

Stag Community Arts Centre

Health and Safety Guidelines

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Health & Safety Guidelines for the use of the Backstage Areas by Visiting Companies

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Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to familiarise incoming companies with the Safe Working Practices that are followed by members of the production staff in the Theatre. Whilst it can never be totally comprehensive, these guidelines – if followed correctly – will safeguard against predictable accidents and hazards.

Please remember that if you decide to take a risk, you not only put yourself in danger, you may also threaten the livelihood of the Theatre. A substantial amount of damage to staff, the building and stock may occur. Please think about the implications of your actions.

You are asked to sign the back page of the booklet to show the Theatre that you have read and understood its contents, and agree to follow the principles herein. If you are unhappy with any aspect, you must let us know immediately. Please also ensure you pass on all relevant information to personnel working on your production.

As part of our Health & Safety Policy we are obliged to ensure anyone working in The Theatre has adequate training for the tasks they are performing, *excuses such as, we have always done this way, won't stand up in an accident inquiry*. Therefore you may be asked to undertake training and sign risk assessment documents for certain activities before being allowed to continue. Theatre staff have the right to stop any activity that they believe is not being done safely.

If you have any queries or questions in the meantime – please ask!

Katy White
January 2009

First Aid, Accidents & Illness

All Visiting Companies should provide adequate and appropriate First Aid arrangements to cover their co-workers. A minimum requirement would be:

- a. A fully stocked First Aid Kit
- b. A first aider, or person appointed to liaise with the Theatre First aiders.

Accidents, however minor or trivial need to be reported to the duty manager and recorded in the Theatres Accident Book. The book is located in the Marketing Office on the second floor.

The Theatre's nominated First Aiders are:

Anthony Redfearn Technician

First Aid Kits are located at the following points:

Box Office	House Managers Office
Theatre Bar	Theatre Foyer
Stage Door	Prompt Desk
Plaza Suite Foyer	Plaza Suite Kitchen

The person responsible for ensuring all kits are fully stocked is: **The Facilities Manager**

Any item used from a kit should be reported to this person as soon as possible.

Fire Safety

Smoking is not permitted in the Theatre

Please see the Full Evacuation Procedure which is available at the Stage Door or by contacting Katy White on 01732 451 548

Use of naked flame, flame and smoke effects on stage

Any effect required on stage that involves the use of flame or smoke must be passed by the Fire safety Officer. This includes any of the following:

- Smoking of cigarettes, pipes or cigars on stage
- Use of pyrotechnics (maroons, flashes, smoke puffs etc)
- Use of lit matches, lighters, candles, oil lamps or flaming torches
- Use of smoke, dry ice, cracked oil, haze or machines
- Use of any real flame or fire effects (fire breathing, blow torches, angle grinders, etc)
- Use of practical cookers
- Use of any compressed gas (e.g. helium, propane, etc)

This list is by no means comprehensive. If you are in any doubt as to the nature of any effect you intend to include in your production, please ask for advice

If any of the above effects are to be used in your production, you must complete the attached risk assessment form and pass it on to the theatre as soon as possible, at least 1 week prior to the first use of the effect.

Permission is obtained by the Bookings Manager in consultation with the fire department. Certain requirements are stipulated in all cases and will need to be fulfilled to obtain permission. Please make yourself aware of these precautions and ensure they implemented at all times:

1. Fire Extinguishers are easily accessible at all times
2. An appointed person is given the responsibility of watching a flame or pyro effect to its conclusion and responding immediately with appropriate means if the effect becomes uncontrolled

3. Provision of ashtrays with damp sand or similar both onstage and off whenever smoking and/ or lit matches are required.
4. Ensuring that all fabrics and furniture in the immediate area are fire proofed to the standards required.
5. Ensure that all lighters, fuel, pyros etc are stored safely between performances.

Please advise the Production Manager of any effect you believe to require permission from the Fire Department well in advance. An inspection may be required prior to the effects first use.

