

Safety at work

Guidelines for safe on site working

Introduction

This is a series of guidelines for some of the most common tasks of site work that would be expected to be undertaken in the Arts, Entertainment and Event industries. It can support a wider Health and Safety Document, but it can also be used for stand-alone purposes. If there is any aspect of this document that you do not understand please make that known.

Fitness and Competency

To be able to work on site you must be fit and competent for the task in hand.

To be fit means you are well, rested, fed and capable of working at your full potential for the entire call. You are not taking any medication that affects you adversely and you are not under the influence of any substance, whether legal or not, that impairs you in any way.

To be competent means you have sufficient experience and/or formal training to complete the work safely and to a high standard. You may need specific qualifications to undertake certain tasks and in that instance you will hold a valid qualification or ticket as per any current legislation.

If you do not hold Public Liability Insurance, you will be classed as a *labour-only Subcontractor*. As such you will have limits on the scope of work you can do. This will be discussed with you.

If you hold Public Liability Insurance in excess of £5m, then you will be classed as a *Bona Fide Sub Contractor*. As such you can work to within your professional limits; any additional stipulations will be discussed specifically.

If you are directly supervised, then some responsibilities will be passed to that supervisor. You must only work as agreed with them, and when they are around to supervise you. Working outside of your competency unsupervised is not allowed. If you are a student or trainee under someone else's care, then your circumstances will be further discussed.

In all cases, each person carries a duty of care for themselves and everyone around them. This means you must take responsibility for your actions and conduct at all times. If you are uncertain at any stage of working if what you are doing is safe, or you don't feel capable of completing it: **stop and get help or advice.**

RAMS

RAMS stands for Risk Assessments and Method Statements. These are the processes by which hazards are identified and risks are managed. There will be H&S documents specific to the work in addition to these guidelines. These will stipulate the activities and measures that must be taken for the project or its tasks. You are obliged to ensure you have read and understood these and that you abide by them.

Method Statements

The process of a given task will be listed in the order it should be completed. It should also prescribe the PPE required, as well as other vital information. It will also identify risks associated. These will feed into the Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments

These take each risk in turn and identify two key factors- how bad that hazard could be- the Severity; and how likely it is to happen- the Likelihood.

These are often given a numerical score, and from those the risk can be expressed. Often, the Severity is multiplied by the Likelihood and the final number is cross referenced to give the Risk Factor.

Then the assessor considers measures which could either reduce the severity or the likelihood- or better still- both. They then apply these measures and re-assess the Severity and Likelihood and generate a new Risk factor.

The assessor takes these before-and-after scenarios, along with other relevant information such as who is affected and how, and compiles them into a formal Risk Assessment.

PPE

PPE, or Personal Protective Equipment is the additional things worn to protect vulnerable parts of the body from specific hazards. The RAMS for your project should indicate which you must wear for specific tasks but it is also good to know what is normally expected. PPE is not to be worn inappropriately- remove items as soon as they are no longer needed so that your senses are not impaired. Some PPE might include:

Gloves

- ✓ For protecting the hands from splinters, rough edges etc; for protecting from heat or cold, chemicals, biologicals and irritants; for when the work needs to remain clean

Shoes

- ✓ Sturdy shoes with good grip for light and work without heavy lifting
- ✓ Steel toe boots for any work lifting above 23kG

Head protection

- ✓ Bump caps for light protection, such as working on LX rigging
- ✓ Hard hats for work where a heavy load is suspended or lifted

Eye protection

- ✓ Safety goggles or glasses for exposure to small particles, shrapnel, spray or sawdust; full masks for more industrial work
- ✓ Tinted or treated glass for protection from bright or dangerous light

Ear protection

- ✓ Foam earplugs or full head-worn ear defenders for working with loud or tools or in noisy sites.
- ! Be careful to not reduce hearing when not needed or where communication is essential

Masks

- ✓ For dusty work- drilling, sanding, sawing- simple dust filter masks are used
- ✓ For work with fumes or very fine particles- painting, treating, welding- specific masks are worn.
- ! You will be fully briefed if these are required.

Knee pads

- ✓ For prolonged kneeling on hard surfaces

Overalls and coveralls

- ✓ For messy work or when there are wet conditions, etc.

Manual handling and Lifting

Lifting and carrying is part and parcel of the work we do. However it is due to this repetition and frequency that manual handling must be done correctly, all the time.

Lifting too much can cause immediate injury; lifting badly too often can cause repetitive injuries; and lifting poorly can lead to other more serious incidents, especially at height and in dangerous areas.

1. Assess the load to be lifted and be sure you have enough people available
2. Check that everyone is happy with the load involved
3. Check everyone has the correct PPE
 - ✓ Gloves and safety footwear are often necessary
4. Discuss clearly how the lift will be done and who will give any signals and how
5. Walk the route you will be lifting
 - ✓ Look for potential hazards and form an action plan
6. Test the load before fully committing to it by lifting very slightly
7. Lift with the correct body posture,
 - ✓ For example ensuring you lift from the knees by crouching rather than bending over or stooping.
8. Lift altogether and slowly
9. Clearly warn if you feel you cannot complete the lift
 - ! In that instance lower the item exactly where it was or the closest safe resting place.
Review your plan and remedy the issue.
10. Put down safely and with awareness of how it will sit; being especially careful of fingers, toes and anything else below.
11. Follow the same procedure for any repeated lift of the exact load, or repeat all the above for any new load.

