



Policy and Guidelines: Health and Safety

Introductory Guidelines

Mid Powys Youth Theatre (MPYT) is committed to ensuring that any work it undertakes does not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons where reasonably practicable. MPYT aims to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, freelancers, volunteers, participants, audience members, and anyone visiting its premises, venues and events.

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Aims & Objectives

The aims and objectives of the policy are:

- To promote and maintain standards of safety, health and welfare that comply fully with the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, other relevant legislation and codes of practice.
- To protect employees, volunteers, participants and others, including the public from foreseeable hazards.
- To provide all employees and volunteers with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision needed to ensure that safe working practices are adhered to and safety awareness is developed.
- To ensure that employees, volunteers and participants are aware of their responsibilities to take care of themselves and others.
- To encourage consultation and cooperation between employees, volunteers, participants and management on any aspect of health and safety.
- To regulate any risk created by work operations and where necessary consult with outside bodies in order to maintain a safe working environment.

Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

Ultimate responsibility for health and safety within MPYT lies with the Board of Trustees. The Board is responsible for taking all reasonable steps to ensure that adequate resources are made available, thereby maintaining a suitable, safe working environment. The board will review policies to ensure they reflect good industry practice. All Hazards and risks are reviewed and risk assessments refreshed and maintained regularly. The board will regularly discuss the health and safety of MPYT in its meetings to ensure regular reviews undertaken.

Staff

The Artistic Director

The Artistic Director will oversee Health and Safety issues on a day-to-day basis. The Artistic Director working under direction of the Board of Trustees will communicate the Health and Safety Policy to all relevant people:

- Delegate the day to day running of the Health and Safety Programme within the organisation
- Receive and action all reports, verbal and written, regarding health and safety issues
- Complete risk assessments for each programme of work and share this with relevant staff/volunteers.
- Maintain Communication with all individuals associated with MPYT about relevant health and safety information.
- Ensure that effective maintenance systems are in place and that all identified maintenance is implemented.
- Remain current with Health and Safety training.
- Ensure competent persons are appointed or selected for tasks that involve health and safety.

First Aiders

Trained and Designated First Aiders are responsible for:

- Administering First Aid to injured employees, volunteers and participants
- Ensuring all accidents are recorded
- Ensuring that all medical equipment and facilities are adequate

Freelance Employees, Volunteers and Participants

Freelance Employees, Volunteers and Participants should:

- Take reasonable care for Health and Safety for themselves and others that may be affected by their work or actions.
- Be familiar with the Health and Safety Policy and procedures and their own responsibilities.
- Observe Health and Safety guidelines at all times
- Follow guidelines and control measures identified in risk assessments.
- Wear appropriate Personal Protective equipment where required
- Report all accidents, damage and dangerous occurrences to the Artistic Director
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfere or misuse equipment, in the interests of health and safety and welfare.
- Follow any training instruction provided.
- Report all health and safety concerns to the Artistic Director

All freelancers, contractors and other persons will be expected to comply with this health and safety policy and its procedures and will be issued with a copy of the policy where appropriate, to allow for this. Parties will be required to present, where appropriate, COSHH assessments, Risk Assessments and other relevant documentation. All materials and substances, including those produced by both (such as dust and fumes) must be risk assessed.

Policy

Maintaining a safe and healthy working environment

MPYT recognizes that there exist a number of potential hazards in the context and environment of drama workshops and theatre productions. These hazards require control to be exercised in order to maintain the health and safety of employees, volunteers, participants and other visitors. These controls and procedures are detailed as follows:

1. Accident Reporting

A record of all accidents, however minor, should be entered in the accident book by the Artistic Director and kept in an accessible place wherever MPYT is working. All injuries should be reported immediately in order that repeat accidents can be prevented. 'Near Miss' accidents and dangerous occurrences should be reported to the Artistic Director or freelance staff present and on duty and recorded by them, to be investigated by the Artistic Director and Board of Trustees, to determine and eliminate underlying and root causes.

Definition:

Accident: an unplanned, undesired event that results in harm, injury, ill health and/or property damage.

Near Miss: an undesired event that does not result in the above, but has potential to do so.

First Aid Treatment: any situation that involves a First Aider attending and giving treatment, but is not considered an accident (e.g. a person feels unwell or has a pre-existing condition).

2. First Aid and First Aid Points

First aid kits will be kept up to date and all equipment inside will be regularly checked to ensure it is not past its best before date.

All persons will be made aware of First Aid arrangements and trained First Aiders as part of their induction and regularly reminded at the start of each term.

Where tools are used there should, where reasonably practicable, always be a first aider on site to assist with any injuries.