Manual Handling

When involved in the lifting or moving of any heavy or awkward object, it is vital that you follow the correct lifting procedures to avoid personal damage or injury. While the Theatre will endeavour to provide a clear access route into the Theatre, it is the responsibility of the Visiting Company to ensure that an assessment of the safest movement of their set, props etc for a production is completed, and any identifiable hazards or difficulties are addressed prior to arrival at the theatre. A blank form is included with this pack to assist in this process.

These notes will help you in this process:

Before starting the task consider:

1. Can the task be avoided by using a mechanised process?
2. If not – can another system or aid be employed, such as a sack truck, trolley or winch to reduce the impact of the task?
3. Do you have enough people to undertake the task safely?

In making your assessment consider the following:

The Load

1. the size of the load – can you make it smaller or lighter?
2. its shape – can you roll it or pull it rather than lift it?
3. its stability – have you got enough people to hold it steady?
4. its weight – can you make it lighter or use lighter containers?
5. How easy it is to hold - can you fit handles or reduce sharp edges?

Individual capabilities

1. Are those involved able to lift/ move the load without causing strain or injury?
2. Is anyone pregnant or experiencing health problems?
3. Is the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) being used (e.g. gloves etc)?

NB: The assessment form in the appendix should be used to establish the steps necessary in any commonly undertaken lifting procedure.

Only attempt to lift an item when you are confident of your ability to do so with ease

Correct lifting Guidelines

(See also appendix)

- Avoid twisting or bending sideways while lifting
- Bend your knees and keep a straight back
- Keep the load close to your body
- Keep arms close to the body
- Keep your chin tucked in
- Keep feet apart, with one leg forward of the other

Please refer to the Safe Working Procedures for Manual Handling, a copy of which can be located at the Stage Door or is available upon request from Katy White 01732 451 548.

Get-ins & Get-outs

- Methods statements must be provided for the Get-in and Get-out
- Ensure wagon doors are secured so they cannot flap away from the sides of the wagon.
- Beware when opening the dock doors that there may be people on the street behind them
- Ensure that the dock doors are chained back when open, and secured when closed.

- Ensure that there are enough people to do the get-in or out safely.
- Respect the abilities of others - offer help if needed. Do not insist that others lift objects they consider too heavy.
- Observe correct lifting and handling techniques - do not over reach or over stretch your self. Do not lift anything that you think may be too heavy for you. See **Manual Handling**
- Where practical clothing, safety boots and protective gloves
- Do not block the footpath with any object. If an item must be left on the pavement, ensure it is stable, and that pedestrians can safely pass.
- Do not throw items from the stage to the wagon or vice versa.
- Always ensure your passage is clear across the footpath before proceeding.

On stage

- Stack items according to size, weight and where on the stage they will be required
- Hard Hats are available for use and it is recommended that all personnel wear them where there is work going on overhead.
- Do not leave objects lying in pathways or across doors
- Ensure all items are stable and not causing a hazard before walking away.
- When lifting items onto the stage from the street ensure that there are enough people to bear the load safely. One person should instruct the others on when to lift, push etc.
- Remain aware of the stage environment - are bars moving, cables being dropped etc.?

In the wagon

- One person **ideally the driver** should take responsibility for the pack and instruct others in the correct order to present or remove things. This person may require assistance with lifting, tying off etc. with heavy or awkward loads.
- Always ensure an item is safe to untie before doing so.
- Do not throw things in to or out of the wagon
- Always enter and leave the rear of the wagon safely
- If using a tail-lift ensure that the correct operative procedure is followed and that a warning is given before each move is made. Do not over load the tail lift and ensure that its path is clear of obstruction.

Fit-ups

- One person should take responsibility for the position and order in which scenery is erected and give instruction to others.
- Do not leave power tools lying around where they may cause a trip hazard or injury.
- Do not leave power tools plugged in when unattended.
- Only trained operatives may use power tools, unless supervision is given.
- No one under the age of 18 may operate a power tool or other stage machinery.
- Always ensure that there are sufficient people to complete a task safely.
- Do not leave any item on stairs, ladder tops or on surfaces that may be moved or dropped.

