



Soundcheck Procedures

Introduction

These procedures are designed for, but not limited to, a team that has control over their own in-ear mixes via a personal monitor (like an Aviom or P16) or a wireless app.



If this is a new concept for your team, don't start without warning. Get the worship leader on your side and communicate your expectations to the team ahead of time. Send them this document, if you like.

When you introduce the new procedure, ensure that the team has received documented expectations. For example, "Soundcheck begins at 8am. All instruments should be connected, in-ears in, and everyone ready to go by or before 8am."

Soundtech Ground Rules & Tips

Never skip a soundcheck just because it's the same team as last time

This is a dangerous habit. These procedures are in place to allow a very fast (but effective) soundcheck that will avoid potential surprises (bad cables, dead batteries, etc.)

After each step, wait a moment to give the team a few seconds to adjust their in-ear mixes

Take a quick look at the band members between each step, especially if there are any new team members on stage. Show them that you are there to serve them!

Use a talkback mic

It's hard to not sound aggressive when screaming across the room, "CAN YOU TURN YOUR AMP DOWN ON STAGE?!?" Use your talkback as a discrete, professional way to address your team.

Make sure your talkback is somehow routed to the ears of the team. Check to make sure they can hear you without being loud and distorted.

Enforce the "No Noodle Rule": No one is playing until it is their turn In an effort to avoid chaos, no one should be noodling out of turn

During soundcheck, the sound tech is in charge. (Always with love), use your talkback mic to remind team members not to play out of turn (avoid calling out anyone specific).

If necessary, briefly mute someone who is noodling out of turn. Often they don't realize what they're doing, but a quick on/off of their instrument in their ears will send a message without calling them out by name.



Give the team the ‘Why Behind the What’

You aren't a dictator. You're doing this to help the team sound their best. You want their personal mixes to sound awesome. When they realize the benefits, you'll have less issues.

Always be aware of your tone and body language with the team

A snide remark or heavy sigh can immediately ruin the vibe on stage before the first song is even rehearsed.

Be sure to smile and to speak with love.



Ground Rules for the Band

When soundcheck begins, everyone should have their instrument(s) plugged in and have their in-ears inserted and turned on.

*From the beginning, everyone should be listening to their mix so they can make their changes as **each** instrument is checked.*

Everyone needs to have the sound tech's talkback mic turned up in their ears

Effective communication is key.

No one should be playing until it is their turn

In an effort to avoid chaos, no one should be noodling out of turn.

During soundcheck, the sound tech and the worship leader/music director are in charge

This will ensure a quick and easy run-through.

Everyone checks at full volume.

This goes for everyone, band and vocals.

It hurts everyone if you soundcheck at a low volume and then get loud during the service.

To avoid having to make drastic changes to your in-ears, everyone should soundcheck at full volume from the top of soundcheck.

Don't play something completely irrelevant

If your worship set doesn't contain Victor Wooten's version of Amazing Grace, then neither should your soundcheck!

Check with something that sets your team up for a win and doesn't cause wasted time or effort.





Proper Soundcheck Procedures

FOH Talkback Mic

From the top, ensure that the band can hear you so you can lead a fast, effective soundcheck.

MD (Music Director) Mic

If your team has an MD mic set up (if not, I highly suggest it), get this happening in the ears early on. A good MD will help you to keep the team in-line during soundcheck.

The MD can also communicate issues to you through the mic so you don't have people yelling to you from across the room.

Drums

Start with 'time' (a groove on kick, snare, and hats). These all affect each other and will save you a little time compared to doing separate checks on kicks, snares, hats, and overheads individually. It's also more fun for the drummer!

Next, check individual tom drums.

Now, check any 'extras' (electronic drum pads, extra snares, triggers, etc.)

Lastly, Full kit (make sure the drummer is playing at full volume).

Bass

Don't play something irrelevant! (see Band Ground Rules)

Check the clean tone (full volume-up and down the neck)

Any effects (dirty tones, etc.)

Any bass synthesizers that may be used (yummy).

Electric Guitar(s)

Start with the loudest tone they have (for setting gain).

Cycle through any effects that will be used. (If any effect is louder or softer than the rest, now is the time to make quick adjustments).

Acoustic Guitar(s)

Start with a strong strum pattern (for setting gain).

Also check any fingerpicking to avoid any issues with gates that may be engaged.

Keys

Start with a piano sound. Everyone knows what a piano “should” sound like but you may not know what they’re going for with any crazy pad or synth patches.

Cycle through any patches they are planning to use. If any patch is louder or softer than the rest, now is the time to make quick adjustments.

Click and Loops

It’s generally best to check click last. Now that the band members have a volume context for their own instruments, they can determine how loud to set the click relative to their own volume.

Check the Full Band

(At this time, any vocals would be for a band reference point only.)



Vocal Soundcheck

Cycle a Big Chorus

All vocals should sing at full volume all the way through

It does no one any good to sing at half-volume for parts of this soundcheck. Even if it isn't the part they will sing during the actual song, everyone should sing full-volume all the way through.

During the check, you may wish to turn the band down slightly to check the vocals individually and then as a group.

Avoid turning the band all the way down or completely singling out any one vocalist. (This may make them self-conscious and they won't give you a proper volume during sound check).

Put the band back in to hear everything together.

Take a moment to make sure everyone has what they need on stage.

Quickly allow any necessary mix changes to occur.

Start rehearsal!*

**These procedures may seem like a lot of work, but your mixes will sound better, the band's in-ear mixes will sound better, and you will avoid many potential time-wasting issues that may have otherwise occurred.*

(Remember that consistency is key: once this has become second nature for you and your team, you can easily knock this out in 3 to 5 minutes or less!)

Ascension Worship

