

Mortimer (St John's) Village Hall

Stage Safety Guide

We want you to love using our stage, and to do so safely.

Because it's a working stage for a theatre, among other uses, there are various hazards that all stage users need to be aware of and understand how to deal with safely.

YOUR SAFETY IS YOUR OWN RESPONSIBILITY!

That said, this document explains some of the main hazards with the aim of minimising risk to your group. This isn't an exhaustive list or a formal training guide, so you're encouraged to take extra precautions of your own or speak to us if you have any specific concerns.

You must ensure that everyone going on stage is familiar with these hazards and how to mitigate them. For some of them the mitigation is to not let people on stage unless certain conditions are met, and it's up to the booker of the hall to enforce that.

Light

Hazard - The stage can be almost pitch black, particularly when the stage curtains are closed, which makes accidents more likely.

Mitigation - Before anyone goes on stage you must ensure adequate lighting.

Always come onto stage for the first time from the steps on the right, near the room with the tables. Just inside the stage door there's a two-socket power switch at waist height that turns on some powerful lights at the back of the stage. There's also a switch near those that says "F.O.S." on it, that turns on some useful LED bars at the front of the stage after a few seconds, which are useful for lighting up performers or speakers.

On the left of the stage, the kitchen side, there's also a light switch immediately above a key box on the back wall, at the top of the steps up. That turns on a light with a movement sensor so it can leave you in the dark without warning! We recommend using the main stage lights as described above.

It's also never a bad idea to carry a torch!

Curtains

Hazard - The curtain uses a manual winder with a pulley system and metal wires that could trap fingers nastily.

Mitigation - Hold the winder handle firmly and keep everything and everyone else away from the pulley wires, including loose clothing such as ties. Having one person responsible for this is ideal, with careful practice.

Height

Hazard - The front of the stage is about a metre higher than the main hall floor, with no barrier.

Mitigation - Make sure that everyone is aware of the drop and stays well back from the front unless strictly necessary. Extra care must be taken when near the front, for example by not running or dancing to the edge, and by facing forwards. Take care when wearing high heels! Speaking of which...

Footwear

Hazard - As a working environment for a theatre the stage floor may have minor debris such as wood splinters or nails, or items of equipment or set materials in places it could be walked into.

Mitigation - Hard-sole shoes should be worn - people in sandals or with bare feet should not be allowed on stage! Make sure that the lights are on, as detailed above, and that everyone is vigilant of their surroundings.

Electrics

Hazard - The stage has electrical equipment that could cause injury.

Mitigation - No-one should attempt to use or fiddle with any electrical equipment on stage, apart from the lighting and P.A. system as specifically instructed.

Tall and Heavy Things

Hazard - Around the sides of the stage are ladders and tall sections of set, and heavy furniture items, which could crush people if they're moved,

Mitigation - We keep the ladders secured to the walls, and set pieces stacked carefully, such that they won't fall. Don't attempt to move or use anything that you didn't bring on stage yourself - and do that carefully too.

Spills and Chemicals

Hazard - The only liquids likely to be on stage are regular paint and cleaning products, and the occasional hot cup of tea.

Mitigation - Don't bring liquids onto the stage without organising to do it safely. Don't leave them lying around in an unsealed container, and wear suitable footwear, as mentioned above, to help prevent slipping.

Bonus Hazard: Attention!

Hazard - All the hazards above are made more likely to happen and cause injury if someone on stage has a diminished ability to pay attention to them.

Mitigation - We recommend that no-one is allowed on stage after having any level of alcohol, taking illegal drugs, or taking prescription drugs that affect the mind or ability to react, or even those with extreme fatigue.