Safe use of Ladders

- Check that the ladder is in good condition before use
- Stand the ladder on a firm level base
- Ensure that it is firmly secured at the top, or if not possible, secured or footed by a second person at the base
- Make sure shoes are clear of grease and mud.
- Make sure the ladder is the correct size for the job
- The foot of the ladder must be supported on a firm surface, not resting on any loose or un-level material, or on other equipment used to gain height.
- The bottom rung of the ladder must not be used to support the weight of the ladder
- It must be ensured that the ladder cannot slip. Where possible the ladder should be fixed to a suitable surface with lashings or straps. Where not be possible the ladder must be footed by a second person or by other safe means to prevent slipping and overbalancing. The person footing the ladder should stand with one foot on the floor, the other on the bottom rung and with one hand on either stile (side piece) of the ladder.
- Only one person at a time should climb or be supported by the ladder.
- Ladders with wire supporting the rungs should be used with the wire to the underside of the rung.

- Metal ladders must not be used if there is an electrical hazard present.
- When climbing a ladder both hands should be free to hold on. Use a rope thrown over the bar (for example) to raise and lower heavy instruments (e.g. lanterns)

Leaning ladders

- The angle of lean should not be more than 75 degrees to the horizontal.
- The top of the ladder should extend beyond the landing place by at least 1.05 meters.

Extension ladders

Sections of extending ladders should overlap by:

- 1.5 rungs when the ladder is at 5m height or less
- 2.5 rungs when the ladder is between 5m and 6m height
- 3.5 rungs if extended to a height of over 6 meters.

Step ladders

- Do not stand on the top level of a step ladder.
- Ensure that the ladder is fully opened out and that any safety stays are properly engaged.

Please refer to the Safe Working Procedures for Working at Height and Ladders, a copy of which can be located at the Stage Door or is available upon request from Katy White 01732 451 548.

Also see HSE Guidelines on use of Ladders. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg402.pdf>

Electrical Safety

General Guidelines.

- All items of electrical equipment (including extension leads and adaptors) must be subject to a visual inspection prior to use.
- Any piece of equipment that fails a visual inspection **MUST NOT BE USED!**
- Personal items of electrical equipment brought into the Theatre must be reported to the Technical Department, and may be required to be P.A.T. tested.
- All P.A.T. tested items are tested as a whole (including its power cable and plug top). If the plug is removed from an item then the P.A.T. test becomes void!
- All electrical installations, (production wiring on a set is considered an installation), either permanent or temporary, must satisfy BS 7671, Requirements for Electrical Installations. Information on this can be obtained from the in-house technician.
- Any set with electrical equipment attached/rigged to exposed metalwork must be earthed.
- All faulty electrical equipment, or part of an installation, must be labelled as faulty, reported to the electrics department immediately, and **MUST NOT BE USED!**
- Under no circumstances should work on live electrical equipment be undertaken, except by members of the Technical Department, and only then after discussion with the in house technician.

Rigging Lighting Equipment.

General Guidelines.

- Any person, other than permanent members of technical staff, handling lighting equipment must have the permission of the electrics department as supervision and training may be required.
- All lanterns and other lighting equipment (extension cables, adaptors) must be subject to a visual inspection as they are being rigged. If in doubt, don't use it, and check.
- Any piece of equipment failing a visual inspection should be clearly labelled as being faulty and **MUST NOT BE USED!**

- All hook clamps must be tightened off to the bar as they are rigged. They can be un-tightened by the designer if they need to be moved.
- All lanterns must be rigged with a safety bond, with enough slack to freely pan and tilt the luminare.
- When plugging up, enough slack should be left on the power cable to freely pan and tilt the luminare.
- Barn doors and colour frames must attach to lanterns with some form of safety bond, catch, or screw mechanism.
- Extension leads and multicore cables should be securely taped or tied off to bar ends to provide strain relief.
- Where ever possible lighting bars should be plugged up so as to avoid crossing phases.

Installation of Sound Equipment.

