

## Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Penrith Players Theatre

This act places a responsibility upon the Theatre Management to prepare a written statement of the general policy regarding the safety and health of all its members in the Theatre (workplace)

The act also requires that every member and visitor to the theatre shall;

Take reasonable care for the safety and health of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their actions;

Co-operate with the management so far as is necessary to perform any duty safely or comply with any requirement imposed as a result of any law that may be in force;

In accordance with and beyond the provision of The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Penrith Players Theatre accept that it is their policy to provide and maintain safe and healthy conditions for all members and others who enter the theatre.

*Our statement of general policy is:*

1. To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities;
2. To maintain a safe environment for members of the public and others visiting the theatre
3. To consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
4. To provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
5. To ensure safe handling and use of substances;
6. To provide information, instruction and supervision for employees and theatre members;
7. To ensure that hirers adhere to the safety policies of the theatre
8. To ensure all employees and theatre members are competent to do their tasks, and To give them adequate training;
9. To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health;
10. To maintain safe and healthy working conditions; and to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

Signed

Chairman of the management committee, Penrith Players Theatre

Date 28/10/07

Review date October 2008

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the management committee.

Day to day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Safety Officer appointed by the committee.

To ensure health and safety standards are maintained the following people have responsibility in the following areas.

Department	Person responsible
Public, Auditorium staff and safety officers	House manager and safety officer
Back stage and installation	Stage Manager
Electrical areas	Lighting manager
Visiting Companies.	Lettings manager.

All members must co-operate with the committee on health and safety matters.

Not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety.

Take reasonable care of their own health and safety.

Report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as indicated in the policy)

All records will be maintained by the safety officer.

### **Risk assessment**

1. Risk assessments concerning the safety of the building and public areas will be undertaken at six monthly intervals by the Health and Safety Officer
2. The findings of the risk assessments will be reported to the Management Committee
3. Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by the Management Committee
4. The Building Director will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented.
5. The Health and Safety Officer will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.
6. Assessments will be reviewed every six months or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.
7. Risk assessments concerning the safety of backstage and on-stage areas (including the set) will be undertaken for each production by the Stage Manager using the forms provided by the Health and Safety Officer.
8. The findings of such risk assessments will be reported to the Health and Safety officer who will keep a record of all risk assessments.

### **Electrical equipment**

1. All portable electrical equipment belonging to the PPT should be PAT tested every 12 months
2. All portable electrical equipment belonging to the PPT should display a sticker indicating the date of its last satisfactory PAT test
3. It is the responsibility of the Health and Safety officer to arrange PAT testing and to retain relevant records
4. Members, hirers or contractors are responsible for the electrical safety of any equipment which they bring into the building and subsequently use.

### **COSHH**

1. The Health and Safety Officer will be responsible for identifying all substances which need a COSHH assessment.
2. The appropriate Head of Department will be responsible for undertaking COSHH assessments.
3. The Health and Safety Officer will be responsible for ensuring that all actions identified in the assessments are implemented.
4. The appropriate Head of Department will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant employees and theatre members are informed about the COSHH assessments.
5. COSHH assessments will be displayed in the relevant place of work

## **Information and Training**

The Health and Safety policy will be available for members and visitors in the bar area on the legislation notice board.

Health and Safety advice will be available from the safety officer or the committee.

Any specific job training will be provided by the appropriate department.

Specific jobs requiring training or instructions are:

Set construction.

Lighting and sound.

Workshop machinery.

## **First aid.**

First aid boxes are kept at:

Corridor between dressing rooms.

Behind the ~~bar~~ COFFEE BAR.

Stage managers station.

When the theatre is open to the public for a production there will be two individuals appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements. These will be the Front of House manager and the Stage Manager.

It is the responsibility of these individuals to familiarise themselves with the Theatre guidelines concerning first aid equipment and the summoning of the emergency services.

1. All accidents and cases of work-related ill health are to be recorded in the accident book.
2. The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority.

## **Accidents**

The health and safety officer is responsible for investigating accidents and to act on the investigation findings to prevent a recurrence.

## **Fire safety**

1. The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring the fire risk assessment for the building and public areas is undertaken and implemented on an annual basis.
2. Escape routes are checked by the Building Manager or their nominated deputy every time the theatre is open to the public
3. Fire extinguishers are maintained and checked every year. Records of these checks are kept by the Health and Safety Officer and are available for inspection.
4. Alarms are tested by Advance Alarm Systems every year. Records of these checks are kept by the Health and Safety Officer and are available for inspection.
5. The procedure for emergency evacuation of the theatre will be available to both the Theatre manager and to the Stage Manager both of whom must be familiar with the procedure.
6. Emergency evacuation procedures will be tested every year by the Health and Safety Officer in conjunction with the Management Committee

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## **Backstage**

All theatre members working backstage are required to follow safety procedures as listed in the guidelines below.

