



***Don't Be Stupid***  
**(Safety Manual)**

**This manual was modified from the University of California Performing Arts Safety Manual and the Southern Oregon University Theatre Safety Manual.**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this manual is to help ensure that A Public Fit Theatre Company maintains a safe workplace for all staff, contract staff and volunteers. The *Don't Be Stupid* manual will provide a general overview of potential theater risk exposures and related safety practices.

Safety is paramount for our staff, contract staff and volunteers. If you have questions or are unsure how to perform your task safely, ask a more experienced staff or volunteer to assist.

### **Note:**

To sum up this manual: don't be stupid, read the directions, ask for help. Be safe.

## **Set Construction/Strike**

This section contains an overview of commonly identified set construction/strike operations, risk exposures and safe practices.

### **Power/Hand Tools**

If you don't know how to use a tool, speak to the Technical Coordinator for instruction before attempting to use it.

General safety guidelines for all power/hand tools:

- Follow the manufacturers' instructions on the use and care of the tools.
- Inspect tools before using them. Check for any defects such as frayed wires or damage. Do not use damaged tools.
- Never carry or hoist a power tool by its power cord.
- Unplug power tools before loading them, changing blades or bits, making adjustments or cleaning them.
- Never use power tools on wet surfaces or in wet weather.
- Never alter or remove any machine or blade guards.

### **Power Saws**

Power saws pose a particular risk to operators. First and foremost, read the manufacturers' instructions. If you have questions regarding the operation of a power saw, talk to the Technical Coordinator.

Here are some general safety guidelines regarding power saws:

- Keep the blade guards in place and in good working order.
- Make sure the power button is turned off before plugging in the power cord to prevent unintentional starting.
- Keep the work area clean to decrease the risk of accidents.
- Keep others at a safe distance and stay a safe distance from other work areas.
- Do not wear loose clothing, gloves, rings, bracelets or other jewelry that may get caught in moving parts of the saw. Wear non-slip footwear. Wear protective hair covering or hair tied back to keep hair from becoming entangled in the tool or material.
- Always wear safety glasses. Wear dust masks when necessary.

- Keep saws in good condition. Follow manufacturer instructions for lubricating and changing accessories.
- Never leave the saw running unattended.
- Never operate any saw while under the influence of drugs, alcohol or medication.

## Ladders

Ladders create a fall risk for users. Therefore, it is important to inspect portable ladders at frequent regular intervals. Here are some general safety guidelines:

- Ladders should be in good condition and free from oil, grease or other slippery materials.
- Do not use a defective ladder. Report defective ladders to the Technical Coordinator or the Company Manager.
- Only use a ladder when it is on a stable, level base.
- Do not use boxes, chairs or other unstable surfaces in place of a ladder.
- Do not stand on the top step of the ladder.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE includes any protective gear that assists in preventing injury. PPE includes eye and face protection, head protection, foot protection, hand protection and respiratory protection. Make sure you use the proper PPE for the job you are doing. If you don't know what PPE to use, please ask the Technical Coordinator.

## Lifting and Carrying

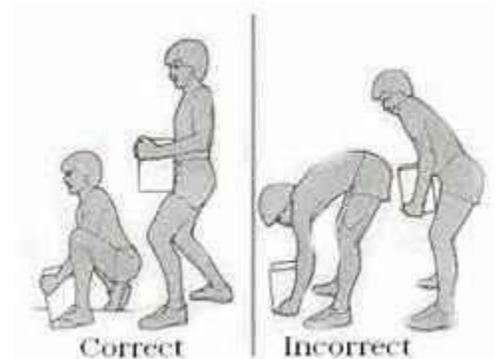
Back injuries related to incorrectly lifting and carrying items are some of the most frequent types of injuries. Set pieces are often awkward, heavy or oddly-shaped, which makes the pieces difficult to lift and move.

Ask yourself these questions before lifting items:

- Is it too large or heavy for one person?
- Do you need a partner to move this safely?
- Are there any tripping hazards on your route?
- Will you be able to get through doorways or corridors as you are carrying the object?

Remember to wear supportive, non-slip shoes to help avoid a fall, and follow these safe lifting techniques:

- Stand close to the load – Carrying an object as close to your body as possible will reduce the strain on your back and help maintain balance.
- Lift with your legs – Using your leg muscles helps keep your back better aligned, which will reduce the load on your lower back.
- Grip the load securely – Get a good handle on the load before you lift to avoid slipping. If the load starts to fall, let it go.
- Lowering the load – Make sure you keep the load close to you and use your legs while lowering the load to the floor.



## **Chemical Hazards**

The key to safe chemical use is to be aware of any information regarding the hazards of the chemicals in use, safe handling precautions and emergency/first aid procedures. Read the manufacturer's label with the chemical name(s), hazard warnings and first aid instructions. Do not remove the labels from containers. If materials are transferred to secondary containers, those containers must also be labeled with the same safety information.

The following safety guidelines apply to all chemical products:

- Read the product labels to help you identify the potential hazards.
- Follow the ventilation requirements of the products you are using.
- Do not eat or drink in your work area.
- Wash your hands before eating and drinking.
- Keep containers closed except when you are using them.
- Keep open flames or ignition sources away from where flammable liquids are used.
- Never puncture aerosol cans or expose them to high heat.
- Dispose of the product as required by the manufacturer.
- Know and understand the chemical spill procedures for each of the products you are handling.

