

WORCESTER OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY
HEALTH AND SAFETY HANDBOOK

Record of Changes

Issue number	Date of issue	Description of changes
0.A	September 2013	First draft for discussion by Committee
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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

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. WODS does not have staff employed under formal permanent employment contracts and all members, including the executive committee, give their time on a voluntary basis.

Nonetheless the WODS Committee (the Trustees) as those responsible for the actions of the Group have a duty of care to those who use the Society's premises and partake in its activities. The Committee has therefore 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.

All references in this document to WODS shall be taken to include the Youth Section (WODYYS). The WODYYS Committee has a representative on the main WODS Committee who acts as a conduit for H&S information.

1.2 This document

This document is the WODS H&S Handbook and describes the procedures by which the policy outlined in the WODS Health & Safety Policy document is implemented. This document is produced and reviewed by the WODS H&S Officer. Any changes are presented to and approved by the WODS Committee. The current copy of this document is posted on the WODS web-site and a paper copy kept at the WODS Hall.

2. Risk assessments

2.1. General risks

Our approach to risk assessment is based on a simple process that examines the hazards and risks associated with all our activities in St Mary's Hall, theatres or elsewhere.

We begin by identifying the hazards associated with our activities, a hazard being defined as an event or series of events that have the potential to cause harm. The risk is then quantified as the product of **probability** and **severity**.

The **probability** is assessed as follows:

Very unlikely to happen (0-5%) – risk factor 1

Rarely happens (5-10%) – risk factor 2

Sometimes happens (10-30%) – risk factor 3

Happens frequently (30-50%) – risk factor 4

Very likely to occur (>50%) – risk factor 5

The **severity** is a measure of the harm done if the event takes place:

Little effect – no need for first aid – risk factor 1

Minor injury – slight burn, scratch or cut treatable with first aid – risk factor 2

Serious injury – burn, cut or fracture requiring treatment at A&E – risk factor 3

Severe injury – severe burn, cut, burn, broken bones or concussion endangering life and requiring immediate emergency service response – risk factor 4

Death – very severe injury possibly leading to loss of life – risk factor 5

Any risk with a rating (probability x severity) of more than 4 will be highlighted for action to reduce the risk. This can be by means of:

- Stopping the activity or finding a safer alternative
- Applying control measures (e.g. better ventilation, avoiding lone-working)
- Providing protective equipment (gloves, masks)
- Training of the individuals involved

The remaining risk following the implementation of the mitigation measures is called the residual risk. All those affected need to be aware of the residual risks.

The records of the risk assessments are kept with the other WODS H&S documents.

2.2 Fire risk assessment

A separate Fire Risk Assessment is carried out of the WODS Hall. This comprises:

- Identifying and reducing sources of ignition (heat, naked flames)
- Identifying and reducing the storage of flammable materials and liquids (paper, solvents)
- Reducing availability of oxygen by use of fire doors
- Ensuring the building has adequate means of escape
- Ensuring the building has appropriate fire-fighting equipment and that sufficient members are trained in its use
- Ensuring the fire alarm system is fully functional
- Ensuring that appropriate signage is provided to indicate escape routes
- Ensuring that all users of the hall are familiar with the fire alarm system and the evacuation procedure

The fire risk assessment is kept with the other WODS H&S documents

2.3 Production risk assessment

There are specific risks associated with each production performed by the Society whether this is in St Mary's Hall or in a hired external venue. It is the responsibility of the Stage Manager for the production to carry out a risk assessment, liaising with the Show Director and the WODS H&S Officer as appropriate. The Risk Assessment will cover all activities associated with the show including the get-in, the performance of the show and the get-out. WODS have a standard template for this which covers a number of generic risks. Any risks which are specific to the show will also need to be assessed and added to the template. Normally, the technical staff at the venue will wish to review this risk assessment to ensure that they are happy with the mitigation measures and the residual risks.

3. Accident reporting

WODS has an Accident reporting book which is normally kept in the Kitchen area at St Mary's Hall. Each complete accident book is numbered starting from 01 and 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.

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 requiring resuscitation or admission to hospital for more than 24 hours
 - Unconsciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to a harmful substance
 - Acute illness requiring medical treatment, or loss of consciousness arising from absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin
- Any injuries to people not at a function organised by the Society as a result an accident "arising out of or in connection with the function organised by the Society", 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

Reportable accidents are notified to the Local Authority within 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 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.

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.

4. Equipment testing

The Group has a number of items that require regular testing to ensure correct and safe working.

