

So You Wanna be a Shin for the Fire Conclave? - What to know before you commit.

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This document:

This document is an abbreviated version of the Fire Conclave Handbook which will be shared with you in March if you submit your group's intention to perform.



Photos by Vimala Faith

WHAT IS A SHIN?

A Shin is the contact point between the Fire Conclave Council (FC Council) and a fire performance group committed to participating in the Fire Conclave at Burning Man. This person is responsible for relaying information between their fire group and the FC Council. The Shin is usually the leader or director of a group auditioning for the Fire Conclave, but this is not a requirement. It is important to note that the Shin takes full **Responsibility** for the group and its members.

We've heard more than once, a new Shin wished they had known how much work was involved in advance. We think that's totally fair. This document has been written to outline what's expected of you once you submit your fire group's Intent to perform for the Fire Conclave. It is not intended to answer every point in explicit detail, however we hope that it's enough to help you make an informed decision. In March, after you have submitted your group's Intent to the FC Council and the Intent period has closed, you'll receive "The Fire Conclave Handbook" that explains the FC Council's expectations in full detail.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF SHINS

The cornerstone of the Fire Conclave is ***Integrity***. The FC Council expects all members of the Conclave to act honestly, and for Shins to adopt integrity as their *modus operandi*. As a Shin you are considered accountable for every person in your group.

To be a Shin one must have the ability to rally a group of free-spirited individuals into a choreographed fire dance. Be patient, lead with a firm but flexible hand, and ***be willing to take responsibility for the actions of all members of the fire group.***

Shins must have reliable internet access, access to a working computer, and be able to work with us through Email, Zoom, Google Docs and Discord. More information will be provided once you submit the Intent to Perform form.

HOW YOU BECOME A SHIN

There are four ways to become a Shin:

1. New Shin for a New Group.
2. New Shin for an Existing Group.
3. Returning Shin of an Existing Group in good standing.
4. Returning Shin of a New Group

To begin as a New Fire Group:

- Submit your [Intent to Perform](#) by the March 1st deadline.
- Send an email to the FC Council - fireconclave@burningman.org introducing yourself and your group

To assume the role of a new Shin of an Existing Group:

- The departing Shin must send an email with a letter of recommendation to the FC Council (cc'ing you) declaring that they are passing the torch on to you. If this does not happen you will be asked to change the group name and be considered a new group
- Submit your [Intent to Perform](#) form by the March 1st deadline.

Some of you have been Shins before and are experienced with the Fire Conclave and its processes. We dearly hope that you continue to participate in the Fire Conclave.

Returning Leader of a group in good standing:

- Submit your [Intent to Perform](#) by the March 1st deadline.

Returning Leader of a New Fire Group:

- Submit your [Intent to Perform](#) by the March 1st deadline.
- Let us know which group or groups you have led in the past (question will be part of the Intent form.)

Submitting Intent to Perform

Submitting Intent to perform is the act of committing your fire performance group to the annual cycle

of the Fire Conclave audition process and final performance. Intention is not only committing your group, but you are committing to being a Shin for the year. We open the “Intent to perform” submission period middle to end of January and close the “Intention” period March 1st noon (PST).

Burner Profile

All Shins are required to have a Burner Profile. This helps us facilitate - multiple things. It's important that your mailing address be updated. <https://profiles.burningman.org/>. Seriously this is important to us, so please make sure all the info in your Burner Profile is up to date and as accurate as you can get. If you move between now and the burn, update your profile.

TIME COMMITMENT

Being Shin of a fire performance group is a minimum **Seven Month Commitment** from March to September. You will be expected to submit monthly reports by the 25th of each month and submit a final report after the Burn. You will also be **required** to:

- Attend two conference calls/meetings (the first one in March and the second after you are accepted into the fire conclave in July)
- Submit a short video (a little over 5 min) for review in May
- Submit a longer audition video to specification in June
- Provide accurate information using spreadsheets and forms
- And of course, herd cats to produce a choreographed fire performance (even if you don't choreograph it you have to manage it)

