Theatre Safety Manual

Safety Policy

It shall be the policy of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Theatre that a safe, healthy environment shall be maintained at all times within the Theatre Program and its environs, including performance spaces, rehearsal spaces, and shop and other work spaces. This includes controlling and minimizing hazards attendant with the creation of theatre. We recognize that many processes, techniques, materials, and practices used in the theatre contain inherent risks to individuals; if those risks cannot be adequately minimized and controlled through proper training, equipment, and use of appropriate precautions, THOSE THINGS MAY NOT BE USED WITHIN OUR PROGRAM.

Furthermore, ignoring precautions and restriction shall not be allowed. No production can ever be considered justification for risk to any member of our program, and no production can be considered successful if someone is injured in its completion.

No activity in theatre is completely safe. Safety procedures considered standard in any other industry may not be practical in a performance situation. We must therefore be especially diligent in following safety rules that do apply. FAILURE TO FOLLOW APPROPRIATE SAFETY RULES AND POLICIES MAY RESULT IN SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH! Therefore, failure to follow required safety rules may result in immediate temporary and possibly permanent expulsion from a given activity, production, or class.

Handling Safety Issues

It is the policy of UW-O Theatre that no safety concern is unimportant. All personnel and students within the Department are encouraged to bring such concerns to the faculty and staff, and especially to the Technical Director. In no way will doing so reflect badly on or be held against the person making the report. Rather contributing to the health and safety of all personnel is everyone's responsibility.

Restricted Access

A theatre space, especially the stage area, is essentially a large machine for producing plays. It contains many hazards, especially to those unfamiliar with the mechanical and physical aspects of a theatre. THEREFORE:

No unauthorized personnel (i.e. anyone other than Cast and Crew) shall be allowed backstage during any performance, between call time and 15 minutes after final curtain.

No one is allowed access to the stage area unless supervisory personnel (faculty, staff, or authorized student supervisors) are present.

No one shall be permitted to work alone in the Theatre space. In case of injury or incident, there must be another present to render aid or seek assistance.
NO ONE SHALL BE PERMITTED TO OPERATE ANY POWER TOOLS IN THE SHOP SPACES UNLESS A PAID STAFF OR STUDENT SUPERVISOR IS PRESENT!
This includes Scenery and Costume Shops.

First Aid, accidents, and reporting

A First Aid kit is maintained in the office of the Technical Director, who is responsible for seeing that it is maintained and kept stocked. This kit is located in the wooden cabinet, and may be accessed as needed. Keys to the TD office are issued to all faculty, professional and academic staff, and student stage managers, who are all authorized to access the first aid supplies.

However, this kit is intended for First Aid ONLY! In the event of anything OTHER than minor incidents, accidents are to be reported IMMEDIATELY to the Technical Director if present and/or the supervisor in charge of the area, who shall contact University Police at phone no. 1212, who are authorized to contact the proper emergency services. If the incident is serious or life-threatening, you should call 9-911 immediately. University Police should then be contacted as soon as practical. Render whatever first aid can be applied until emergency services arrive to relieve you.

All incidents must also be reported to the Technical Director after the fact.

Emergency Procedures

FOR ANY EMERGENCY INCLUDING INJURY, ILLNESS, FIRE OR AN EXPLOSION, DIAL 1212 (UNIVERSITY POLICE) FROM ANY UNIVERSITY PHONE, OR IN EXTREME EMERGENCY, DIAL 9-911.

Your call will be answered by an officer at University Police. Public Safety personnel will respond and determine the need for additional assistance.

The following are recommended procedures for various types of emergencies:

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

1. If a SERIOUS INJURY occurs, immediately dial University Police at the 1212 emergency phone number, or dial 9-911. First aid can be administered or medical transport can be arranged if necessary.
2. Never move a person suspected of serious injury unless it is a life-threatening situation such as a fire. Attempts to move an injured person can cause further injury, especially to the spine and neck. Try to keep the injured person warm and still.
3. Persons with severe injuries or illnesses that require emergency department facilities for treatment are to be transported directly to Mercy Medical Center. Persons with less serious conditions should obtain treatment at the Student Health Center in .
4. Because of infection, minor cuts have the potential to become more serious. Wounds should be washed and dressed. Visit McCosh Health Center if necessary.

