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Acknowledgments

This Theatre Safety Procedural Manual was prepared by the Office of Risk Management and Security Services and is intended for student and community use group productions at any stage Divisionwide. Information found in this manual is applicable to all students, staff of PWCS, and community use groups.

Albeit, this document has been approved for distribution to PWCS staff and community use groups; PWCS, the Office of Risk Management and Security Services, and the Office of Student Learning share the responsibility of updating this manual when deemed appropriate.

Special thanks to Kristina Nelson, teacher at Osbourn Park High School, Joyce Zsembery, supervisor of the arts in the Office of Student Learning, Jim Honeycutt, safety specialist II in the Office of Risk Management and Security Services, Dee Wyatt, secretary in the and the Office of Risk Management and Security Services, and the theatre teachers for their cooperation and input in preparing this manual.
I.  Introduction

1.  Scope

The Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) Theatre Safety Procedural Manual is intended for student and community use group productions at any stage Divisionwide. Information found in this manual is applicable to all students, staff of PWCS, and community use groups. Any questions or comments regarding this manual should be directed to the Office of Risk Management and Security Services.

2.  How to Use the Manual

This manual is designed to follow a production from planning stages to strike. It is divided into four primary sections: Introduction, Administrative Guidelines, Safety Guidelines and Fire Protection, and On Stage.

3.  Theatre Training

The Office of Risk Management and Security Services, in conjunction with Student Learning and the theatre staff from area PWCS, will provide mandatory technical and safety theatre training for production crew members and staff.

The training is designed to promote basic shop and technical safety skills for all students and staff working on school productions. Topics will include a safety overview of personal protective equipment, use of power and hand tools, lighting and basic rigging, ladders, aerial lifts, flammable liquids, and chemicals. This training is mandatory for all students and staff members who wish to work on any technical phases of a production, regardless of previous experience.

4.  Sources of Assistance

Office of Risk Management and Security Services
703.791.7206

Student Learning & Professional Development – Office of the Arts
703.791.8105

Prince William County Fire Marshal’s Office
703.792.6360

DIAL 911 IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
II. Safety Guidelines and Fire Protection

1. Personal Protective Equipment

Eye, face, hand, and hearing protection shall be worn when the feasibility of injury may occur: machine operation, excessive noise, handling wire rope, and using or being in the close proximity of tool use.

2. Ladders

- Ladders are the property of the school and can ONLY be used by students and staff of PWCS. It is strongly recommended that students and staff of PWCS be trained by a safety specialist from the Office of Risk Management and Security Services prior to using a ladder. The training will include classroom and hands-on, as required by the standards set forth by the “Occupational Safety and Health Administration” (OSHA). (See 29CFR.1910, Subpart D.)

- Ladders shall be inspected before each use and when dropped. Ladders will be inspected for broken or missing rungs or steps, broken or split rails, or other faulty or defective construction. Remove ladder from use if any defects are found.

- Portable ladders shall be placed on a substantial base (flooring) and the area around the top and bottom of the ladder shall be kept clear.

- Do not paint or cover up the labels on a ladder.

- Use only fiberglass or wooden ladders when working in the proximity of electricity.

- When ascending or descending a ladder; three-point contact must be maintained at all times.

- Side rails of an extension ladder must extend no less than 36 inches above the landing.

- Never substitute a chair, desk, or table for a ladder.

3. Aerial Lifts

Aerial “Genie” lifts are the property of the school and can ONLY be operated by a PWCS employee. If a lift of any type is brought in to the school to hang scenery, drops, or do any additional rigging, the person(s) operating the lift needs to be certified to operate the lift. No PWCS student shall at any time operate a lift, go on to catwalks, or climb on scaffolding.
Prior to operating an aerial lift, the operator shall be trained by a safety specialist from the Office of Risk Management and Security Services. The training will include classroom and hands-on, as required by the standards set forth by the “Virginia Department of Labor and Industry.” (See ANSI A92.3-1990.) Aerial lift operators will receive re-certification training every three years.

Aerial lifts will be inspected prior to each use by the operator and annually by the Office of Risk Management and Security Services, Office of Facilities Management Services, or their designee.

The aerial lift will be taken out of service for repair if deemed necessary during its inspection. The operator will contact a safety specialist from the Office of Risk Management and Security Services to request repairs.

4. Power Tools, Hand Tools, and Air Tools

- All operators of power and hand tools shall receive familiarity training prior to operating any tools. The instructor shall be deemed competent to train by a safety specialist from the Office of Risk Management and Security Services. A competent person is defined by OSHA as, "one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them." (See 29 CFR 1926.32(f.)

