Guidelines for Readers at the TWS Reading Series

‘It is usually advisable to prepare an introduction to your reading that provides the audience all the context they need to understand your piece. You can also use the introduction to relax yourself, tell a story, make eye contact with the audience—understanding of course that whatever time you take must not cause you to go over your time limit. That is the only unbreakable rule: Do not read too long.’

- A Note on Readings, published in Event Magazine Issue 38.1, Spring/Summer 2009, by Hal Wake, Artistic Director, Vancouver International Writer’s Festival

1. YOUR READING CAN TAKE TEN MINUTES TOTAL. This includes any introductory or contextualizing comments and asides you may make, about your writing or yourself, at the beginning, middle, or end of your piece.

2. DO NOT GO OVER THE TEN-MINUTE TIME LIMIT. As a rule of thumb, ten minutes = no more than five double-spaced pages of text. Be selective and edit your piece(s) to maintain narrative cohesion while staying within the time limit. Always err on the side of coming in under the allotted time, not over.

3. DID WE MENTION OUR TEN-MINUTE LIMIT? Apart from making the evening run long, exceeding your allotted time can make you memorable for the wrong reasons: pushing past the limits of audience patience and attention span. We want you to be remembered for your compelling work!

4. ARRIVE AT THE VENUE LEAST 15 MINUTES EARLY. Introduce yourself to the reading host(s), advise them of the timing of your piece, and do a sound check with the mic. Tell the host the correct pronunciation of your name, if mispronunciation is likely.

5. PLAN TO STAY TO HEAR ALL THE READERS. It’s good fun, and supporting your fellow authors helps build camaraderie and relationships within the writing community.

6. BOOKS FOR SALE? We have a bookseller at each event, for cash-only sales. If you have published books or chapbooks, by all means bring some to sell. (Please bring change if your price point isn't a simple multiple of $5.00 CDN.)

7. IF YOU MUST CANCEL, email twsread@sfu.ca to notify the host at least two weeks before the reading. TWS alumni volunteer hosts have built this series into one of the best reading series in the city. Show your respect for their efforts and commitment.