A First Aid box is located within the MPYT office and the Green Room of Centre Celf. In other venues, portable first aid boxes are carried to all external MPYT activity. In external host venues first aid boxes should be identified as part of an induction/venue introduction procedure.

3. Use of Electrical Equipment

All users of theatre lighting, sound equipment and other electrical items as part of MPYT's will be professionally qualified or will have received comprehensive instruction before they operate the equipment.. Users of electrical equipment must also demonstrate their ability to adhere to health and safety procedures before being authorised to operate equipment unsupervised. PAT testing will kept be up to date. Users will conduct a visual safety check of equipment to ensure no cuts to cables or obvious problems with equipment before use. If they notice a problem with equipment they will report this to the Artistic Director for review. Said equipment will be taken out of use/ circulation until thorough checks and mending has taken place.

4. Ladders - working at height

All ladders shall be regularly checked under risk assessment procedures and any defects noted and reported immediately to the Artistic Director. All ladder users will conduct a visual inspection of equipment before using it and will dynamically risk assess the task before completing it, if they notice any defects or dangers they should report this to the Artistic Director and if mitigating factors cannot be put in place then that ladder or ladder work should not be used/ done until they can be. Anyone intending to work at height should ensure that another member of staff is aware that they are doing so before they start work. No one should use ladders if they are in the building alone. Anyone using ladders must have a responsible person in the space with them at all times when working at height. Good working practice for using ladders will be put into place at all times, and the ladder user will maintain 3 points of contact and secure any equipment to themselves while using the ladder. The spotter and people around the ladder should wear hard hats to maintain their safety on the ground.

5. Activities with Young People and Safeguarding

MPYT recognises that the Health and Safety practise of the company is inextricably linked to its Child Protection, Equal Opportunities and other policies related to the care and development of young people.

Workshop leaders are responsible for ensuring that spaces are appropriately organised and that all fire exits are clear of any obstructions during and after workshops.

Whilst MPYT recognises that the nature of performing arts involves physical activity:

- Young people must be given the option to sit out activities where they feel unsafe.

- Leaders should consider the appropriateness of activities to the age, ability and experience of the young people they're working with in relation to health and safety.
- Young people must be properly instructed in the use of technical equipment and supervised where appropriate.
Young people should be regularly reminded of their contribution to the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Disciplinary action will be taken when individuals disregard health and safety rules.
- Leaders must always consider health and safety issues in the design, construction, and use of a set for performance
- Leaders should familiarise themselves with fire procedures and consider all health and safety issues of the particular environment they're working in.

Participants will be made aware of the Designated Safeguarding Leads' and Safeguarding Officers contact details should they require to contact them regarding an issue. All disclosures will be taken seriously and the correct procedure followed, in accordance with MPYT's safeguarding policy.

6. Fire and Emergency Procedures

MPYT will make every effort to reduce both the likelihood - and severity of fire, and reminds staff, volunteers and participants to be vigilant and report anything that could be hazardous.

Employees, volunteers & participants should familiarise themselves with the posted fire precautions and drill procedure.

For regular workshop sessions, fire evacuation procedure should take place on the first session of each new term.

Workshop leaders should ensure anyone who misses the first session, or joins later in the term, is given a safety briefing on joining.

Workshop Leaders and The Artistic Director will take responsibility for knowing each site's fire safety policies and their assembly points and relaying this information to participants, volunteers and other persons.

Where possible MPYT should ensure that the buildings it uses for workshops and performances follow correct procedure for regular checks for fire safety equipment, and should request to see such documentation if required.

MPYT will comply with ensuring that all sets and props are fire retardant and given fire retardant treatment , in accordance with the retardancy product manufacturers instructions.

7. Fire Evacuation Procedure

If you discover a fire

- Raise the alarm
- Do not attack the fire
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If you hear the fire alarm

- Leave the premises by the nearest available exit close all doors behind you
- Call the fire brigade if you are the person previously designated to do so
- Do not return to the building until you are told it is safe to do so by either a firefighter or a member of your youth theatre staff

Fire Evacuation Procedure for performance/public events

Prior to a performance commencing, instructions will be given to all front of house staff, all members of the cast, all stage staff and technical crew and the audience the procedures they should follow in the event of a fire. The artistic director will act as 'Fire Marshall'. and will help enforce the evacuation plan. Designated safe areas are on notice boards in the building. Designated staff and volunteers will check for the full evacuation of the building. A register of MPYT personnel should be kept to ensure all persons have been evacuated effectively.

