



Carver Theatre

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“TECHNICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES”

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES: Document 2

REVISED MARCH 2010

INTRODUCTION:

The Carver Theatre has undertaken a comprehensive 'hazard and risk assessment' of the facilities and activities occurring within the theatre. From this assessment, a "Health and Safety" policy has been agreed and 'procedures' identified that shall be followed by all members.

This policy is achieved, in part, by encouraging all members to take an informed, common sense and responsible attitude towards safety issues.

The policy and procedures are set out in two related documents, "Carver Theatre: Health & Safety Policy and Procedures" and "Carver Theatre: Technical Health and Safety Guidelines"

The first document, the "Carver Theatre: Health & Safety Policy and Procedures", contains a description of the formal hazard and risk assessment and how it was (and will continue to be) carried out. It sets out general health and safety procedures relating to everyone, members and public, involved with the Carver, especially actors, stage construction personnel, and members involved in production, front of house, bar and tea room.

That document, first issued in May 2007, has undergone its first revision in March 2010.

This second document, the "Carver Theatre: Technical Health and Safety Guidelines", addresses the more technical areas of stage and production and should be read by members who work in these areas. The stage working environment is inherently dangerous. Use of electricity, power tools, working at heights and special effects are day-to-day practices within the theatre.

This document comprises the first revision of the original second document which was first issued in November 2007.

All members shall be made aware of both revised documents.

A manual containing both revised documents will be kept in the library. Further copies can be obtained from the Society's Secretary.

STATEMENT OF AIMS

Health, safety and the security of our members and the public are at the forefront of the society's considerations.

It is our duty to minimise risks and educate members as to proper practice, according to current safety legislation.

All people within (members and visitors) the theatre have a duty of care for each other and a responsibility to prevent potentially dangerous situations occurring.

In all the assessments undertaken and throughout this document the assumption is one of reasonable common sense rather than prescriptive policies and procedures. If it seems unsafe then 'don't do it' is the overriding principle.

SUMMARY

The Carver Theatre is a licensed venue for plays and music. The theatre is owned (in trust) and run by the members of the society. The theatre has a bar for the use of members of the society and the public who are attending public performances of plays and other theatrical events.

The Theatre's Health and Safety policy and procedures are set out in two related documents.

Document 1 of this series, "Carver Theatre: Health & Safety Policy and Procedures" provided the following in general terms:

- General health and safety provisions.
- Health and Safety Risk Assessment - In making that risk assessment two groups of people were identified and considered.
 - Members of the Society
 - Members of the Public

For the purposes of that risk assessment the theatre was split into six physical areas.

- The Stage and Auditorium
- Back Stage Area including Green Room and under stage
- Dressing Room area
- Foyer, corridors and toilets
- The Bar and Library (tea room)
- The 2nd floor member's area, comprising meeting room, rehearsal studio, wardrobe, properties room and archive.

Each of the following hazards and the associated risks were considered in relation to the above defined people and areas.

- Trips, slipping and falls
- Falls from height
- Electrocution
- Cuts and bruises
- Burns
- Scalding
- Moving and lifting
- Damage to hearing
- Theatrical activities and special effects
- Fire

In document 1, the above hazards were examined and identified as individual risks where sensible or were treated as a general risk and in each case a policy was set out in the section entitled 'Specific Hazards & Risk assessment'.

In document 1, 'Fire' and how to deal with it was addressed in general terms, in the section entitled 'Fire Safety'. In addition the Carver Theatre has carried out a specific fire safety risk assessment according to the "Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

This document, document 2 of the series, entitled "Carver Theatre: Technical Health and Safety Guidelines" specifically examines, "Safety applied to theatrical preparation and performance" and is aimed at members of the Carver Theatre who work on the stage or are involved in any of the specialised technical areas of the Theatre's operation (including actors where appropriate). It provides a detailed analysis of hazards and associated risks to be met in specialised technical areas and details of the procedures to be employed by persons working in these areas.

The document is to be made available in all stage and technical areas for members who work in these areas and shall be read by such members.