- At the Stag we have a system that doesn't need fiddling with. By all means plug in CD players and extra microphones but do not unplug anything without prior permission from the in-house technician. Should the System incur any damage, a £180.00 fee will be charged for the call out of the Sound Engineer plus any parts required
- All mains powered sound equipment must be subject to a visual inspection, and if found to be faulty should be labelled as such and **SHOULD NOT BE USED!**
- Where cables and multicores run across walkways and may present a trip hazard they should be covered by a cable mat or taped down.
- Correct lifting practices should be observed

If you have any questions for the Sound Engineer please submit in writing to Katy@stagevenoaks.co.uk

Use of Smoke, Haze and Dry Ice.

- When selecting a smoke effect for a performance reference should be made to the particular data sheets for that type of fluid and any hazards identified.
- Smoke machines must be subject to a visual inspection prior to use.
- Care should be taken when handling fluids on stage as this could contribute to slip and shock hazards.
- Smoke machines must be switched off during re-filling.
- Consideration should be taken when high levels of smoke are to be used and visibility impaired. Possible trip or fall hazards may arise.

Safe use and storage of Pyrotechnics.

- Pyrotechnics must only be handled by the in house electricians
- When selecting a pyrotechnical devise reference should be made to the particular data sheet for that effect, and any health hazards identified.
- Reference should also be made to the safe working distance of the effect.
- Consideration should be made for elements to the effect such as hot fall out.
- Pyrotechnics must be stored in a metal cupboard, which is to be kept locked.
- Pyrotechnics may only be activated by control systems approved for that use.
- Pyrotechnics may only be operated by persons with a clear view of the device to be detonated.
- Fire fighting equipment of the correct type must be on stand by with a member of staff dedicated to that role whilst pyros are activated or still burning.
- When re-loading pyro-pods, detonators must be de-activated, and the key taken by the person re-loading.
- A risk assessment must be carried out and permission obtained from the Fire Safety Officer prior to any pyro being used in a performance situation.

Please read the Safe Working Procedures for Pyrotechnics. A copy can be found at the Stage Door or please contact Katy White on 01732 451 548

Safe use of Hand Tools

1. Ensure all hand tools are sound, adequate for the intended purpose, and used as intended.
2. All tools should be returned to their storage place when not in use. Do not leave lying around unattended.
3. If you are unsure about the correct way to use a tool seek advice before attempting work.
4. Hand tools should not be used by work experience or students under the age of 18 without adult supervision, and not by any person under the age of 12 at all.
5. Any defective tools should be withdrawn from use and reported to the manager:
 - Hammer heads should be secured to a sound shaft that is not split, broken or loose
 - Chisels should be sharpened to the correct angle and not be used with mushroomed heads
 - Files should have handles and not be used as levers
 - Screwdriver handles should be sound and the heads not used as chisels
 - Cutting tools such as knives etc should be kept sharp. Knives with retractable blades should be used in preference to fixed blades where possible.
 - When using knives always cut away from your body
 - Saws should be checked before use to ensure blades are sound
 - Worn spanners should be discarded. Makeshift extension tubes should not be used.
 - Sweep up any debris immediately the task is complete
 - Always work in an uncluttered area on a sound and stable surface.
 - Where appropriate wear protective eye wear and gloves.

Safe use of Power Tools

For example: sanders, drills, electric screwdrivers, routers, jigsaws etc.

- Do not use power tools unless you are completely aware of the correct method of usage.
- Only use power tools for the purpose for which they were designed.
- Never use power tools if the working area is damp or wet
- Do not allow person under the age of 18 to operate power tools.
- Always ensure you have enough cable to safely reach your work area without pulling the cable tight.
- Do not place the cable in a position where it might become entangle with any moving parts.
- Always use a RCD on mains powered tools. Ensure that all tools carry valid PAT test certification (green sticker on plug bearing valid dates) Keep power tools clean and free from saw dust etc. & return to carry boxes after use.

Working in the Studio

The Studio space is used for many different purposes. Please observe the following guidelines when working in this area:

- The lighting rig should only be used for performances and lighting rehearsals. For all other occasions where working light only is needed, please use the house-lights, controlled by the dimmer switch by the Bar or outside by the Foyer counter
- Please keep both fire exits clear at all times
- Turn off all lights and power sockets when not in use.
- The heating and air conditioning is controlled from the control room, please ask a member of staff to adjust the temperature for you.
- Smoking is not permitted in the studio under any circumstances except with the express permission of the Fire Officer. (see Naked Flame above)
- Youth Theatre groups working in the studio should not be left unsupervised at any time, particularly if electrical equipment is within reach.
- The control room, and the equipment inside it, may only be accessed with the permission of the technical department.

