

Sheffield Teachers' Operatic Society Health and Safety Manual

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. The Committee has spent time writing this guide to 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 manual. H&S is a standing item on the committee's agenda, so if you are unsure about any aspect of this manual, please raise the matter with any committee member. This policy will be checked annually to make sure that our health and safety objectives are achieved and maintained.

Keith Arrowsmith, Chair. March 2006.

APPOINTMENT, AUTHORITY AND TRAINING OF SAFETY PERSONNEL

STOS has appointed its Stage Manager as its H&S Officer. The H&S Officer will keep an overall watch on the policies set out below, and will help us to maintain proper standards. STOS members will help the H&S Officer as the need arises. Those helpers may receive special instructions or training, and may deputise for the H&S Officer.

The H&S Officer or a deputy will be present at every STOS 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 STOS activities.

At least one committee member will be a member of ABTT, which produces H&S updates. Any H&S training is recorded and regularly monitored as part of the annual audit arrangements.

INFORMATION

We provide information on health and safety procedures to:

3.1 New members

New members are provided with written information in the joining pack.

3.2 Existing members

Existing members are provided with information on updates, and will be reminded of the procedures at the start of the rehearsals for each production, and before the technical rehearsal.

3.3 Visitors

The H&S Officer or deputy asks visitors to sign the register (5), and informs them verbally of the fire safety drill, the fire exits and the assembly point to be used in the event of an incident.

3.4 Member's 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 H&S Officer or any other committee member should be made aware of any disability, illness or pregnancy.

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 H&S Officer or any other committee member as soon as possible.

3.5 Alcohol and Smoking

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

CHILDREN

STOS defines a child as a person aged from 5 to 16 years of age. No child under 5 takes part in STOS activities. The committee appoints a specific person to oversee children in accordance with the STOS Child Protection Policy. The H&S Officer 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.

SIGN-IN SIGN-OUT

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

REHEARSAL REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Rehearsals

The H&S Officer 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 will be told how to use equipment that requires work above floor level. In particular members are forbidden to stand on makeshift rostra such as plastic nesting chairs or fold-up tables.

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 the fire extinguishers, the 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. Every venue used by STOS will have a first aid kit. In the case of emergencies, everyone will follow instructions given by the H&S Officer or deputy, and will report to the H&S Officer or deputy at the assembly point.

6.2 Theatre

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

DRESSING ROOMS

7.1 Tidiness

Theatre staff are responsible for cleaning dressing rooms, and all members are asked to keep their dressing room tidy. The Wardrobe manager supervises the storage of costume packing cases.

7.2 Allocation Of Dressing Rooms

The committee is responsible for the allocation of dressing rooms. A person (usually a committee member) is responsible for checking that their dressing room is empty if the theatre is evacuated, and that there is no inappropriate or noisy behaviour in their dressing room. That person is responsible for confirming with the stage manager that the tannoy is working and is audible and for reporting any faults.

ON-STAGE AND IN THE WINGS

The Stage Manager is responsible for STOS stage crew. The H&S Officer will inform them of the relevant procedures. They must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment and use appropriate tools for the task(s) being carried out. The H&S Officer is responsible for checking that the Stage Manager and stage crew liaise with the Theatre staff. Any special arrangements will be written down as amendments to these procedures for use in any specific circumstances.

Because of the higher risk of accident, only authorised persons may be present during get ins / get outs.

STOS recognises that the stage and its wings can be hazard areas. The H&S Officer will carry out a risk assessment of the activities and situations that present themselves or could present themselves in the areas concerned. Where the theatre has carried out its own risk assessment, then the H&S Officer liaises closely with the theatre.

The H&S Officer checks that all persons who are required to be in the wings or on-stage before, during and after a performance have been properly instructed in their responsibilities. All members attending a performance venue for the first time will be given a tour of the building, and all members will attend a health and safety talk before the technical rehearsal.

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.

FRONT OF HOUSE

The STOS Front of House Manager manages the STOS 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. The Front of House Manager will meet with the Theatre House Manager prior to first night.

In the case of emergencies, the STOS front of house team will follow instructions given by the Theatre staff, and will report to the STOS Front of House Manager at the assembly point.

ORCHESTRA PIT

The H&S Officer informs 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.

SCENERY / PROPS / WARDROBE WORKSHOP AND STORE

Some members are asked to work with STOS's scenery, props and costumes. No unauthorised members of the society should enter the workshop and store, since there is an increased risk of accident in these areas. A risk assessment will be prepared for each of these areas, and members must abide by any special procedures agreed by the committee.

OTHER EVENTS

STOS will complete a risk assessment for each other activity, and members must abide by any special procedures agreed by the committee.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Our approach to risk assessment is based on a simple process that examines the hazards and risks associated with each type of activity. A hazard is its potential to cause harm. A risk is the likelihood that it will occur. Any risk has a probability and a severity. We categorise them as being:

Probability	Severity
A Always happens	1 Death
B Nearly always happens	2 Severe Injury
C Often happens	3 Serious injury
D Doesn't happen very often	4 Minor injury
E Hardly ever happens	5 Little Effect

We examine each situation and apply a probability factor from A to E and a severity factor from 1 to 5. Any probability/severity factor from A1 to C3 requires action. STOS will apply remedial measures to all other factors where necessary.

SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORKING

The committee is aware that members are often working under pressure and time restraints to put on a production. Members should rest regularly. If an unsafe system of working has been identified or an

incident has occurred, the H&S Officer investigates the cause(s), reports to the committee, and institutes procedures to minimise the risk of it occurring again.

ACCIDENT BOOK & RECORDS

STOS keeps records, and uses an Accident Book to record all incidents, however trivial, that happen during STOS events. Performance venues may also record all incidents.

Each book is maintained and stored by the H&S Officer or a deputy when not in use. The H&S Officer or a deputy records the details of any incident that requires first aid, however trivial, in the accident book.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

All electrical equipment owned by STOS 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. The H&S Officer keeps records of all STOS owned electrical equipment and all inspections. Any equipment that fails to pass the inspection is removed and quarantined to prevent use. Equipment is 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 H&S Officer or the committee.

LADDERS, SCAFFOLDING AND TALLESCOPES

Some of STOS's members will be required to work with working at height equipment. STOS is aware that one of the major causes of injury is falls from height. Only members who have been authorised by the H&S Officer or the committee may use this type of equipment.

USING SUB-CONTRACTORS

The H&S Officer informs all contractors of the relevant procedures set out in this manual. The H&S Officer keeps a record of all inductions. Contractors are instructed to work in accordance with this manual and any relevant Health and Safety Executive's Information Sheets.

A risk assessment will be carried out jointly by the contractor(s) and the H&S Officer to check that any risks specific to the operations of the contractor are properly and fully documented and procedures put in place to minimise any hazards identified during the risk assessment.

The H&S Officer informs contractors verbally of the fire safety drill, instructs them to sign the register (5), and shows them the fire exits and the assembly point to be used in the event of an incident.

The H&S Officer regularly reviews and closely controls the activities of the contractors whilst providing services to STOS. Likewise members of STOS who need to work closely with any contractor(s) are informed of the duties that such contractors will carry out.

ANNUAL AUDIT

The H&S Officer carries out an annual audit of the safety manual with the objective of checking that the contents are relevant. Audits also include examination of records and interviews with members.

The H&S Officer records the results of the audit, and agrees a plan of action with the committee, to deal with the points revealed in the audit.