess you might have made. You are responsible for cleaning up your own garbage at the end of the night. All scares will be inspected at this time. This is a good time to tell us if something is in need of repair in your scare. You will only be released for the night after the last customer has left the attraction. You will remain in character until you've reached the backroom. A customer who is being followed out by employees who are laughing, talking, taking off their masks and costumes . . . or just generally being out of character . . . is a customer who is not having a good time. Please hang up your costume, place any props on the tables and sign out. You are welcome to join us in the pavilion for a small meal and to visit with friends and share stories. The park closes 1 hour after we have shut down the attractions.

SETS AND SCENES. . . .

We have worked hard putting Spider Hill together. We have spent months/years designing the sets and scares. We have spent thousands and thousands of dollars on the props and displays that you see in each individual room/scare. For that reason, you will be expected to adhere to the following policy . . . Props, displays and set dressings are not to be touched. Every scene has been designed to produce a desired reaction from our customers. The props, what they are, where they are and how they are situated has all been thought out and you should not take it upon yourself to change things. If you think a particular prop or piece will have a greater impact in a different area, all you have to do is ask us and we will consider your suggestion. However, the final decision is ours to make.

PROPS & DISPLAYS

On a busy night, you might end up using the same prop or accessory over 100 times. As a result, things sometimes need preventative maintenance or actual fixing / replacing. Technical problems such as burned out lights, running low on blood or slime or fog juice that isn't working should be reported to us. Things like a coffin lid becoming loose or a fog machine not working are things that many times can be fixed quickly in between groups. Any problems of this nature should be brought to our attention as well. If it turns out to be a big job, at least we can work all night to get it fixed, which is a lot better than finding out about a broken prop 15 minutes prior to opening. Never leave for the night without notifying someone that there is a problem with a particular prop, set or display. Since management can't be everywhere at once, we depend on you to help keep us informed of any problems.

If you have an idea or a way you think will make your room scene better, tell us, we'd love to hear it. The time to tell us is at the end of the night or come in early the following day and we can discuss your idea then. Generally speaking, one hour prior to opening is not a good time to want to talk about a new concept because there is so much to do before opening for the night. Remember . . . never take it upon yourself to just change your room scene. Your idea might be a good one, but we need to carefully consider any changes made.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURE

With exception of helping out terrorized children and dealing with inappropriate customers, the only other time you can break character is during a medical emergency. During a medical emergency, your first response should be to have ONE actor go to the scare before and stop the line then return to the hurt individual and another actor is to go to the ticket taker then immediately return to the hurt individual. The ticket taker will radio for help and stop sending customers until management says otherwise. Everyone must remain in their scares, management will come through with instructions.

ALWAYS WEAR BLACK . . .

Shirts, pants, socks and shoes . . . besides helping you to hide throughout the attraction, it helps you fulfill the customers expectations. One of the reasons they come to a Haunted Attraction, is to see the strange and unusual. A Under Armour sweatshirt and Nike sneakers may be fine casual wear but it's far from "strange and unusual". Dressing appropriately helps give our customers value for their dollar which is super important because they are in the attraction for such a short time. If you do not have an all black wardrobe, please talk to us. Also, dress in layers some nights start out comfortable but end up being cold. Bring gloves, hand and foot warmers, an extra jacket, etc.

SCARING PEOPLE . . .

This is what it's all about. This is why our customers pay their money, this is why we are all here. We use three basic varieties of scares. 1. First we use the startle scare method. Also known as "Chill-O-Rama", this is an "In Your Face" startle scare. 2. Secondly we use the "Gross Out" scare . . . Plenty of Blood, Guts, Slime and Body Parts 3. Thirdly we like to scare people from far away.

LET'S TAKE A MOMENT TO LOOK AT THESE THREE METHODS . . .

