

WORCESTER OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

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Introduction – Setting the Scene

The Group known as Worcester Operatic and Dramatic Society (WODS) is a registered charity. The applicability of health and safety legislation does not necessarily cover charities or the voluntary sector as it concentrates on the roles of employer, employee and self-employed and only with these definitions do responsibilities ensue under criminal legislation. There is no party employed under a formal permanent employment contract and all members and executive committee members give their time on a voluntary basis.

Nonetheless the executive committee (the trustees) as those responsible for the actions of the Group have decided to implement best practice in terms of health and safety and is fully committed to the Health and Safety and Welfare of all members and those affected by the undertakings of the Group's activities. This commitment extends beyond health and safety legislation and embraces moral and ethical issues of caring for the members and others as friends and colleagues.

It is recognised that considerable work has been put into producing a Health and Safety Policy and Manual, which includes the guidance provided by NODA. This is the framework upon which the Group bases its activities.

The Basis of this Plan

WODS is seeking to provide a concise plan to cover the key health and safety issues relating to attendance at both its Rehearsal Premises, St. Mary's Hall, Northfield Street, Worcester and the production of shows. These may be at the Worcester Swan Theatre, Malvern Festival Theatre or in the Rehearsal Premises. The plan aims to identify Health and Safety issues and detail action to control and managed them.

As revised by Martin Bradshaw
WODS Health and Safety Officer
May 2008

HEALTH AND SAFETY GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

WORCESTER OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY

We, the Trustees of the Worcester Operatic and Dramatic Society are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of our members, so far as is reasonably practicable. We are fully committed to protecting others who may be affected by our activities.

Our members will be given such information, instruction and training as is necessary to enable the safe performance of their activities with us. It is the duty of the committee to ensure that our facilities and systems of work are designed to take account of health and safety and are properly supervised at all times. The specific responsibilities and duties are detailed in the Society's Health and Safety Manual.

Arrangements are set out in the Society's Health and Safety Manual to ensure that members are able to bring to our attention matters of health and safety that need to be addressed.

Competent persons are appointed to assist us in meeting our statutory duties, including where appropriate external specialists.

Every member, visitor and affected member of the public is encouraged to co-operate with us to ensure that our statutory duties are met. All members are reminded of their obligations to take care of their own health and safety, and for the safety of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions

This policy will be audited at appropriate intervals to ensure that our health and safety objectives are achieved and maintained. It will also be reviewed whenever there are changes to health and safety law or organisational changes which affect health and safety.

For example, a separate Fire Risk Assessment has now been carried out in accordance with Regulator Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This is kept as a separate document by the Health & Safety Officer and is reviewed regularly.

We provide safe working conditions and a healthy environment for our members.

We ensure that equipment and systems of work used by our members are safe.

We provide training and information to our members as is necessary within the framework of our health and safety organisation.

We ensure that the public at large are protected from danger or risks to health as a result of our activities. We ensure that this policy is reviewed each calendar year and that as a result of that review changes are made to

procedures and our overall health and safety organisation to take into account the items identified as needing change in that review.

Signed:

Name:

Position:

Date:

REHEARSAL PREMISES REQUIREMENTS

The Director appointed for any specific production has overall responsibility for ensuring that props, staging and other stage furniture are safe for use. As necessary, the Health and Safety Officer or his/ her nominated representatives instruct such Directors in their duties in this regard. Records of such instructions are kept by the Health and Safety Officer or his/ her nominated representative.

Members are instructed to attend rehearsals wearing suitable loose fitting clothing and footwear that is non-slip for general duties. For some productions all or some of the cast will be required to wear special footwear such as tap shoes and/or special clothing. In these circumstances they will be instructed to put such footwear or clothing on only for the duration of their need for rehearsal purposes.