CARVER THEATRE: TECHNICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

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DETAILED HAZARD AND RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURES TO BE EMPLOYED

SET CONSTRUCTION

GENERAL SAFETY

Risk evaluation

A serious, but temporary risk is perceived.

Risk reduction

Ensure excellent housekeeping and employ safety checks.

Train members about the hazards and use of good working practice.

Junior members of the Carver should always be supervised by an experienced adult member when working on stage.

General safety procedures to be used during set construction

Always use fireproofed materials (curtains, props, sets and costumes) wherever possible, especially those which may be used in situations which may constitute a fire risk.

Make sure you know how to use any tools safely. Members should never use any power tools that they are not familiar with.

Keep working area TIDY at all times.

Never leave objects lying around where they can trip people up or jam doors.

Check and ensure that the set is safely secured.

Check and ensure that relevant props are safely secured.

Make sure that the stage floor is swept, and if necessary, mopped to keep it dry and free from slippery materials.

Check and ensure that the stage floor is free of splinters, screws and nails.

Check and ensure that all Stage Drops, Lighting Bars and other over-stage equipment is safely secured, using safety chains.

Trip Hazards

Risk evaluation

The hazard has the potential to cause accidents - particularly from cables and materials on the floor.

Risk reduction

Ensure excellent housekeeping and safety checks.

Train members about the hazard and good working practice.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid trip hazards

Mark obstructions in dark areas with white or similar visible paint or tapes.

Check and ensure that all power, control and sound cables are secured to floor / walls using gaffer tape (or other appropriate means). Alternatively, make use of data trays/electrical guttering where appropriate.

Ensure that stairs and steps are clearly marked on edges.

Working at heights and with ladders

Risk evaluation

Stage crew do regularly work from ladders and bridges. There is a risk of either persons falling from a height or of dropping things on to people below. The chances of persons falling from more than two meters in the theatre are quite small. There is little practical opportunity to rig safety harnesses.

Risk reduction

Employ good working practice for working at heights.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards of working at height

Two people should always be involved with the use of ladders and scaffold.

Ladders should always be footed to prevent slipping and checked for security before use

Step ladders should ONLY be used fully opened and never too close to the edge of staging or rostra.

Never lean out or over-stretch from a ladder - MOVE THE LADDER!

NEVER leave objects on top of ladders,

Hard hats will be available in the tool room for any stage crew that want to use them. However as there are rarely times when people are working above others the stage area will not be considered a mandatory hard hat area.

If persons are working above head height those on stage below should stay clear of the area in case anything is accidentally dropped. In extreme cases the area below may be cordoned off.

If you are dropping anything from above head height, or if anything such as a cable is likely to swing near anyone's head, you should always shout 'HEADS' and, if time allows, check that all is clear before letting go. (The object should be designed to withstand being dropped!).

Scenery & the Stage Revolve

Risk evaluation

There is a risk of scenery falling from a height on to people below. There are risks of persons and materials falling over where the revolve is rotated.

Risk reduction

Employ good working practice for securing scenery and use of the revolve.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from scenery and the stage revolve

ALWAYS secure unused scenery drops with a safety chain.

When lowering or raising a scenery drop, ALWAYS check that no persons are within 1 metre of the drop. If at all possible, do not lower or raise a scenery drop in blackout - If unavoidable, DOUBLE CHECK area is clear before proceeding.

Always secure scenery flats to each other and to permanent structures, e.g. the 'peg-rails' or the stage walls or floor. If securing scenery flats to the floor with a brace and stage weight, to avoid anyone tripping over them, always mark both the brace and the stage weight with fluorescent / reflective tape and ensure there is adequate back stage lighting.

When ever possible, only operate the 'revolve' when in visual or audible communication with someone sited on the stage. When operating the 'revolve', ALWAYS ensure the stage is completely clear of obstructions both on the stage and above the stage. Ensure that all items on the 'revolve' are secured and will not fall over when the 'revolve' is moved.

ALWAYS ensure that nobody is either on the 'revolve' or near the edge of the 'revolve' before operating. If there is anybody either on or near to the 'revolve', ensure they are aware of its imminent operation by calling "STAND CLEAR - REVOLVE GOING".

