

GORLESTON THEATRE COMPANY

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. HEALTH AND SAFETY GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

Live performance is exciting and fun, but can also be stressful and dangerous. Even the most experienced person can make mistakes, especially when in unfamiliar surroundings. This Policy Statement will help us all observe proper procedures in health and safety. We all have a duty to try to avoid accidents, so please take some time to read this policy. This policy will be checked regularly to make sure that our health and safety objectives are achieved and maintained.

2. APPOINTMENT, AUTHORITY AND TRAINING OF SAFETY PERSONNEL

Gorleston Theatre Company (GTC) has authorised its Executive Committee to oversee H&S practices. The committee will keep an overall watch on the policies set out below, and will help to maintain proper standards. This will, in part, be achieved by the appointment of a committee member as Health & Safety Officer.

GTC members will assist with H&S issues as the need arises. Those helpers may receive special instructions or training, and may deputise for the committee in terms of overseeing H&S issues.

A member of the Executive Committee, or a nominated deputy, will be present at every GTC event, and members must abide by any instructions given by that person. In rare cases, the committee may require a member to withdraw from rehearsals or performances or other GTC activities.

3. INFORMATION

3.1 Members' Information

We ask that members provide us with any information that they feel may be relevant to the health and safety of themselves or others. For example the committee should be made aware of any disability, illness or change in circumstance e.g. pregnancy (this information will be treated as confidential unless indicated otherwise by the member).

Due to the nature of some productions, especially when a historical context is relevant, glasses or other aids may require special consideration. A member should raise any special requirements with the main committee as soon as possible.

3.2 Alcohol and Smoking

No alcohol may be consumed during any rehearsal, backstage or on stage. All buildings that GTC uses for rehearsals and performances have no smoking policies that must be followed.

4. CHILDREN

GTC defines a child as a person aged from 5 to 16 years of age. The committee will appoint a specific person (chaperone or matron) to oversee children involved in society productions, in accordance with the Child Protection Policies and Legislation.

The chaperone/matron is responsible for telling children about our H&S procedures.

Adult members are reminded of the need to exercise special care and attention when performing with children.

5. SIGN-IN SIGN-OUT

GTC uses a sign-in and sign-out register for its performance venue. Each member is required to sign-in and sign-out. Sub-contractors, such as external lighting, sound personnel etc. are also asked to sign-in and sign-out.

6. REHEARSAL REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Rehearsals

The Production Manager and/or Stage Manager, in consultation with the theatre venues technical team, is responsible for checking that props and staging are safe. Members must work safely with props, and refuse to use any that are, in their reasonable opinion, unsafe.

Members are asked to attend rehearsals wearing suitable loose fitting clothing and footwear that is non-slip. For some productions all or some of the cast will be required to wear special footwear such as tap shoes. In these circumstances special footwear should only be worn when required.

Members must know the location of all fire exits and the assembly point(s). Members must obey fire drill instructions. Members are asked not to park in front of fire exits or place any obstruction in front of fire exits, outside or inside the building.

6.2 Theatre

The Production Manager and Production Team will liaise with theatre staff, in particular the theatre technicians, to agree the responsibility for safety in the theatre and to identify any particular hazardous areas or situations that need to be addressed. The Production Team will inform the cast and back stage crew of all safety matters that need to be notified to them.

7. DRESSING ROOMS

7.1 Dressing Room Tidiness

All members are asked to keep their dressing room tidy and to leave the dressing rooms clean and tidy on exit, at the end of show week. The Wardrobe manager will supervise the storage of costume packing cases.

7.2 Dressing Room Faults

If there is a fault with any technical aspect of the dressing room area e.g. bulbs blown, tannoy system not working, please tell the stage manager so it can be dealt with by theatre staff.

8. ON-STAGE AND IN THE WINGS

The Stage Manager is responsible for running the GTC stage crew. During set-build and get-in, they must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and use appropriate tools for the task(s) being carried out. The Stage Manager and stage crew must liaise with the theatre staff to decide upon the methods and safe practice that will be followed during set-build and get-in at the performance venue. Any special arrangements will be written down as amendments to these procedures for use in any specific circumstances.

GTC recognises that the stage and its wings can be hazardous areas. The Production Manager and/or Stage Manager, in conjunction with theatre technical staff (and members of the GTC committee where necessary), will ensure a risk assessment is undertaken of the risk-based activities and situations that present themselves or could present themselves in the areas concerned.

Where the theatre has carried out its own risk assessment, the Stage Manager liaises closely with the theatre. In the case of emergencies, cast and crew will follow instructions given by the theatre staff, and will report to the Stage Manager at the assembly point.

9. FRONT OF HOUSE

The GTC Front of House Manager manages the GTC Front of House team and liaises with the theatre staff so that each has identified themselves to each other and each party has understood the respective roles of the parties concerned.

In the case of emergencies, the GTC Front of House team will follow instructions given by the theatre staff, and will report to the GTC Front of House Manager at the assembly point.

10. ORCHESTRA PIT

The Stage Manager will inform the Musical Director about health and safety procedures. The MD must check that the orchestra is familiar with the procedures. No unauthorised members of the society should enter the orchestra pit. In the case of emergencies, the MD and orchestra will follow instructions given by the theatre staff, and will report to the Stage Manager at the assembly point.

11. SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORKING

The committee is aware that members are often working under pressure and to tight deadlines in order to put on a production. Members should take regular breaks. If an unsafe system of working has been identified or an incident has occurred, committee members will investigate the cause(s), and institutes procedures to minimise the risk of it occurring again.

12. ELECTRICAL SAFETY

All electrical equipment owned by GTC is subject to annual inspection and testing by a competent authority. At the conclusion of each inspection and test the equipment is then labelled to show its inspected status.

Any equipment that fails to pass the inspection will be removed and quarantined to prevent use.

Equipment will be stored and maintained in a safe working condition between inspections.

Any person who wants to use his or her own electrical equipment must seek prior approval from the Production Manager/Stage Manager and/or committee.

13. ACCIDENT/INCIDENT RECORDING

All accidents, where injury is caused to a member, or any incident occurring, where injury could have been caused to a member, will be recorded in the Accident/Incident Book, by a member of the committee. Such recording should be made at the time of the accident/incident, or as soon is practicable.

All accidents/incidents and action taken, will be reviewed my the committee and each and every committee meeting. The Health & Safety Officer will be responsible for informing any statutory bodies of an accident/incident requiring notification.

14. RISK ASSESSMENT

Each and every production can bring new challenges and with it, new risks. Accordingly a risk assessment must be carried out on those aspects of a production where a potential risk has been identified or is identified during blocking at rehearsal. A risk assessment sheet must be completed and filed in the Risk Assessment Register for future reference.