

New Venture Theatre

Health & Safety Policy

This is an important document that affects you personally, as a member of the NVT. Please read it fully.

The NVT has in place a Health & Safety Policy to ensure the health & safety of all its members, visiting production companies and all visitors to the theatre, whether as audience members or in any other capacity.

As a member of the NVT you have a responsibility under Health & Safety legislation to take every care of yourself and to act responsibly to avoid putting yourself or others in any danger. If at any time you are asked to do anything that you consider unsafe, you should say so and refuse to do it.

To ensure Health & Safety is constantly reviewed, each event has a production meeting at which any issues concerning Health & Safety are discussed and noted. As appropriate either at or during the pre-rehearsal stage or during rehearsals risk assessments are undertaken and any necessary precautions taken. The Health & Safety Manager has responsibility for advising on Health & Safety, for inspecting the premises and for carrying out risk assessments; the Technical Coordinator (Lighting/Sound), Set Design Coordinator, Front-of-House Coordinator and the Directors of production/event are the named persons who are responsible for Health and Safety in their own specialist areas. The Chairman has overall responsibility for Health & Safety.

If at any time anyone on the premises sustains an injury, this must be reported to the "senior" person present. This could be the production / event director or production manager, Duty Manager, the individual in charge of set construction, lantern rigging etc. The injury must be recorded in the accident book by the senior person present. (The Accident Book is currently located by the first Aid Box in the kitchen). If the injury is serious enough to require professional medical attention, or there is any doubt about the seriousness of the injury, the Health & Safety Manager must be informed as soon as possible and in any case within 24 hours of the accident occurring. First Aid Boxes are located in the Kitchen, Box Office and upstairs in the Dressing Room area.

The following rules have been agreed by the NVT Trustees to ensure Health & Safety at all times. Many of them are required, either under Health & Safety legislation our Insurance Terms and Conditions or other regulations/legislation. It is appreciated that not all these requirements may apply to you but, for completeness and for your information, you are being issued with this copy.

If you are in any doubt about any of these requirements, or would like any advice or information on Health & Safety, the Health & Safety Manager will be glad to discuss them with you. In addition, if you have any suggestions on how safety can be improved, or have any concerns regarding safety, please tell the Health & Safety Manager.

As a member you are required to observe all the following rules at all times. It is regretted that, in the event of any of these not being observed, it may be necessary either to stop a production or event going ahead and if appropriate, terminate membership. This is part of our legal theatre requirements.

The following rules must be observed at all times:

1. Fire Action

Everyone must read the fire action notices (copies are displayed throughout the theatre) and be familiar with the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

2. Smoking and Vaping

No smoking or vaping in any areas of the theatre at any time (except where explicitly permitted as part of a theatrical performance – see point 9). This includes the external fire escape, landing and stairs leading from the dressing room. Smoking/Vaping is allowed on the patio up to 10.30pm.

The theatre has a responsibility for keeping the area outside the theatre free of litter and cigarette butts. Members and patrons are asked not to litter the area outside the theatre and to have consideration for our neighbours concerning noise.

3. Keep exits clear

Emergency exit signs and emergency exit doors must not be obscured or in any way obstructed. Clear access to fire exits must be maintained at all times. Particular attention needs to be paid to this in the studio theatre and the passageway in the upstairs dressing rooms, leading to the external fire escape.

4. Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers and fire blankets must not be obscured or removed from their mountings for any other reason than for fire-fighting purposes. Their relevant signs must also not be obscured. Fire extinguishers are not to be used as door-stops.

5. Hanging items

Other than theatre lanterns, no other items are to be hung from, fixed to in any way, or supported by, the lighting bars, or other parts of the ceiling or walls, without first consulting the H&S Manager. All lanterns must be secured with safety chains.

6. Electricity

When working on any electrical equipment, the power supply must first be disconnected. No alterations to electrical wiring are to be undertaken without first consulting the NVT Technical Team.

7. Portable electrical appliances

All portable electrical appliances, (kettles, hair-driers, irons etc) brought into the theatre by you must comply with current PAT regulations and be approved by the H&S Manager before being used in the theatre.

8. Ladders

Ladders should only be used by those members who have undergone appropriate ladder safety training. This training is available through the NVT for all members who have a need to use ladders. Members who have undergone appropriate ladder safety training will be listed in the NVT Ladder Register. When being used, all ladders and steps must be safely erected and footed. Ladders must not be leant up against lighting bars. Only the three-way ("Zargis") ladder should be used for rigging lights etc.