Stage manoeuvring

Risk evaluation

Presents a serious hazard, especially for stage crew and construction teams. The potential hazards include: back strains from lifting, pinching fingers or receiving splinters when moving blocks or flats into place, bumping head when working under stage.

Risk reduction

Stage crew to receive instruction and should not exceed their capabilities. Teach techniques to new stage crew.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from stage manoeuvring

Sufficient numbers of people shall participate in lifting heavy objects to reduce personal strain

Gloves should be available for stage crew to wear.

Sufficient lighting – portable light should be available.

Lifting including Lighting Bars and Drops on Stage

Risk evaluation

Presents a serious hazard, especially for stage crew and construction teams. Potential hazards include back injury, rope burns and potential risk to those on stage from a falling bar or drop.

Risk reduction

Teach members about the hazard and use of good working practice.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from lifting lighting bars and drops

Consider using lightweight staging and blocks.

Never lift heavy weights unaided. Remember, when lifting, bend your legs and keep your back straight. Ensure there are sufficient numbers of people for lifting heavier items.

Lifter of lighting bars or drops to check the lifting area is clear before starting the manoeuvre. Give a clear call 'Bar Coming In' – or 'Bar Going Out'. Only trained stage crew to tie off bars and drops. Stage crew should ensure the control of people entering the lifting space during the lifting operation.

It is recommended to use gloves when using hemp ropes to avoid rope burns or splinters

When flying lanterns, check that everything on the lantern - including the safety chain - is secure before the lantern is hauled up. Be extra careful when flying lanterns with gel frames or barn doors attached - they have a nasty habit of failing out.

When flying anything, make sure the rope or cord is strong enough for what you're lifting and that the rope is not getting frayed.

Power Tools

Risk evaluation

Use of power tools by members presents an ever-present hazard from contact with electricity, dust and shards.

Risk reduction

Power tools should only be used by competent members. Training is done through teaching and mentoring by experienced members during set building.

Battery operated tools should be used wherever possible.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from use of power tools

Power tools connected to mains electricity should be checked before use and not used if damaged.

Mains voltage electricity supply should come via RCD protection.

When using power saws, eye protection should be used. Goggles for the use of stage crew will be stored in the tool room.

When cutting hazardous dust producing materials (e.g. MDF) facemasks should be worn. Face masks are stored in the tool room.

Use of Paints and Glues

Risk evaluation

They are a minor fire hazard. Paints and glues used are normally for household use and are not a danger when handling. Only water based emulsion or stage paints should be used.

Risk reduction

Employ excellent housekeeping. Teach members about the hazard and good working practice.

Lock away flammable paints and glues in a metal cabinet.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from paints and glues

All paints, including gloss paints, used should be water based. Solvent based paints and glues should be avoided where possible.

Follow the instructions on any material being used. Solvent based varnishes, paints or glues should only be used in well-ventilated areas.

If paint gets in an eye seek medical help rather than washing with water.

ELECTRICITY

Electricity is extremely dangerous and it is VITALLY IMPORTANT that adequate precautions are taken at all times.

Risk evaluation

Use of high voltage electricity presents an obvious danger.

Risk reduction

Electrical equipment used only by responsible technicians. Ensure proper maintenance and inspection of equipment by responsible Technicians.

The use of electrical equipment brought in from outside shall be discouraged. It shall be inspected before use.

Training is done through teaching during practical work.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from electricity

Electrical Safety: Whenever possible, work with the power supply switched off and make sure that everything is in good condition. In any doubt DO NOT use it, get it checked by a qualified person.

Sensitive circuit breakers and fuses will reduce the incidence of short circuits. Common sense should be applied where ever electrical equipment is used.

Phases & Electrical Capacity: The Theatre requires a large amount of power, which is supplied in 3 phases. The phases are used for different purposes, (e.g. two phases for the stage, lighting etc., the other phase for the rest of the building). Each phase is equivalent to normal mains; a two-phase supply is twice as dangerous and a two-phase electric shock would almost certainly be fatal.

