Guide to implementing the Code of Conduct (Get-ins, Fit-ups & Get-outs)

UK Theatre & BECTU

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Preface

The original Code of Conduct for Get-ins, Fit-ups and Get-outs was created as a result of a serious accident during the unloading of stage flooring on the back of a wagon for a theatrical production. The accident was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and subsequently discovered a number of safety concerns relating to poor working practices, competence of employees and a tradition of excessive working hours within the theatre industry. The HSE advised the whole industry that a culture change was required for get-ins, fit-ups and get-outs with the change being led by the industry rather than the regulator to prevent further accidents occurring.

Following Union and Employer consultation the new code was jointly agreed by UK Theatre (UKT) & BECTU becoming part of the union agreement. It represents a benchmark of best practice within technical theatre to protect the safety and well-being of employees for both the resident and production management. It sets minimum standards to ensure safety during production activities which should be adopted wherever reasonably practicable.

Supportive Statement

The Health and Safety Executive provided support to UK Theatre and BECTU in producing this guidance, which is aimed at improvements within the Theatre industry. This guidance may go further than the minimum you need to do to comply with the law with regard to health and safety.

Objectives of the Code of Conduct:

- Improving management of work activities from start to finish
- Employ the right people for the work activities involved
- Having the correct information and assessments of the work activities
- Communicate & engage with everyone about risks and how they are being controlled
- Co-operation & co-ordination throughout the work activities
- Reducing accidents & injuries and down time to investigate incidents
- Improve the overall industry working practices & wellbeing

The Code of Conduct is intended to promote and encourage safe working by all those involved, which will typically include:

a) the individual or organisation procuring use of the theatre and engaging the performing company for the purposes of presenting the production (**the "Producer"**);

b) the theatre or venue in which the production will be presented (**the "Theatre or Receiving House"**). This would include Resident in-house Production venues;

c) the Producer's appointed representative responsible for the overall management and coordination of the get-in, get-out and fit-up arrangements (**the "Production Manager"**) – *typically a Production Manager, Production Carpenter, Company Manager etc.;*

d) the manager(s) with responsibility for the management of the technical staff and infrastructure employed or provided by the Theatre and their deputies (**the "Theatre Technical Managers"**) – *typically Master Carpenters, Chief Electricians, Technical Managers etc.;*

e) the manager(s) with general responsibility for the management of the Receiving House premises (**the "Theatre Manager"**) – *typically Theatre Managers, General Managers, Venue Managers, Operations Managers etc.*

The Code of Conduct contributes considerably to compliance with the general requirements of CDM Regulations 2015 which additionally require a Construction Phase Plan, Method Statements and site Inductions. This guidance is also written with consideration of current legislation requirements listed at Appendix 1.

Part 1 - Management Procedures

1.1 Both the Producer and Theatre will take all reasonable steps to develop and implement suitable and sufficient safety management arrangements. The Producer and Production Manager will comply with the Theatre's Health & Safety Policy.

1.2 Generally, productions will be managed and supervised by the Production Manager or their representative and this will include managing sub-contractors working on behalf of the production. In addition, the Production and Theatre Technical Manager's will:

- Demonstrate safety commitment while performing their jobs including wearing protective equipment as required
- Follow all applicable workplace guidelines, participate in inductions and discuss any production concerns
- Report, investigate and record accidents, near-misses & production related issues
- Set an example of good behaviour, including:

- Treating everyone involved with respect
- Maintaining good working relationships and coordinating work with others
- Offering assistance to colleagues under significant pressure or stress
- Demonstrating a disciplined approach to work
- Managing time and workloads effectively to maintain high standards under pressure

1.3 The Production Manager will be responsible for completing Risk Assessments and Method Statements and will:

- Undertake (or appoint an appropriately competent person to undertake) suitable and sufficient Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) for all activities to be undertaken as part of the get-in, get-out or fit-up, and ensure that the significant findings are suitably recorded and disseminated;
- Ensure all works are completed in line with the RAMS, highlight when deviations occur and either adjust the RAMS or adjust the work method as appropriate;
- Obtain and provide any required plant, equipment and installation certificates

1.4 The Production Manager will ensure that the Theatre is appropriately consulted on their plans. This will ensure that any potential health & safety issues relating to the integration of the production with the Theatre are identified and suitably mitigated. Where appropriate this will include arranging a site visit to confirm or develop the plans. Production works must be planned to ensure that sufficient time, resources and information are provided to include:

- The full production plan (including RAMS) which must be discussed in advance of arriving at the Theatre. Depending on the size of the production this may contain venue drawings, site plans, detailed schedule, rigging plans, truck packs, flying plots, stage layouts etc. All relevant documentation should be sent to the receiving venue as soon as practicable.
- Theatre Technical Manager should provide venue specific health & safety and statutory information to the Production Manager.
- The Production Manager will provide suitable and sufficient loading information and accompanying RAMS for each vehicle prior to its arrival at the venue. The Theatre Technical Managers will review the information and RAMS before any unloading or loading in order to verify that the proposed method is appropriate to the Theatre's loading access and that any issues or constraints have been appropriately addressed.
- Prior to any work being carried out relevant working agreements, contractor guidance and pertinent safety & technical information must be shared and consolidated by Production & Theatre Technical Management. This should also be provided to key members of the touring and in-house technical teams working on the production.