Members and visitors (all users) are:

- instructed to know the location of all the fire extinguishers, the fire exits and the assembly point(s). (See separate Fire Risk Assessment)
- instructed to obey fire drill instructions. (See separate Fire Risk Assessment)
- instructed to register their attendance by being recorded on an Attendance Register kept by the Production Secretary or an appropriate appointed person and, in those cases when they need to leave the rehearsal early, to sign-out as well.
- instructed not to park in front of fire exits or place any obstruction in front of fire exits, outside or inside the building.
- instructed to work safely with props and to refuse to use any that are, in their opinion, unsafe.
- instructed on how to use equipment that requires them to work above floor level. In particular they are reminded that it is forbidden to stand on make-shift rostra such as plastic nesting chairs or fold-up tables.

Details of any accident, however trivial, are immediately recorded in the accident book by the Health and Safety Officer or the person calling that

rehearsal in the absence of the Health and Safety Officer. Note: The accident book is a specially prepared and bound document with consecutively numbered and referenced pages such that any torn out pages can be easily detected, and is kept in the kitchen.

ACCIDENT BOOK

The Group uses the Health and Safety Executive's Accident Book B1 510 to record all incidents that happen during events that are organised by the Group and in which members of the Group participate.

Incidents are recorded which involve a member of the Group, a sub-contractor or members of the public at any event organised by the Group.

Each complete accident book is numbered starting from 01.

Each book is maintained and stored by the Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative when not in use. The current book accompanies the Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative to each function organised by the Group in which Group members participate.

Each report is numbered above the tear-off point and with the same number on the actual record.

The report is completed, where possible by the person to whom the incident occurred. In cases where the injuries make it impossible for the person to whom the incident occurred to make the entry, then a competent bystander is required to complete the details required of the report.

Retrospectively an entry may be completed by The Health & Safety Officer upon discovery of the incident

In those cases where the accident is considered to be reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences regulations 1995) then the Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative completes Form: F2508 (HSE form entitled: Reporting of an injury or dangerous occurrence).

The Group reports accidents in accordance with RIDDOR that involve:

- Death or major injury

- Fractures (other than to fingers, thumbs or toes)
- Amputations
- Dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine
- Loss of sight (temporary or permanent)
- Chemical or hot metal burns
- Injury resulting from electric shock or electrical burns leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.
- Injuries leading to hypothermia, heat induced illness or requiring resuscitation or requiring admission to hospital for more than 24 hours
- Unconsciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to a harmful substance or biological agent
- Acute illness requiring medical treatment, or loss of consciousness arising from absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin
- Acute illness requiring medical treatment where there is reason to believe that this resulted from exposure to a biological agent or its toxins or infected material
- Any injuries to people not at a function organised by the Group as a result of an accident "arising out of or in connection with the function organised by the Group", where they are taken to hospital from the scene of the accident
- Any other injury resulting in an absence of work over a 3 day period (Known as a 'three day injury')

Reportable accidents are notified to the Local Authority, within 10 (ten) days of the occurrence by the Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative.

Alternatively such accidents may be reported direct to the Health & Safety Executive on line.

Records of reportable accidents are maintained and kept by the Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative for at least 3 (three) years after the incident in a form that is easily and quickly retrievable for those in authority who need or wish to see the report.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

The Group has identified five categories of electrical equipment that are subject to its procedures under electrical safety:

Fixed Equipment only removable if the fixings are removed.

Transportable Equipment normally spends its time in one place but can be moved when the need arises e.g. refrigerator.

Portable Equipment- movable from its location e.g. computer, kettle.

Hand Held Equipment electric drills and other electrical tools etc.

Stage Lighting used at the Rehearsal Premises for 'in house' performances.

All electrical equipment owned by the Group, hired or the personal property of a member of the Group used on Group activities is subject to annual inspection and testing by a competent authority. At the conclusion of each inspection and test the said equipment is then labelled to show its inspected status. The label includes the name or mark of the inspecting authority, the date that the test was carried out and the date for the next inspection together with the signature of the tester.

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.

The Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative keep records of all inspections together with a record of each individual piece of equipment.

Each piece of equipment is given an identifying reference that is permanently affixed to the piece of equipment.