Rough Schedule : We will update the calendar on our website with deadlines -

<https://fireconclave.org/calendar/>

- January
 - Cycle opens with an information deluge.
 - Update your Burner Profile
 - 28th - Intent to perform - submission period opens.
- February
 - 12th - Sit and spin (come ask Questions)
 - 15th - Registration Opens for Documentarians
- March
 - 1st noon PST - Intention period Deadline.
 - 7th 6:30 PST OR March 10th 1pm PDT ((Attendance is only required at one)
 - Note the time change from PST to PDT for those not in AZOptional
 - Choreography forum March 10th 5 PM PDT
 - 5th Receive the Fire Conclave Handbook.
 - 15th - FC Council sends out audition video guidelines, Video primer (Expected date hopefully earlier)
 - 25th - Monthly report submitted.
- April
 - 25th - Monthly report submitted.
- May

So you wanna be a shin? - 2024 Fire Conclave

Fire Conclave Council - fireconclave@burningman.org / www.burningman.org / www.fireconclave.org

- 1st - Communicate to commit to a small or large group.
 - 1st - May Day Video Review due (required).
 - 25th - Monthly report submitted.
- June
 - 1st - Special Tool request deadline.
 - 1st - Video Submission Opens
 - 19th- Video audition due (EOD).
 - 25th - Monthly report submitted.

So you wanna be a shin? - 2024 Fire Conclave

Fire Conclave Council - fireconclave@burningman.org / www.burningman.org / www.fireconclave.org

- July
 - FCC video review and decisions.
 - Great Circle Shin summit. (dates TBD)
 - Fire conclave Documentarian registration closes and Media Mecca registration closes
 - Submit ticket information lists.
 - Acquire letter of permission to bring Fire Swords into Black Rock City.
 - 25th - Monthly report submitted.
- August
 - 25th - Monthly report submitted.
- Playa Time - August 25 - Sept 2, 2024
 - Shin's must check in at Convergence no later than Wednesday of the event week.
 - Friday attend the SHINdig
 - Saturday - Attend Helmsman meeting. (optional for Shin)
 - Saturday - Attend Documentarian safety meeting. (optional for Shin)
 - Saturday - Attend GCAP pick-up.
 - Saturday - Have an amazing fire show in the Great Circle, honoring the Man.
 - Stay on playa until after Burn Night.
- September
 - 25th Final reports.

A note about dates and times and information in this and other documents. We do our best to update calendars and documents with the latest info. In some cases we miss things, in other cases things change. In all cases the most up to date info will be in the most recent document we share with you and on the Resources page on our website www.fireconclave.org. If you are ever not sure, feel free to ask!

PHOTO CREDIT: Grant Palmer



MAYDAY VIDEO REVIEW

We require a Mayday Video (due May 1st). This video will need to be about 5 minutes and will need to include 45 to 90 seconds of your duet and two scenes with at least ONE transition. The video does not need to be finished and does not need to be on fire (but we do love to see fire). Our goal is to watch the videos and be able to give you critiques and to steer your performance a little if we see something that will not work. We are pushing for May 1st so you will have time to make changes if needed for the audition video, however you can send it in earlier (April 15th) if you want extra time to work on your audition video with the Council's critiques. This will not affect your audition video standings but will hopefully give you a chance to correct anything we see that needs correction. (more details will be in the Video Primer)

AUDITION VIDEO

The main Fire Conclave audition video is a 15 - 20 minute video due in June, that shows us the performance you intend to present on Burn night. Put your best flamey foot forward, costume up, and dazzle us with a choreographed dance on fire.

We understand that your show may not be entirely complete by June, show us your best and there will be a chance to communicate any small changes you intend to make for the final performance. The FC Council reviews each audition video for technical skill, group choreography, use of fire and showmanship. Our goal is to bring the best fire groups together for the largest fire show in the world before we release the Man.

EXPECTED CHALLENGES

- Managing personalities.
- Maintaining motivation - yours and your groups.
- Conflict resolution.
- Innovating ideas.
- Communications.
 - To the Council, besides monthly reports you should be ready to ask questions and answer them.
 - To your group, you need to have a clear communication channel to pass on information from the FC Council and talk to your group.

Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Personnel.● Choreography.● Time Management & Cat Herding.● Video shoots.● Video compositing and editing.● Video location conducive to spinning fire.	Costs <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fuel - for lit practice and your playa performance.● Costumes - we don't require costumes, although we think visual cohesion is awesome.● Tool building.● Practice space.
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(and weather challenges!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting Group Members to and from the Playa (tickets, travel expenses, food, etc..)
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MENTORSHIP

As the choreography evolves and groups become more sophisticated, FC Council recognizes the need to help fire groups that are less experienced or struggling with their performances.

The purpose of the FC Council's Mentorship is to provide assistance to groups that may need a little extra support through the audition process. We aim to accomplish this by providing a one-on-one meeting to discuss their individual needs and counsel them based on our experience.

We will give priority to groups that were struggling last year or are new this year, but any group is welcome to apply.

We will also be doing this in two stages.

- Pre-Mayday - starting Feb/March focused on new groups and any groups that struggled last year
- Post-Mayday - after reviewing the Mayday videos we will once again reach out to groups we think are struggling.

Mentorship is not required, nor does it guarantee you will be accepted into this year's Fire Conclave, however we hope it will help.

There will be a check box in the intent to perform form asking if you would like mentorship this year starting right away. .

NAMING YOUR FIRE CONCLAVE

When you submit your Intention you also lay claim to your group name for the year. Do not use the word "Conclave" in your group name. The Fire Conclave is the meeting or assembly of troupes rather than the fire performance group themselves.

PLANNING AHEAD

If you think perhaps you'll shoot your audition video in Early June (so you have time to review, reshoot if necessary, composite, render and upload it) work backwards from there... practice, costume making, choreography and design, collaboration, meetings ...that puts your start time in February! If you think it's going to take less time and effort than that, you'll be short-changing yourself and all of the people putting their faith in you and the Fire Conclave.

Once we've reviewed the audition videos and invited groups to join the Fire Conclave, in early July, we'll require Shins to submit group and ticketing information about their group members with a short deadline (during a time when it seems we're all away doing fabulous and exciting things deep in the woods!). As Shin you will be required to verify each member on your list. You may not use your own email as a substitute if a group member doesn't have one. We also request that each member of your fire

group register a [Burner Profile](#) to participate with the Fire Conclave.

HOW MANY PEOPLE?

A fire performance group in the Fire Conclave may have as many as 50 people or as few as 15 (*note this number increased this year*). That's a lot of personality to manage! You don't have to go it alone, and we don't expect that you would. We recommend you have a dedicated assistant (or two!) to help you stay on top of your responsibilities. They will be added to the Shin email list and can join the discord, however, please note we do not accept monthly reports from your assistants.

There are spaces for two sizes of groups, Large and Small within the Great Circle. We accept groups based on the audition videos and how well each group communicates and completes the required steps. The numbers of groups accepted in the Great Circle can fluctuate. We know that people don't always have the resources to create a large group, or the ability to manage so many and so we have created a space for smaller groups. We leave the final details until we know who has made it into this year's Conclave.

Managing groups of fire dancers has long been known as Herding Cats, if you find yourself struggling with managing the inner workings of your group, please ask the FC Council or other Shins for guidance.

ENLIST SUPPORT

How you manage your fire performance group is totally up to you, however we've seen the best success from groups who enlist support and diversify their leadership structure. We recommend utilizing a Shin Assist, Captains or Pod Leaders, people who will help lead sections of the group choreography or manage specific tasks for you.

Asking you to be a Shin and a filmmaker is a tall order, enlist the support of someone who has experience shooting and basic video editing and will take your direction. We don't expect or want a Hollywood production. We have a set of guidelines which we expect you to adhere to which are outlined in a document we call the Video Primer. Your video is your **audition** not your filmmaker's demo reel. Select people to help you with this if filmmaking is outside of your skillset.

Asking you to be a Shin and a Choreographer can be another tall order to fill. Remember, we don't expect you to do it all personally. You are, however, responsible to make sure it gets done. Attend the Fire Conclave choreography forum. Enlist the help of teachers from local dance studios. Search YouTube for dance, martial arts, marching band, etc.. for choreography ideas. Go to plays and see shows and movies. There are a number of things you can do.