1. The Startle Scare . . . Although it sounds simple, there's a lot more to it than meets the eye. As with so many things in life, timing is everything. I can't tell you how many good scare opportunities have been missed simply because an actor jumped out too early or too late. Pay close attention to when you are jumping out to get your scare. Make sure you are close enough to the group to get an effective scare. It doesn't do any good to jump out at them from far away. The far away scare is completely different. Always try to get more than one scare per group. This is very easy to do when the 90 degree rule is in effect. Don't stick around after the scare. Nothing ruins a perfectly executed startle scare, like hanging around looking at the rest of the group once the scare is accomplished. If you are coming out of something (like a closet) either return to your hiding place or walk away from the group altogether. In either case, don't just stand there looking at the group. If you do, they will expect you to do something and when you don't deliver they will be disappointed. Don't jump out too fast. Although your startle scare must happen quickly in order to get maximum results, you can do it too fast producing almost no results. The brain/nervous system needs to perceive a threat in order to react . . . thereby getting the scare. If you jump out too quickly and then disappear, the nervous system won't have anything to "hang on to" or to perceive as that threat. Therefore . . . no scare. Be forceful. Nobody reacts to the meek and mild. Put your all into every scare. Don't scare just the front of the group. It is vitally important to concentrate on scaring both the middle and end of the group. Most customers at the head of the group will have a good time simply because they are the first ones to see cool stuff and the first ones to get scared. Our job is to scare everyone in the group.
2. The Gross Out Scare . . . It's pretty self explanatory. The fact is that people love blood, guts, and gore . . . not to mention slime. The more disgusting it is, the better they like it. My favorite example is to have a mad mortician doing an autopsy in a lab. After the initial incision, he reaches down and picks up a handful of slimy intestines and chases his guests around the lab with them until they are begging him to let them out. Anything really gross such as squishy eyeballs and squirting blood also works really well. The only thing to keep in mind is that there is no "red" that we know of that doesn't stain, so if people are going to get slimed or squirted with "blood", always use plain water to avoid any problems.
3. The Far Away Scare . . . This is another sure fire scare that's easy to do, but it takes a little self discipline to really make it work. With this type of scare, it's important not to get too close to the customers. Many people tend to get "uncomfortable" when they see a Zombie coming at them from far away. The closer the Zombie gets, the more frightened

they get. It's simple. It is important to maintain some distance in order for this scare to work. Here's why. You know how you feel funny when a stranger stands too close to you? That's because we all have our own "personal space". By getting too close, the stranger has invaded your personal space. Well, what happens when a Psycho Killer invades your personal space? Again, you feel funny or uncomfortable. But what happens when that killer invades your space but doesn't try to kill you? What happens, is that he loses his credibility as a killer and, therefore, loses his ability to scare you. However, by keeping some distance, the customer can always believe that maybe the killer is not really an employee and something could go terribly wrong.

This brings us to a very important point. There is a world of difference between someone who is having good time being scared and someone who is actually being traumatized. Many times parents will, against our advice, bring a young child into the attraction. A child who is obviously being traumatized by the Haunted House experience could develop fears that will stay with that child for a lifetime. That's not what we're about. You may witness a child who is screaming, paralyzed with fear. If you do, your only response is to break character and with parent approval, lead that child and his/her family out of the attraction to safety. This is one of the few times that you are allowed to break character, but it's well worth it.

10 REASONS WHY YOUR SCARES AREN'T WORKING

1.....Not using the 90 degree rule & not getting more than one scare per group Example of what not to do . . . Suppose you have a coffin with a body in it and there is a straight line of customers approaching the coffin. When the ghoul in the coffin jumps up to scare the head of the line, the entire rest of the line will see it and the scare will be useless from that point on. You have gotten only one scare for the entire group. An example of what to do instead . . . use the 90 degree rule. What is it? Never put a scare in a straight line where others can see it. A 90 degree turn is when you are walking down a hallway and make either a sharp left or right turn. If you position the scare just around the corner then not only will you get the scare, but the rest of the group will not be able to see what happened and the suspense of hearing the screams will only heighten the upcoming scare for them.

2..... Actors not close enough to customers to get effective scares When frightening a customer using the "Startle Scare" (in your face) method, the actor must actually violate the customer's "personal space" in order to get the scare. Jumping out and yelling doesn't scare anyone if you're too far away. Invade their safety zone! This is important to do without touching the guests.