FIRE EMERGENCIES

In the event of a fire, University Police should be notified immediately at 1212 and the following actions are recommended:

1. Activate the fire alarm.
2. Put out the fire if you know how to do so without endangering yourself or others. University policy states that individuals are not required to fight fires. Those that choose to fight small, incipient stage (no larger than a waste paper basket) fires must be trained in the proper use of fire extinguishers. If a fire cannot be extinguished within the first 10 seconds, leave immediately!
3. If the fire is large or spreading, leave the fire area and prevent the fire's spread by closing the doors behind you. If on stage, activate the Fire Curtain by breaking the glass cover on the Curtain release behind either proscenium.

4. Evacuate the building and await the arrival of Fire Officials. Try to account for everyone inside the building. Do not leave the area until you have been accounted for.

5. Do not re-enter the building until you are told to do so by University Police or the municipal fire official.

CHEMICAL EXPOSURE

1. If you spill a chemical such as paint thinners or fabric dyes on your skin:
   - Rinse the area with water for at least 15 minutes.
   - Remove any soiled clothing and jewelry while you are rinsing.

2. If you get a chemical in your eyes:
   - Rinse with water for at least 15 minutes, rinsing from the nose outward to avoid contaminating the unaffected eye.
   - Remove contact lenses while rinsing - don't wait to remove them before you rinse.

3. If you inhale a chemical or are overcome by fumes:
   - Leave the room and move to fresh air.
   - Keep door of room open to vent.
   - Do not re-enter a contaminated area.
   - If symptoms do not subside, seek medical attention at Student Health Center or Mercy Medical Center.

Chemical Spills

The campus police chief functions as emergency coordinator. The general procedure in the event of a spill is to notify supervisor (Technical Director if available) who will evacuate immediate area if necessary. The supervisor then calls campus security office. Campus security staff will consult with the EHS manager and with the campus Facilities Management director to make a determination on whether to call in the local hazmat team.

Fire control and Use

Fire is always a hazard in the Theatre. To minimize this problem, the following shall be adhered to at all times:

The Fredric March Theatre is equipped with a Fire Curtain, which is designed to lower automatically in case of fire. **AT NO TIME IS THE PATH OF THE FIRE CURTAIN TO BE BLOCKED BY SCENERY, PROPS, OR REHEARSAL PROPS OR FURITURE.**

All technical personnel and students MUST, and all actors SHOULD, be trained in the location and use of fire extinguishers in the backstage areas. HOWEVER, if a fire cannot be extinguished within the first 10 seconds or so, **GETTING EVERYONE OUT SAFELY IS THE FIRST PRIORITY!** This is the responsibility of the Production Stage Manager and the Technical Director. Activate the fire alarm immediately! If possible, the fire curtain lowering system (i.e. the "Break Glass" box) should be activated before leaving the stage. Fire alarm boxes are located at each exit to the building. Pull an alarm switch to alert the Fire Department on the way out if it has not already been activated.

Open Flames:

**THE USE OPEN FLAMES IN PRODUCTION IS STRONGLY DISCOURAGED!**

THAT SAID:
The use of open flames shall be permitted when necessary for production ONLY WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR who is responsible for training and overseeing personnel handling the effect. If necessary, the TD shall consult with and obtain permission from the City Fire Marshal before effects can be permitted. IF EITHER THE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OR THE FIRE MARSHAL DISAPPROVES THE FIRE EFFECT, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, IT SHALL NOT BE PERMITTED.

At any time open flames are in use, at least one crew person shall stand by offstage with a fire extinguisher at hand the entire time the open flame is present, and that shall be that PERSON'S SOLE DUTY AT THAT TIME!

**Combat and Weapons**

ACTORS and DIRECTORS:
No stage combat shall be permitted in production or class without training and approval of the Theatre faculty responsible and/or the faculty Fight Director.

PROPS:
Prop weapons are **NOT** toys. They are **NOT** to be handled **EXCEPT** by authorized persons and are the responsibility of the Props master of each production and/or the assigned Weapons Handler. **NO ONE ELSE IS ALLOWED TO HANDLE ANY PROP WEAPON!**

Prop weapons shall be secured when not in use, and shall be issued to the actors using them only when required, and shall be immediately turned back in to the props person responsible immediately when finished; the weapon shall then be immediately secured until the next performance.

All prop weapons MUST ALWAYS BE TREATED AS REAL weapons (which in fact they are). All guns used as props must be handled as if loaded; all edged weapons must be treated as sharp. **EVEN BATED WEAPONS CAN KILL!**

**Smoking Rules**

It is State Law that **SMOKING IS PROHIBITED** in all State buildings, including the Theatre facilities; in fact is illegal within 25 ft. of the outside doors. The single exception is smoking required by the business of a particular production. THIS SHALL NOT BE USED AS AN EXCUSE TO SMOKE IN THE THEATRE! Only such smoking as is absolutely necessary for a production is allowed, and if you push it, such permission will be withdrawn!

