

# **Scenic Studio Safety Guidelines For Scenic, Paint, Props, Lighting and Sound Areas**

The labor (you) in the production area is provided by a mix of students fulfilling requirements for course study in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance and student employees. We usually provide support for five or more productions a year. During your time here we hope to introduce you to the tools, procedures and techniques used in the production area. These guidelines are specific to the scenic studio. Although you may not specifically work in the scenic studio these guidelines are relative to all the areas of production.

In this reading you will find some of the important safety guidelines to be followed that help ensure a continued safe working environment for all.

Theater work, by nature, is physical, and the use of power equipment is more dangerous than general classroom work. However, if you use common sense and follow these safety procedures, working in the scenic studio and on stage will be fun and safe for you and your classmates/fellow workers.

Please feel free to ask questions at any time. We are here to teach you as well as support Theatre Arts Productions.

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# Scenic Studio Safety

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## Proper Attire

Come dressed to work

1. No loose, long or baggy clothing. It can get caught in moving parts of machinery or snagged on splinters etc.
2. Sturdy, leather closed-toe shoes with good, non-slippery soles; canvas shoes (Tom's, Vans, Keds, Boat Shoes, etc.) sandals, flip-flops or dress shoes will not protect your foot from being crushed and are not allowed in the scenic studio.
3. Long pants; no skirts, dresses or shorts. Jeans or work pants are designed to protect your legs. Sweat pants, scrubs, athletic pants and leggings do not qualify as long pants for the scenic studio.
4. No long or large jewelry. It can get caught on things and at best may get ruined. No rings.
5. Wear clothes that will protect you from dust, etc.
6. You will get dirty and stained. Wear work clothes.
7. Long hair must be put up or tied back and put down your shirt.
8. Long sleeves are required for working with metal. The scenic studio will supply leather welding garments to wear over your long sleeves to ensure you do not get burned when welding. These welding garments are non-negotiable and must be worn when performing welding operations.

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## Safety Rules

General Safety Rules:

The most obvious safety rule is to be careful. Pay attention to what you are doing and do not rush. Repetitious jobs are more likely to cause inattention. Try to avoid monotony and boredom.

Being careful means being careful all the time. It only takes a moment of inattentiveness to get hurt. This is entirely under your own control. Being careful is your best defense against injury.

Because your attention is needed at all times the use of cell phone and personal listening devices (I-pods, mp3 players, etc...) is prohibited in the scenic studio.

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Avoid danger by using common sense. Some people accept a greater risk of danger in order to work faster, more conveniently, etc. Do not hurry and cut corners on safety. Take the time to do it right and safely the first time instead of taking the time to do it again.

No food or drinks are allowed in the Scenic Studio.

#### Power Tools:

Each power tool has its own set of safety rules. They are safe when properly used, but they can cause serious accidents when misused. You will be trained on each power tool before you use it. In general, power tools have rotating parts that can wind you in if they catch on clothes, hair, or jewelry. Power tools can throw debris at you, so eye or face protection is necessary. Ear protection from loud noise is also often necessary. Make sure the work surface and floors are clear, and get EVERYTHING ready before you hit the ON switch. If you are asked to use a tool that you have not been trained on or are uncomfortable with tell a supervisor and you will be trained or reassigned. If you are terrified of a tool we cannot force you to use it but we may be able to ease your fears.

Never walk behind someone who is using the table saw; if the saw kicks back you can be seriously injured. When you are using the table saw you are also responsible for knowing where others are around you. Do not start a cut on the table saw if someone is behind you.

#### **Students may NEVER operate unguarded power tools.**

Sometimes there is a strong temptation to remove safety guards when they seem to complicate the work. If you think you need to do something without the standard blade guard, stop and ask a supervisor. In cases where a guard must be removed, a jig will be put in its place to allow for safe operation of the saw and still provide adequate protection to the user.

Pneumatic tools are power tools also. You must learn each one before use. They also have safety guards. Do not ever circumvent the safety mechanism or use the tools in a manner for which they were not made. (i.e., it is not a target gun!)

# Safety Rules

## General Safety Rules continued:

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### Hands:

Hands are most susceptible to injury. Watch the cutting edge of any tool, especially the power tools, and be aware of where your hands are in relation to the cutting edge. Pay attention and do not get distracted. There is a dangerous temptation to hold parts together with one hand while shooting pneumatic tools with the other. Sometimes staples and nails turn inside the wood and poke out where you do not expect them. A good rule is if a staple is 1-1/2" long keep your hands at least 3" away. The number of injurious cuts from matte knives is incredible; be careful and make sure the knife blade is retracted after use. Similarly, chisels possess a very sharp cutting edge. In both instances keep both hands behind the direction in which the sharp edge is traveling; never pull a blade toward your body.