Where possible:

- ! Avoid manual handling where a safer means is available
- ! Avoid *double-handling* to reduce the overall amount of lifting
- ✓ Use dollies, wheels and trolleys in preference to manual carrying

Hand and Power Tool Safety

Simple and common-sense actions when using tools prevent some of the most common and avoidable accidents. These guidelines from the HSE help cut those risks dramatically.

- ✓ Read the manual supplied with the tool. This is especially important if this is your first tool of this type.
 - ✓ When not using a power tool switch it off at the wall to avoid accidental activation.
 - ✓ If using cutting or grinding discs make sure you have the correct disc for the material being cutting to avoid shattering.
 - ✓ Use the appropriate safety gear. [PPE]
 - ✓ Ensure others know what you are doing and what areas to avoid while you are working.
 - ✓ Make sure that your electrical supply is safe. Check the condition of any cables, extension leads, plugs and sockets before commencing work.
 - ✓ Always use proper support when cutting a large work piece. Enlist the help of another to provide safe support if required.
 - ✓ Clamp everything down- if drilling or cutting do not rely purely on hand pressure alone to keep the work piece from moving.
 - ✓ If using a tool that produces sparks or hot material, carry out an onsite assessment before proceeding
 - ✓ Keep your work area generally tidy, excess mess can cause trips and other accidents.
 - ✓ Keep your work area well lit.
 - ✓ Tuck in or change any loose clothing; tie back long hair
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- ! Ensure that electric cables to not cause a trip hazard.
 - ! Ensure that electric cables are well out of the way from the material you intend to cut.
 - ! Never use electric power tools in wet conditions unless specifically designed to be used under these conditions.
 - ! Ensure that a power tool has completely come to a stop before placing the tool down or inspecting its settings. Then unplug it.
 - ! Do not carry a power tool by its power cord.
 - ! Avoid drilling into services by planning your work
 - ! Do not remove or hinder any safety features on power tools.
 - ! If cutting through material ensure that all nails and screws have been removed.
 - ! If you feel fatigued or if your concentration wanders then stop working.
 - ! If a tool appears damaged, behaves strangely or makes an unusual sound when running then do not use that tool.
 - ! Do not attempt to repair power tools yourself unless qualified to do so.
 - ! Do not use inappropriate tools or mismatching accessories.
 - ! Do not try to make do with tools that are not designed to do the job.

Electrical Safety

Electricity is obviously encountered on all jobs but however essential, electricity can be very harmful and even fatal if mishandled or used recklessly. It takes a very small current to kill someone. Sensible precautions, regular checking and knowing where to turn off the power are simple ways to eliminate these risks. Follow these as well:

- You should only use an electrical item that you are qualified or competent to use
- Only use items you feel safe and in control of
- Always make visual checks before using electrical items **before you turn them on at the wall:**
 - ✓ Check where it is plugged in, especially where extensions are used
 - ✓ Check that the item and any flex is undamaged in any way
 - ✓ Check that it is not wet [unless it is designed to be wet, like a pump]
 - ✓ Check that you know how to operate it
 - ✓ Know your Wattage and the power drawn on the whole circuit
- When using the item if you notice anything unusual, switch it off and unplug it. Then tell someone or remove it from the site.
- When working on an item's user accessible parts, for example an accessory on a lantern or a blade on a saw, always **switch off** and **unplug** the item.
 - ! Merely switching off may not be sufficient, especially where the power is controlled elsewhere
- If an item trips out, do not bypass the safety device.
 - ! Repeated trips indicate faults and you should isolate the item or mend the fault.
 - ! However, do not attempt to mend or fix any item that you are not qualified for. All equipment, building services, distribution, dimming, cabling and installations are not to be opened or examined at all unless you have been expressly told to do so.

Look after others around you:

- ! Do not leave cables trailing where people walk, perform or visit.
- ! Switch off and unplug all items that are not in use, even for short periods of time.
- ! Report and make clearly visible any faults on any equipment; don't leave for someone else to have the same issue
- ! Never reset any trip unless you know exactly why it has activated or what it controls. Someone may be working on the other end, or a fault might happen out of sight.
- ! Work within your limits and seek appropriate help whenever you are not sure about anything electrical.

If someone receives a shock:

- ✓ Isolate the source of power/safely remove person from the power
- ✓ Perform CPR if they stop breathing.
- ✓ Immediately contact local First Aid Staff
- ✓ Dial 999 and request an ambulance if someone is unconscious after an electrical shock, or they seem anything but perfectly well and lucid.
- ✓ Keep them under constant observation until they can be seen by a first aider in all instances of shock, however mild.

Rigging

Across all departments in the industry, rigging or suspending things at height is a common requirement. Whenever anything is flown or rigged at height, several considerations should be taken so as to avoid incident.

