

APPLYING TO BURLESQUE FESTIVALS

A Best-Practices Checklist for Performers

Festival requirements vary, but most applications ask for similar information about you, your act, your performance video, and your technical needs. Prepare these materials in advance, then customize them for each opportunity.

1. BEFORE YOU APPLY

Read the festival's application, rules, and performer terms **before paying a fee or preparing your submission.**

☐ **Check the opportunity.**

Confirm:

Dates + Location • Deadline • Notification Date • Application Fee • Showcase/Competition • Categories • Act Length • Submission Limits • Technical Restrictions

☐ **Check the cost.**

Know what the festival provides and what you will cover:

Travel • Lodging • Baggage • Meals • Local Transportation • Act Expenses • Missed Work

Compare your estimated costs with any **performance pay, prizes, travel assistance, lodging, meals, or other benefits** offered.

Going international? Research applicable passport, immigration/work authorization, insurance, tax, customs, and travel requirements before committing.

☐ **Choose the right act.**

Ask:

Why this festival? Why this act?

Consider the festival's format, audience, categories, judging/selection criteria, and programming. Your newest act isn't necessarily your strongest submission.

2. BUILD YOUR APPLICATION KIT

Keep one folder of reusable materials so you aren't starting from scratch with every application.

☐ **Performer Materials**

Stage/legal name • Pronouns • Location • Email • Socials/website • 25-, 50-, and 100-word bios • Notable performances/titles when requested

Bio Tip: Tell them who you are as an artist and what distinguishes your work—not your entire résumé.

☐ **Promo Materials**

Current high-resolution photo(s) • Photographer credit • Permission for promotional use

When possible, keep vertical and horizontal options.

☐ **Act Materials**

For each act, keep:

Title • Exact runtime • Music/artist • Short description • Costume/colors • Props • Starting/ending position • Setup/cleanup • Stagehand needs • Lighting/sound • Special effects

When in doubt, disclose it. If it spills, sprays, burns, flies, stains, sticks, hangs, requires assembly, or needs assistance, tell the festival. Venue rules vary.

3. MAKE YOUR VIDEO COUNT

Your submission video may be the selection committee's primary experience of your work.

Clarity matters more than expensive production.

☐ **Make sure they can see:**

The complete act • Full-body movement • Costume/reveals • Stage presence • Facial expression • Musicality

Whenever possible, submit the **exact act you intend to perform**. Confirm that rehearsal footage is permitted before using it.

☐ **Avoid:**

Highlight reels • Partial performances • Excessive editing • Obstructed views • Distant footage • Long MC introductions

☐ **Test your link.**

Open it in an **incognito/private browser**.

Can you watch it without logging in, entering a password, or requesting access?

If you can't, neither can the selection committee.

4. BEFORE YOU HIT SUBMIT

Your application is also a producer's first glimpse of what working with you may be like.

- ☐ Correct act and category selected
- ☐ Runtime meets requirements
- ☐ Instructions and word limits followed

- ☐ Video is correct and link works
- ☐ Props/technical/cleanup needs disclosed
- ☐ Promo photo and credit are correct
- ☐ Available for required dates
- ☐ Fees, compensation, travel, and lodging understood
- ☐ Terms and conditions read
- ☐ Application proofread and submission confirmation saved

Give yourself time to review. When possible, finish the application and return to it later with fresh eyes before submitting.

5. KEEP PERSPECTIVE

Festival selection is **curation**, not simply a ranking of performers. Producers may be balancing styles, concepts, music, experience levels, technical requirements, competition categories, and the needs of the overall show.

A non-selection doesn't automatically mean your act wasn't strong. Review what you can improve, continue developing your work, and keep applying.

If accepted, immediately record any deadlines for **contracts, music, tech forms, promo materials, travel, rehearsals, and check-in.**

FESTIVAL-READY QUICK CHECK

Before application season, have:

- ☐ Short bios
- ☐ Promo photos + credits
- ☐ Performance video links
- ☐ Act descriptions + runtimes
- ☐ Music information
- ☐ Costume + prop information
- ☐ Technical/setup/cleanup needs
- ☐ Current social + website links

READ THE RULES • CHOOSE THE RIGHT ACT • CHECK YOUR RUNTIME • TEST YOUR VIDEO • DISCLOSE YOUR TECH • KNOW YOUR COSTS • PROOFREAD • SUBMIT

And keep track of which acts you have submitted to each festival!

Producers should not have to remind you which act you submitted for their event!