As a general rule, ensure that no one can touch equipment on different phases at the same time i.e. keep any two lanterns on two different phases at least 2 metres apart.

When using sound equipment, try to ensure that the sound gear is on a different phase from the lighting gear (this will reduce mains hum over the speakers).

Electrical Cables: Firmly tape down all cables, especially if they are across doorways or gangways. Where possible, run cables over the tops of doors, or use heavy duty cable covers.

Uncoil cables COMPLETELY before using - running current through a coil of cable generates heat, creating an obvious fire risk.

LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from lighting equipment

Check the Lighting Plan: Theatre lanterns cannot be plugged in anywhere. Follow the lighting plan.

The lighting plan should be devised according to the general rules:

- The dimmers are rated at 10 Amps - this is about 2kW of light.
- Some special effects lights are not suitable for running on dimmers.
- Never change the plug on a lantern; it's there for a reason.
- Different lights use 5 and 15 amp round pin plugs these are different to the conventional 13 amp square pin sockets and must not be mixed up.
- Ensure that there is adequate lighting backstage.

Hanging a lantern

The procedure is the same wherever you are hanging the lantern:

Hang each lantern in place correctly (make sure it is not upside down!), lock the clamp hook, and secure the safety chain (except lighting stands or booms – see below).

Point the lantern roughly in the right direction. This helps with focusing and may show up problems such as overcrowding or bad sight lines. Insert the gel frame (colour frame).

Plug the lantern in, making sure you check the socket numbers with the lighting plan. AVOID plugging in or unplugging a lantern or cable while the circuit is live.

Ensure that you do not knot or tie the lantern's power lead to the bar or boom. The cable should be hanging loosely between the lantern and socket to allow movement during focusing.

Cabling

Cable runs shall be neat and tidy. The cabling procedure is as follows:

- Make sure the cable is long enough. Cables can be joined together, but this can make fault-finding harder.
- Clove-hitch the socket end of the cable to the bar beside the lantern. Make sure you leave some slack for focusing.
- Run the cable along the bar, coiling it loosely to take up the slack.

Rigging, Equipment, Lighting Bars and Grids

Stage lighting is very hot; check that all lanterns are properly focused, angled and located, and not too close to drapes or gauzes.

Movable lighting bars will have cable running from them back to the dimmers (known as tripe). Be sure that the tripe (cable) from a bar being moved (i.e. dropped down to stage level) is free to manoeuvre safely.

Lighting Stands

Lanterns can also be supported on lighting stands, attached by spigots instead of clamps. A T-bar allows more than one lantern to be supported on a stand. Make sure that any stand is on a level surface; and on a tripod stand, ensure that the legs are as wide apart as possible. Make sure that any adjustable sections are locked off.

If the stand is somewhere where it might be knocked, use stage-weights to reinforce it.

Lanterns attached to stands using spigots do not require safety chains. Lanterns attached to a T-bar using hook clamps should be chained - preferably to each other as well as to the bar. Make sure that lanterns transferred to stands are not rigged upside-down.

Booms and Boom Arms

Lanterns can also be rigged on vertical bars called booms. The Theatre has fixed F.O.H. booms.

A temporary boom should always be firmly secured by means of a boom base. If a boom base is used, stage-weights should be used to ensure that it is stable.

Lanterns attached to booms MUST be secured with boom arms; a normal hook clamp is not suitable.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

The use of special effects equipment requires special care.

Risk evaluation

An occasional - but obvious risk. Use may be governed by Health & Safety requirements.

Risk reduction

To be operated only by experienced members.

Practice with actors before the production.

Advise the audience of special effects being used where necessary.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from special effects

Lasers:

Lasers require a qualified operator and special permission may be required. Anyone thinking of using lasers must seek approval from the Stage Committee.

Strobe lighting:

Strobe lighting can make many people feel ill and in some cases can trigger epileptic fits - Use sparingly. Strobes should never be used at frequencies above 8Hz.

Strobes shall not be used for more than 20 seconds at a time.

If several strobes are used they should be synchronised together.

Warning notices MUST be displayed in the programme and at the entrance to the theatre (Ensure audiences know not to look directly at the sources.)