In most cases any project that requires rigging will prepare RAMS for the specific tasks, however there are some general good practice methods that you should always consider.

- ✓ Always plan the flying or rigging of any item carefully.
- ✓ Make sure the fixing point is correct and capable of the load intended
- ✓ Ensure the lifting and rigging equipment is right for the task, and is it proven to be able to hold the load it states
- ✓ Whenever an item is to be suspended in any way above 1.8m, it should have a secondary safety support, unless there is greater than 50% redundancy in the system
- ✓ Make sure you use any fixings and suspension equipment correctly and as it was designed; do not improvise rigging methods
- ✓ Discuss the raising and lowering of any item with the team tasked with the work before beginning. Ensure you have the right number of people and that they all know what is about to happen and how
- ✓ If using equipment, motors, cranes etc- ensure the operator is competent and/or trained to operate that equipment and that it is thoroughly checked and fit for the job in hand
- ✓ Keep other non-essential people clearly away from the area whilst and raising or lowering happens. You might consider a cordon and/or someone to ensure the area is clear
- ✓ Check all knots and fixings before relying on them
- ✓ Clearly call any lifting or lowering so that those nearby are aware of what is happening
- ✓ Good PPE is essential when lifting. Hard hats are almost always warranted in this kind of task
- ✓ Always monitor suspended items periodically to ensure they are still as safe as when originally rigged

Height

Working at height is often necessary but can be dangerous if done poorly or without thought.

- ! Very rarely is it safe to use any access equipment alone. If you do work alone then ensure someone knows where and what you are doing and that you have a means to raise an alarm.
- ! Always check with any access use that you are using something you have been authorised to use and that you understand how to use it safely and appropriately.
- ! Avoid using any access equipment if there is a better and safer option available, even if it makes for a longer journey.
- ! Only ladders and other proper access equipment can ever be used to get height on a job. Chairs, flight cases and other handy items are not for standing upon.
- ! Do not use anyone else's access equipment unless specifically told to.

When working access equipment consider your own safety

- ✓ Are you confident to use the equipment at that height?
- ✓ Are you properly trained to use that equipment?
- ✓ Do you have support around you in other staff?
- ✓ Have you got the right safety equipment and is it in good condition?
- ✓ Look at what you are working with and what you have to do; plan your work and think what could happen
- ✓ Should you be wearing PPE, especially head worn protection for this task?
- ! Think about the surfaces you may lean or rest on
- ! Think about doors and things that might get opened inadvertently on to your access
- ! Think about what the equipment was designed for and if this is the correct use.

When working access consider those around you

- ✓ Only take up to height what you need for the current task
- ✓ Warn people you are working above
- ✓ Secure doors that might open onto your access equipment, if you can
- ✓ Tie tools off and secure materials
- ✓ If wearing head-worn PPE, make sure it has a chin-strap or similar way to keep it attached
- ! Don't leave things on access equipment that could fall off, especially if it is moved by someone.
- ! Be mindful to not drop items and/or fix items with lanyards
- ! Report all damaged or suspicious access equipment immediately and stop using it straight away.
- ! If assisting, or even footing anyone using access equipment, remain alert and aware of them at all times; do not become distracted or begin other tasks.

Ladders

Ladders are useful but not always essential. So if you don't need to use one, don't. Wherever possible delay the task until someone can assist and foot the ladder if necessary. Always make sure someone in the space knows you are working on a ladder.

All specific access equipment information and guidance will be provided on site

Set-up for leaning ladders

- ✓ Do a daily pre-use check (include ladder feet)
- ✓ Secure it: Ground should be firm and level
- ✓ Maximum safe ground side slope 16° (level the rungs with a suitable device)
- ✓ Maximum safe ground back slope 6°
- ✓ Have a strong upper resting point
- ✓ Floors should be clean, not slippery

Leaning ladders in-use

- ✓ Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes) but amend duration based on personal capabilities. Shorter working is highly recommended
- ✓ Light work (up to 10 kg max, less based on personal capabilities and taking manual handling notes above into account)
- ✓ Ladder angle 75° – 1 in 4 rule (1 unit out for every 4 units up)
- ✓ Always grip the ladder when climbing
- ✓ Do not overreach - make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the stiles and keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task
- ✓ Do not work off the top three rungs – this provides a handhold

Set-up for stepladders

- ✓ Daily pre-use check (feet included)
- ✓ Ensure there is space to fully open
- ✓ Use any locking devices
- ✓ Ground should be firm and level
- ✓ Floors should be clean, not slippery

Stepladders in-use

- ✓ Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes) but amend duration based on personal capabilities. Shorter working is highly recommended.
- ✓ Light work (up to 10 kg max, less based on personal capabilities and taking manual handling notes above into account)
- ✓ Do not work off the top two steps (top three steps for swing-back/double-sided stepladders) unless you have a safe handhold on the steps
- ✓ Avoid side-on working
- ✓ Do not overreach – make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the stiles and keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task
- ✓ Don't leave things on top, they always fall off.