## **Housekeeping**

Work areas can become congested while set building and rehearsals take place. Clutter can contribute to slip and fall injuries or to being struck by objects and can be a fire hazard. Remember to clean up after each work session. Place trash in proper receptacles. Avoid accumulating scrap lumber and materials. Store tools in the proper areas when not in use.

All lumber, plywood, metal and plastics are to be stored in the APF storage room. Good housekeeping practices are required for proper storage of plywood, lumber, metal and plastics, as well as maintaining organized storage for fasteners and supplies such as staples, bolts, nails, screws, brads, hinges, glues, molding, sandpaper, etc.

Housekeeping also includes proper storage of hand and power tools. While in use, power hand tools such as drills, saws or routers have cords that can run across the floor and cause tripping hazards. Take steps to reduce the trip hazard through cord placement and cord guards.

## **Storage of Materials**

After each production, all materials must be stored in the APF storage room. The room must be kept organized and clear of obstructions.

Storage procedures should comply with the following guidelines:

- Store flammable and combustible materials in the designated flammable storage cabinets.
- Store materials at least 18 inches below all sprinkler heads and at least 36 inches horizontally from the sprinkler heads.
- Store materials at least 24 inches below the ceiling where sprinkler heads are not present.
- Never obstruct exits.

## **Strike**

The Technical Coordinator and Stage Manager are in charge of strike. It is important that everyone listen to directions and perform them accurately. The safety requirements regarding set construction, lighting and audio still apply in this stage.

## **Provide the Appropriate Tools**

Provide the appropriate tools for the tasks to be completed, and require the crew to use the tools in the manner for which they were designed, for example use a hammer when a hammer is needed rather than a screw driver. Ensure crew members are trained to use the tools they are assigned and understand they should never use a power tool without proper training in its use and limitations.

## **Reduce Distractions**

Distractions during strike activities increase the risk of injury, just as distracted driving increases the risk of accidents. Distractions can also be caused by unauthorized personnel “visiting” the strike. Limit the strike to authorized personnel.

## **Lighting**

Working with hanging lights and high-voltage electricity has the potential to cause a variety of accidents and injuries including falls, electrocution, injuries from falling objects and fires. Also, lighting equipment is heavy and can cause significant injuries if proper lifting techniques are not used.

The following is a brief overview of typical lighting operations and hazardous exposures while installing, maintaining, and storing lights and fixtures.

## **Fire Risks**

Theater lights run hot, and the lenses can magnify the heat the lighting units produce. It is important that only approved equipment is used to modify your lights; using unauthorized materials can put you at risk for fire. Make sure lights are placed clear of anything that could ignite, including paper, plastic and flammable furniture.

Your fire prevention training will provide you with critical information about your theater's fire protection systems, including the use and location of fire extinguishers.

### **Electrical Risks**

There are inherent risk exposures while working with lighting instruments. Lighting equipment must be checked regularly for worn areas and exposed wire that might put an employee or volunteers at risk for electric shock. Worn or exposed wires need to be repaired and inspected before use.

### **Risk of Falling**

The procedures for hanging and focusing lights will require you to work from ladders and elevated platforms. It is critical that all fall risks are identified. It is important that employees work safely and with a partner to ensure stability and proper lifting techniques.

### **Overhead Lighting**

Theater lighting rigs are heavy and can cause injuries if they fall. All lights must be double-checked for safe installation.

### **Dimmer Boards**

Only trained and qualified employees are allowed to operate and maintain the light board and dimmer. Do not store flammable material near the stage management area.

### **Inspection, Maintenance and Storage**

Regular inspection and maintenance will significantly reduce potential electrical malfunctions and fire hazards:

- Visual observations of the condition of cables, plugs, cords, grips, insulation and electrical pockets.
- Confirmation that lighting instruments, electrics, cables, gel frames, top hats, barn doors and other electrical instrumentation are clean and dust-free.
- Confirmation that electrical equipment is stored in a clean and dry storage area.
- Confirmation that the power cords are coiled, the shutters closed and all attachments secure.

## **Audio**

Like lighting operations, there are significant risk exposures while installing, maintaining and storing audio equipment. You may be exposed to hazards such as a fall from heights while installing speakers, an injury sustained from falling equipment or back injuries from lifting heavy equipment. An added hazard may result from the decibel level generated by the speakers and amplifiers.

## **Electrical Risks**

The Sound Designer or Technical Coordinator will train staff and volunteers on the proper installation of audio equipment, including grounding. Grounding helps eliminate the ground loop that can potentially damage the equipment. The ground loop also results in electrical shock.

## **Risks of Falling**

Hanging audio equipment may require you to work from ladders and elevated work areas. It is critical that all fall risks are identified. It is important that employees work safely and with a partner to ensure stability and proper lifting techniques

## **Suspending Audio Equipment**

Overhead speaker units can cause severe injuries if not suspended properly. Sound Designers and the Technical Coordinator will train staff and volunteers on how to install and rig the units properly.

## **Noise Levels**

High noise levels generated during the production can result in hearing loss for the performers and crew. Conduct noise level testing when planning high noise level events and provide appropriate hearing protection devices when the planned noise levels reach a time-weighted average of 85 decibels.

