

Guidelines Concerning the Use of Props

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1. Purpose of proposal

While there has been considerable debate over the definition and use of props in competition within the **Ontario Guild of Town Criers** over the years, and since there is nothing concrete within the Guild rules, the following are set out as guideline for Town Crier Competitions.

2. Preamble

The use of props in a competition is not only discouraged but should be considered inappropriate. While the entertainment value may be substantial, it is not perceived to be part of a traditional Crier's persona.

3. Attention Seeking Devices

An attention seeking device shall be considered to be and include the following:

- a) Bell
- b) Horn
- c) Gun
- d) Drum
- e) Cymbal or gong
- f) Chimes
- g) Triangle and striking instrument
- h) Pot or Pan and Striking device
- i) Heritage or religious items; eg. - feathers/talking sticks, which may act as "a device" and that originates from legitimate customs of the Crier's heritage, religion, etc.
- j) Any device that alters or affects air currents, which when combined with another device, is designed to make noise. It must be portable enough to be carried on one's person.

Items A-D are the traditional attention devices. The others have also been used but in order to not be considered a prop, the device should be consistent with the time period of the Crier's uniform AND used in the regular performance of their duties.

This rule gives a Crier who might wear a less traditional uniform, for some reason or emphasis, an opportunity to have a suitable attention seeking device

4. Items not considered Attention Seeking Devices other than Props

Non attention seeking devices when an accessory to the Crier's uniform shall include but are not restricted to the following:

- a) Swords
- b) Hat Feathers
- c) Scrolls
- d) Gloves
- e) Monocles
- f) Eyeglasses as required by prescription or for reading
- g) Pouches
- h) Sheaths
- i) Other utility holders or belts

The purpose of this rule is to allow Criers, who by nature of their uniform, are required to replace items on their persons or need to be able to read their scroll. Since scrolls are not necessarily or always time appropriate, other items from which to read should be accepted.

5. Definition of a Prop

The word prop is a noun and defined in one dictionary as something that serves as a means of support or assistance. Theatrically, it means, among others, as any stage theatre or tangible object that is touched by the performer. This refers to smaller portable or rigid objects as opposed to larger "set designs". For our purposes we can additionally say that anything that is not considered to be an attention getting device, used over and above that which is considered part of the Crier's uniform, should be considered a prop.

6. What are considered Props

A prop shall be considered anything not outlined in Section 3 and 4 above.

Anything attached to, carried by or hanging from the Crier that does not meet BOTH of the following conditions:

- i} consistent with the time period of the Crier's uniform or from an older time period and
- ii} part of the accessories used in the everyday performance of duty.

Please note that the Crier may be penalized for using an unacceptable prop and shall also include the following:

- a) Electronic devices
- b) Published books
- c) Magazines, newspapers
- d) Packages, parcels or bags
- e) Vendor products
- f) Live animals
- g) Puppets, mannequins or marionettes
- h) Other battery or electrically run items
- i) Jars, bottles, plastic container or ceramics
- j) Caricatures, time inappropriate crests, cartoons or logos
- k) Hidden items that could be used during cries
- l) Chairs, benches, stools or similar items (*except as provided*)*
- m) Any Magnifying device
- n) Tinted or clear eyewear except as required
- o) Propellers
- p) Scrolls longer than one (1) meter, with the following exception - see 7b

** This is to protect the tradition of stumping. This does not suggest that the Crier should be sitting to deliver the cry. The Crier should always stand when practicable.*

The purpose of this rule is to not allow phones, computers, breakable items, fans, lights magnifying glasses or anything that will detract from the Crier's uniform.

7. Exceptions

Notwithstanding the above the following exceptions should be allowed:

Any device/animal/special need that is medically required for physically or mentally challenged persons as deemed by Canada Human Rights Act to meet their accommodation requirements”.

- a) Wheelchairs or similar item for the chronically disabled Crier or one temporarily experiencing exceptional physical circumstances
- b) Large print scrolls for the visually challenged
- c) Service animals
- d) Cochlear implants and/or hearing aids or speech altering devices to assist speech impaired Criers.
- e) Medical or surgical procedures designed to assist with a Crier's diagnosed disability
- f) Other eyewear not listed above
- g) Cries written in Braille
- h) At the discretion of the Host Crier, cries specifically intended to promote the goods or services of contemporary vendors or sponsors.

Obviously this allows a Town Crier in good standing to participate as an equal.

8. Penalty

It is recommended that as a penalty for violating these rules, the Crier should have a deduction of ten (10) points per violation per cry

9. Conclusion

The Host Crier has the right to determine what he/she wishes to issue as exceptions, to permit what dress or props are deemed to be appropriate for the theme of the respective competition. The Host Crier would have to specifically list the exception at the time of announcing the competition.

The above does not apply to Provincial competitions.

If a Crier is in doubt as to what may or may not be a prop, it is suggested that the Crier speak to the Host Crier, who would then approach the judges and together make a decision that is final. The Crier would be told as soon as the decision has been made.

Approved at OGTC Board of Directors Meeting, October 19th, 2017