*This part of the policy contains some handy advice on the use of some of the equipment you will find in many theatres, including the People's. However, no one should EVER use equipment if they are not sure how to use it safely, or if they are under the influence of tiredness, alcohol or drugs. In addition, this in no way permits people to use tools without receiving specific training for that specific tool from a qualified person. If you are uncertain about anything, DO NOT USE IT, instead consult the theatre management or an experienced technician. Feel free to contact Health and Safety Officer for further advice.*

**Everyone taking part in a Penrith Players Theatre production should be a member of the Theatre for insurance purposes**

### **general guidelines**

- Do not do something if you do not know how to do it.
- Do not do something if you only think you know how to do it.
- Never be afraid to ask for help.
- Never be afraid to refuse to do something if you do not know how.
- If you see a potentially dangerous situation, tell someone immediately.

### **fire safety**

- Know all the exit points of where you are working.
- Know the location of the fire appliances.
- Know the location of the nearest external phone.
- Know the location of the meeting or assembly point.

### **PPTheatre Rules**

Most of the safety rules in the Theatre are just common sense; a few of the most important ones are summarised below, but this is by no means a complete list.

- No one may engage in activities in the backstage area or on stage while intoxicated with alcohol or drugs.
- Keep backstage areas tidy and avoid clutter
- Keep all passageways and marked walkways clear of clutter
- Do not block access to fire escapes or fire extinguishers
- Alcohol or drugs should not be consumed in the backstage area or in the vicinity of the stage at any time.
- No smoking is permitted in any backstage area of the theatre
- If smoking or naked flames are required to be used on stage as part of a production then the Stage manager must ensure that the appropriate risk assessments have been completed and must make satisfactory arrangements to ensure fire safety

- No serious technical work may take place on a show without another person being present in the building.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing for all backstage activities including working at height and cutting MDF. MDF residue must be cleaned up immediately after working with it.
- Use of power tools in the Theatre will only be allowed after specific training by the appropriate Head of Department or other authorised user. Ask the appropriate Head of Department for training if you need to use any power tool for the first time.

## **Risk Assessments**

### **Procedure for People's Theatre plays**

Prior to the run of the show a risk assessment should be completed for the set and staging which assesses the following risks.

Risk assessment should follow these basic Steps –

- Step 1 Identify potential hazards
- Step 2 Identify who is at risk from the hazards identified
- Step 3 List existing controls or measures.
- Step 4 Identify risks where existing measures are not sufficient and the action needed

Some areas to be considered in a risk assessment might be :-

1. Fire – is the set fireproofed and are there any specific risks (naked flames on stage, smoking on stage) for which special precautions are need?
2. Pyrotechnics – are these being used safely?
3. Set – is the set safely constructed and are there any possible dangers involved in the actors or crew using the set (trapdoors, unprotected drops on raised rostra etc)
4. Set – is the area behind the set clear of obstructions so that actors or crew may walk in these areas without danger of tripping, falling or colliding with objects
5. Lights – are all lights above the stage and audience fitted with proper safety chains and are all gel frames and other attachments securely fixed
6. Crew – are the crew working in hazardous conditions. Is there any lifting or working at height.
7. Equipment – if any additional equipment is to be used in the show has this got its own safety certificate and has been PAT tested. Are there any specific risks associated with the use of such equipment (e.g visibility issues with smoke machines).

Once the risk assessment has been completed on the proforma supplied it should be given to the Health and Safety Officer who must approve the measures outlined therein.

### **Risk assessment for hirers**

1. Hirers must complete in advance of the opening night a risk assessment form. This is *extremely* important.
2. To this end, the management will not allow hirers to open until a satisfactory risk assessment has been completed.
3. The completed risk assessment should be returned to the hiring manager or other nominated representative of the Management Committee.
4. Hirers must adhere to all health and safety rules of the PTAG as detailed in this document.

### ***Electrical work***

When using electrical items such as power tools, smoke machines and theatre lanterns, always give the item a quick visual inspection to make sure that the cable is not damaged, and that no bare electrical connections can be seen. If the equipment looks faulty or does not work, notify the appropriate Head of Department as soon as possible, so that it is not mistakenly used by anyone else. It is usually unwise to try and modify an appliance or repair faulty equipment yourself; this will violate the equipment's current PAT. If you are given permission to repair the equipment yourself, only do so if you are sure of the wiring conventions and connectors used inside the appliance.

When working in a theatre, it is a good idea to familiarise yourself with the power distribution; thus, if there is an electrical accident and the circuit-breakers fail (which is most unlikely), or a stage lantern catches fire (which is certainly possible), you will know where to go to cut the power supply.

### ***Power tools***

It is very important that power tools are only used after sufficient training has been given. Most tools have recognised methods of operation, and some require the material being processed to be specially treated before the tool is used. If goggles or ear defenders are advised then WEAR THEM! The true brilliance of the gifts of sight and hearing may only become apparent after these senses have been lost...

In general, angle-grinding or welding should only be done outside the building; if angle grinding or welding are to be done inside the theatre then the specific permission of the Health and Safety Officer must be sought and a full risk assessment completed.

At the People's Theatre, everyone must be trained by the appropriate Head or Department or other nominated individual before they may use the power tools.