### Ladders:

**You may not use our scaffolding until you have been trained by a supervisor in its proper use and have signed the training book.** Working on ladders and scaffolds presents a potential for a fall. Do not stand on the top or any steps the safety labels indicate. Before you get on a ladder, make sure that all four legs are firmly on the floor. Remember not to leave tools and hardware or anything heavy on top of a ladder. This will lead to the next person who moves the ladder getting hit in the head by a falling object. When you are working above on a ladder you must take extra precautions. You need to be aware of overhead scenery and lighting instruments and electrical cables. Do not have loose items in pockets that may fall and whenever possible, tools should be attached to you. If you can't attach tools, extra precautions must be made to keep people below aware of you and your work. **Anyone person working on or supporting ladders and the scaffolding must wear a provided hard hat.**

### Personnel Lift (Genie):

**You may not use our personnel lift until you have been trained by a supervisor in its proper use and have signed the training book.** The lift must have all outriggers installed and the lift leveled before use. Do not climb on basket rails, if you cannot reach something from the platform reposition the lift or find someone with a longer reach. Under no circumstance should the lift be moved while someone is raised in the basket, doing so can result in failure of the course. **Anyone person working on or supporting ladders and the scaffolding must wear a provided hard hat.**

# Safety Rules

General Safety Rules continued:

## Broken Items:

If you break something tell someone in charge immediately. If you leave a broken tool, ladder, etc. in use it could injure the next person that uses it.

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## House Keeping

Clean up your work area at the end of your work shift.

- Do not leave tools and supplies out unnecessarily.
- If you do not know where something goes, ask.
- Do not let your work area become too cluttered; this can lead to trip hazards. Clean as you go.
- Remove or flatten nails, screws and staples in used lumber.
- Do not leave long sticks in trash barrels. They can poke others in the eyes.
- Do not block fire extinguishers, doors, or marked tool-safety areas.
- Keep pathways to fire exits and for crossing the scenic studio clear. It can be dangerous having to carry large items while walking over lumber and trash.

## **Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)**

The scenic studio will provide you with some safety equipment. There are some safety glasses available for use although they will not be as comfortable and stylish as the ones you would purchase yourself. If you are a design student you are strongly encouraged to purchase your own. The scenic studio will also provide dust masks and hearing protection. If you have any questions or doubts, ask the Technical Director or Scenic Studio Supervisor. Your safety is our concern. We welcome questions if you have any. We will attempt to explain things to you. Feel free to request safety equipment. We are human; we might forget and it is always better to be safe than sorry. Our goal is to make you safe and comfortable when performing duties in the scenic studio. If you see a safety hazard report it immediately.

- Dust Masks:

Particulate matter dust masks are available for use. These are for protection from saw dust. They will do nothing to protect from fumes and vapors and other assorted toxins. Read the box for instructions on how and when to use these.

Note: these are not for lung protection from vapors and fumes.

- Ears:

We have earmuffs and earplugs for high noise jobs. Use them often; your ears will appreciate it.

- Eyes:

Eye protection is required at all times in the scenic studio. You may not be using a power tool or a chemical but someone else might be. You can be struck by flying debris and splashing solvents or paints.

## **Handling scenery, Lifting and Carrying heavy objects:**

Lift correctly: bend your knees and lift with your legs. Do not bend from your lower back to pick up anything heavier than a phone book. Communicate with others involved in lifting or carrying with you.

Look where you are going, especially through doors and around corners.

Be aware of the back end and what's behind you.

When carrying tall objects like a flat or ladder, lift with one hand high and one hand low. That is, lift with one hand which carries the weight and the other hand extended to help balance the object. Match hands with lifting partner and keep the object vertical.

It is all too common to set heavy platforms or walls down on one's toes. Awareness and communication with fellow co-workers are the only prevention.

If you are losing your grip or if something is too heavy, tell the person with whom you are carrying the object and take a rest and get a better grip; this is much better than dropping the object and having someone suddenly bear the entire weight at once. You will never be asked to carry something too heavy. If something is too heavy for you ask for help.

When you lean scenery or materials against a wall, be sure that the object is a sufficient distance between its base and the wall, so it will not fall back by itself.

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## **Health Hazards:**

Because this is mainly a wood working shop, the use of dust masks may help prevent some dust particles from getting in your respiratory system.