**Safety complaints and hazards**

Any perceived safety concerns or hazards, large or small, MUST be reported to the supervisor in charge of the area, and/or the Technical Director, who shall take steps to correct the problem or to report the problem to the appropriate University authorities for action.

Electrical or maintenance services to the building shall be referred to Buildings and Grounds, at 3466.

**Scene Shop Safety Rules**

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - OSHKOSH THEATRE SHOP SAFETY RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The following should be considered as guidelines for working in the Theatre Shop areas. They have been written and are enforced for your safety, and as such should be followed at all times. If you have any questions regarding the safe operation of any tool or method of construction, please feel free to ask the Faculty or Staff. You are
responsible to know and understand all of the following:

1. All persons working in the shops shall be properly attired. This includes long pants and close-toe shoes. Hard-sole shoes should be worn if possible since gym shoes do not afford sufficient sole and toe protection. At no time will anyone wearing a dress, shorts, or sandals be allowed to work in the shop areas as none of these garments give sufficient protection to the wearer. Also, long hair is to be tied back to avoid any chance of getting it caught in moving machinery.

2. The Scene Shop is an eye protection area and safety glasses are required whenever entering this space. In general, when operating any power tool, safety glasses are to be worn. Also when participating in any amount abrasive sanding or spray painting, respirators are also to be used in addition to safety glasses. Ear protection is available to all students and staff in the shop areas at all times. It is up to the student or staff members to determine when this protection is necessary.

3. Every attempt should be made to keep your work area clean and organized. This means periodically sweeping up excessive waste and returning unnecessary tools to their proper places.

4. There is to be NO SMOKING IN THE SHOP AREAS. No soft drinks or food are permitted in the shop areas.

5. No person shall work in the shops while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Prescribed drugs which could cause drowsiness, lightheadedness, or disorientation should also not be used. Any student using such prescribed medications should notify both the Faculty and Staff in-charge. Any person removed from the shops for the above reason shall not be allowed to return unless authorized by the Faculty.

6. Any time that you have a problem with any tool or machine, bring it to the attention of the Staff so they may assist you. Never attempt to repair or adjust any machines. If a machine or tool is accidentally damaged, bring it to the attention of the Staff. Please do not try to hide or cover up any damages.

7. At no time shall any student operate or attempt to operate any of the following pieces of equipment without permission of the staff.
   a) Table Saw
   b) Radial Arm Saw
   c) Circular Saw
   d) Band Saw
   e) Sabre Saw
   f) Drill Press
   g) Any pneumatic power tool

8. Before operating any power tools, make sure all allen wrenches, chuck keys or other foreign materials are clear of the machine's work area.

9. Dangling necklaces or large rings, long loose scarves or loose sleeves should not be worn in the shop as they may become entangled in moving machinery.

10. Always make sure that all power tools are turned off and the electrical power disconnected before leaving the machine. Never leave an unattended machine running, even for "one second".

11. Always unplug or disconnect from power all power tools before changing blades, bits, or attachments.

12. IF YOU DON'T KNOW - ASK! There is no such thing as a dumb question, only dumb mistakes and injuries.

**Safety notices and bulletins**

Safety Bulletins will be posted on the Crew bulletin board outside the Technical Director's office, ACW-124.
Safety rules for each of the major power tools in the Scene Shop are posted near each tool. NO PERSONS WILL BE ALLOWED TO OPERATE ANY POWER TOOL UNTIL TRAINED AND APPROVED BY THE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR. Likewise, personnel and students must be trained and approved before being permitted to operate any powered costume shop equipment. All required safety rules must be followed at all times.

Some guidelines for using tools include:

- Inspect tools before use for any defects such as frayed wires, or damaged hand tools. Remove defective tools from service and have repaired or replaced.
- Only use power tools that are properly grounded with a 3-pronged plug or that are double-insulated. A power tool with a missing grounding prong shall be considered damaged and be removed from use until repaired.
- Never carry a power tool by its cord. Avoid wrapping cords too tightly around tools for storage to prevent damage to strain relief grommets.
- Unplug power tools before loading them, changing blades or bits, making adjustments, or cleaning them. Follow all manufacturer's instructions for handling and adjusting.
- Defective, damaged or unsafe equipment must be removed immediately from service if damage occurs or is detected.
- Dull tools are unsafe and can damage operator or work. Maintain your tools and always use sharp cutting blades.
- NEVER ALTER OR REMOVE ANY MACHINE OR BLADE GUARDS OR DISABLE ANY SAFETY FEATURE.

