

SHAPE NEWSLETTER

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Promoting
Safe & Healthy
Workplaces in the
Performing Arts
and Motion Picture
& Video Industries
Since 1998

Art Safety News From Around the Globe

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to begin. The production's cast and crew were in rehearsals when they heard a loud noise. The 15 year olds' body was found in the sound booth with the prop gun in his hands. It was unknown at the time how the teen gained possession of the prop gun – the district had been granted permission to use it under the premise that it would be in the possession of a parent. Although the prop gun had no bullets, the gas inside had the same impact as a bullet, according to the St. George police

Aerial stunts and stage combat – two of the most dangerous activities that a performer is likely to engage in during their career. When the script calls for an actor to be involved in these types of stage business, it is vitally important that the production company engages the services of a qualified specialist, to oversee the effect and properly train the people involved. Too often, companies skip this important obligation, with disastrous results. Here are some recent accidents which occurred when the production company failed to bring in the professionals:

Vienna, Austria: December 2008

An actor narrowly escaped death after slashing his throat on stage with a real knife, instead of a blunt stage-prop blade. The incident happened during a performance of the play Mary Stuart where the actors' character was supposed to commit suicide and he used what he thought was a blunt prop weapon. Instead, the knife was real and the actor was rushed to hospital with a deep slice to his throat, which fortunately missed his main artery – the actor recovered in hospital and managed to return to the production, albeit with a bandage around his neck.

St George, Utah: November 2008

A 15 year old high school student died from head injuries after firing a blank-shooting prop pistol, shortly before the evening performance of Oklahoma was about



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**Cincinnati, Ohio:
December 2008**

A woman fell to her death after failing to secure a latch on her safety harness, before she climbed 20 feet into the air. The performer apparently fastened the harness in the dark, and never noticed that her costume had become tangled with the latch, preventing it from closing properly. When she began the performance, the latch popped open and she fell to the stage below. According to the coroner's report, the performer was wearing a harness intended for rock climbers, and not for aerial acrobatics and neither she, nor the spotter who was assisting her, noticed that the latch was not secure.

While rehearsing the final scene from *Of Mice and Men*, the character Lenny was injured when the stage gun they were using, fired a real bullet in the final scene. The genuine 32 calibre revolver had been brought to the rehearsal hall by another cast member, who did not first check to see if it was loaded. The bullet fortunately grazed the actor's scalp, cutting through a part of his ear and causing only relatively minor injuries – the doctors called his survival a million-to-one chance.

**Scottsdale, Arizona:
January 2009**

A performer with an aerial acrobatic troupe fell to his death during a show in front of seven-hundred of people. The performer was working with aerial silks, during a piece where he slowly unravels his body while suspended high above the ground. Something went terribly wrong during the stunt and he crashed head-first onto the ground below.

Beware: Heatstroke

With the summer months upon us, it's time to start thinking about the potential hazards of working outdoors in the heat.

Heatstroke occurs when the body fails to regulate its own temperature and body temperature continues to rise. A person with heatstroke may stop sweating. Other symptoms include confusion, delirium, or unconsciousness, and skin that is red, hot, and dry, even under the armpits.

Heatstroke is a life-threatening medical emergency and 911 should be called.

- Move the person into a cool, shaded area to rest. Do not leave the person alone.
- Loosen and remove any heavy clothing.
- Cool the person's entire body by sponging or spraying cool—not cold—water, and fan the person to lower the body temperature.
- Do not give Aspirin or acetaminophen to reduce a high body temperature that can occur with heatstroke. These medications may cause problems because of the body's response to heat stroke.

Prevention is the best cure. To prevent heatstroke, drink plenty of nonalcoholic and nonsugary fluids, wear lightweight, light-coloured and loose-fitting clothing, a wide brimmed hat, UVA/UVB protected sunglasses and sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher)

If possible, limit your outdoor activities to morning or evening hours.

New Stunt Guidelines

In 2007 WorkSafeBC launched Guidelines for Fall Protection during stunt work (G.11.2-6). Developed with the film and performing arts input, the guideline applies to all stunt work in the motion picture and performing arts industries.

In 2009, minor revisions were made to the guideline. These changes, the inclusion of wording to cover suspension of performers rather than strictly falls and the listing of entanglement as a risk factor, more accurately reflect the original intent of the guideline.

On the subject of stunt fall protection, an item which requires constant due diligence is documentation. The original guideline clearly states that documentation must be available at the work location which establishes that the equipment used meets the applicable standard. G.11.2-6 contains an alternate standard, which was developed in response to the industries need to use a wide variety of equipment in stunt work. It is important to remember that the alternate standard must be applied to non-rated equipment. The alternate standard contains three options for assessing the equipment to ensure it is safe. One of those three options must be applied to non-rated equipment and the process of applying that option must be documented. In addition of course, all planning must be carefully documented.

If it proves difficult for the stunt coordinator to document the planning, another member of the stunt team could be identified as responsible for the documentation. Don't expose yourself and your production company to risk. Write it down. Draw a picture. Make notes of your planning and testing. Document your work!

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Most jobs in our industry require some form of PPE. While PPE is the last choice of protection, everyone should be prepared to use it when necessary and know the correct procedures and proper applications for using it.

Who is responsible for providing PPE?