9. Smoking and naked flames on stage

No smoking or naked flames are allowed on stage without the prior agreement of the H&S Manager.

10. Acrobatics, stunts & fight sequences

Acrobatics, stunts & fight sequences must only be designed and performed by competent persons. This would include, for example, instances of a prepared falls from any height, where fallers are to be caught by others, or if there is any risk of injury. If there is any doubt as to whether a planned action falls into this category, advice from the H&S Manager must be sought.

11. Flame-proofing

All flats, drapes and props etc, including wood less than 18mm thick, must be adequately flame-proofed. These will be tested prior to performance and if flammable will not be allowed.

12. Special Effects

The use of special effects, such as smoke, dry ice, pyrotechnics, strobe lighting etc, must be discussed and agreed with the H&S Manager.

13. Rostra

If moved, the rostra must be correctly secured, with guard-rails and steps correctly in place and chairs secured. All edges are to be marked with white tape. If you need to change the current layout of the rostra in the Studio Theatre, you must discuss this with the H&S Manager at least 4 weeks in advance of your performance date.

14. Dangerous Substances

No flammable liquids i.e. petrol, white spirit etc. are allowed on the premises. Any substances hazardous to health are not permitted. If in any doubt, or if you need to use a flammable or hazardous substance, the Health & Safety Manager must first be consulted.

15. Personal protective equipment

Goggles, dust-masks, hard hats and gloves are available and should be worn when carrying out any hazardous operations, for personal safety reasons.

16. Light Rigging & Set Construction

Only those authorised are allowed on stage when set-building, lantern-rigging or any other construction/painting work is taking place. Caution / warning signs must be placed on all entrance doors when Light Rigging is taking place. N.B. This applies to the whole of the Studio Theatre and Upstairs Theatre areas, including audience seating.

17. Safety and Tools

Power tools (e.g. Electric Drills) should not be used before guidance on their use has been given by a competent person.

Hot Tools (e.g. Angle Grinders) is restricted to competent trained persons only.

Without exception all tools to be safely stowed and locked away in the designated area in the workshop at the end of a working day.

18. Manual handling

Care must be taken at all times when lifting/handling any materials. Correct handling procedures must be used at all times. If in any doubt, advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Manager before carrying out such activities.

19. Fire officers

For the duration of performances, directors must appoint a responsible member (usually the Stage Manager unless otherwise indicated), of the backstage crew to be the fire officer responsible for ensuring that all actors and backstage crew are evacuated safely from the building in the event of a fire. All actors and crew must know who the fire officer is. All actors and crew should read the Fire Action notices and be familiar with the procedure to be followed in the event of fire.

The Duty Manager will be responsible for the safety of the audience.

20. Avoiding fire risk

Directors have a responsibility for all aspects of Health and Safety in respect of their cast and crew. They should see that all actors and crew co-operate to ensure that the theatre is safe from fire and that they do not do anything that would place themselves or others at risk.

21. Reporting Accidents

During rehearsal and performance of a production / event, all accidents, however minor, must be reported immediately, either to the director / production manager or Duty Manager for Events, who will ensure that they are recorded in the Accident Book.

Accidents occurring at other times must be reported to the H&S Manager as soon as possible, or, in their absence, to the Chairman.

22. Use of Radio Communication

Internal radio communications should be used during any performance / event. Radios should be used by the Duty Manager, Technical Team, Stage Management, Fire Steward and Box Office Manager. Radios should be operational from the opening of the doors to the audience until the performance / event is over. They can be used beyond this period if advantageous to safely managing the building.

23. Lone Working

Where possible no member should undertake work in the theatre on their own. They should always work in the building with another person. This is for safety should they have an accident or be taken ill and be unable to raise an alert and get assistance.

Where the above it not possible for practical reasons the following procedure must be followed.

This is especially important for anyone undertaking work at height, using power tools etc.

1. The member attending the theatre as a Lone Worker must ensure another person is aware they are there.
2. The Lone Worker should advise the other person of their arrival.
3. They must confirm all is well at regular intervals if they remain in the building for more than 1 hour.
4. They should advise the other person when leaving the theatre
5. *These contacts can be made by phone or text.*

The NVT Health & Safety Manager's contact details can be found on the Contact Sheet by the first Aid Box in the kitchen.