**MSDS**

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for chemicals and materials used in the shops are maintained by the Technical Director and are available at any time to all persons in the theatre area. Workers in the shops, students and paid assistants are required to follow safety guidelines on each sheet for each material and chemical. If you do not understand or have questions about anything in any MSDS, or about any process, see the Technical Director for clarification.

**Work requiring training**

Many of the processes and systems in the theatre complex pose hazards while in use. Before students and staff are permitted to use them, they must be trained and approved by the appropriate supervisor of the area. These processes include but are not limited to:

**Use of power tools in the Scene Shop:**
- Table Saw
- Radial Arm Saw
- Band Saw
- Stationary Drill Press
- Portable Drills and Drill Motors
- Bench and Portable Grinders
- Pneumatic-powered Nailer and Staplers
- Electric and Gas Welders
- Chop Saw
- Circular Saw

**Theatre Systems:**
- Stage Rigging and Fly systems
- Lighting Control Boards
- Sound Control Boards
Hydraulic Lift (Apron)

Ventilation Systems

The Scene Shop is equipped with certain ventilation systems, which shall be used at all appropriate times. These include but are not limited to:

Spray paint use is only permitted in the Spray Booth of the Scene Shop, with ventilation system running, or with the use of ANSI approved filter masks. If such a mask is not available, painting cannot be done until appropriate equipment is obtained.

Dust collection system must be operating when table saw, band saw, or radial arm saw is in use. Training on these tools must include training on the ventilation system.

Welding shall be allowed only when room ventilation equipment is in use. The dust collection system and the spray booth are NOT considered part of this system.

Personal Protective Equipment

In addition to normal permitted work cloting (see Scene Shop Safety Rules, Item 1) the shops are provided with personal protective equipment. Use of such equipment is not optional and shall be used at all times when performing associated activities.

Such personal protective equipment shall include but is not limited to:

EYE PROTECTION: safety glasses, goggles, or face shields shall be required when operating power tools.

EAR PROTECTION: ear plugs or ear muffs shall be required when operating louder power tools, such as radial arm saw, table saw, circular saw, chop saw, or portable grinder at any time, or any percussive tool (pneumatic nail gun), at ALL times. Ear plugs or ear muffs shall be required when operating ANY power tool for extended periods of time.

HARD HATS are available and must be used while overhead rigging is taking place.

BREATHING PROTECTION:
Spray painting is only permitted in the spray booth with evacuation system running, or while wearing a ventilation mask rated for spray paint.

Dust collection system and room ventilation systems shall be used at all appropriate times. See section on Ventilation Systems for clarification.

Dust masks are required for activities creating quantities of dust or of dust collection system is not practical for a given activity (i.e. portable tools.)

PROTECTIVE GLOVES are required when working with solvents or solvent based (non-water based) chemicals and materials. Extended exposure to water based chemicals (such as paint) shall also require the use of protective gloves. Refer to MSDS for guidelines as to appropriate equipment.

WELDING: Proper eye protection goggles and masks, long sleeve shirts and long pants are required for welding. A leather welding tunic is available and should be used while arc welding.

Counterweight loading and unloading
TO LOAD A BATTEN SAFELY:

WITH FLYMAN AT THE LOCK RAIL AND LOADERS ON THE LOADING GALLERY:

- Flyman calls "HEADS UP" and lowers batten to floor.
- Flyman gives clearance to deck crew to place the load on batten.
- AFTER load is on batten, Flyman estimates weight and directs loaders to load the arbor with appropriate weights equal to the load.
- Loaders raise keeper nuts and spreader plates, leaving one on top of batten weight.
- Loaders place required counterweights on arbor. If many "bricks" are needed, a spreader plate should be inserted between weights every two feet.
- When finished, Loaders slide down remaining plates and keeper nuts, locking them in place with thumb screws. Only then do they call down: "Locked and Secured."
- Flyman calls to Deck crew to "Clear the Batten."
- Flyman removes keeper ring and opens lock handle, and tests load for balance.
- If load is out of balance, repeat above procedure to adjust.
- Once weight is correct, Flyman calls "Clear the Batten" and flys load to trim, locking rope lock and securing with Keeper Ring.

TO UNLOAD, REVERSE THE PROCEEDURE:

- Flyman calls "Heads Up" and flys batten to the deck.
- Upon flyman's command, Loaders remove all weight down to but not including batten weight.
- Only after weight is off arbor, Deck crew removes goods from the batten.
- Flyman calls "Clear the Batten" and flies batten out for storage.