## **Inspection, Maintenance, and Storage**

Regular inspection and maintenance reduces potential electrical malfunctions and fire hazards:

- Inspect the condition of cables, plugs, cords, grips, insulation and electrical pockets.
- Confirm that speakers are clean and dust-free.
- Confirm that all equipment is stored in a clean and dry storage area.
- Confirm that the audio cables are coiled and any attachments are secured.

## **Special Effects**

### **Atmospheric Smoke, Fog and Haze**

Smoke is produced using pyrotechnic materials, such as white or color smoke cartridges or other flammable substances. Fog or haze can be produced using a variety of commercially available machines using glycol, glycol/water mixtures, water, mineral oil or dry ice. The use of the equipment used to produce these special effects can result in operator injury from chemical exposure, fire or explosive discharge.

All staff or volunteers who will be working with these chemicals, equipment and devices that produce these special effects will be trained by the Technical Coordinator, Producing Director or other designated trainer.

Many people are sensitive to smoke, fog or haze. When smoke, fog or haze is used in a production, warnings must be posted at the front of the house, at entrance doors to the theater, online box office and in the program. For example: "WARNING: Synthetic fog is used during this performance."

## **Laser and Strobe Lights**

Laser and strobe lights can induce a seizure in some people with epilepsy or photosensitivity. When laser and/or strobe lights are used in a production, warnings must be posted at the front of the house or entrance doors to the theater and in the program, as an example: “WARNING: Laser and/or strobe lights are used during this performance.”

Some laser lights have the potential to cause eye damage if a person were to stare at the light, and some lasers can cause skin burns if too strong or too close. Only Class 2 lasers may be used. Approved laser lights must meet requirements set forth by the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA’s) Center for Devices and Radiological Health. Only employees trained to do so may operate the laser lights. Inform all performers and crew in advance and educate them regarding the hazards and safety precautions associated with the use of the laser and strobe lights.

## **Open Flame, Pyrotechnics & Explosives**

The use of open flame, pyrotechnics or explosives can be very dangerous. Fire permits are required in most jurisdictions for the use of open flame, fireworks and/or pyrotechnics in an assembly area. It is the policy that APF simulate open flame, pyrotechnics and explosions whenever possible. If actual open flame, pyrotechnics or explosives will be used, all performers, crew and volunteers will be trained by the Producing Director or other designated trainer. Appropriately rated fire-extinguishers will be on-hand and ready for use.

### **Open Flame**

Open flame includes candles, lanterns, camp stoves, cigars, cigarettes (herbal, tobacco and vegetable-based), pipes, incense and anything else that burns. Open flame will be simulated whenever possible. When it cannot be simulated and open flame is on stage, the following procedures will be followed:

- Stage crew member(s) with fire extinguishers in hand will be off-stage whenever open flame is present.
- Maintain buckets of moist sand on either side of the stage for the immediate extinguishment of smoking materials (cigars, cigarettes, pipes).
- Empty any ashtray props into the moist sand buckets as soon as they are removed from the stage and again at the end of each performance or rehearsal.
- There will be no smoking backstage, in the dressing rooms, in the audience area or the lobby.
- Electric or battery-powered candles will be used whenever possible.
- E-cigarettes or simulated cigarettes will be used whenever possible.

### **Explosives**

The use of explosives is not allowed.

### **Snow, Confetti & Foam**

Artificial snow may be made from chemical mixes, shredded paper or plastic. Chemically produced snow may pose hazards such as skin and eye irritation or internal ingestion. Check the packaging for any warnings and safe use directions, and share these warnings and directions with the performers and crew.

Shredded paper, shredded plastic and foam are used as confetti and artificial snow. These materials can produce dust that may result in eye and respiratory irritation, and they pose a fire hazard.

- Never use these materials when an open flame or other ignition source is present.
- Provide dust masks to crews assigned to clean up the material.
- Never reuse disbursed material, as it can become contaminated with moisture and other debris from the floor.
- Clean up the disbursed material immediately following each performance or rehearsal.
- Dispose of the material in closed metal containers.
- Use flame-proofed materials when possible.

### **Changes in Elevation**

Changes in elevation (stairs, ladders, etc.) pose trip/fall hazards. To reduce the risks of trip/fall incidents:

- Mark changes in elevation, including the edge of the stage, with phosphorescent tape.
- Inspect ladders and stairs for stability before each performance and rehearsal.

## **Costumes**

Costume designers and staff are exposed to hazards while operating scissors and other cutting devices such as sewing machines, glue guns, and steam irons, and when applying chemicals during construction and repair. The costume material and design may expose performers to fire, heat stress and trip/fall hazards while wearing the costumes. The costumes and accessories can pose fire, material handling and trip/fall hazards during the storage phase.

### **Sewing Machines**

Make sure you have received training in how to use the sewing machine before use. It is important to keep your fingers well away from the “presser foot” and “feed dog” of any machine to avoid exposing your fingers to the needles and/or knives.

### **Scissors and Cutting Devices**

Costume design and construction may require the use of various scissors and cutting devices such as bent fabric shears, paper or craft scissors, embroidery scissors, pinking shears, power scissors or rotary cutters. Here are a few reminders regarding the safe handling of scissors and rotary cutters:

- Always cut away from your body and hands.
- Keep your hands and fingers away from the cutting line.
- Always carry manual scissors with the point toward the floor and with your hand around the closed blades.
- Walk slowly when carrying scissors and be alert to your surroundings to avoid trips and falls.
- Hand off the scissors to someone else by holding the scissors by the closed blades in a loose grip and offering the handles (known as bows) to the person receiving the scissors.