On the wall of the workshop are ready reference charts giving the safety equipment required when using various tools. It is vital to check these lists before using any power tools to check that you have the necessary equipment.

Face masks, ear defenders and goggles can all be found in the workshop safety cupboard. USE THEM

### ***Overhead working***

- Always wear a hard hat and ensure that anyone working at ground level is also protected
- Empty all pockets and remove all loose items from your person
- Attach all tools to belt or harness
- Notify all staff that work is being carried out on the grid.
- Do not leave any loose items, and coil all lines
- Wear a harness if working in any unprotected overhead position
- Never allow objects, however small, to drop from above. Falling objects can kill

## Guidelines for safe working backstage

### **Stepadders**

Before mounting a stepadder, check that it is fully erect and locked into place. There are usually diagrams on the side of the stepadder to indicate what parts should lock into place; most of the time it is obvious, but check if you are at all unsure. Pushing firmly on a low step of the stepadder should indicate whether the stepadder is locked into place; if the stepadder does not jerk and feels stable, then it should be safe to climb.

If you are dealing with heavy items or working at the maximum height of the ladder, it is recommended that you find a second person to stabilise your stepadder; if they tip, stepadders can cause serious injury - and it's best to be on the safe side.

Stepadders should be footed on the same side that the person climbs them. Footing them on the other side can be quite dangerous, particularly on an incline, as the ladder can topple over towards the person who is footing it when the extension is raised.

### **Ladders**

Common sense should suffice here; *always foot a ladder*, either with a person or a large weight. Make sure that the ladder is at a steep angle to the wall, but not so steep that anyone climbing it could tip over backwards if startled! This ensures that there is less likelihood of the ladder slipping horizontally. Remember not to reach out too far or handle heavy weights on top of a ladder; use a tallscope or stepadder for tasks that require this.

### **Pyrotechnics/guns/swords**

- No pyrotechnics/guns/swords to be used without notifying the Health and Safety Officer and completing a risk assessment
- Pyrotechnics only to be rigged by a nominated competent person as specified in the risk assessment
- Pyrotechnics to be stored in an approved safe location and locked away when not in use
- Guns to be stored in a locked safe when not in use
- Swords to be locked away safely when not in use

**Pyrotechnics including fireworks** Specialist manufacturers supply pre-packed pyrotechnics, which enable strict control of the quantities of components and the easy safe repetition of pyrotechnic effects. Pyrotechnics supplied specifically for stage use must be used unless the entire effect including the operation is under the direct control of a specialist contractor.

- All pyrotechnics must be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- The Duty Fire Officer must be present on stage whenever pyrotechnics are used.

Additional fire fighting equipment may be required.

Pyrotechnics must be confined to the stage area and not taken into public areas.

Pyrotechnics must be fired from an approved key-protected control/firing box (and never directly from the mains electricity supply.) The key must be kept in the possession of the operator responsible for firing the devices. The control/firing box must only be energised immediately before firing the pyrotechnic devices.

The operator must have a clear view of the pyrotechnic device and its immediate vicinity from the firing point. This may be achieved by the use of an appropriate closed circuit television system.

The device must not be operated if there is any risk to anyone. In the event of a misfire the circuit must be switched off until after the performance.

Maroons must only be used in suitable bomb tanks in safe locations. Warning notices must be displayed stating that maroons operate as part of the effects on the premises.

Only sufficient pyrotechnic supplies for one performance may be withdrawn from store. At the end of the performance any unused pyrotechnics must be returned to store.



**Smoke machines & Fog generators** Smoke is the product of combustion and is made up of small, solid particles. Fog is composed of liquid droplets. This difference is important. Apart from as a by-product of the use of pyrotechnics, smoke is rarely used as an effect, whilst fog or vapour effects are relatively frequent. Most "smoke machines" should more properly be known as "fog generators". Fog or smoke may cause irritation to those with respiratory sensitivity, including asthmatics. The Licensing Authority may require approval of the type of fog generator or smoke machine proposed. Some Licensing Authorities operate an approved list of smoke machines or fog generators and will not consent to other machines unless adequate technical information is provided in sufficient time to enable them to determine whether the type of smoke machine or fog generator proposed is acceptable.

- 51.1. Documentary evidence of the non-toxicity and non-flammability of the fog or smoke must be retained in the production file.
- 51.2. Smoke machines and fog generators must be sited and controlled so that they do not obstruct exit routes nor cause a hazard to surrounding curtains or fabrics.
- 51.3. The volume of smoke and/or fog must be limited so that it does not seriously affect means of escape or obscure escape route signs. The penetration of smoke and/or fog into public areas must be restricted as far as is possible. Ventilation plant must be running while the smoke and/or fog effects are in use.
- 51.4. Warning notices must be displayed stating that fog or smoke is used as part of the effects.

### **Children in the Theatre environment.**

**Children:** All performances, or rehearsals with children on stage, or in the auditorium must have an adequate provision of licensed chaperones to keep order at all times, take charge of the children in an emergency and ensure their welfare at all times. Children under 16 must be supervised at all times. There must be at least one chaperone with every 10 children. This is the law; failure to comply may result in the performance being cancelled.