3..... Actors sticking around too long after the scare An actor hides behind something . . . perhaps a wall or a piece of furniture . . . his timing is perfect. As a group comes by, he jumps out getting a big scare . . . only to ruin it by not immediately going back into hiding. Instead he just stands there, knife in hand, and stares at the rest of the group as they walk by. With him standing there, the rest of the group knows there will be no more scares in that particular area and immediately become bored. Their good time was compromised by an actor with a "one scare per group" attitude. As soon as you have successfully gotten a scare, go back into hiding

and look for the chance to scare someone else in the same group. That chance will be right around the corner if you've used the 90 degree rule.

4..... Actors timing is off . . . jumping out too soon or too late to get the scare This one is pretty self explanatory . . . as with so many things in life, timing is everything. When designing your house, maze, or room, be sure to put in enough "peep holes" so the actor can see the group as they're coming by. He can then jump out at just the right moment and maximize the scare.

5..... Actors jumping up or jumping out too fast I know this sounds crazy, but I've seen actors so anxious to get the scare that they jumped up, yelled something, and went back into hiding . . . all in the blink of an eye. Here's what happens. A good scare triggers something in the involuntary nervous system. It senses possible danger and commands the body to react. You really can't control it. In order for this to work however, the brain needs something to "hang on to". It needs to sense danger. If you jump up too quickly and disappear again right away, the brain doesn't recognize the "danger" it needs to see in order to make the body react with fear.

6..... The rooms are too big to allow for a startle scare This one goes hand in hand with number 2. Large rooms are not always conducive to scares. At least not startle scares. Generally speaking, when a zombie jumps up or comes out of something in a large room, you can see him coming from a mile away. In larger rooms, I have always found that a "gross out" scare works better. A morgue is a perfect example. The Mad Mortician can pull the intestines out of a cadaver and chase the customers around the room with them. The more disgusting the intestines are the better.

7..... Actors violating someone's personal space Although this is a "must do" when going for the startle scare, not every scare is a startle scare. Another type of scare is the "far away scare". Many people get uncomfortable when they see a zombie or ghoul coming at them. The closer the zombie gets, the more frightened they become. It never fails . . . if it's done correctly. For this scare it's important for the ghoul to keep some distance between himself and the intended victim or group . . . here's why. You know how you feel "funny" when a stranger stands too close to you. That's because we all have our own personal space. By getting too close, the stranger has invaded your personal space. Well, what happens when a psycho killer invades your space? Again, you feel uncomfortable or funny but what happens if the killer doesn't try to kill you? Simply put, he has lost his credibility as a psycho killer and therefore has lost his ability to scare you. The simple rule is, when doing a far away scare . . . always keep some distance.

8 Doing the same type of scare too often If every scare in your attraction consists of a zombie jumping up from behind a prop, it won't take long for your customers to figure out where the next scare is coming from. If you are going to keep your customers off balance, it's important to pepper your attraction with a variety of scares and distractions. The three types of scares I like to use are the Startle Scare, the Gross Out Scare and the Far away Scare. Once a customer has been scared, he tends to let his guard down so don't be afraid to scare him twice in the same room. Why not have an actor actually "set up" the scare by bringing the customer

over to where the scare is going to happen. This method guarantees a super scare every time. Do whatever you can to get the customer to let his guard down. Once he does, he is yours. Remember, variety is not only the spice of life; it also is the guarantee for a scary haunted attraction.

9..... Actors are not forceful enough i.e. young girls Many times people will hire someone just to have a “warm body” in the scare. We would rather leave it empty than staff it with someone who can’t do the scare as I designed it to work. The same holds true for people with “low energy” in general. For example, some people just can’t bring themselves to jump out quickly or scream loudly. As a general rule, we don’t need these types of people working for us. Remember . . . the more energy, force, and presence the better.

10..... Middle and end of the group is not getting scared It takes constant concentration to make sure you are not only scaring people correctly, but are scaring the correct people. If only the first two or three people in every group are getting scare that means that most of the group is not. It is important to design some scares and properly train some actors to scare the middle and end of every group. It takes a lot of discipline to do this correctly. What it means is that you have to wait. While every impulse in your body is screaming “jump out now . . . jump out now”, you have to wait . . . wait until last person in that group is going by and then letting him have it. It will always work because by the time the last person in the group is going by, he has already let his guard down.