If the fire alarms sounds during an event/performance

Staff and volunteers should help evacuate all participants, staff and audience members exiting the building via the nearest fire exit. All participants, staff and volunteers should assemble in the designated area. The senior technician on duty should ensure all the technical team are evacuated, and the senior member of stage staff should ensure all cast members are safely evacuated. In the event of an actual fire, the designated 'Fire Marshall' shall follow the fire procedures and call the fire brigade. The 'Fire Marshall' should, if it is safe to do so, facilitate the checking of toilets, kitchen and offices to ensure the building is unoccupied.

Once the all clear has been given, either by a firefighter, or by the 'Fire Marshall' in the case of a false alarm, staff should facilitate an orderly return to the building

8. Environmental Protection

MPYT Strives to be as environmentally friendly as possible and recognises its environmental responsibilities and will encourage all persons to ensure we minimise the impact we have on the environment. We aim to recycle, reuse and reduce where reasonably practicable and will encourage all to do so.

9. Drugs and alcohol

Alcohol and drug use damages health and can lead to serious accidents particularly where working at height or driving a vehicle. MPYT has a zero tolerance policy with regard to alcohol and non-prescription drugs. Non-compliance with these requirements may lead to dismissal or asking participants and volunteers to leave.

10. Display Screen Equipment

MPYT aims to adhere to DSE regulations. Users of DSE will dynamically assess their workstations and Display Screen equipment to ensure it is ergonomically comfortable to use. Where users are spending more than 4 hours per day at Display Screen equipment for MPYT work they should conduct a thorough written self assessment to ensure their comfort at their work station. Where reasonably practicable the Board will supply items to ensure users who are spending more than 4 hours at a time at DSE are comfortable.

DSE users should take regular breaks from their workstations and screens to ensure their eyes and bodies do not become tired and uncomfortable. Users should report any problems with MPYT DSE equipment or workstations to the Artistic Director for review with the Board of Trustees.

11. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

MPYT will ensure that all substances with potential to cause injury to health for use in workshops and productions will have up-to-date information (COSHH or Data Safety Sheets) available and that information will be communicated to those using the products, and those who may be affected by use of the substance.

The Artistic Director, Freelancers and Contractors will ensure that all processes under their control have been adequately assessed and control measures identified and properly implemented, maintained and periodically reviewed. Where reasonably practicable, COSHH substances should be locked away and stored with their Data Safety Sheets when not in use.

12. Manual Handling

MPYT recognises the importance of developing and maintaining arrangements for preventing, as far as reasonably practicable, injury from handling heavy or awkward loads. Persons lifting heavy loads should be competent, have had instruction from those trained in manual handling. Persons conducting manual handling should avoid hazardous handling of heavy items where possible. If manual handling is still necessary persons should try to reduce risk of injury as far as is reasonably practicable. Manual Handling should be risk assessed and those lifting should follow TILE:

Task: Plan what you are lifting and the journey to where it needs to go. Can the item be pushed, pulled or wheeled instead?

Individual: Can the individual manage handling the load. If the load is more than a one man lift then assistance should be sought.

Load: How big is the item, what is the weight of it? Does it have handles or hand holds? Consider all of these things and make a plan. Where necessary do a test lift to ensure that you are able to carry the item, with or without assistance.

Environment: Check your surroundings for danger, obstruction and most direct path before lifting. Consider low lighting levels and other risk factors. Ensure other people are aware you are about to heavy lift and ask them to make way for you.

13. Inspection, Monitoring and Reviews

The Artistic Director in liaison with the Board of Trustees will carry out regular inspections to assist with the measurement of health and safety to assist with the commitment to maintain high standards within the company. This will include: regular equipment and premises inspections, Health and Safety talks with relevant persons, periodical policy reviews.

14. Lone Working

The HSE guidance defines Lone Workers as those who “work by themselves without close or direct supervision”. This may include any of the following:

- Working in areas where only one person is present
- People who work outside normal hours.
- Working in isolated areas

MPYT recognises its responsibility to ensure that all employees and participants are not put at risk of injury while working or participating in MPYT workshops and productions. Lone working situations should be identified, risk assessments carried out, and where possibly lone workers should inform a colleague of lone working and have access to a phone with the means of contacting colleagues, management or emergency services.

15. Noise

MPYT recognises its responsibility and duty to reduce the risk of hearing loss and damage to the lowest level reasonably practicable. Where possible the Artistic Director, practitioners, and workshop leaders will work to limit the exposure to loud

noise, ensure regular breaks are taken where loud noise is being used and will provide hearing protection to those who request it. Where necessary recording of decibels and noise exposure time will be made and kept on file to ensure best practice is being adhered to.