## **Flat and Steam Irons**

The improper use and handling of irons can result in personal injury and property-damaging fires whether you are using a domestic flat/steam iron or an industrial steam iron. Industrial steam irons may be gravity-feed or steam box. The industrial steam irons generate greater heat than the domestic steam iron; therefore, their use requires greater caution. In a gravity-feed steam iron, the steam is generated from a water supply tank suspended above the ironing box. In a steam box iron, the steam is under pressure, and the inadvertent release of the steam may result in painful steam burns.

Here are some tips to ensure the safe use of irons:

- Never leave an iron turned on; turn it off when you are done using it.
- Unplug irons after turning them off.
- Check to ensure all irons have been turned off and unplugged before leaving the area.

## **Using Chemicals**

Chemicals are often used to alter the appearance of materials used in costume design. The improper use, storage and/or handling of chemicals can result in injury and/or illness. Controls to avoid injury and illness include proper use and storage, the use of PPE and ventilation.

Always read the label and directions regarding how to use a chemical before handling it. If you do not understand the information provided, ask someone to help you. Always return the chemical to the storage location specified.

Costume enhancement is often achieved through the aerosol application of a variety of chemically-based products such as paint and special finishes. Inhalation of the chemical vapors poses a hazard, so such applications should be conducted outdoors or in properly ventilated areas designed specifically for such use.

Be sure to wear PPE as necessary. This includes, but is not limited to, splash safety goggles, face shields, chemically resistant gloves, aprons, coveralls and dust masks. Use, store and care for all PPE as instructed.

## **Wearing Costumes**

Performers may be exposed to injury and/or illness while wearing costumes. Trip/fall injuries may result from the costume design, such as stepping on a long trailing hem or tripping over the toes of over-sized shoes. Trip/fall hazards may also be posed by a costume that obstructs the performer's vision. Conduct an assessment in a low-hazard area to determine how the costume moves, how the performers handle the costume and the performers' ability to see where they are going.

The risks of heat illness may be increased by the costume. Period costumes with corsets and multiple layers trap body heat close to the skin. Costumes that enclose the performer's head trap heat and humidity within the costume making it difficult for the body's cooling mechanisms to function properly. These conditions, combined with the hot stage lights, can increase the body's

internal temperature. It becomes critical to monitor the performers for signs of heat stress and to train them regarding the need to drink plenty of water and avoid caffeine and alcohol.

Flowing costumes and those coated with flammable treatments increase the risk of fire when an open flame is included as a stage prop. The risks of costumes catching fire can be reduced through the use of flame-resistant materials in the construction of the costumes or treating the costume with flame-retardant chemicals after the construction of the costume.

### **Storing Costumes**

Costume storage practices can pose injury and property damage risks. Where and how the costumes are stored may damage fire suppression systems, obstruct exits, increase the fire load in the building, cause falling object hazards, result in falls to other elevations during the storing or retrieval process and present material handling hazards. **DO NOT HANG COSTUMES ON SPRINKLER HEADS OR PIPES.**

Costumes may only be hung on costume racks. Storage shelves should be equipped with some means of preventing items from falling off the shelves such as shelf guards, cargo netting or bungee cords. Stored items should not extend beyond the edge of the shelf. Heavy, awkward and frequently accessed items should be stored on shelves within the optimum lift zone, which is between the knees and shoulders.

Use step ladders. Do not climb on chairs or furniture to access or put away costumes. Ladders should be inspected routinely to ensure they are in good condition.

### **Cosmetics Selection**

Use only cosmetic products for skin application; never use paint or other non-cosmetic products. Only use face products for the face, eye products for the eyes and body products for the body. Use the products only as directed.

Purchase makeup that is commercially manufactured. Ensure the product label lists the product's ingredients. Sharing the information can help performers avoid products that contain ingredients to which they know they are allergic. Have each user conduct a small patch test of the product before using it the first time to determine if the user has a reaction to the product. Visit the product manufacturer's website to find out more about the product.

When selecting products that are sprayed, such as hair spray, select products that can be dispensed via a manual pump rather than pressurized gas. Replace spirit gum used as an adhesive with surgical adhesive where possible. When using glitter, only use glitter sized for makeup use.

### **Application**

Sharing makeup and makeup applicators may result in the transmission of diseases, such as conjunctivitis. So, the key to makeup application safety is keeping it clean. This is true whether the makeup supply is a personal supply or a communal/shared makeup supply, and whether the performer applies his or her own makeup or a makeup artist applies the makeup.

### **General Guidelines for Keeping Makeup Clean**

- Wash your hands prior to handling the makeup.
- Ensure the performer's face is washed prior to applying the makeup.
- Never smoke, eat or drink while handling or applying the makeup.
- Replace makeup regularly.
- Never use old makeup.
- Keep makeup containers sealed when not in use.
- Use clean brushes to apply makeup.
- Never share makeup tools with others.
- Use tap or distilled water to moisten palettes, brushes or pencils; never use saliva.

