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# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2026 Season Edition • Confidential

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**01 WELCOME TO THE TEAM**

### Welcome To The Team

As a member of our team, you are now part of a unique and thrilling organization dedicated to providing unforgettable experiences for our guests. Whether you are a first-time seasonal worker or a returning veteran, we are excited to work with you to bring screams, laughter, and excitement to life.

We believe in creating a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive — respecting one another, collaborating creatively, and maintaining a safe space for both employees and guests. Southern Screams is more than just a haunted attraction — it is a community, a production, and an evolving story brought to life by talented individuals like you.

As you move through this handbook, you will find detailed expectations, policies, and resources to help you succeed. Whether you are playing a terrifying monster, running support staff, or working behind the scenes — your role matters.

**A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP**

Welcome to the Southern Screams Scream Team! We're excited to have you with us for another unforgettable season.

Your creativity, energy, and teamwork help bring Southern Screams to life, and we truly value your voice, ideas, and feedback. Together, we'll create an experience that is safe, exciting, and memorable for our guests and for each other.

Welcome aboard — let's make this season one to remember!

**2020**  
ESTABLISHED  
Charleston, SC

**4**  
BRANDS  
And Always Growing

**#1**  
OUR GOAL  
Immersive Entertainment

**Safety**  
ALWAYS  
First Priority

**02 OUR MISSION, VISION & VALUES**

**OUR MISSION**

Deliver unforgettable, immersive entertainment that amazes guests while prioritizing safety, professionalism, and storytelling excellence.

**OUR VISION**

To become the Southeast's premier destination for immersive entertainment, known for innovation, inclusion, creativity, and unmatched guest experience.

### Core Values



#### Safety First

Above all, we ensure our guests and team are safe in every aspect of our operations, from set construction to guest interactions.



#### Creativity & Innovation

We embrace imagination and bold ideas, constantly seeking new ways to frighten, surprise, and entertain.



#### Team Spirit

We value collaboration, mutual respect, and support. Every role is essential. Teamwork makes the screams work!



#### Inclusivity

We believe everyone deserves a place in the Southern Screams family and we celebrate diversity in all forms.



#### Professionalism

We show up on time, act responsibly, and treat others with dignity, both in and out of costume.

03

## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

### Equal Employment Opportunity

Southern Screams, LLC is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE). We are committed to hiring and retaining a diverse workforce and do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

We are proud to foster an environment of respect and inclusion where all individuals feel welcomed and valued. Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation of any kind is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

#### ALL EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS ARE BASED ON:

- Merit, qualifications, and business needs
- Applies to hiring, promotions, training, compensation, benefits, and terminations
- Reports of unlawful discrimination are treated confidentially and investigated promptly
- Retaliation against those who report in good faith is strictly prohibited

## 04 EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

### Employment Classifications

Your employment classification defines your rights, responsibilities, and benefit eligibility as a member of the Southern Screams team.

Classification	Hours	Description	Benefits
Full-Time	30+ hrs/wk	Year-round, consistent basis	Eligible
Part-Time	< 30 hrs/wk	Ongoing or seasonal	Limited
Seasonal	Varies	Limited period — most SS staff fall here	Not eligible*
Temporary/Contract	Project-based	Short-term via agreement or agency	Not eligible*

\* Unless otherwise specified in writing at time of hire.

### Rehire Consideration

- Employees with excellent attendance, teamwork, performance, and policy adherence are prioritized for future hiring
- Individuals with disciplinary issues, poor evaluations, or unapproved absences may not be invited back
- Rehire status will be communicated upon request and/or prior to future events

## 05 ONBOARDING & PROBATIONARY PERIOD

### Onboarding & Probationary Period

Our hiring process is designed to identify individuals who are passionate, reliable, and eager to contribute. Applicants complete an online application, submit required documentation, and may attend an interview or audition depending on position.

#### 1 Apply Online

Complete the application and submit all required documentation.

#### 2 Interview / Audition

Depending on your role, you may be asked to interview or audition.