Technical & Dress Rehearsals

Before the start of any rehearsal on stage please:

- Make sure all cables are taped down securely and not run across walkways or doorways. Bulky cables or plug & sockets should be clearly marked with tape
- Clearly mark any changes in levels backstage with white tape or similar
- Ensure there is sufficient working light for safe movement backstage
- Familiarise the cast with the lay out backstage by walking them round in full light and also in show lighting conditions.
- Remove all objects lying in walkways or across doors
- Make sure all fire fighting equipment is readily accessible and that staff are familiar with its use
- Clearly mark the edges of any object – including lanterns – that may be walked into or cause head injury.
- Do not block any doorway or exit with any item at any time.
- Familiarise the cast & crew with any moving pieces or flying pieces that may present a danger to those onstage
- Make sure that the iron line is clear at all times, or if items are placed under it that they are easily moved by one person. Make individuals responsible for the movement of any items under the iron should the alarms sound.

During the rehearsal:

- Ensure that all exits, fire fighting equipment and walkways are kept clear of any obstruction at all times.
- Do not move scenery etc over trailing cables – if this is unavoidable the rehearsal must be stopped and cable runs re-routed before proceeding.
- If at any point for any reason you become unaware of an imminently dangerous or unsafe situation that you cannot immediately deal with STOP THE REHEARSAL.
- In terms of cueing the DSM's word is final UNLESS as an operator you are aware of a potentially dangerous situation which the DSM is not aware of – for example, someone stood too close to a pyro box, or underneath a moving flying piece.
- In the event of a rehearsal being stopped due to accident or imminent danger the workers must be turned on immediately.

The Technical Stage Manager or Deputy is responsible for the safe operation of the safety curtain and the safe working of all stage & fly crew.

The Incoming Companies Production Manager (or Stage Manager in his/her absence) is responsible for the safety of all cast members, stage management & wardrobe staff during all rehearsals and performances.

Any unresolved safety issues must be reported to the Technical Stage Manager or Deputy as soon as practicable.

Use of Dressing Rooms

When using the Dressing Rooms, please observe the following guidelines;

- Please ensure that nothing comes into contact with the bare bulbs in the dressing rooms – they get EXTREMELY hot!
- Please turn off the mirror bulbs when the room is unoccupied.
- Any personal mains operated electrical equipment brought into the building (e.g. hairdryers, radios etc) MUST be passed to one of the Theatre's electricians for inspection before use. Please note that un-inspected items may get their plugs cut off!
- The stage and dressing room areas will be closed down approximately fifteen minutes after the end of the show. Please remove any personal items you need, as access may not be possible after this time.

- Please do not leave broken glass, crockery or other sharp items in the waste-paper bins.
- Please don't wedge open any doors in the backstage area.
- Please familiarise your self with the Theatres Fire Evacuation procedure, and the nearest exit route to your location.
- Please do not leave the building by any of the fire exits except in an emergency or specifically instructed to do so. The fire doors are alarmed.
- Performers in costume are not permitted in the Front of House areas after the half hour call, unless directed as part of the performance.
- Any damage done to any dressing room must be reported immediately. If the visiting company has caused the damage, the cost of repair will be passed on to the company.
- If you are unhappy about any aspect of the dressing rooms, please let us know. We are well aware that they are in need of a facelift, but will do our best to ensure that they are clean and presentable.

Using the Understage area

Dressing Room

- This area is for use as an overflow dressing room and should only be used when other areas are not sufficient to accommodate casts. A maximum of 8 adults or 12 youth theatre can be accommodated at any one time.
- It is not to be used as a store room for set or props
- Spray paints, adhesives and varnishes should not be used in this area.
- Ensure that all cast members using this area are familiar with evacuation procedures.