### **Guidelines for Shared Makeup**

- Dispense makeup, whether cream or powder, from larger containers into smaller ones, and label the container to identify the performer using it.
- Slice cream stick makeup and lipstick using a clean palette knife and place the sliced portion in an individually labeled container or on a labeled paper.
- Use a palette knife or wooden craft stick to transfer cream makeup from its original jar into individually labeled containers.
- Never place an applicator back into a shared makeup container after the applicator has been used.
- Use disposable applicators, such as brushes and sponges.
- Ensure makeup artists wash their hands between performers.

### **Removal of Makeup**

The proper removal of makeup is as important to the performers' health as is the proper application. Avoid the use of solvents for the removal of makeup, nail treatments, as well as latex and spirit gum removal. Never pull spirit gum or latex off quickly, as this action can also remove healthy skin cells. Instead, slowly peel off the gum or latex. Promptly remove makeup after each performance using cold cream followed by warm water and an exfoliating cleansing product. Be sure to moisturize after the cleansing with a hypoallergenic moisturizing lotion or cream.

### **Storage Practices**

Adopt makeup storage practices that reduce the likelihood of shared use and unauthorized access and that also promote cleanliness.

- Clean and sanitize reusable brushes and sponges and then place them in sealed, labeled bags to keep them clean.
- Ensure all containers are closed.
- Store the makeup in a secure location to prohibit unauthorized access.
- Store makeup in a cool, dry location.
- Replace mascara every three months.
- Replace other makeup every six months.
- Keep disposable applicators in sealed containers.
- Clean and sanitize re-usable makeup brushes and sponges between users/performers.

- Use clean containers of clear water for each performer's makeup application.

## **Hair**

Hair products can pose skin absorption and inhalation hazards. Read the label prior to using any product and follow the listed safety procedures. Hair styling tools, such as curling/flat irons and steam curlers, can cause burns. Sharing brushes, combs, hair clips, as well as skullcaps, wigs and facial hair can transmit lice and nits.

### **Hair Product Guidelines:**

- Wear gloves when applying hair dyes and lightening products.
- Avoid dispensing large amounts of sprayed products in closed or un-ventilated areas.

### **Hair Styling Tools and Prop Guidelines:**

- Remove combustible and flammable materials from areas where hot irons will be placed.
- Clean and sanitize facial hairpieces, skullcaps and wigs between users.
- Clean and sanitize combs, hairbrushes, curlers and other styling tools between users.
- Do not share brushes, combs or curling irons.
- Inspect the power cords on curling and flat irons, as well as hair dryers prior to putting them away. Unplug hair dryers and hair irons when they are turned off.

## **General Safety Guidelines**

Know where the first aid kit and emergency eyewash station are located. If the performer experiences any of the following seek immediate medical attention:

- Serious skin reaction to any makeup application.
- Symptoms of pink eye/conjunctivitis: redness in the white of the eye, swelling of the eyelids, itching or burning of the eyelids, a lot of tearing and/or eye discharge.
- Scratched cornea.

## **Special Props**

Some productions call for special props, such as weapons or live animals. These props pose special risks that require special handling procedures to ensure the safety of performers, crew and audience.

### **Weapons**

Stage weapons can cause life-threatening and serious injury. Weapons include firearms, stun guns, air guns, edged weapons, arrows and bows (cross and recurve), pitch forks, clubs, sling shots, grenades, whips, chemical weapons, such as pepper spray and any other object that could be used in stage combat, such as a mace (spiked ball on a chain) or staff. Examples of firearms include: hand guns, rifles, shotguns and BB guns. Edged weapons are defined as knives, swords, spears, daggers, kunai and axes.

### **General Safety for All Weapons**

There are several rules and procedures in place to provide for the safe use of weapons, regardless of the type of weapon.

**Training:**

- Train stage management, designated employees, as well as all performers and crew who will handle the weapons.
- Provide appropriate PPE, such as hearing protection, eye protection, face protection and body protection for all hands-on weapons training.
- Include in the training all weapons policies; how to handle the weapons in a safe manner; the use, care, and maintenance of weapons; weapons security; noise exposure from weapons discharge; and hazards of and procedures for firing weapons in controlled settings.
- Provide additional extensive training regarding loading, cleaning, inspection and repair to those employees responsible for those activities.
- Document all training.
- Provide adequate time during tech rehearsals to allow the performers to become comfortable using the weapons.

**Storage:**

- Store all weapons in locked cabinets or rooms.
- Restrict access to the weapons storage areas to authorized staff.
- Secure weapons used in rehearsal in their transportation cases or other secured areas when not in use.
- Store all weapons in secure areas at the end of each performance.

**Injury and Near Miss Incidents:**

A “near miss” incident is defined as an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness or damage – but had the potential to do so.

- In case of injury, call 911 for medical assistance.
- Administer first-aid.
- Report to Company Manager, Artistic, and Producing Directors.
- Secure the location to preserve evidence.
- Complete incident reports.

**Use and Handling:**

- Only use weapons as intended by the choreography of the play.
- Never play with the weapons or engage in horseplay onstage or offstage.
- Never remove the weapons from the stage/backstage area.
- Only stage management and designated crew members may maintain, load, handoff and receive, and store the weapons.
- Store weapons in an unloaded state in a safe protected manner while they are backstage and not standing by for use onstage.
- Immediately clean weapons post-show and store them in dedicated locked storage areas.