#### 3 Orientation Session

Covers SS overview, safety training, costume assignments, and role-specific instruction.

#### 4 Dress Rehearsal

All employees attend a required Dress Rehearsal before season open for facility tour and additional safety training.

## 5 Probationary Period

Typically two weeks for seasonal roles. Performance, attendance, and conduct are closely monitored.

### PROBATIONARY PERIOD

During this period, both you and Southern Screams evaluate fit.

If expectations are not met, employment may be terminated without further warning.

Top performers are prioritized for advanced roles and leadership consideration.

## 06 EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

### Employee Expectations

Southern Screams is an immersive experience — and our employees are at the heart of it. We hold all team members to high standards to ensure the safety, enjoyment, and well-being of everyone involved.

- Safety** Adhere to all safety guidelines and immediately report any unsafe conditions or incidents. Never touch guests. Horseplay, unauthorized prop use, or safety violations can result in immediate dismissal.
- Professional Behavior** Always treat guests and coworkers with courtesy and respect. Harassment, bullying, and discrimination are strictly prohibited.
- Dependability** Arrive on time, attend all scheduled shifts, and notify your leader as early as possible if you cannot work. Tardiness and absenteeism affect the entire team.
- Appearance & Role** Follow all costume and makeup guidelines. Stay in character during guest-facing roles and use only approved dialogue.
- Respect for Property** Treat all equipment, sets, props, and costumes with care. Mishandling company property may result in financial liability.
- Teamwork** Assist others, take direction from leads, and communicate openly. Teamwork makes the screams work!

### VIOLATION OF THESE EXPECTATIONS

Any violation may result in disciplinary action, including immediate termination.

See Section 26 (Disciplinary Policy) for the full corrective action process.

**07 HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

### Harassment & Discrimination Policy

Southern Screams maintains a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment or discrimination. We are committed to maintaining a respectful, inclusive, and safe workplace for all team members and guests.

<p><b>HARASSMENT INCLUDES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct</li> <li>• Offensive jokes, slurs, or name-calling</li> <li>• Sexual harassment: unwanted advances, comments, or contact</li> <li>• Intimidation, threats, or bullying</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISCRIMINATION INCLUDES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treating individuals differently based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any protected characteristic</li> <li>• Any action that creates a hostile or unwelcoming environment</li> </ul>
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#### Reporting Procedures

- Report immediately to your leader or leadership if you feel harassed or discriminated against
- Reports are kept confidential to the extent possible
- Retaliation against those who report misconduct is strictly prohibited
- All complaints investigated promptly — disciplinary action including termination may result

**08 DRUG & ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE**

### Drug & Alcohol-Free Workplace

Southern Screams has a strict zero-tolerance policy regarding drug and alcohol use. Employees must be sober, alert, and fit for duty at all times while on company property or representing the brand.

Category	Policy
Illegal Drugs	No possession, use, or distribution on company property
Alcohol	No use during shifts or while in costume
Reporting for Duty	Never report to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol
Prescription Medications	Notify leadership confidentially if taking prescriptions that may impair performance
Tobacco / Vaping	Permitted in designated outdoor areas only — never in costume or visible to guests

**VIOLATION CONSEQUENCES**  
 Any violation may result in immediate termination.  
 Random or post-accident drug and alcohol testing may be conducted where permitted by law.

## 09 CONFIDENTIALITY & MEDIA POLICY

### Confidentiality & Media Policy

At Southern Screams, confidentiality is critical for protecting our creative concepts, proprietary processes, and the privacy of both guests and team members. All employees are expected to exercise discretion.

