

TECHNICAL SOURCE GUIDE

A TECHNICAL TIP FOR LIGHTING DEPARTMENTS

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With the increased use of variable focal length Ellipsoidal Reflector Spot (ERS) instruments and par cans in the theatre has come increased confusion on which specific instrument might be in your hands. Upon quick inspection, the master electrician and others familiar with a particular piece of equipment may be able to tell which configuration the instrument is arranged for. However, with some ERS's this requires taking apart the lense train. With par lamps, discerning between a wide flood and medium flood can be confusing for anyone. When a theatre has a rotating electrical staff where the technicians may not be fully versed on the specific stock, time may be lost in identifying or changing instruments during focus.

The common treatment is to assume that one person present will be knowledgeable enough to insure proper selection during a hang. This means looking down the barrel of each and every instrument or opening them prior to placement. Sometimes a quick training session is required. or the master electrician has to directly supervise these instruments rather than overseeing the whole process. A preparatory step of marking the instruments has become a popular way of speeding up hang time.

Scveral ways to mark instruments include chalk or semi-permanent methods such as colored stickers, or tape and marker. Chalk, although it is quick and readily changeable, does rub off easily and accidentally. On the other hand, stickers and tape will stay around, sometimes more than. desired. When using a color-coded system, the crew needs to remember what the colors mean. With stickers or tape and markers, it is necessary to keep on hand a ready supply of all components. Unfortunately, markers almost always get lost, pocketed or left someplace. If the stickers or tape and pen are not handy, these markings become deceptive when the instrument is changed and the previous label remains.

The desire for a readily changeable semi-permanent identification system led to the development of a method of Velcro ® tabs attached to the yoke of variable focal length ERS and par instruments. Velcro tabs make for easy exchange and yet they stay put for any period of time. Instrument information can be put on the backing of the loose Velcro piece. This label will tell the user about the instrument's configuration at a glance and may be easily changed at any time.

Applying the felted half of the Velcro to the yoke prevents inadvertent clinging of clothing to the yoke, thus leaving the hooked half for labeling. Each instrument requires individual labels for each possible configuration. For instance, for an

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instrument with a 30 degree, 40 degree, or 50 degree capability, three separate labels could be made which read 30° ,40° and 50°. Similarly, for an instrument with narrow spot, medium flood, or wide flood capability the labels might read NSP, MFL, and WFL. An additional aid is to individually color-separate these identifying labels. Enamel spray paint sticks well to the Velcro backing and is opaque enough to read in a variety of colors. Painting the identifying labels in a different color for each type makes for quick separation and - counting in large groupings. By creating a cut-out template of desired information for a tab, any number of repeating tabs can be quickly painted.

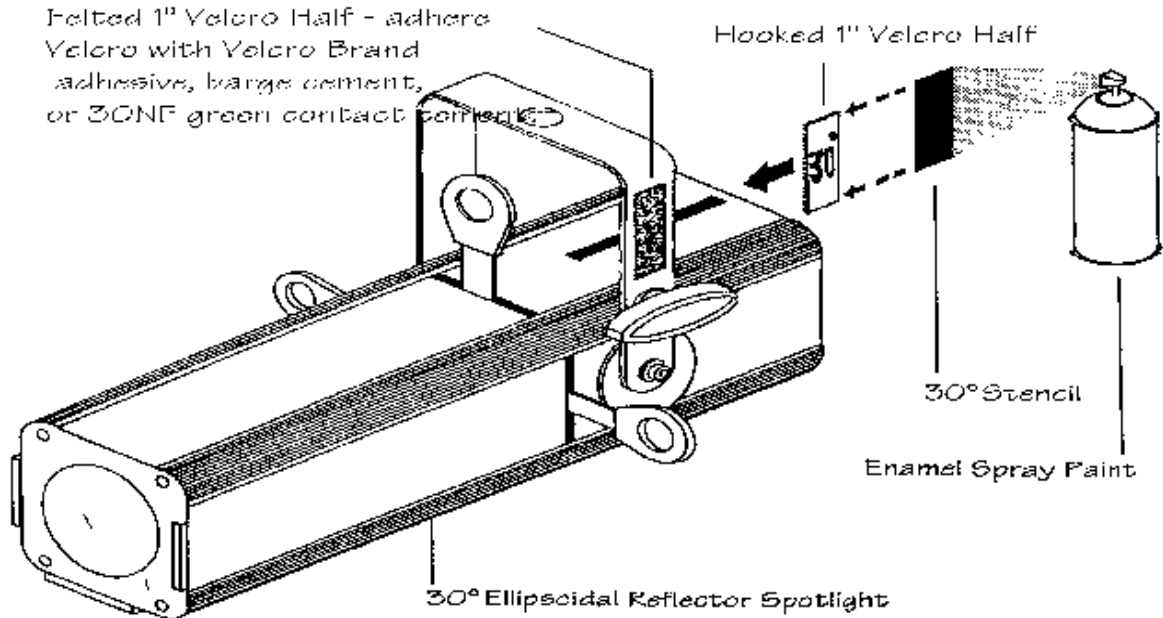
Obviously, the instruments will only use one label at a time, which requires storage for the additional labels. At some facilities, bins or boxes may be the best method. Another possibility is to adhere the extra tabs to a heavy felt pad permanently mounted in lighting storage or on a portable board. Par instrument tabs could stay with the exchangeable lamp stock when these lamps have a specific storage area.

Black Velcro is definitely the least obtrusive visually on the standard black yoke. Because of the width of the average yoke, purchasing one-inch wide Velcro off a roll will Prove to be the easiest and most economical. It can then be cut into any length desired. One and one-half inch lengths fit well onto the top of the yoke and Provide enough room for a short bit of information. Velcro can be purchased from most craft or fabric stores in both parts for a suggested retail Cost of \$1.25 per foot for the one-inch wide roll. In following this method, you will find that you use more of the hooked half than the felted half of Velcro. Your costume shop may be an eager recipient of the-remainder of felted material.

Several options exist for adhering the Velcro to the instrument. Velcro Brand Adhesive works well. A one-ounce tube retails for \$2, and will do approximately 100 instruments. Some substitutes, such as Barge® cement, are contact Cements that work on non-porous materials. For a less toxic, water-soluble adhesive that is better for the environment, try green glue (30NF Green Contact Adhesive by 3M®). In all cases, be sure to follow directions concerning preparing the surface. A mild detergent or mineral spirits will work well for most cleaning. If the yoke is greasy or extremely filthy, be sure to use a heavy duty grease-cutting cleaner or scrubber.

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Lighting Instrument Labeling

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Technical Source Guide #7 - Tech Tip for Lighting Depts.

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