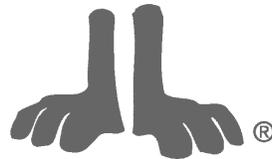


STREET CHARACTER[®]
COSTUME
INSTRUCTIONS



MASCOT SOLUTIONS

1-888-MASCOTS

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Printed in Canada

SCI/IDDL-9805

PART 1: DRESSING INSTRUCTIONS

~ Actions to Take Before Dressing ~

Before your mascot performer dresses in the costume, he should do the following:

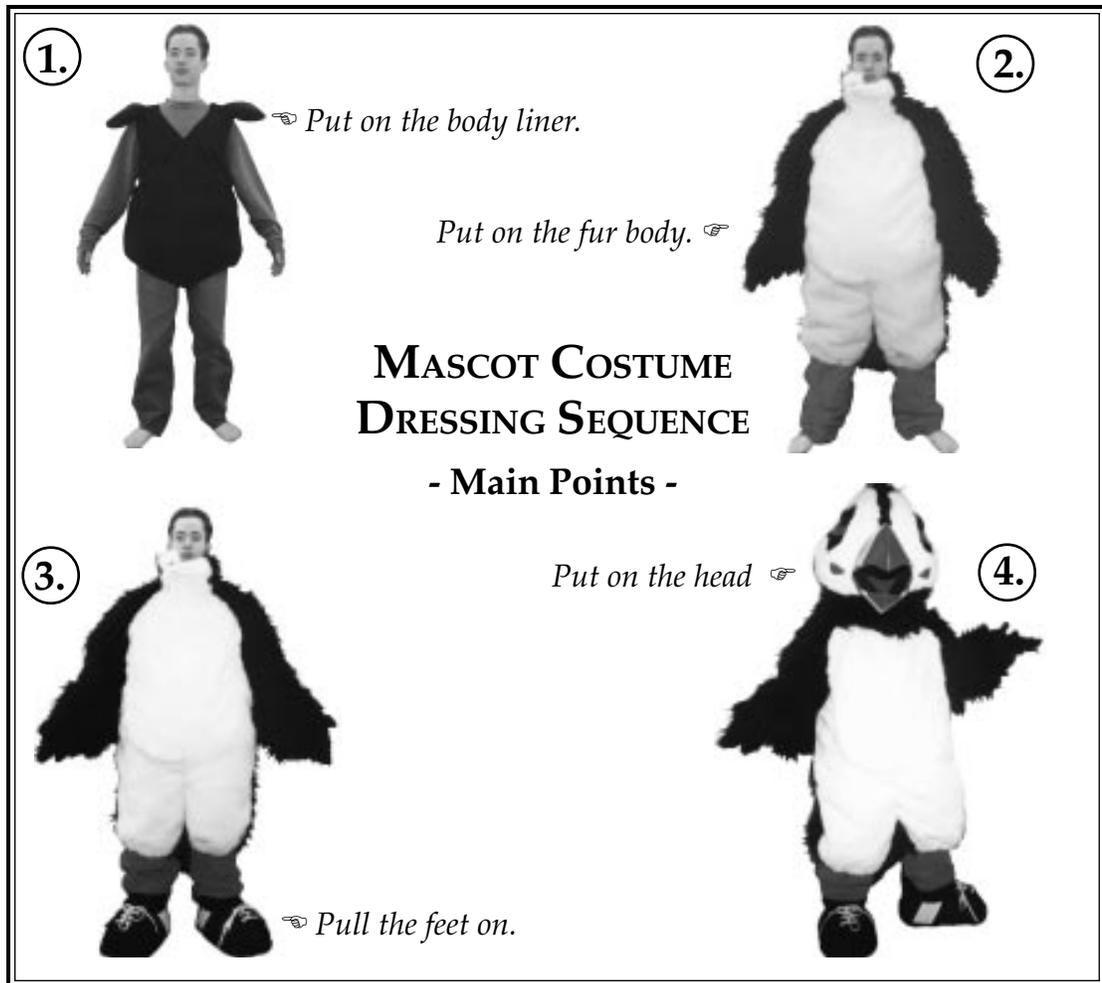
1. Take a shower/bathe (to help keep the inside of the costume clean).
2. Dress in the appropriate undergarments for the climate conditions of the venue. For indoor performances year-round or outside performances in warm weather, gym shorts and a cotton T-shirt are recommended. For outdoor performances in cold weather, we recommend your performer wear full piece thermal underwear or a track suit. We also recommend he wear a sweat band or bandanna around his forehead to prevent perspiration from dripping down into his eyes.
3. Inspect the costume for cleanliness, damage and general appearance.