4.1. Portable Appliances

The Group has identified five categories of electrical equipment that are subject to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT):

Fixed Equipment which is only removable if the fixings are removed – test every 2 years

Transportable Equipment which normally spends its time in one place but can be moved when the need arises (e.g. refrigerator, photocopier) – test every 2 years

Portable Equipment which is frequently moved and handled (e.g. anglepoise lamps, kettle, urns) – test every year

Hand Held Equipment such as electric drills and other electrical tools – test every year

Stage Lighting used at the WODS Hall for 'in house' performances, including luminaires, extension leads and splitters – test every year

This applies to all electrical equipment used at WODS Hall whether it is owned by the Group, hired in or is the personal property of a member of the Group. The testing will be carried out at the intervals specified above by a competent contractor. At the conclusion of each PAT inspection, each item of equipment is labelled to show its inspected status, including the name or mark of the tester, 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. Failed equipment should be repaired and retested or scrapped. 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 contractor to perform the PAT inspection, the Group can ensure that the inspection is carried out by a technically qualified member of the Group using commercially available PAT equipment.

4.2. Fire alarm system

The fire alarm system currently installed at the WODS Hall specifies a number of periodic checks. There is a book in which to record these. These include:

- A monthly cycle of checks of all the alarm trigger points
- A monthly test of the control panel to ensure full functionality

- An annual maintenance visit by the manufacturer or installer of the system
- Fire evacuation drills which are carried out for each show rehearsed at the Hall

Any faults or issues arising from these checks should be recorded in the book and remedial action taken by the WODS H&S Officer.

4.3 Fire extinguishers

The Group has a number of fire extinguishers located around the WODS Hall Building which are of the following types:

- Water/Foam
- Carbon dioxide
- Powder

Each extinguisher is checked annually to ensure it is still inside the expiry date and shows no signs of damage. Arrangements are made to have out-of-date fire extinguishers either changed or serviced as soon as possible after their inspection date.. A record of the inspections and services is kept by the WODS H&S Officer. A selected group from the WODS Committee will receive training in the use of fire extinguishers on a regular basis. The WODS H&S Officer will organise the training and keep a record of the training.

4.4 Emergency lighting system

St Mary's Hall is fitted with an emergency lighting system that cuts in if mains power to the building is lost. A monthly check of the correct operation of this system is carried out by the WODS H&S Officer at a time when the Hall is unoccupied. This is done by turning off the mains input power at the switch box in the room to the west side of the Hall behind the stage. A record of these checks is kept by the WODS H&S Officer.

5 Inspections

As well as the risk assessments outlined in Section 3 and the equipment inspections and testing outlined in section 4, the WODS H&S Officer will organise an annual audit of the WODS Hall by a competent person to ensure compliance with the WODS H&S Policy. A record of this audit inspection is produced by the H&S Officer highlighting any problems or issues and issuing a remedial action plan to all those concerned.

6 Communications

WODS H&S information is communicated in a number of ways.

6.1 Briefings

Rehearsals. Fire safety and evacuation briefings are given to WODS members taking part in rehearsals at the Hall for each show by the H&S Officer.

Show participants. For members taking part in a show, the Stage Manager will give a briefing to all those involved in the show at the final rehearsal at the Hall. A member of the venue's technical staff will also provide a briefing,

which is normally done immediately prior to the technical rehearsal at the venue.

Audience members Those attending a performance at the WODS Hall are given a briefing by the WODS H&S Officer or a nominated deputy immediately prior to the start of the performance.

Contractors All contractors working in the WODS Hall are instructed in the fire safety precautions by the Health and Safety Officer or other person nominated by the Health and Safety Officer.

Hirers. Any members of the public hiring the WODS Hall are given a briefing by the WODS member who opens the WODS building for them, reinforced by a briefing sheet summarising the emergency procedures.

6.2 Documents

A number of H&S documents are available to WODS members. The following table summarises the documents and where they are kept.

Document	Location
WODS H&S Policy	H&S file, Notice board, WODS web-site
WODS H&S Handbook	H&S file, WODS web-site
Fire Risk assessment for hall	H&S file
General risk assessment for hall	H&S file
Show risk assessment	Stage Manager's files
Fire alarm system testing	H&S file
Emergency lighting checks	H&S file
H&S audit inspections	H&S file
Accident Book	Kitchen area at St Mary's Hall
Portable appliance testing reports	H&S file
Fire extinguisher testing	H&S file
Fire extinguisher training	H&S file
Briefing notes for hirers	H&S file