## Firearms Safety

Following the safety rules for the use of firearms is essential for the safety of the performers and crew. Injury and even death can be caused by discharged wadding of blank rounds. The noise levels produced by the discharge of firearms can cause hearing damage.

Take firearms safety seriously.

- Treat all firearms as though they are loaded.
- Never use live ammunition. The use of live ammunition is prohibited.
- Only use the blanks designated for each individual weapon.
- Never use substitutions.
- Store blank rounds and shells in a container separate from the firearms.
- Check the barrel of weapons for obstructions before firing to avoid launching a projectile. Only trained and authorized personnel will perform this check.
  - This check is only necessary for those weapons whose barrels have not been purposely plugged.
- Never load any firearm until actually ready to use it.
- Never permit a performer to handle a firearm except during supervised training, supervised rehearsals, fight calls and performances.
- Always follow safe handoff procedures:
  - Make eye contact.
  - State whether the firearm is “unloaded” or “loaded.”
  - Offer the firearm grip first with the muzzle pointed down.
  - Wait for a “thank you” to confirm the recipient has control of the firearm prior to releasing it.
- Never cock or ready a firearm for discharge until it is called for onstage.
- Maintain all safety devices in place until ready to use the firearm.
- Always keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to pull the trigger.
- Never point-blank fire or dry fire a weapon. Dry firing is when the trigger is pulled when the gun is unloaded.
- Comply with the proper aiming and safe firing distances for each weapon based on its type, caliber and load size as determined by department staff.
- Apply safe firing distances to people and surroundings, such as soft goods, scenery, drops, scrims, props, costumes, etc.
- Point the weapon in a safe direction when discharging it.
- Never point the firearm directly at another person.
  - Aim slightly off to one side when required to aim at a performer, and ensure no one is in the direct line of fire.
- Wait 15 seconds after a misfire before ejecting or clearing the unfired blank from the firearm.
- Keep the gun pointed in a safe direction when waiting after a misfire, when clearing an unfired blank and during cleaning.
- Use proper PPE when firing a weapon. This applies to technicians and personnel in the vicinity when the weapon is discharged backstage. PPE includes hearing protection and

safety goggles. Performers must wear hearing protection devices and eye protection when directed to do so.

- Immediately engage the safety devices after discharging the firearm.
- Inspect, clean and oil firing weapons as directed by the manufacturer after each use to ensure proper function. Only trained and authorized personnel will perform these tasks.
- Never leave a firearm unattended.
- Secure firearms when not in active use during rehearsals, performances, or inspection and cleaning activities.
- Obtain and maintain current licenses and permits for possession and use of production firearms as required by applicable local, state and federal regulations.
- Maintain a firing log to record which weapon was fired and to notate any misfire or other problems with the weapon.

### **Edged Weapons:**

Piercing weapons are included in the category of edged weapons. Examples include, but are not limited to: knives, swords, rapiers, razors, arrows and bows (recurve and crossbow), pitch forks, mace, hatchets, axes, saws, spears, kunai, throwing stars and darts.

- Dull the edges of edged weapons.
- Blunt the tips of piercing/pointed weapons.
- Only use edged weapons designed for stage combat. These weapons should be strong enough and constructed so as not to break into dangerous pieces during use.
- Provide qualified supervision for all training sessions, rehearsals and performances.
- Inform performers and crew of safety precautions to be observed, including their positions during the action sequences.
- Review and practice the choreography with performers and crew prior to the introduction of weapons.
- Keep all protective devices, such as sheaths, in place until ready to use the weapon.
- Use storage cases for kunai and throwing stars.
- Never leave the weapons unattended.
- Inspect weapons for damage after each use.
- Repair weapons prior to their next use, including the removal of burrs along the edge or other sharp edges.

### **Other Weapons**

Many other types of weapons appear as props in productions, such as whips, staffs/walking sticks, clubs, slingshots and grenades.

- Only use weapons designed for stage combat. These weapons should be strong enough and constructed so as not to break into dangerous pieces during use.
- Inform performers and crew of safety precautions to be observed, including their positions during the action sequences.
- Review and practice the choreography with performers and crew prior to the introduction of weapons.
- Never leave weapons unattended.

## **Live Animals**

Live animals in theater productions can pose a variety of hazards and challenges. The animal may cause illness or injury to the performers, crew or audience. Materials for the care of the animals may increase the fire load within the building and may otherwise be hazardous to human health. The animals themselves may be harmed by the actions of the performers, crew or audience.

Physical injury, such as scratches, bites, contusions and broken bones, can result when animals are frightened or threatened and use their natural defensive mechanisms. Animals can also transmit illnesses to humans through scratches, bites, simple contact, secretions and airborne pathogens. Animals may also cause flea infestations. Performers and crew members may have an allergic reaction to the animals.

Ensuring the safety of the performers, crew, audience and the animals requires adhering to specific steps before allowing the use of any animal in a production. **NOTE:** No poisonous animals will be permitted at any time.