What Is Confidential?	Examples
Creative Content	Scripts, character designs, storylines, scare sequences
Technical Assets	Set layouts, lighting rigs, special effects mechanisms
Internal Operations	Employee info, schedules, internal communications
Business Information	Financials, strategies, marketing plans
Guest Privacy	Guest names, images, and incident-related information

#### Media Policy

- Do not speak to the press or represent Southern Screams unless explicitly authorized
- Do not record, photograph, or livestream inside production areas without permission
- Never share images, names, or personal information of guests without consent
- If a guest is involved in an incident, never disclose or speculate publicly or online

## 10 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

### Communication Channels

Clear communication is essential to keeping our fast-paced, high-energy operation running smoothly. Southern Screams provides several official channels to keep every team member informed and engaged.

Channel	Purpose
Leaders / Leads	Daily operations, questions, and shift-specific instructions
Leadership	Escalated concerns including pay, benefits, and policy questions
Email / Announcements	Updates, shift changes, or weather-related notices — check frequently
Bulletin Boards	Located backstage for schedule postings, events, and news
Facebook Group	Company-owned group for SS-related info. Keep posts professional.

**EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION**

In an emergency, updates are provided via in-person announcements, text alerts, emails, and designated safety personnel. Staying informed is your responsibility.

**11 BREAKS & MEAL PERIODS****Breaks & Meal Periods**

Southern Screams is committed to providing all employees with appropriate break times. These breaks are important for personal well-being and maintaining high performance throughout the night.

Break Type	Eligibility	Duration	Paid?	Notes
Rest Break	Shifts > 4 hours	5–10 minutes	Yes	Designated break areas only
Meal Break	Shifts > 8 hours	30 minutes	No	Clock out; off-stage areas only

- Do not take unscheduled breaks without permission from your leader
- Eating or drinking permitted only in designated off-stage areas
- Return promptly from breaks — late returns affect the entire operation

**12 COMPENSATION & PAYROLL****Compensation & Payroll**

Southern Screams believes in transparent and timely pay practices. Compensation varies based on role, experience, and employment classification. All pay rates are communicated at the time of hire.

Topic	Detail
Pay Rates	Communicated at time of hire, re-hire, or contract renewal
Performance Roles	Lead actors and technical crew may have higher base rates
Pay Schedule	Two pay periods per seasonal event via direct deposit or paper check
Pay Stubs	Provided each period showing hours, taxes, and deductions
Timekeeping	All hourly employees must clock in and out using the designated system
Time Adjustments	Must be submitted to a leader for approval
Payroll Issues	Direct to your leader or leadership immediately; resolved within two weeks

**TIMEKEEPING REMINDER**

Falsifying time records is grounds for disciplinary action, including termination.  
 Keep personal records of hours worked to identify discrepancies quickly.

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**SCHEDULING, ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY**

**Scheduling, Attendance & Punctuality**

Southern Screams' schedule changes regularly based on event dates, ticket sales, and staffing needs. We strive to create fair and balanced shifts that support operations and provide opportunities for all team members.

- Arrive at least 5 minutes before your shift in appropriate dress code and report to your leader
- Clock in and out for every shift
- Be in full costume and makeup, ready to work at the designated start time
- Remain in your assigned area until dismissed by a leader at end of night
- All shift swaps must be pre-approved by a leader

Situation	Requirement	Consequence
Tardiness	Notify leader ASAP if running late	Repeated tardiness = disciplinary action
Absence	Minimum 4 hours' notice (except emergencies)	Repeated absences = disciplinary action
No Call / No Show	Not acceptable under any circumstance	Immediate termination

**RELIABILITY IS REWARDED**

Employees with excellent attendance are more likely to be promoted, rehired, or selected for special roles. Willingness to work high-demand nights is considered when assigning shifts.

## 14 EMPLOYEE PERKS & DISCOUNTS

### Employee Perks & Discounts

Working at Southern Screams comes with some spooky perks! We appreciate your hard work and aim to make your experience fun and rewarding throughout the season.