An example of best practice as follows:

Average Noise Level	Time taken to receive a dose equivalent to upper exposure action level (85db)
85db	8 hours
95db	45 minutes
100db	15 minutes
105db	5 minutes
110db	under 2 minutes
115db	under 30 seconds

16. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be conducted for work and activities including, but not limited to:

- use of COSHH
- Fire Safety
- Work at Height
- Manual Handling
- Noise use
- DSE where appropriate
- Lone Working

Risk assessments will be used to review work processes and to induct and train new employees and workshop leaders. A copy of risk assessments will be kept on file in either electronic or paper format, or both. Risk assessments will be made available to all persons to be able to reference and consult.

17. Training

All training needs will be identified by the Artistic Director and Board of Trustees. MPYT will work with partners in the voluntary sector and umbrella organisations (eg: PAVO) to ensure necessary training is provided in areas of health and safety awareness, first aid, the use of protective equipment, safety devices, working-at-height and manual handling.

Safety equipment and PPE will be provided where necessary. Training should aim to minimise workplace incidents, accidents, and damage to property. It should aim to ensure a safe and healthy environment.

All persons should be familiar with emergency procedures and relevant health and safety information.

18. Violence and Aggression.

MPYT does not tolerate any acts of violence, aggression or unacceptable behaviour and will ensure that any allegations are investigated by the Artistic Director and Board of Trustees, and appropriate action will be taken to deal with it.

Unacceptable behaviour could include verbal abuse, threatening posture or physical violence.

19. Welfare

MPYT will aim to achieve and maintain high welfare standard to help reduce the risk of ill health, promote good health and welfare practices.

Welfare facilities will be provided, wherever reasonably practicable, at all premises occupied by the company. Breaks will be offered and encouraged.

'Welfare facilities' are those that are necessary for well-being, such as washing, toilet, rest and changing facilities as well as somewhere clean to eat and drink during breaks.

20. Work Equipment

'Work equipment' covers almost any equipment, regardless of whether it is owned, leased, or provided by the employee for use at/ in a work setting.

Equipment includes:

- 'Small hand tools', such as hammers, knives, handsaws, etc.
- Single machines, such as drilling machines, circular saws, photocopiers, etc.
- Lifting equipment, such as hoists, lift trucks, elevating work platforms, lifting slings, etc.
- Other equipment, such as ladders.
- Scaffolding or similar access equipment.

The use of work equipment means any activity involving work equipment including starting, stopping, programming, setting, transporting, repairing, modifying, maintaining, servicing or cleaning. All power tools will be checked regularly to ensure they are in good working order, guards are in place, and not damaged. All equipment will have a risk assessment that shows the controls for its use, and many will have safe working procedures for them.

Below are the hazards and controls that would be considered for these risk assessments.

- Suitable - for use and the purpose and conditions in which it is used.
- Maintained - in a safe condition for use so that people's health and safety is not at risk.
- Inspected - to ensure it is and continues to be safe for use.

MPYT will ensure that all authorised persons who use work equipment have available to them adequate health and safety information and where appropriate written information pertaining to the use of the work equipment. And ensure that the work equipment is maintained in an efficient state, in working order, and in good repair and that all protective guards are fit for purpose, securely fitted, and are regularly inspected. All hired or leased equipment will be checked to ensure that it meets satisfactory safety standards. The person hiring in equipment will ensure that Certificates of Thorough Inspection, Portable Appliance Testing, Calibration, and compliance to LOLER and PUWER regulations are met as necessary, prior to release. Defective, or non-compliant items, will not be used.

General

Good Housekeeping

One of the major contributions towards the maintenance of poor health and safety standards is bad housekeeping. Everyone has responsibility for ensuring that housekeeping is up to standard in the areas in which they work. All working areas should be kept tidy and free from clutter. Any potential health and safety issues should be reported immediately to the Artistic Director or member of MPYT staff.

All employees, volunteers, participants and work placements will be given a copy of the Health and Safety Policy. They will be guided through health and safety awareness and procedures at their induction. Participants will be informed of health and safety issues relevant to them at group/project induction sessions. Employees, volunteers and participants are asked to consult the Artistic Director if they are in doubt concerning the implementation of safe working procedures or if they consider arrangements to be unsafe. employees, volunteers and participants must abide by the rules and regulations in force for the maintenance of a healthy and safe environment as detailed above. When health and safety is disregarded it will be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees where disciplinary action may be recommended.

Monitoring

The Artistic Director will ensure that working conditions are regularly monitored, ensuring that safe working practices are being followed. The Artistic Director is also responsible for investigating work-related accidents and is responsible for acting on findings from any such investigations to prevent a recurrence.

This policy will be reviewed by the board at least once bi-annually.

Version No.	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Board	March 2024	Reviewed and approved	Annually
2.0	Board	March 2025	Reviewed, enhanced and approved	Annually