## **Conduct a Risk Assessment**

Identify the potential hazards associated with the proposed use of animals in a production. Consider involving persons experienced with animals, such as zoo keepers, animal trainers and/or a veterinarian. Ensure the risk assessment answers some fundamental questions:

- Is the animal essential to the production?
- Are there alternatives?
- Is the animal obtained only from a competent handler/trainer or other legal provider?
- What hazards are posed by the animal's natural behavior when reacting to loud noises, lighting, special effects on stage, stunts, other animals on stage or service animals in the audience?
- Will the animal be exposed to other animals on stage or in the audience?
- How can you influence the animal's behavior?
- With whom will the animal interact or have contact; i.e., crew, performers or audience?
- How much contact will there be with the animal?
- What routes of entry might microorganisms be transmitted; i.e., hand to mouth contact, mouth to mouth contact, secretions, bites, scratches or airborne?
- Could the animal cause an infection that might threaten pregnancy, such as cats and litter box contact transmitting the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis?
- How will the animal's movements be controlled?
- How will bodily fluids and secretions be managed?
- Who will be responsible for the animal on site? Off site?
- How will separation between the animal and any food and beverage areas be maintained?
- Will the animal have an experienced handler/trainer?
- Where will the animal be housed during the course of the production and between performances?
- How will the animal be fed and cared for during the course of the production?
- Will materials needed for the care and comfort of the animal, such as hay and/or straw, increase the fire load in the theater?

- What are the costs of including the animal in the production? Be sure to consider all fees, licenses, rentals, equipment, insurance, security, food, veterinary inspections/care, maintenance products and waste disposal.
- What special emergency response and evacuation procedures need to be developed?

### **Control Measures**

Once the use of an animal is decided:

- Notify all potential performers and crew members of the nature of the animal to be included in the production. Inform them of the amount of contact anticipated for each performer/crew member and the potential hazards associated with the contact.
- Obtain Hold Harmless waivers from each performers and crew member. Ensure the Hold Harmless waivers also require the disclosure of any known allergies.
- Obtain written verification that the animal is healthy from a licensed veterinarian. This must be obtained prior to bringing the animal on site.
- Ensure an adequate number of competent people have been retained to control the animal.
- Obtain written verification the animal is properly licensed where required by local ordinances.
- Provide adequate means to maintain personal hygiene; i.e., hand washing and/or sanitizing materials for use before and after handling the animal.
- Provide the appropriate PPE when needed; i.e., safety shoes when working with large animals, gloves when working with large birds, etc.
- Ensure patrons and the public are informed to the use of animals in the production. As with special effects notifications, this information should be included in advance advertising, posted in the lobby, online box office and printed in the program.

### **Animal Care Plan**

An Animal Care Plan is essential to ensure the safe and humane treatment of the animal and the safety of the performers, crew and audience. This plan will detail the when, where, how and who of animal care and control.

**NOTE:** The use of drugs and sedatives to control the animal's behavior is strictly prohibited.

Ensure the plan details:

- Who will be responsible for the care and behavior of the animal.
  - During rehearsals and performances?
  - All other times?
  - It is best if the animal is cared for off-site by its owner/trainer.
- How the animal will be transported to and from the theatre.
- What travel paths will be used for the animal's transportation.
- How the animal's movements will be controlled.
  - When waiting for rehearsals and performances?
  - On-stage?
  - During transportation?

- What will be the frequency of the rehearsals and performances; ensure the amount of time is kept to a minimum.
- How food and water will be provided while waiting for rehearsals and performances.
- What measures will be taken to ensure the animal is able to relieve itself.
- Who will dispose of the waste and ensure the area is kept sanitized.
- Who will groom the animal.
- How the animal will be protected from:
  - Unnecessary handling, including excessive contact from performers and crew, such as petting?
  - The loud noise and activity of the production while waiting for rehearsals and performances?
  - Patron contact?
- What are the emergency response and evacuation procedures for:
  - Evacuation of the animal in case of fire or other emergency evacuation of the building?
  - Escape and recapture of the animal?
  - Injury to the animal?
  - Injury to the performers, crew or audience?
- How and when the animal will be returned to its owner; how that return will be confirmed.
- What is the name and contact number for:
  - The animal's owner?
  - The animal's trainer?
  - The emergency veterinarian?

### **Front of House**

Front-of-house personnel have multiple responsibilities that impact audience safety as well as their enjoyment of the performance from their arrival, throughout the performance, and until they exit the facilities. Front of house can also help ensure the safety of the performers during the performance. Fire and life safety duties are first and foremost. Beyond fire and life safety responsibilities, front-of-house personnel are also responsible for signs and notices, food safety including licensing and permit compliance, safety inspections, safe facility conditions and incident investigations.

### **Training the Staff**

Front-of-house staff includes paid personnel and volunteers involved in managing the front of the house, box office sales and ushers. Each position has responsibilities that are detailed in the job description that need to be reviewed during training sessions conducted well in advance of the arrival of patrons. The training should include:

- Specific job duties
- House rules
- Hazard recognition
- How to deal with difficult and/or unruly patrons
- Emergency response duties

## **Patron Safety**

Ensuring patron safety is essential. Patron safety begins prior to their arrival and continues until their departure from the facility.

- Ensure the Fire Marshal has approved the seating layout for venues equipped with portable seating.
- Check all illuminated exit signs to ensure they are functioning properly.
- Ensure the program has been printed with the appropriate warnings regarding the use in the production of:
  - Strobe lights
  - Laser lights
  - Pyrotechnic effects
  - Live animals
- Ensure there is a back-up plan to provide production warnings in case the programs are printed without the required warning information.