Orchestra Pit

- The one understage entrances to the Orchestra pit are fire escape routes, and must not be blocked – on either side – by any item including instruments, cases or chairs at any time.

Risk Assessment

As part of current Health & Safety good working practice, all incoming companies should supply a risk assessment for their production. While the theatre is responsible for implementing safe working practices and risk assessments around standard procedures as included in this booklet, the incoming companies should complete a risk assessment for any element of their production which may constitute a hazard. For example – acting areas raised above 1 metre, stage fighting, sequences involving running or complicated dancing in high heels etc. This assessment, once completed, should be passed on to relevant members of the incoming company and also passed onto the Production staff at the theatre. A Risk Assessment document has been included at the back of the document and should be used as a template, should you require an electronic copy, please contact Katy White.

Five Steps to Risk Assessment *(see attached form)*

1. Identify the hazard
2. Who might be harmed and how?
3. Consider what safeguards are in place – are they sufficient? What else could you do to lessen the risk?
4. What level of risk remains?
5. Review your assessment periodically

Reporting Hazards & Maintenance Problems

Any thing you notice in the Theatre that could constitute a hazard (such as damaged equipment), or is in need of attention (sticking doors, loose signage etc) then report it.

If it's urgent or dangerous, tell the Duty Manager immediately.

If it's just annoying, fill in a maintenance request form (on the health & safety notice board in dressing room corridor), and pass onto the Theatre Manager. The work required will be done in due course.

Areas of Responsibility

During your time in the theatre it is important that you know who to approach if you have any queries regarding any aspect of the production or the theatre itself. The following is intended as a guide only, if the person stated is not available, please approach the Duty Manager.

H&S/Bookings	Katy White
Production/ Stage	Anthony Redfearn

During Performance Week:

While we are unable to guarantee that a member of the technical staff will be available to assist with your production, they are generally able to give help and advice in most situations.

The Facilities Manager or Duty FOH Manager normally adopts the role of Duty Manager. During technical rehearsals or other work that occurs in the evening when there is no performance the senior member of Production staff in the building normally takes on the role.

Please note:

Any comment or complaint regarding any aspect of your hire should be passed on as soon as possible to a member of staff as detailed above.

In any decision regarding safety on stage at any time the word of the In house technician or Health and Safety Manager is final. For all other matters relating to audience or Front of House, the word of the Front of House Manager is final.

THE STAG ALCOHOL POLICY

Under the Health and Safety at Work Policy, it is the duty of the Stag to advise all users of the building (including employees, visiting artists and members of the general public where necessary) of the current "Drink and Drugs Policy".

ALCOHOL POLICY

Alcohol will not be sold or consumed anywhere in the building except in the Areas designated by the Premises licences. These areas are:-

1. Theatre Bar
2. Plaza Suite Bar

This policy was compiled by the Management Team and is designed to assist in the aim to provide and maintain the highest standards of health, safety and systems of work for staff, visitors and members of the public; whilst also supporting its commitment to a policy of providing theatre, and a positive experience, for young people.

All users of the Theatre have a duty to follow the guidelines laid down. Staff in breach of the policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Adopted Policy

The consumption of alcohol **is not permitted** in the following areas:

- 1 Backstage (All Areas)
- 2 Workshop Areas
- 3 Corridors
- 4 Front of House working areas (Box Office & Associated Areas)

In addition, staff or volunteers (including work placements, visiting performers and crew) may not consume alcohol prior to the commencement of, or during, their normal duties (including get in/out and performances). This includes recognised breaks.

Alcohol may be consumed on the premises after completion of normal duties (in permitted areas). At no time should staff on duty consume alcohol. It is recognised that in certain circumstances i.e. informal gathering, meetings, Press Night's, members of staff as representatives of the Theatre may be invited to consume alcohol.

Should you have any questions regarding this document then please contact Katy White on 01732 451 548

Declaration

I have read and understood **Stag's Health and Safety Guidelines**. The information contained in this booklet will be passed on to all members of the Hirer who are affected.

Name

Company.....

Position in Company.....

Production.....

Date:.....

Signed:.....