- All power tools designed to accommodate guards shall be equipped with such guards in place while in use.

- Electric power tools shall be inspected before each use and either be an approved double insulated type or grounded properly.

- All defective tools shall be tagged, “Unsafe – Do Not Use.”

- All portable power tools shall be unplugged when not in use.

- All air tools must be connected to regulators and correctly adjusted.

- Never point the tool toward yourself or anyone else, whether it contains fasteners or not.

- Always disconnect the tool from the air line.
5. Fire Protection

- Access to all firefighting equipment shall be maintained at all times.
- All aisles and walkways shall remain clear as not to impede egress from the auditorium.
- Emergency exits are illuminated and back-up power is working.
- Exit doors must remain clear at all times.
- All exit doors must be fully functional at all times.
- Prior to the start of each performance, a stage manager or building manager shall alert the audience of the locations of all exits in the auditorium.
- Outdoor cooking shall adhere to “The International Fire Code.” (IFC) (See 307.4.2, Recreational Fires.) Recreational fires shall not be conducted with 25 feet of a structure or combustible material. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.

III. Safety Guidelines and Fire Protection

1. Special Effects

- The use of fog is permitted. Make sure any fog machine is unplugged at the end of the event.
- Open flames of any type are not permitted. Flash pot or flash paper use must be cleared by the Office of Risk Management and Security Services.
- No stage combat will be permitted in classes or productions without training of the instructor and approval of the school administration.
- Prop weapons shall be secured when not in use and shall be issued to the actors using them only when required. They shall immediately be returned to the stage manager or props person when finished, and secured until the next performance.
- Prop weapons shall be made of rubber, plastic, or wood. There should be no sharp edges on the prop weapons. If metal weapons or sword fighting is to be used, a certified fight master must be hired by the school to choreograph the
fight and train students in weapon safety and use, as well as rehearse the choreography with the students.

- Stage weapons must never leave the stage area. Students that take weapons into any other area of the school without receiving permission from school administration will face repercussions as outlined in the PWCS “Code of Behavior” in regards to “look-alike-weapons.”

2. Set and Design Construction

- Set and design construction shall be in accordance with PWCS regulations, the IFC, International Building Code (IBC), and 29CFR1910 Subpart D, Walking-Working Surfaces.

- Scenery made of combustible materials shall meet the fire propagation performance criteria of the “National Fire Protection Association 701.” Foam plastics and materials containing foam plastics shall comply with Section 2603 of the IBC and the IFC. (See IBC 410.3.6, Scenery.)

- Platforms installed for a period of not more than 30 days are permitted to be constructed of any material permitted by the IBC and IFC. The space between the floor and the platform above shall only be used for plumbing and electrical wiring to platform equipment. (See IBC 410.4.1, Temporary Platforms.)

- Platforms that actors are to walk and perform on shall be constructed in accordance with IBC and OSHA standards.

- Triangular braces built to secure flats should have sandbag weights to hold them in place.

- Nothing is to be pinned or attached to curtains, except by alligator clips or a similar clip, which will not harm curtains.

- Stairs with four or more risers must have a handrail.

- Landings and platforms above four feet shall have a guardrail or barrier wall constructed to prevent falling hazard.

- Sound and light boards shall be operated by trained personnel only.

- Drops and scenery must be hung from dead hung battens that are already in place.

- Only authorized personnel may adjust or alter the stage lighting.
3. **Clean-up Guidelines**

All stages must be left in good condition after an event. All spaces used by PWCS students or staff, in addition to community use groups, must be left in good condition. (e.g., furniture returned to its proper place, etc.) Community use groups will be responsible for completing a Pre/Post Event Inspection Checklist.

4. **Pre/Post Event Inspection Checklist**

The Pre/Post Event Inspection Checklist will be completed prior to and after an event. The post inspection will be performed by both the organization representative and the school representative. The organization representative will receive a copy of the completed checklist with any notes and suggested remedies noted on the inspection. (See Appendix A.)
IV. Community Use Guidelines

1. Community Use

The Prince William County School Board encourages the use of facilities for educational, civic, recreational, and cultural activities. Nearly 270 cultural, educational, religious, and civic associations use our school facilities in the evenings and weekends. The community use program was established for this purpose. Individuals, groups, and organizations may reserve space within a school for such activities.

The Office of Risk Management and Security Services is responsible for overseeing the community use of PWCS facilities.