From respirators to gloves to hard hats, According to WorkSafeBC regulation Part 8.2:

A worker is responsible for providing their own clothing needed for protection against the natural elements, general purpose work gloves and appropriate footwear including safety footwear, and safety headgear.

Employers are responsible for providing, at no cost to the worker, all other items of personal protective equipment required by this Regulation.

If the PPE provided by the employer causes allergenic or other adverse health effects, the employer must provide appropriate alternate equipment or safe measures.

WorkSafeBC regulation Part 8.2 does not override existing or future contracts/agreements between a worker and employer or union agreement. For example, if a workers contract states that employers are to supply hard hats to workers, then a worker is not bound by Regulation 8.2 to supply his/her own.

Keeping a safety equipment bag which contains all the PPE one may acquire at different times and for dif-

ferent hazards is a good way to be prepared when it is needed on short notice.

The Safety Equipment Bag may contain:

•**Eye Protection** - Such as safety glasses and goggles. Be sure to maintain them - no broken arms, clean and without too many scratches which may impair your vision. Replace them when needed.

•**Face Protection** - Such as a shield or full face respirator. They should always be kept clean and protected from scratches.

•**Head Protection** - Hard hats are usually available at the jobsite, however if you have your own personal hard hat, you should have it adjusted to fit your head properly and wear it in the correct manner.

•**Hearing Protection** - There are many different types of hearing protection (ie. muffs, plugs and form fitted), it is always best to choose the one that you will actually wear - having the protection and not using it is pointless. Check the protection level offered by the chosen device to ensure it is adequate for the noise level you will encounter.

Wash your hands thoroughly before inserting hearing protection and make sure earplugs are clean.

“Work tunes” (ear muffs with a radio inside) are popular with construction workers and do protect workers from outside noise, however they also limit the wearer’s hearing. This may pre-

vent them from hearing signals or alarms, and are therefore not recommended.

•**Hand Protection** - It is important to check the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) to make sure the appropriate glove is selected for the task at hand. Some gloves can be harmful if they are not correct for the chemical being handled (ie. may melt onto hand or let chemical to seep through).

•**Foot Protection** - Although some jobs may not require it, it is a good idea to always wear or have available a pair of CSA approved footwear. Things can change (ie. you may be required to work near mobile equipment) and it is always good to make sure that you are prepared.

•**Respirator** - The correct type of respirator must be worn for the task at hand, it may be half mask, full face or supplied air. The wearer is required to have a fit test done when they first receive their mask and then on an annual basis after that. Care must be taken that the filters are the correct type for the chemical being used. Check the MSDS for the chemical information and suggested respirator protection.

SHAPE offers free fit testing and keeps a data base for fit test compliance.

Protect yourself. PPE won’t work if it is not kept in good condition; used or worn in the correct manner; or used when required.

The key to safety is you

SHAPE COURSES

Courses must be paid in advance to SHAPE. Courses may be subject to cancellation. We would be happy to book a class for you if your group has the minimum number of participants.

Call 604-733-4682 for further details.

For full course descriptions, dates and to register online, visit www.shape.bc.ca/courses/

Aerial Lift Training

\$120 (Experienced - 1 Day)
\$220 (Inexperienced - 2 Day)

Experienced:

Saturday, June 27
Saturday, June 27

Inexperienced:

Saturday, June 27 and
Sunday, June 28
Saturday, May 30 and
Sunday, May 31

8:30am - 4:30pm

Instructor: Leavitt Training Agency

Counterbalanced Forklift

\$120 (Experienced - 1 Day)
\$220 (Inexperienced - 2 Day)

Experienced:

Saturday, June 20
Saturday, June 20

Inexperienced:

Saturday, June 20 and
Sunday, June 28
Saturday, June 20 and
Sunday, June 28

8:30am - 4:30pm

Instructor: Leavitt Training Agency

Firearm Safety Level 1

\$50

TBA - check our website for updates.

10am to 5pm

Instructor: Felcan Enterprises

Occupational First Aid Level One

\$40

Monday, June 22

8:45am to 5:30pm

Instructor: Kathy Day

Performing Arts Supervisor Safety

\$25

Monday, July 6

1pm - 5pm

Instructor: Dave Winstanley

Film & Television Safety Awareness*

\$25

Tuesday, June 16

Sunday, July 12

Tuesday: 6pm-9pm

Sundays: 10am-1pm

Instructor: Marty Clausen

Film & Television Supervisor Safety*

\$25

Sunday, July 12

1:30pm - 4:30pm

Instructor: Marty Clausen

*Take both Safety Awareness and Supervisor Safety for \$45

ONLINE COURSES

Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG)

\$20

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)

\$20

SHAPE has an in house computer station available to those who do not have internet access but wish to take our online courses. For details, call 604.733.4682.

Out of Jurisdiction First Aid Certificates

Good news! As of April 1st, you can swap your out of province First Aid training certificate, for an equivalent BC Out of Jurisdiction First Aid certificate.

SHAPE will issue Out of Jurisdiction Level 1 Certificates at no charge. We are unable to offer Out of Jurisdiction certificates for First Aid Level 2 or 3, because we do not offer training for those courses.

For further information, please contact SHAPE at 604.733.4682 or info@shape.bc.ca.