Smoke:

Theatrical smoke is non-toxic and non-irritant; however it should still be used with care. (Audiences can still imagine it is harmful – cough inducing!).

Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions before using the equipment.

Don't attempt to release smoke before the machine has heated up - this can result in slippery oil being released onto the stage.

Smoke machines have parts that get very hot when in use, wait for them to cool down before storing.

Do not leave a smoke machine switched on for long periods unattended and NEVER cover the smoke machine with anything that could impede ventilation.

Avoid firing smoke directly at people, fabrics or equipment. The operator should always have a clear view of the area around the smoke machine.

Never use more smoke than necessary, and in particular avoid dense clouds over the audience.

Anything that cuts down visibility is potentially dangerous. The use of small and frequent puffs, which allows time for dispersal, works best.

When using smoke on stage, make sure that everyone knows it's coming.

Dry Ice:

Dry ice is a hazardous substance. Dry ice (solid carbon dioxide) releases a cloud of dense white vapour when heated by placing it in boiling water (in a kettle designed for the purpose).

Dry ice is extremely cold and will produce burns. Gloves **MUST** be worn whenever handling dry ice.

Storing dry ice can be problematic. It should never be kept in a sealed container. If a deepfreeze is not available an unplugged domestic refrigerator or other well-insulated box can be used.

NEVER use dry Ice in tight, enclosed spaces. Care should be taken to ensure ventilation of the surrounding area to prevent a build-up of gas. Dry ice vaporises rapidly, so only small quantities should be removed from storage at a time.

Before filling the kettle with water, ensure that it is disconnected from the mains - unplug it, don't rely on a switch. Make sure the machine doesn't leak. Once boiling, add dry ice as and when necessary to achieve the desired effect. In use, remember that the machine contains boiling water.

If you have to add more water to the machine, allow it to cool before adding the water.

NAKED FLAMES

Any intention to use naked flames during a performance must be very carefully considered by the stage crew and the stage committee. Fire extinguishers must be on hand at all times.

FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

Risk evaluation

Firearms and stage weapons using blank ammunition present danger to people from noise and flash.

Risk reduction

There should be adequate training and procedures for those using firearms.

Use governed by police and Health & Safety requirements

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from firearms and weapons

Firearms only to be used by trained stage crew and actors on stage and only firearms firing blank ammunition shall be used.

Care to be taken in staging to minimise risk to actors

Earmuffs and eye protection to be available for wearing when fired in the wings.

Firearms and ammunition to be securely locked away by stage crew after use.

PYROTECHNICS

Risk evaluation

An occasional, but obvious risk, particularly a fire risk.

Risk reduction

There should be adequate training and procedures for those using pyrotechnics.

Use governed by Health & Safety requirements. The statutory requirements must be followed.

Practice with actors & stage crew when using pyrotechnics on stage.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards from pyrotechnics

To be operated only by responsible & experienced stage crew. One experienced person in a production must have sole responsibility for all handling, loading and firing of pyrotechnics.

Pyrotechnics should be detonated in metal flash pods, or in the case of maroons, in a metal bomb tank. All flash pods & bomb tanks must be clean and in good condition.

When loading pyrotechnics, ensure that the flash pod is isolated by unplugging it from the firing device. It must be possible to isolate the device remotely and safely.

The distance of the last break in circuit from the device should be at least 2 metres in order to give some protection in the event of an accident.

The person detonating a pyrotechnic must have a clear view of the device.

Never fire pyrotechnics close to scenery or people. If a flash box has to be sited within 0.5m horizontally or 1.5m vertically of any scenery, then the scenery must be protected with flame retardant material. If a flash pod has to be placed on top of rostra or carpet, protect the surface with a square of non-combustible material at least 0.5m x 0.5m in size.

If at all possible, maroons should be sited off-stage. Bomb tanks should be clearly labelled DANGER - EXPLOSIVES - KEEP CLEAR.

Maroons can damage sound equipment. Check with the Stage Committee before using them.

Anyone on stage during a pyrotechnic effect must know exactly what to expect. Stop an appropriate rehearsal at the required time, explain the effect and then fire it with everyone out of the way.

