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

IN THIS DOCUMENT:
- WHAT IS A SHIN?
- WHAT IS EXPECTED OF SHINS
- HOW YOU BECOME A SHIN
- TIME COMMITMENT
- MAYDAY REVIEW
- EXPECTED CHALLENGES
- NAMING YOUR FIRE CONCLAVE
- PLANNING AHEAD
- HOW MANY PEOPLE?
- ENLIST SUPPORT
- FACEBOOK
- VIDEO MEETINGS & DOCUMENT SHARING
- A NOTE ON PROPS, TOOLS, TOYS, WHAT-HAVE-YOU
- WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE FIRE CONCLAVE COUNCIL

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 is designed with the intention of letting you know what’s expected of you once you submit your fire group’s Intention to audition for the Fire Conclave to the FC Council. 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 Intention to the FC Council, you’ll receive a 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 has set base level expectations of honesty for the Fire Conclave, FC Council and the Shins. The FC Council expects Shins to adopt integrity as their *modus operandi*, for as 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 we also recommend a google account for accessing Google docs later.
HOW YOU BECOME A SHIN

There are three ways to become a Shin:
3. Returning Shin of an Existing Group in good standing.

To begin as a New Fire Group:
- Submit your Intent to Perform. (opens February 1st)
- Fill out the New shin form.
- Send an email (fireconclave@burningman.org) to the FC Council.

To assume the role of 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.
- Submit your Intent to Perform form to become the new Shin. (opens February 1st)
- Fill out the New shin form.

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 Intention by the March 1st deadline.

What is this Intention to which we refer?
When we refer to “Intention” we’re referring to 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 “Intention” submission period February 1st and close the “Intention” period March 1st.

TIME COMMITMENT
Being Shin of a fire performance group is a minimum of a Seven Month Commitment (from March to September) from beginning to end. You will be expected to submit monthly reports by the 25th of each month and submit a final report after the Burn. You will be required to attend two conference calls/meetings, submit a Mayday Video Review, audition videos to specification, accurate information using spreadsheets and forms, and of course, herd cats to produce a choreographed fire performance.
Rough Schedule (some dates will change)

- **January**
  - Cycle opens with information deluge.

- **February**
  - 1st - Intention submission period opens.
  - 20th - Registration Opens for Documentarians

- **March**
  - 1st - Intention period Deadline.
  - March 10th (2pm PST) and 11th (7 PM PST) Shin Summit (Attendance is only required at one)
  - Optional Choreography forum March 11th @ 5:30 PST
  - Receive the Fire Conclave Handbook.
  - 15th - FC Council sends out audition video guidelines, Video primer (Expected date)

- **April**

- **May**
  - 1st - Communicate to commit to a small or large group.
  - 1st - May Day Video Review (required).

- **June**
  - 1st - Special Tool request deadline.
  - 1st - Video Submission Opens
  - 21st - Video audition material submission period closes.

- **July**
  - FCC video review and decisions.
  - Great Circle Shin summit. (dates TBD)
  - Fire conclave Documentarian registration closes and Media Mecca registration closes July 18th @ noon PST.
  - Submit ticket information lists.

- **August**
  - Black Rock City 8/25 - 9/2
  - Shin’s must check in at Convergence no later than Wednesday of the event week.
  - 30th attend the SHINdig
  - 31st - Attend Helmsman meeting. (optional for Shin)
  - 31st - Attend Documentarian safety meeting. (optional for Shin)
  - 31st - Attend Laminate pick-up.
  - 31st - Have an amazing fire show in the Great Circle, honoring the Man.
  - Stay on playa until after Burn Night.
  - 25th Final reports.
MAYDAY REVIEW
Once again we will be requiring a Mayday Video (due May 1st). This video will need to be between 5 and 10 minutes and will need to include 45 to 90 seconds of your duet and two scenes with a transition between. They do not need to be finished and they do not need to be on fire (but we do love to see fire). Our goal is to watch the videos and 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 the changes if needed. This will not affect your audition video standings but will hopefully give you a chance to correct anything we see that needs correction.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logistics</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choreography.</td>
<td>Costumes -- we don’t require costumes, although we think visual cohesion is awesome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management &amp; Cat Herding.</td>
<td>Tool building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video shoots.</td>
<td>Practice space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video compositing and editing.</td>
<td>Getting Group Members to and from the Playa (tickets, travel expenses, food, etc..)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video location conducive to spinning fire. (and weather challenges!)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 made our decisions 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. Each member of your fire group will need to register a Burner Profile to participate with the Fire Conclave with their own email address for ticketing purposes. https://profiles.burningman.org/

**HOW MANY PEOPLE?**

A fire performance group in the Fire Conclave may have as many as 50 people or, as few as 10. That’s a lot of personalities 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, however, please note we do not accept monthly reports from your assistants.

Through the years we’ve seen established smaller groups struggle to add people and bigger groups struggle to keep people committed to a larger group. We’re committed to fire dancing and recognize the challenges of building and maintaining a big group. In 2014 the FC Council established an opportunity for smaller groups to perform in the Great Circle, our restrictions for group size are for a maximum of 25 people and a minimum of 10 including Performers, Helmsman and Safeties. A group Shin must commit to being a small group or large group by May 1st.

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 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 the Video Primer. Your video is your **audition** not your filmmaker’s demo reel. Select people to help you with this if filmmaking is out 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. Enlist the help of teachers from local dance studios. Search YouTube for dance, martial arts, marching band, etc. 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 very the same people. Each year we set up a Shin Discussion List so that you may share your challenges and successes. This discussion list is not a place to promote your products, but is a good place to discuss issues and spend time getting to know your fellow Shins.

FACEBOOK
Not only will we be using the traditional email discussion list, we have also created a private Facebook Group (called the Fire Conclave 2019 Jungle) for the shins and shin assists. It is our hope that you will find communicating with each other easier using a social media platform which most of you interact with on a frequent basis. While the email list will still be the primary means of communication, we will be duplicating most of the info onto Facebook. We also have a Fire Conclave Facebook Page where we will add public info. http://www.facebook.com/thefireconclave and an instagram page https://www.instagram.com/fireconclave/.

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, like Google Hangout or Skype to “attend” meetings, YouTube or Vimeo to share choreographic development, Google docs to manage your lists of names etc, and private Facebook groups to discuss the ins and outs of group dynamics and group coordinations. The FC Council, located in Seattle, San Francisco, Reno, Los Angeles, and Vancouver, BC uses Google Drive and Docs to manage the year’s work, and you will be expected to interface with us through spreadsheets and online forms as well as these video sharing platforms.

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 is a living document that we hope 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 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...

Tabasco, Wrangler, Scorch, Natalie and Crimson