Paint solvents, adhesives and welding produce toxic fumes. Do not spray paint in the scenic studio. Go outside and use brown paper to prevent over spray from getting on the loading dock. Painted concrete is slippery when wet.

The bright blue light (the welding arc) produced by arc-welding is an eye hazard and is brighter than the sun. Do not look at the welding arc or serious and permanent eye damage may result. The light can also cause sun burns on exposed skin in close proximity to the arc, even through clothes; make sure to wear appropriate PPE.

## Chemicals:

Any chemical purchased for use in the Scenic Studio must first be brought to the scenic studio supervisor to be added into the Chemical Inventory Database. This includes all latex paint, spray paint and all adhesives.

Any empty container containing a 'UTA Chemical Inventory' barcode sticker must be placed into the bin labeled "Empty Chemical Containers" located in the Paint area so that it may be removed from inventory. This includes all types of paint, adhesives and other harmful compounds.

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## Fire Safety:

Most of the materials in the scenic studio are combustible.

Paint solvents etc., are highly flammable and are kept in a special cabinet.

Welding and grinding produce sparks and extreme heat. Paper, sawdust, oil, and all flammable items must be moved away from the work area during these procedures.

Do not leave oily rags in a pile, they may spontaneously ignite. Dispose of them in the marked red Hazardous Waste container.

Know where the Fire Exits are in the scenic studio.

Know where the fire extinguishers are and what types we have in the scenic studio.

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# Working in the Theatre space

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## Working with the fly system and ropes

**You may not use our fly system until you have been trained by a supervisor in its proper use and have signed the training book. Even if you have used a fly system elsewhere you still need to be trained.** Training includes knowing the parts and what they do as well as knowing how to tie off the purchase line with either a Sunday or Prusik knot. When you are the person responsible for raising and lowering scenery or equipment it is your responsibility to make sure that people are out of the way, that all hazards are cleared and that everyone on stage knows that you are about to move something in or out (down or up) on stage. This should be a loud verbal warning so all can hear you over all other work going on at the time. If you are in the way of the batten move out of the way

and respond with a CLEAR. Only respond if you are onstage and can see the entire path of the batten.

Do not use any rope or hardware or cable that is worn or in questionable condition to fly anything that is heavy or could lead to a hazardous situation. Remember that the counterweight system's rope locks are only meant to hold about two bricks out of weight. Anything more than that and the rope will slide through the lock and you'll have a runaway. Ask for help before you need it. It is better to have extra help than not enough. We do not want to endanger the lives of anyone. If you have a question always ask someone who knows.

If the counterweight system is out of balance a "runaway" can occur. This is a very dangerous situation. If you are on the rail call "**RUNAWAY**" not "heads" and move as far away from the runaway lineset as possible. If you are on the stage get to the scenic studio or house as quickly as possible.

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### Working Above

Whenever you are to work on any overhead platform (ladder, catwalk, scaffold, grid, etc.), all tools must be secured so they can't fall. Loose change and items in your pockets can cause serious injury if dropped from thirty feet. They should be removed before you ascend. You are responsible to make sure the people working beneath you know you are above them, and whenever possible they should be cleared from the area. If an accident occurs and you do drop something, you should yell "**HEADS**" before the object reaches the ground.

Do this clear and loud so people know where the warning is coming from and can scatter out of the way of danger. If you are below and hear "heads" yelled, cover your head and get out of the way quickly. Do not look up to see what is falling. A small object (such as a penny) dropped from the grid may not cause serious injury to the top of your head if it hits you, but it can put out an eye if you are looking up.

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### Set Strike

This is where a lot of dangerous work goes on in a short amount of time. Make sure you are aware of all the things going on around you. The fast work pace and the extra enthusiasm you will find does not change the need to pay attention and follow all the rules for working in the theater and with power tools. Pay extra attention to nails in wood and debris on the floor.

## In case of an accident

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- Immediately report all accidents to the nearest faculty/staff supervisor.
  
- In an emergency call University Police at 23003 (campus phone) or 817-272-3003 (non-campus phone); they will contact 911. University Police will be better able to direct emergency responders to your location. If you call 911 directly you will need to give the street address (Fine Arts Building 502 s. Cooper)
  
- Things you can do to be of help if an accident or emergency occurs:
  - \* Know where fire extinguishers are.
  - \* Know where the first aid kit is.
  - \* Keep calm.
  - \* Keep others away from the accident site.

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If you have any questions about the rules or would like a hard copy please contact the scenic studio supervisor or technical director.

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