Perk	Detail
Event Admission	Unlimited admission to Southern Screams events (for yourself)
Guest Passes	6 passes each to Southern Screams Haunted House, Holy City Christmas, and Brewery Blast Laser Tag
Food & Beverage	Discounted food and beverages at Holy City Brewing during the season
Gift Shop	10% discount at Southern Screams Gift Shop
Merchandise	Free Southern Screams t-shirt, keychain, sticker, and more!
Referral Bonus	Refer a new hire who completes their first full season — enter to win a gift card!
Wrap Party	End-of-season celebration with awards, food, and fun
Team Events	Team building events and periodic team dinners throughout the season

## 15 PERFORMER CONDUCT GUIDELINES

### Performer Conduct Guidelines

Our Scream Team is the heart of Southern Screams. Your commitment to safety, professionalism, and consistency creates memorable experiences for our guests. Every person plays a vital role in shaping each performance night.

#### Performance Standards

- Always perform your assigned character to the best of your ability
- Stay in character while in front of guests unless an emergency arises
- Commit to your scare zones — do not wander into areas where you are not assigned
- Remain in your designated area until dismissed directly by a leader
- Support newer cast members through encouragement and example
- Maintain silence in backstage areas during performances to avoid sound bleed

#### NEVER TOUCH GUESTS

Physical contact with guests is strictly prohibited under any circumstances.

Keep a safe distance during all scares. Monitor guests for distress and notify staff if needed.

## Guest Communication & Professionalism

- Be courteous, professional, and friendly at all times
- Never argue with a guest — redirect concerns to a leader immediately
- Use clear, respectful communication even when correcting guest behavior
- Do not use phones or personal devices while in costume or on-set
- Report any injury, costume malfunction, or show-affecting issue to your leader immediately

## Show Readiness

- Arrive with enough time for costuming and makeup — be in place before opening
- Hydrate, warm up, and check your zone for hazards before showtime
- Keep your voice and body conditioned — haunted house performing is physically demanding

## 16 WARDROBE & MAKEUP

### Wardrobe & Makeup

Our cast's visual presentation is a critical part of the guest experience. Southern Screams provides all costumes, makeup, and effects to fully embody your character. Treat every item with care and respect.

Category	Requirement
Costume Assignment	Assigned based on role — may not be altered or omitted without permission
Condition	Report tears, damage, or missing components to your leader immediately
Storage	Never take costumes, masks, or props off premises without authorization
Liability	You may be financially responsible for lost or damaged items due to neglect
Makeup	Applied on-site by FX team. Do not alter without approval.
Allergies	Notify leadership of any allergies before makeup, masks, or special FX are applied
Appearance	Costumes and makeup must be complete before entering any guest-facing area
Personal Items	Phones, bags, and street clothes must never be visible to guests

- Keep dressing areas and shared workspaces tidy and organized
- Dispose of trash properly — no food or drink may be disposed of on premises
- Alert maintenance or leaders to any hazards or damage

## 17 PROP & SET SAFETY

### Prop & Set Safety

Southern Screams' elaborate sets and props are crucial to the guest experience but pose risks if not handled properly. All employees must follow safety procedures when interacting with set pieces and props.

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Never alter or relocate props without leader approval
- Do not climb, lean against, or hang from set pieces
- Only use fog machines, lighting, and effects as instructed
- Report broken props or scenery immediately

#### ACTOR-SPECIFIC SAFETY

- Memorize your zone and path to avoid collisions
- Note tight corners, blind spots, and uneven floors
- Emergency exits must never be blocked by props
- Know the nearest exits in your area at all times

### Crew Protocols

- Wear protective equipment (gloves, goggles) when building, painting, or adjusting sets
- Use ladders, tools, and power equipment only if trained and authorized
- Label and store hazardous materials safely away from public areas

## 18 SAFETY & EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

### Safety & Emergency Protocols

Safety is everyone's responsibility. All employees must adhere to all protocols at all times and participate in scheduled drills and training sessions. Remain calm, act quickly, and follow leadership in all emergency situations.