~ Dressing in the Costume ~

Regardless of what type of Street Character[®] mascot you have, the costume dressing sequence will be as follows.

- ☞ Put on body liner or padding if provided with your costume. For cooling effect, insert frozen gel packs into the pockets of the body liner.
- ☞ Put on the fur body.
- ☞ Put on whatever articles of clothing go over the body (e.g. shirts, vests, shorts etc.).
- ☞ Pull on the feet using the webbing straps attached.
- ☞ Put on the head and fasten the chin strap. Performers should ensure that the helmet fits properly. If necessary, pieces of paper towel can be used to give a snug fit.
- ☞ Put on the hands.

For further information, please refer to the general illustration on page 2.



At functions where your performer is required to wear specialized athletic footwear such as ice or in-line skates, your performer may have to dress in *sneaker covers*.

The procedure for putting these sneaker covers on is listed below.

- ☞ After getting dressed in the body of the costume, put on the sneaker covers, pulling them slightly over calf.
- ☞ Put on your ice/in-line skates.
- ☞ Pull down the sneaker covers.
- ☞ Feed the supplied webbing straps between the skateboot and the blade of the skates and secure the cover.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Sneaker covers that can be used with ice and in-line skates will only have been included with your costume if you requested them at the time of purchase.*

~ Getting Acclimatized to the Costume ~

It will take a while for your performer to feel completely at ease wearing the costume. Because of this, we recommend he spend some time getting familiar with each component separately before trying on the whole outfit. Accordingly, your performer should wear the head for a while to get accustomed to working with limited peripheral vision. He should then try out the body of the costume to get accustomed to working with large limbs.

Your performer should then practice wearing the body and the head together. This may initially cause him to feel a bit claustrophobic, but that sensation will pass if he remains calm. The key to remaining calm is to breathe normally. Whatever your performer does, he must not panic or start hyperventilating, lest he feel even more claustrophobic.

After your performer has tried the head and body together, he should remove them and try on the feet. Because a mascot's feet are quite large, your performer will initially find them clumsy to walk in. This too shall pass. The secret to walking in them is to adopt a slightly wider stride and/or a swagger. Both will keep his feet sufficiently apart to prevent stumbling.

Once your performer is accustomed to the separate costume components, he can dress in the whole outfit and begin moving around in it. Your performer should not try any elaborate movements at first. Rather, he should simply get accustomed to walking around and moving his arms and legs. To help himself gauge the success of these basic movements, your performer should **practice in front of a full length mirror**. Then later, with the help of a spotter, your performer should try climbing up and down stairs and navigating his way through tight spaces.

When your performer has reached his comfort zone with this, he can begin training in the art of mascotting, including the use of effective body language gestures and entertainment skit development. Complete information on mascot training is contained in the Street Characters' publication *Street Smarts, The Guide For Mascot Management*. To purchase a copy of *Street Smarts*, phone toll-free at 1-888-MASCOT (1-888-627-2687).

**For further information on any of these topics,
please phone Street Characters Inc. toll-free at
1-888-MASCOTS (1-888-627-2687)**

PART 2: COSTUME CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

~ General Guidelines ~

The Importance of Cleaning and Maintenance

As a public relations and marketing representative for your organization, your mascot must look his well-groomed best whenever he meets the public. By doing so, he will project a professional, clean cut image of your organization. To achieve this well groomed appearance, your mascot's costume will require regular cleaning and maintenance.

Besides aesthetics, regular cleaning and maintenance has the benefit of extending the life of your mascot costume. Given the sizable investment you have made in the costume, you will want it to remain serviceable for as long as possible. With regular cleaning and maintenance, your costume could easily last you four to five years.