In those cases where it would be uneconomic to employ an outside body to perform the inspections the Group adopt the following procedure:

- Ensures that inspections are carried out by a technically qualified member of the Group.
- Disconnects the equipment and checks that such disconnections do not affect other equipment or cause the disconnected equipment being inspected to fail.
- Checks any flex or trailing leads for good condition.
- Checks the plug for security of cable to plug, no signs of overheating, no signs of damage and can continue to be used with safety.
- Does the equipment work, can it be switched on and off properly, no signs of damage and can it be used safely?
- As required perform an earth leakage/continuity test and check that the impedance between the earth pin and the metal case of the appliance is less than 0.1ohm
- As required, perform an insulation test. However electronic components can be damaged in this situation. The Group therefore favours

and uses a visual inspection to confirm this test. If in doubt it uses the services of an outside competent body

- Sockets are checked for signs of overheating, loose connections and an earth impedance test is carried out in accordance with the current IEE Wiring Regulations

FIRE SAFETY

The issue of Fire Safety is also now dealt with separately under a separate Fire Risk Assessment as mentioned above. It is included here for the sake of completeness and because it also deals with the Society's policy in Theatres and other venues occupied by the Society at a particular time.

We address and carry out our duties and responsibilities on fire safety in all our activities in a proper manner. We provide information on and rehearsal of fire safety procedures in the following areas of our activities:

New members

New members are provided with written information on fire safety in the joining pack that is given to them by the Health and Safety Officer*.

* In all cases where the Health and Safety Officer is written in this procedure, the full text is **"The Health and Safety Officer or, in his/her absence, his/her nominated representative"**.

Existing members are provided with current information on fire safety procedures or on recommendations made either by the local fire safety officer or following any incident that found the existing procedures to be inadequate.

Visitors

Visitors are instructed verbally in the fire safety precautions by the Health and Safety Officer of the group or other person nominated from time to time by the Health and Safety Officer who informs them of the fire safety drill, instructs them to sign the Register, shows them the fire exits and the assembly point to be used in the event of an incident.

Sub-Contractors

Sub-Contractors are instructed in the fire safety precautions by the Health and Safety Officer or other person nominated by the Health and Safety Officer.

Procedures within the Rehearsal Premises:

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring that:

- From time to time, reminding all persons in the building of the need to remain alert to the potential of a fire and what they must do in the case of an outbreak or rehearsal for such an outbreak.
- Marked exits are kept clear of all obstructions such as chairs, boxes etc.

He/she shall remind members of their duties in this regard and that they shall assist in these activities.

- Marked fire exits are unlocked during the time that the premises are occupied.
- A count of attendees is taken to ensure that all in attendance recorded in the register.
- A record is kept of the location of the nearest telephone to be used in the case of an emergency and/or that at least two members are nominated as having a mobile telephone to hand to be used in the case of an emergency.
- Frequent checks to ensure that the fire extinguishers are still inside their expiry date and those arrangements are made to have out-of-date fire extinguishers either changed or serviced as soon as possible after their expiry date(s).
- Fire drills are carried out at irregular intervals and that all persons present shall treat the fire drill in a proper manner and assemble at the nominated fire assembly point.
 - In the case of an actual emergency nominate a person, normally other than him/herself to contact the fire brigade and receive feedback from that nominated person that contact with the fire brigade has been made.
- Remove the register during a fire drill or actual emergency and carry out a check of all attendees on it so as to account to the fire brigade for any missing persons and their possible location

Procedures within the theatre or other performance location(s):

The Health and Safety Officer or the Stage Manager for the production, if nominated by the Health and Safety Officer, familiarises him/herself with the location of fire exits and the assembly points to be used and liaises with the theatre (or other location) staff to identify the procedures that is to be followed by his/her members whilst in the building.

The Health and Safety Officer or Stage Manager instructs his/her members on the procedures to be followed whilst in that building. In the event of an emergency, members of our society act in accordance with the procedures for evacuating the building as contractually agreed in writing with the theatre (other building) staff.