#### CODE RED

Fire Emergency

- 1 Announce "CODE RED" three times on walkie — state your location
- 2 Attempt to extinguish ONLY if safe to do so
- 3 Evacuate guests calmly and guide to emergency exits
- 4 Meet at designated muster point and await instructions

#### CODE GREEN

Medical Emergency

- 1 Announce "CODE GREEN" three times on walkie — state your location
- 2 Do not move the injured person unless in immediate danger
- 3 Use first aid kit if trained and applicable
- 4 Follow all directions from EMS and/or leaders

**GENERAL SAFETY EXPECTATIONS**

- Report all hazards or unsafe behavior immediately
- Wear proper footwear and attire to prevent injuries
- Follow lifting and movement protocols for heavy props
- Taking shortcuts or ignoring safety protocols will not be tolerated

**Power Outage**

Stay calm. Keep guests in place unless directed to evacuate.

**Security Threat**

Stay back. Alert leadership or on-site police immediately.

**Evacuation**

Guide guests calmly to nearest marked emergency exit.

**First Aid Kits**

Stationed throughout the venue. Know your nearest kit.

**19 LOST & FOUND POLICY**

**Lost & Found Policy**

Southern Screams maintains a Lost and Found system to manage misplaced or recovered items. Both guest and employee belongings must be handled with honesty and care at all times.

Situation	What To Do
You find a lost item	Turn it in immediately to the Lost and Found station. Notify a leader for valuables.
You lose an item	Report to your leader ASAP. Check Lost and Found at end of shift.
Guest reports lost item	Notify leadership. Never promise a guest their item will be found.
Company liability	Southern Screams is not responsible for personal items left unsecured.

**20 PARKING & TRANSPORTATION**

**Parking & Transportation**

Southern Screams provides on-site employee parking, but spaces fill up quickly on busy nights. Arrive early to secure employee parking and allow time to get settled before your shift begins.

Rule	Detail
Designated Areas	Park only in employee-designated areas
Emergency Lanes	Do not block fire lanes, emergency exits, or guest paths
Vehicle Security	Lock your vehicle; Southern Screams is not liable for lost or stolen items

Carpooling	Encouraged to reduce congestion on busy nights
After-Hours Safety	Use the buddy system when walking to and from your vehicle

## 21 GUEST COMPLAINTS & INCIDENT REPORTS

### Guest Complaints & Incident Reports

Ensuring a high-quality guest experience is a top priority at Southern Screams. While we strive for excellence, issues can arise. It is crucial to handle guest concerns professionally and promptly every time.

#### 1 Listen Actively

Do not interrupt the guest. Give them your full attention and remain calm.

#### 2 Stay Calm & Empathetic

Never argue, blame others, or promise more than you are authorized to deliver.

#### 3 Solve or Escalate

If you cannot resolve the issue, immediately refer the guest to your leader.

#### 4 File an Incident Report

Required for guest injuries, medical emergencies, near misses, or escalated complaints. Include names, times, locations, and descriptions.

#### 5 Maintain Confidentiality

Do not discuss incident details outside the leadership team. Submit reports before leaving your shift.

## 22 WEATHER & OUTDOOR WORKING CONDITIONS

### Weather & Outdoor Working Conditions

Many roles at Southern Screams require working outdoors or in non-climate-controlled environments. Be aware of weather-related risks and take precautions to stay safe every night.

Condition	Guidelines
Hot Weather	Stay hydrated. Take shade or rest breaks. Wear breathable layers under costumes.
Cold / Wet Weather	Dress in layers under your costume. Waterproof footwear and outerwear encouraged.
Severe Weather	Operations may be paused or shut down. Follow leader instructions and shelter as directed.

**IF YOU FEEL UNWELL**

Notify a leader immediately if you feel faint, dizzy, overheated, or ill.  
No performance standard is worth your health and safety.

**23 ILLNESS & CONTAGIOUS DISEASE GUIDELINES****Illness & Contagious Disease Guidelines**

To protect the health of guests and team, Southern Screams follows public health guidelines related to contagious illnesses including COVID-19, flu, and other transmissible diseases throughout the season.