Costume Cleaning and Maintenance Criteria

Common sense and good judgment will dictate when costumes are cleaned and repaired. However, cleaning should be conducted whenever:

- ☞ the entire costume or a particular component is visibly dirty,
- ☞ the costume begins to smell even after it has been aired out,
- ☞ the number of times the costume has been worn merits it being washed,
- ☞ the nature of the last assignment merits washing (e.g. the venue was unsanitary).

Repairs should be conducted as soon as a defect is observed. These defects may include:

- ☞ loose threads
- ☞ fabric tears
- ☞ matted fur
- ☞ cracks or peeling in the latex features
- ☞ worn Velcro
- ☞ fur becoming unglued from the foam structure
- ☞ broken or cracked
- ☞ the soles of the feet wearing out

Responsibility for Costume Cleaning and Repair

Minor cleaning and repairs should be conducted by your own staff. For small mascot programs, this responsibility will likely fall on the shoulders of the performer and spotter. If your program is a large one with multiple costumes, we recommend you have a dedicated cleaning and maintenance staff.

For major repairs and cleaning, return the mascot costume to us for service. **DO NOT ATTEMPT THEM YOURSELF AS IT MAY VOID YOUR WARRANTY.**

~ Minor Cleaning and Maintenance ~

Material Requirements

To conduct minor cleaning and repairs, you will need to assemble a costume repair kit. This kit should contain the following materials:

- ☞ an assortment of safety pins,
- ☞ sewing needles,
- ☞ spools of thread (colors appropriate to the costume),
- ☞ swatches of matching color fabric for patches
- ☞ sewing scissors
- ☞ an exacto-knife
- ☞ jars of contact cement (small jars with brush under lid)
- ☞ dog hair brush
- ☞ pliers
- ☞ masking tape
- ☞ spray bottles of non-corrosive laundry stain remover,
- ☞ cleaning cloths,
- ☞ small spray bottle of Armorall® to clean latex features
- ☞ a cleaning and repair log book (a sample log sheet is given on page 11).

Minor Cleaning

Minor cleaning jobs involve:

- ☞ spot removal of minor stains and soiling from the mascot's fur,
- ☞ spot removal of minor stains and soiling from the mascot outer clothing,
- ☞ removal of matting from the mascot fur, and
- ☞ removal of smudges from latex surfaces.

Spot Removal

The first step in removing minor stains and soiling is to brush away the dirt or excess stain residue using a dog hair brush. If some dirt or residue remains, try to remove them with a well rinsed, wet cloth. If the stain or soiling persists, spray the affected area with stain remover and sponge clean.

WARNING: before applying the stain remover, test it on a small, obscure part of the costume (or a swatch of patch fabric) to ensure it will not cause the colors to run.

Removal of Fur Matting

To remove matting from the fur, brush the affected areas with the dog hair brush, one small section at a time. Then give the entire costume a light brushing to improve the fur's appearance.

Smudge Removal - Latex Surfaces Only

To remove smudge marks from latex surfaces, wipe the affected area with a wet cloth. If that fails, spray the area with Armorall.[®]

Minor Repairs

Your mascot costume should be thoroughly inspected after each performance. A sample inspection checklist is attached on page 8. If any defects are noted they should be repaired immediately and the maintenance action recorded. Minor repair jobs include:

- ☞ clipping off loose threads,
- ☞ hand sewing ripped seams (using a matching thread color),
- ☞ replacing broken or lost clasps, hooks, snaps, buttons and rings,
- ☞ gluing down lifted latex with contact cement - NEVER USE ANY KIND OF TAPE TO REPAIR LATEX AS IT WILL LIFT IT, RUIN THE FINISH AND VOID THE WARRANTY.
- ☞ hand sewing (or pinning) temporary patches in place,
- ☞ spot gluing eyes, eyebrow etc. back into place (or hand sewing if that is more appropriate).

All minor repairs should be completed before the costume is cleaned, just in case the cleaning process aggravates the damage. Any damages caused by cleaning should be repaired immediately.