Remember, you can always ask for support from other Shin's. You are all tackling similar issues and may even be dealing with the same people. We have both a Discord server and the Shin Discussion Email List so that you may share your challenges and successes. These platforms are not a place to promote your products, but a good place to discuss issues and spend time getting to know your fellow Shins.

COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication is key to making the Fire Conclave successful. We utilize a variety of methods in order to assist you in communicating with the Council as well as other Shins. This year we will use the following tools:

- **Talk directly with the Fire Conclave Council:**
 - Email fireconclave@burningman.org to submit monthly progress reports, or ask direct questions. We will send you major communications and shin tips via email as well.
- **Chat with other Shins:**
 - We will invite you to join the Fire Conclave Discord Server where you can chat with the Council and other Shins.
 - We will also add you to the Shin List, an email group list where all Shins (as well as the FC Council) can talk with each other.
- **Just want to listen:**
 - i. Facebook page
 - ii. Instagram
 - iii. The Fire Conclave Announce List
- **For reference throughout the season:**
 - i. www.fireconclave.org for a list of resources and key dates

VIDEO MEETINGS & DOCUMENT SHARING

Some of the most dynamic groups are spread across vast distances and use a variety of platforms to manage their groups. Services such as Zoom, or Google Meetings are used to “attend” meetings, YouTube or Vimeo to share choreographic development, Google Docs to manage your spreadsheets and doc, and communication apps such as Slack and Discord to discuss the ins and outs of group dynamics and coordination. The FC Council, located in Seattle, Gerlach, Reno, Golden Valley, and Vancouver, BC uses Discord, Zoom, and Google Docs to manage the year’s work. You will be expected to interface with us through these platforms throughout the year.

A NOTE ON PROPS, TOOLS, TOYS, WHAT-HAVE-YOU

Props are not the show, you are. The Fire Conclave is about fire dancing. Please know that we are interested in dynamic and engaging fire dancing. We expect that you are thinking about the performance and not just adding a flaming thingy into the background just to add more fire.

In Short, The Shin’s Responsibilities

- Integrity.
- Monthly Reports.
- Timely and accurate information.
- Time and effort focused on managing a fire dancing group for seven months.
- Follow through.
- Produce a beautiful choreographed fire dance.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE FIRE CONCLAVE COUNCIL

INTEGRITY

You can expect us to be honest with you. We’ll be as current and as forthcoming about issues as we are capable of being. You may hear hullabaloo out in the world about how things are going behind the scenes at the Burning Man Organization (tickets are a good example). We are always working to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information as possible. The rate of that information flow may be slightly behind the rumor mill, but please trust in the fact that we are always working to give you accurate information in a timely fashion.

SUPPORT AND FEEDBACK

How you manage your group is entirely up to you. We strive to maintain a hands-off approach, offering guidance when you ask for it. You can rely on us for feedback, even if you think the questions are silly, not relevant or do not want to bother the FC Council, we are here to help and support you through your decisions for managing your group if that’s what you need from us. Though we may all have different approaches, keep in mind we all have your success in mind, and are always available by email. If you seek critical feedback from us to assure that you’re on the right track with your work or audition video, please do send it along, (details in the handbook). We don’t want to leave you guessing what we want to see, but neither do we want to be too rigid or constricting in our requirements.

THE FIRE CONCLAVE HANDBOOK

The Handbook we keep referring to will be distributed to you once the Intention period closes and you've committed to the season. The Handbook covers most of the questions you may have during the season; outlines, guidelines, dates, how-tos and do-nots, etc.. We don't expect it to be the be-all-end-all document, so if you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to ask the FC Council. Your questions helped create the Handbook in the first place and will continue to help it grow.

VIDEO PRIMER

The Video Primer is a document that will become available soon after the Fire Conclave Handbook. This will explain each element that we need and do not need to see in your video. It will hopefully guide your hand and prevent you from making typical shooting mistakes during your audition filming.

FINAL WORDS

The FC Council wishes you well with the start of the season. Happy Burning. When you fill out the intent to perform form you will need to enter a passphrase, this year that phrase is "Rain Rain Go Away"

Scorch, Tabasco, Crimson, Natalie and Wrangler



Photo By: Espresso Buzz