The Health and Safety Officer ensures that all persons in the theatre (or other building) are informed verbally of the fire drill, fire exit locations, fire extinguisher locations and assembly points, coded announcements either by him/her or by the theatre (or other building) staff or Stage Manager as agreed in writing between them as soon after they enter the building as is possible and certainly before the start of any technical rehearsal.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Our approach to risk assessment is based on a simple process that examines the hazards and risks associated with our activities, be they, in rehearsal, in the theatre or hall or elsewhere.

We distinguish between a **hazard** and a **risk** by using and applying the definitions given below.

Hazard

A hazard is its potential to cause harm. It may cause you to cough, feel heat, kill you etc.

Risk

A risk is the likelihood that it will harm you in the actual circumstances presented by the hazard.

This depends on:

- the hazard(s) that have been identified
- how it (they) is (are) controlled
- who is exposed
- their involvement at the time

Risk assessment

The examination of a series of situations to determine each situation's potential to do harm.

Any risk has a **probability** and a **severity**.

We categorise **probability** as being:

A Always happens

B Nearly always happens

C Often happens

D Doesn't happen very often

E Hardly ever happens

We categorise **severity** as being:

- 1 Death**
- 2 Severe injury**
- 3 Serious injury**
- 4 Minor injury**
- 5 Little effect**

THEATRE or other building(s) Drill

The Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representatives are responsible, if applicable, for liaising with the theatre staff, in particular the Technical Stage Manager, to set-up the line of responsibility for safety to persons and to identify any particular hazardous areas or situations that need to be addressed. As agreed by this liaison, the nominated person informs the cast and back stage crew of all safety matters that need to be notified to them.

This will usually be carried out by the Theatre's Technical Stage Manager or in his/her absence a person nominated by him/her

Members are shown the location of fire extinguishers, fire exits and assembly points and the location of the first aid kit(s) and the identity of the first aid team or person. Members need to leave the wings and stage area clear before, during and after rehearsals and performances unless required to go on stage or working backstage.

Details of any accident, however trivial, are recorded in the Group's accident book by the Health and Safety Officer or Stage Manager, if nominated by the Health and Safety Officer.

Where the theatre or other venue has its own system for recording accidents, the procedures required under their health and safety policy are carried out in addition to those of the Group. The Health and Safety Officer is instructed to make regular contact with the theatre or other venue to familiarise him/herself with their procedures. Records of these reviews are maintained on file by the Health and Safety officer.

Members and persons backstage with the approval of the Stage Manager must have equal regard for the Health and Safety Policy of both WODS and the other venue. Should any conflict arise, this should be resolved by discussion.

CHILDREN

For the purposes of this procedure, the Group defines a child as a young person aged upto 16 years of age.

This procedure applies both to situations in which children and adults are involved in the activity and to those in which children are solely involved.

The Group's Health and Safety Policy and the actions and responsibilities contained in its Health and Safety Manual shall apply to children.

Although the Health and Safety Officer is responsible overall for the fulfilment of the Group's Health and Safety Policy, the society has a Child Protection Policy overseen by our Child Protection Officer. The Child Protection Policy addresses general as well as specific issues of Health and Safety in relation to children within our Society.

The Society complies with all Local Authority regulations relating to theatrical licences. They appoint appropriately CRB checked and qualified chaperones and have appointed Theatre Matrons.

The Society is in the process of reviewing new requirements for the CRB process.

ANNUAL AUDIT

The Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative carries out an annual audit of the safety manual and the procedures contained in it with the objective of checking that the contents are relevant. Audits also include examination of records and interviews with Group members.

The Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative records the results of the audit.

The Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative agrees a plan of action, if necessary with other Group members, to deal with the points revealed in the audit.

The Health and Safety Officer or his/her nominated representative keeps a constant eye on the feed back from the audits in order to maintain a high profile on the need to make the amendments as revealed in the audit.