**Curtain Times:** Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinees at 2:00 p.m.

**Seniors:** Senior ticket rates offered to patrons sixty years and older.

**Students:** Student ticket rate offered to students with ID.

**Special Access Needs:** APF will make accommodations whenever possible.

**Late Seating:** APF does not allow for late seating. There are no refunds or exchanges for latecomers; however APF will issue tickets to a different performance, if possible.

**Smoking:** Smoking is not allowed in the theatre.

## **Prior to Each Performance**

Although routine safety inspections are made of the facility, the house manager must ensure the facilities are inspected again prior to the performance and arrival of patrons in order to identify hazards that may have developed since the last routine safety inspection. The house manager should ensure all hazardous conditions are immediately corrected and, if necessary, cancel the performance and evacuate the building.

- Locate fire extinguishers and know how to use them.
- Locate first aid kits.
- Review location of all exits and where they lead.

## **Accessible Exits**

- Ensure aisles, corridors, exit pathways and exit doors are unobstructed.
- Ensure aisle widths meet building code and Fire Marshal specifications in venues equipped with portable seating.
- Ensure aisles and corridors along the exit pathway are not reduced.

- Ensure no curtains or decorative hangings obstruct or obscure the view of the exits or access to the exits.
- Ensure exit doors are unlocked and open with ease.
- Check the exterior side of all exit doors to ensure the required exterior clear area exists.
- Ensure the immediate removal of any exit constrictions or obstructions.

### **Patron Awareness**

Some special effects and special features of the performance may pose a hazard for patrons. It is essential the patrons be notified in advance.

- Ensure signs are posted in the lobby advising patrons of the use in the production of:
  - Strobe lights
  - Laser lights
  - Pyrotechnic effects
  - Live animals
- Ensure informational signs are positioned to ensure patrons see the notice prior to entering the auditorium but not in a manner that obstructs or obscures the exit pathways.

### **Fire Safety**

- The stage manager, an usher or a patron may be the one to notify the house manager of the possibility of a fire. The House Manager should call 911.
- If the show is to be stopped, arrange with the Stage Manager to make an announcement. A sample speech is: "Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention please. There is no cause for concern. We are having a problem with the alarm system and must, according to safety regulations, evacuate the theatre. The play will resume once the alarm system has been fixed. Please exit via the house doors closest to your seat. The ushers will show you the way. Thank you." **DO NOT MENTION THE WORD "FIRE"!**
- Ushers with flashlights should assist patrons through the doorways and up and down steps as much as possible.
- When all patrons have left the building, close doors behind you as you leave.
- Evacuate to at least 300 feet from the building and keep away from emergency personnel.
- Do not return to the building until instructed to do so by authorized personnel. Do not walk through or stand in a smoke cloud.
- Tell authorities if you suspect someone may be trapped inside the building. **If you are caught in smoke:**
  - Drop to your hands and knees. Crawl toward an exit. Stay low as smoke rises to ceiling level.
  - Hold your breath as much as possible.
  - Breathe shallowly through your nose and use a filter such as a shirt or towel.
- **Using a fire extinguisher:**
  - If you have been trained and it is safe to do so, you may fight small, contained fires with a fire extinguisher. Be sure you are using the proper extinguisher for the type of fire you are fighting.
  - Fire extinguisher instructions:
    - **P** – PULL safety pin from handle.

- A – AIM at the base of the fire.
- S – SQUEEZE the trigger handle.
- S – SWEEP from side to side at the base of the fire.

### **Power Outage**

- The Producing Director, Associate Producing Director, Artistic Director, or Stage Manager will make the decision to cancel the show.
- The Producing Director or Associate Producing Director will make the following announcement. Go immediately to the front of the house with a flashlight and say, "We are experiencing a power outage. If you will please stay seated, we are trying to determine the problem. We hope to have the power back on within a few minutes. Thank you."
- Station ushers by the doors with flashlights.
- If the power comes back on, then let the audience know that the performance will be continuing soon.
- If the decision is made to cancel the performance, announce that we are canceling remainder of this performance. If they purchased online, then we will issue tickets for a different performance. If you purchased tickets at the box office this evening, please leave your email address with the box office or Producing Director and we will issue tickets for a different performance. Please exit by the nearest marked exit. Ushers with flashlights should assist patrons through the doorways and up and down steps as much as possible.

### **Emergency Assistance**

Call 911 for medical emergencies, fire or fire alarms, leaks or spills of hazardous or toxic chemicals, bomb threat by phone or bomb threat in writing.

### **Medical Emergency**

- Do not move a seriously injured person unless the surrounding situation is life threatening.
- Usher should go to lobby and inform house manager of situation. House Manager contacts Producing Director.
- House Manager or Producing Director will contact 911.
- Remain with the patient until emergency personnel arrive. If possible, send someone outside to wait for emergency personnel. If the show has been stopped, once emergency personnel remove the patron from the theatre, the house manager can contact the stage manager to resume the show.
- Provide necessary first aid, and keep the patient as calm and comfortable as possible.
- If patient is having seizures, try to prevent injury by moving furniture out of way. When the seizure finishes, roll the individual onto his/her side. Be aware that they most likely will remain unconscious, may have wet themselves and may have snoring-type breathing.
- If you notice any medical identification jewelry, bring this to the attention of the responding emergency provider.