~ Major Cleaning and Maintenance ~

Major Cleaning

Major Cleaning is required whenever spot cleaning fails to remove stains. Some of this cleaning can be done by your staff if they have the proper facilities. Otherwise, have the cleaning done by a professional costume cleaning company like Street Characters Inc. The steps for cleaning the various costume components are listed below.

Fur Body

- ☞ Remove any plastic hooping that exists.
- ☞ Machine wash in a commercial front loading washer on the cold setting.
- ☞ Following washing, hang to air dry. DO NOT use a clothes dryer as this will singe the fur and void the warranty.
- ☞ Lightly brush the fur with a dog brush to bring up the nap.

Body Liner

- ☞ Remove the gel packs prior to washing
- ☞ DO NOT remove any plastic hooping
- ☞ Using a tub or large sink, hand wash in hot water using a mild detergent.
- ☞ Hang to dry.

Mascot Head

- ☞ Vacuum the head to remove heavy or embedded dirt. This can be done using the upholstery fitting on a household vacuum cleaner.
- ☞ Shampoo the fur by hand using a gentle upholstery / rug cleaner then rinse thoroughly. Test the cleaner for color fastness first.
- ☞ Place the head on a stand or open shelf to air dry.
- ☞ Once it is dry, lightly brush the fur with a dog brush to bring up the nap.

Care of Mascot Clothing (T-shirt, sports jersey etc.)

Refer to the garment label if applicable **OR**

- ☞ Machine wash the clothing separately on gentle cycle using mild detergent.
- ☞ Hang to dry.

COSTUME INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Inspection Date: _____

Mascot Name: _____ Costume Set #: _____

Event Last Used: _____ Performer: _____

Cleaning Required Yes No

Specify by Component

Head: _____

Fur Body: _____

Feet: _____

Outer Clothing: _____

Accessories (e.g. sunglasses): _____

Repairs Required Yes No

Specify by Component

Head: _____

Fur Body: _____

Feet: _____

Outer Clothing: _____

Accessories (e.g. sunglasses): _____

Action To Be Taken:

None **OR** Clean by: Staff External Repair by: Staff External

Sample Costume Inspection Checklist

Major Repairs

Major repairs will need to be conducted whenever minor repairs fail to permanently fix defects to the costume. Your staff should never attempt to conduct these repairs themselves unless they have the proper training, as this could void the warranty. Major repairs on the costume include:

- ☞ hand sewing or machine mending tears in the fabric other than at the seams,
- ☞ replacing pealed off latex,
- ☞ gluing fur back on the foam structure when the two become separated,
- ☞ replacing worn out soles on the feet,
- ☞ replacing worn away, singed or heavily matted sections of costume fur,
- ☞ glue or otherwise reattach separated joints in the costume, and
- ☞ wholesale replacement of body parts (including design modifications).

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Do not attempt to conduct major repairs yourself as this could void any possible warranty work. Contact Street Characters Inc. to have your costume fixed.*

**For further information on any of these topics,
please phone Street Characters Inc. toll-free at
1-888-MASCOTS (1-888-627-2687)**

PART 3: COSTUME STORAGE

When your mascot costume is not in use, it needs to be stored outside of its carrying bags. The fur body will need to be turned inside out and hung on a clothes hanger in a well ventilated space. The body liner and any additional clothing will also need to be hung to dry. Always hang the bodyliner so it keeps its shape. Never store it standing upright on the floor as this will cause the liner to compress. When not in use or hung up, lay the liner on its side.

To reduce odor during storage, you should spray these items with a bacteria killing deodorizer such as Lysol.[®] The inside of the feet should also be sprayed with deodorizer at this time. Solid rechargeable deodorizers may be purchased from Street Characters Inc.

The mascot head should be stored on a costume head stand whenever possible to allow air to circulate through it, and to prevent damage. Failing that, you should place the head on an open shelf by itself, with the neck base facing down. To reduce the chances of theft or accidental damage, all costume components should be stored by themselves in a secure, well ventilated room or locker.

Finally, if you own multiple costumes for the same mascot character, store each set separately so that their respective components don't get mixed up. To further reduce the chances of components being mixed up (**a problem given that no two costumes are 100 per cent interchangeable**) label each component with a simple identification number to distinguish which costume set it belongs to (e.g. Set #1, #2 etc.).

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