

Theatre Curtain Finishes Explained



Summary Points

Creating the right theatre curtains can be difficult if you are not sure exactly what you want.

You'll need to specify things like the type of material, the fullness you want, the height and width of the curtains and more.

You'll also need to know what finish you need for your curtains.

While you can certainly use the same finish as your existing curtain, knowing what's available will help ensure you get the right application for your needs.

Here are a main areas of stage curtain finishing you'll need to specify:

1. Top Finish: How do you want to hang your curtains and what will you be attaching them to?
2. Side Finish: Do your side finishes need to be extra strong for hand paging?
3. Bottom Finish: Will the curtains need weights or is a simple hem sufficient?

Read the next page to learn more about these important terms.

Please feel free to call us to help you better understand these concepts and how they relate to your theatre venue.

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Types of Finish

There are several different finishes for stage curtains, including top, side and bottom finishes. Each of these is different and will have a profound effect on how your finished stage curtains appear. Here's a bit more about each type of finish.

Top Finish

The top finish of your curtains will vary depending on how you intend to hang them. If you have a stationary curtain that will be suspended from a batten, possible top finishes include grommets, webbing or ties. Webbing is used in conjunction with grommets, but ties are good options if you want to hide the pipe or batten from which the curtain is suspended. There are other types of top finishes, as well, including using webbing only (used in temporary situations), or pipe pocket hem.

Side Finish

If you have a one-width curtain with a clean edge, you might not require any side finish at all. However, most curtains will require a finish. One type that is used often is the double-turned 22-hem. This is often found with backdrops and stage curtains and features 2 inches of fabric folded on one side and then an additional 2 inches folded over that prior to the hem being sewn.

Half-width turnbacks are another type of side finish that can be found with stage curtains. This type of finish is created by folding back 1 inch of fabric on the edge, and folding it once more, and then sewing the turnback in place. Some types of curtains have different side finishes on each side of the curtain – this is particularly true with traveller curtains. If the actual fabric edge is sewn without being folded, it is called "marrowing" though this is not often found with stage curtains.

Bottom Finish

The bottom finish for your stage curtain is very important. This is when weights will be added and sewn into the material. Usually, this is accomplished by sewing a 6-inch hem into the bottom of the curtain, which is then lined with a muslin pocket. Chain is inserted into the pocket, though it is offset by about two inches on the bottom to prevent the chain from dragging on the floor.

Standard hems are used for stationary curtains and smaller curtains, but these are not often found with stage curtains except for specialty applications. A lined pipe hem or pocket is used with cycloramas and backdrops to ensure that the curtain can be secured at the bottom to a pipe or batten (because these usually need to be pulled taut and have no fullness).

For further information please contact Specialty Theatre or an authorised Specialty Theatre dealer.

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