



Northwestern University

Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz
Center for the Performing Arts

Onstage/Backstage
Safety Orientation
Last Updated: 9/4/2023

Onstage/Backstage Safety Orientation

Venue:

Show/Event:

Site Supervisor: Shannon Perry

Affected Parties:

Performers
Directors/Designers
Stage Management/Show Crews
Shop Personnel (Scenic, Props, Paint, Electrics, Costume)
Wirtz Center Staff
Outside Visitors

This document is intended to introduce the safety concerns associated with navigating and performing on a stage and on scenic elements. All rules established in the Wirtz Health and Safety Manual apply to work onstage or backstage. This document will offer rules about general stage safety, and will be supplemented with separate risk assessments created for the specific hazards of each production. This document will be distributed by a Shop Supervisor or Stage Manager during an in-person safety orientation session, and is meant to be read and understood by each affected party.

General Stage Safety:

1. A Shop Supervisor/Stage Manager will inform all parties about the location of fire exits, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits. Note that only those who have received Bloodborne Pathogen training can administer first aid, assist, or transport a bloodied person.
2. A Shop Supervisor or a qualified staff member (as approved by the Production Manager) will be present at all tech rehearsals.
3. Only persons associated with a production are authorized to enter the backstage and dressing room area past the half-hour call of a performance or rehearsal.
4. Shoes must be worn in backstage areas at all times, unless specifically instructed to remove them for a performance. Slippers must be worn from the dressing room to the stage if the actor is to appear without shoes.
5. To prevent collisions and falls, no cast or crew member should lie down or sit on the floor backstage during rehearsals or performances unless in designated areas that are out of pathways and are lit.
6. Do not jump from ladders, platforms, or other elevated places unless called for as part of your role or crew assignment and then only under supervised conditions with proper training and rehearsal.

Low Light Levels:

Low light levels may be present when lighting equipment is being focused, during rehearsals, and during performances. Caution should be used in these conditions, as vision is greatly impaired. Blackouts may also occur at any time.

1. Use caution in low light areas and situations. Stop all hazardous activity in low light situations. Use a flashlight when you can.
2. Except during performances, stage managers must call out when stage lights are about to go to "black" to warn those in the area.
3. If you are working in the theatre and a blackout occurs, stop where you are. Do not attempt to find or feel your way in the dark. Wait for the lights to come back on or use a flashlight.
4. Provide blue running lights for all major pathways and obstacles wherever possible.



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Moving Scenery:

1. Only designated and trained crew members may operate the fly system or automated scenery.
2. Before each rehearsal and performance where flown scenery is going to be used, visually inspect the system and your workstation according to guidelines received from the Technical Supervisor.
3. In a performance situation, only execute movement on cue from stage management. Moving scenery before a cue could cause severe injuries or damage property on stage.
4. Always have a view of the moving scenery before movement is executed.
5. Except during performances, call out when moving anything.
6. Never attempt to modify the automated system.
7. If something seems out of place or you are unsure about an aspect of the system, find a supervisor for help.
8. For those onstage: be aware of scenery flying in and out, and listen for calls about moving scenery.

Training Acknowledgement:

I have read and understood the information presented in this document, as well as in the Theatrical Fall Hazard Control Policies and any risk assessments created for this production. I affirm that I have received and understood Stage Safety Orientation.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____