Whenever pyrotechnics are fired, someone MUST be standing by with a fire extinguisher.

Anyone handling pyrotechnics must NOT smoke while doing so.

Always allow flash pods to cool for at least 15 minutes before reloading.

Hearing protection should be available for protection against noise, (e.g. firearms or explosions).

Once fired, waste pyrotechnic devices should be disposed of carefully and safely.

Specification for pyrotechnic devices

The supplier's health & safety datasheet must be available and followed! All pyrotechnic equipment used MUST conform to the ABTT guidelines. Only use professional equipment. Never attempt to use home-made firing devices or cartridges. Never mix pyrotechnic or explosive powders together.

Firing boxes must have two switches, one lockable. The person loading the pyrotechnics should ensure that the device is switched OFF and must have the key while loading. The key should only be inserted just before firing.

Where possible, indicator lamps should show where a power supply is present. Where possible, all switches should be of the biased type (i.e. they are only engaged while they are being pressed).

Each device should be controlled and detonated separately.

Storage of pyrotechnic devices

Pyrotechnics must be kept in a locked metal cabinet and stored materials should be kept to a minimum. Ideally, the amount of stored material should not exceed 2.3kg. The cabinet should be marked '**DANGER - NO SMOKING - NO NAKED FLAME**'.

No combustible materials should be stored near pyrotechnic devices.

Pyrotechnic misfires

In the event of a pyrotechnic device failing to fire, switch OFF and isolate power supply to all pyrotechnic devices, remove fuses and unplug the cable from the firing device.

DO NOT attempt to approach the device until the power supply has been switched OFF.

Try to determine the fault and fire the pyrotechnic under safe conditions. This ensures that the device is safe for the next performance.

NEVER return a failed pyrotechnic device to the store. If it cannot be detonated in a test firing it should be destroyed safely or returned to the supplier.

SOUND EQUIPMENT

Risk evaluation

There are few hazards associated with sound equipment other than those Identified under general electrical hazards.

Risk reduction

All sound equipment brought into the theatre for connection to the theatre PA system MUST be checked and approved by competent sound engineer (approved by the Stage Committee) prior to being installed and used.

THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE

General performance conditions

Risk evaluation

Normally a low risk but some situations can be problematical.

Risk reduction

There should be adequate training and rehearsal time.

All members must report any unsafe performance situations (e.g. involving special effects or other potential hazards) to the Stage Committee as soon as they are seen.

Specific procedures to be used to avoid hazards during theatrical performance

On-stage movements, entrances and exits should be well choreographed and rehearsed.

Stunts and combat should be carefully choreographed and planned by qualified personnel.

Padded landing areas should be provided for jumps over 6 feet [or for other designed falls].

The set and props should be safely secured.

The stage floor should be swept (free of splinters and nails), and if necessary, mopped before each performance and keep it clean, dry and free from hazards.

All corridors, stairways and rooms shall be kept clear of obstacles at all times.

Flying of Actors [The raising of a body on a rope or cable above the stage]

Risk evaluation

A serious hazard - but often artistically desirable.

Risk reduction

Procedure designed using knowledge from experienced members or others and supervised accordingly by experienced persons [even hiring specialist expertise if needed].

Procedures shall include the use of a suitable and approved harness

Wardrobe and Dressing Rooms

Risk evaluation

Few hazards other than those already identified. Fire safety is the major risk.

Risk reduction

Costumes shall not be left on or near a heater or radiator. NEVER leave costumes near light bulbs and certainly DO NOT drape costumes over the light bulbs or around the dressing mirrors.

DOCUMENT REVIEW RECORD

Assessment review date:	Action & result	Completed by:	Signature:
November 2007	Document first issued	B J Bircher G Lennox M Coleman	
17 th March 2010	1st Revision of document The information & technical procedures given within the original document have been reassessed for continued applicability and necessary changes [shown in yellow highlight] made to: Text revision to account for change of use of Caretaker's flat as a 2nd floor member's area. Inclusion of the 1 st document review records.	B Bircher D Davies	

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