To reserve space at a PWCS, contact the community use specialist for PWCS at 703.791.7435 or the Office of Risk Management and Security Services at 703.791.7206.

2. Responsibilities of Community Use Groups

PWCS Building Supervisor

Groups or individuals who request use of the stage at a PWCS facility are required to hire a building supervisor. This person is to remain with the group during their time at the school. They are responsible for unlocking doors as soon as the responsible representative from the group is present. They will not allow performers in without their supervisor.

The building supervisor will report any equipment malfunctions (HVAC, power issues, plumbing problems, etc) to the proper authority, answer questions about the facility, deal with emergencies which may arise, assist groups in locating items such as tables or chairs, instruct group representative in light board and sound board operation, advise groups of any unsafe practices which could cause possible damage to personnel or school facilities, and act as a general liaison between the school and the group.

If the building supervisor feels that something is being operated or performed in an unsafe manner, they are obligated to report it to the director of the group and to school authorities if the practice continues.
Groups must also have an approved designated, responsible, and non-student adult in-charge who will take responsibility for discipline, protection of school property, etc.

**Safety Policies**

- Only approved theatre staff may operate the fly system.
- Only approved production staff may occupy the booth and catwalks. No students will be permitted on the catwalks.
- The client may not run wires or cables at any time.
- The client may not construct scenery that requires anchoring it into the stage or paint on the stage.
- No open flame (candles or lighted fire) or pyrotechnics are allowed at any time.
- All banners, props, and decorations must be fire-resistant.
- The client may not exceed the maximum seating capacity.
- Backstage lighting is the responsibility of the renting group and should be provided for the safety of the performers. All such lighting must be unplugged at the end of each performance. Glow tape should also be used where needed to avoid injury.
- Children under the age of 18 should not be permitted to work with lights, sound equipment, or operate machinery. Anyone who does work with lights, sound, or construction, should have knowledge of the proper procedures when using this equipment.

**Production Policies**

- The client must provide a list of production staff 24 hours prior to the event.
- The client must become familiar with emergency procedures and evacuation routes for the theatre.
- The client must designate an event coordinator who will be present during the entire event. This individual shall be responsible for behavior of cast and crew.
• A production meeting with the theatre manager should take place four weeks prior to the event.

• The client is required to have all lighting, staging, rigging, and sound needs approved by the theatre manager two weeks prior to the event.

• Lights can be refocused, aimed, or gelled after receiving instructions from building supervisor. All lights must be returned to a “general stage wash” after the production is finished.

• Do not remove, add, or adjust lights from battens. Cues should be programmed using what is needed. Do not reprogram the basic functions on a light board so that school functions are unable to perform.

• All banners and signs need approval by the theatre manager and may be hung in designated areas.

• The client must leave the facility (theatre, stage, dressing rooms, bathrooms, booth, lobby, hallways, and outer facilities) in an orderly fashion.

• Excluding plain bottled water, no food or drinks are allowed inside the theatre at any time. Performers and patrons are required to consume their food and beverages outside the theatre at all times.
# PWCS Auditorium/Theater Pre/Post Event Inspection Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Event Inspection</th>
<th>Post-Event Inspection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date: _______</td>
<td>(Circle One)</td>
<td>Date: _______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtains and Rigging</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Flooring</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressing Rooms</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backstage Areas</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Board/Sound</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Board</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House (Audience Area)</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobby</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Cleanliness</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms (If Used)</td>
<td>G  U</td>
<td>G  U</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- G = Good
- U = Unacceptable

**NOTES:**

**SUGGESTED REMEDIES:**

**PRE-EVENT SIGNATURE:**

| School Representative | Date |

**POST-EVENT SIGNATURE:**

| School Representative | Date |

| Organization Representative | Date |

*Signature signifies agreement with the findings of the Post-Event Inspection Checklist and that the organization representative accompanied the school representative during the post-event inspection and received a copy of the completed checklist with suggested remedies included, if any.
School Board
Mr. Ryan Sawyers
Chairman

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Associate Superintendent for Eastern Elementary Schools

Mr. Keith J. Johnson
Associate Superintendent for Human Resources

Mr. Phil Kavits
Associate Superintendent for Communications and Technology Services

Mr. Michael A. Mulgrew
Associate Superintendent for High Schools

Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) does not discriminate in employment or in its educational programs and activities against qualified individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability. PWCS provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following individual(s) will handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies, including Section 504 and Title IX:

Associate Superintendent for Human Resources
Prince William County Public Schools
P.O. Box 389
Manassas, VA 20108

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