Situation	Required Action
Sick before your shift	Stay home. Contact your leader ASAP. Follow standard call-out procedures.
Symptoms arise during shift	Report to a leader immediately. You may be sent home to prevent spread.
Prevention on-site	Wash hands frequently. Use sanitizer stations. Sanitize shared tools and costume pieces.
Mask & Vaccination Policies	Updated based on current local, state, or federal regulations. All employees follow current guidelines.

**24 PHOTOGRAPHY, FILMING & MEDIA RELEASE****Photography, Filming & Media Release**

Southern Screams regularly photographs and films on-site for promotional and archival purposes. Your presence on the property implies consent to be recorded as part of company activities.

Scenario	Policy
Company photography / filming	You may be photographed or filmed while working for advertising, social media, or training use
Personal photos backstage	Permitted during non-operational hours with approval. Never in guest-facing zones.
Confidential areas	Never record or photograph command centers, schedules, or dressing areas
Guest photography	Guests may photograph in permitted areas. Do not interrupt unless safety is a concern.
Media inquiries	Direct all press requests to leadership. Do not speak on behalf of Southern Screams.

## 25 PERSONAL PHONE & SOCIAL MEDIA USE

### Personal Phone & Social Media Use

While personal devices are a part of everyday life, use of phones or social media during your shift must be restricted to maintain professionalism and preserve the guest's immersive experience.

#### PHONE USAGE RULES

- Keep phones silenced in bags or storage during shifts
- Do not use phones in guest-facing areas or in costume
- Emergency calls must be handled away from sets or during approved breaks

#### SOCIAL MEDIA CONDUCT

- Do not share behind-the-scenes content without approval
- No derogatory or offensive content about coworkers, leadership, or guests
- Check with leadership before posting any promotional content

#### VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY

May result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination or legal consequences.

## 26 DISCIPLINARY POLICY

### Disciplinary Policy

At Southern Screams, discipline is most effective when based on coaching and corrective action. Our policy is designed to guide behavior and support long-term success, not simply to punish mistakes.

#### Progressive Discipline Process

##### 1st Offense

##### Verbal Warning

Verbal feedback and coaching note — developmental, not punitive.

##### 2nd Offense

##### Written Warning

Formal written documentation with clear expectations for improvement.

##### 3rd Offense

##### Final Warning / Suspension

Final opportunity to correct behavior. May include suspension.

##### 4th Offense

##### Termination

Employment ends.

**IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OFFENSES — NO PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**

- No call / no show | • Physical violence or threats
- Theft or intentional property damage | • Substance use on the job
- Harassment or discrimination | • Insubordination

**27 RESIGNATION & TERMINATION****Resignation & Termination**

We recognize that circumstances may arise where an employee chooses to leave or must be released from their position. This section outlines our process for both voluntary and involuntary separation.

Type	Process	Notes
Voluntary Resignation	Provide at least 72 hours' notice in writing	Return all company property before final shift
Job Abandonment	No-call/no-show may be treated as abandonment	Grounds for immediate termination
Involuntary Termination	Due to policy violations, poor performance, or misconduct	Final paycheck issued per legal requirements
Rehire Eligibility	Determined by performance, behavior, and departure reason	Terminated for cause generally not eligible

**AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT**

All employment with Southern Screams, LLC is at-will. Either the employee or Southern Screams may end the relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without prior notice. Nothing in this handbook creates a contract of employment or any guarantee of continued employment.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT

### Acknowledgment Of Receipt

All employees are required to sign this acknowledgment confirming they have received, read, and understood the Southern Screams Employee Handbook. Please sign and return this page to your leader.

- I understand this handbook outlines the policies, procedures, and expectations for Southern Screams employees.
- I agree to follow the policies described and to seek clarification if I have any questions.
- I understand that violation of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- I acknowledge that leadership may update or revise this handbook at any time and that I will be notified of changes.
- I understand that my employment with Southern Screams, LLC is at-will.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position / Role

S O U T H E R N S C R E A M S , L L C — Confidential Onboarding Material — 2026