Part 2 - Competence

2.1 The Producer will make suitable and sufficient resources available such as to enable the required tasks to be safely completed within the time available.

2.2 The Production Manager and Theatre Technical Managers will ensure that any individuals performing tasks under their instruction are suitably competent to do so without putting themselves or others at risk, and that a sufficient number of suitably competent and trained staff are provided to undertake the required tasks safely, in accordance with the relevant RAMS.

2.3 Work activities can be delegated to other employees but care should be taken to ensure the person is equipped with the suitable level of competency to discharge those tasks appropriately.

2.4 The Production Manager will ensure that staff are appropriately scheduled and called, ensuring that wherever practicable working hours are limited to a maximum of 16 in any 24-hour period, in which an 11-hour break should be given in accordance with the Working Time Regulations. All parties should attempt to reduce the 16 hours maximum working day whenever practicable. This will be monitored and reviewed by the industry Theatre Safety Committee (TSC). Whilst it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to exceed these hours in order to complete the task at hand, staff should not be scheduled to do so at point of planning. Compensatory rest should not be paid-out to full-time members of staff in lieu of an actual break.

2.5 No member of staff reporting to work is permitted to consume or be under the influence of alcohol or take, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs. Staff must remain alcohol and drug-free during the working period (including any breaks).

2.6 Staff taking prescription drugs that may impair their performance must notify their manager immediately in order that any implications may be addressed as part of the risk assessment process. Any information shared must be dealt with fairly and in strictest confidence. Any records either hard copy or electronically need to be carefully managed.

2.7 Any member of staff involved in the get-in, fit-up and get-out considered to be unfit for work or identified as incapable to perform their duties safely by either manager, will cease working irrespective of their employer.

2.8 The Theatre's Health & Safety standards & control measures will be adopted by all Production staff unless their own standards are higher in which case both companies will adhere to their own standards. It should be remembered that the use of PPE is the last resort and will be provided in line with the RAMS.

2.9 A contact number for Theatre Senior Management must be accessible at the Theatre Stage Door in order to provide assistance with any H&S concerns or incidents & HR related situations/complaints. The Senior Manager will treat the matter seriously, sensitively and in the strictish confidence. Any necessary response or investigation should be completed in a timely fashion. Effective and honest communication is essential if concerns about breaches or failures are to be dealt with effectively.

2.10 Bullying, harassment and discrimination have no place in our industry so everyone involved in the production should adopt the general values of the 10 Principles for Safe and Inclusive Workspaces 10 Principles - UK Theatre. These principles aim to eradicate abuse and all forms of discrimination. They can also help employers meet legal requirements and offer a shared vision to promote and maintain a safer, more inclusive workplace environment for everyone.

Part 3 - Site engagement

3.1 Everyone involved must receive a venue specific site induction before commencement of any work activities. Inductions should also be provided to those who do not regularly work on the site but who visit it on an occasional basis. The following should be covered:

- Introduction to key staff
- Objectives of the day

- On-site behaviour for safe & inclusive working
- Arrangements for consulting the workforce on health & safety matters
- Individual worker responsibilities
- Outline of the production
- Management responsibilities of the project
- Site rules (PPE, working hours etc.)
- Welfare facilities including kitchens, toilets and rest areas
- Physical & Mental Health First Aid arrangements and their contact details
- Emergency and evacuation procedures
- Accident and incident reporting arrangements

3.2 In addition, a task specific toolbox talk - in effect training specific to a task required by the production - shall be undertaken as required to manage specific Production risks. The toolbox talk is an informal, short meeting (typically 5 to 15 minutes, depending on the complexity of the task) that should focus on a single specific topic and explore the risks of specific health & safety issues on site and how they may be dealt with.

3.3 A record should be kept of inductions and toolbox talks.

3.4 All Accidents, Near Misses or unresolved compliance issues should be recorded, investigated and kept by both parties.

3.5 The Theatre Manager will ensure that there is a robust process for the reporting of all accidents, near misses and other safety incidents or compliance issues which may occur. The Producer may either run their own process or elect to adopt the established Theatre process, but in either case arrangements will be made for the appropriate sharing of information between the parties, with records being stored centrally by the Theatre Manager or their designated representative.

3.6 Sharing incident knowledge throughout the industry will help promote learning and development opportunities with a view to proactively changing workplace practice where appropriate. Incidents, non-compliance and subsequent investigation reports should be completed for every production when relevant events occur.

3.7 Non-conformance reports will indicate that problems have occurred with the terms of the Code of Conduct and must be addressed with corrective actions. If the deficiency is not addressed with appropriate action, it could seriously impair the effectiveness of the agreement. Examples could include:

- Lack of risk assessments from either party
- Inadequate toolbox talks or venue induction
- Excessive working hours over the 16 hours maximum
- Non-adherence to PPE requirements
- Loads not weight marked
- Incorrect loading or stacking of loads
- Accidents or near misses

3.8 Copies of the reports should be retained by both the Resident and Production Managers' representatives. In the case of a serious incident, or aspect of the work that may impact on next receiving venue's personnel, then information should be communicated via email or call to the next venue.

3.9 Incident & Non-Compliance Reports (Appendix 2) can also be shared via code@soltukt.co.uk this will allow identified risks to be discussed with all relevant parties.

Information will be shared to other venues on the tour or with linked productions if relevant. This is a vital tool in the prevention of future incidents and protects the health & safety of all parties involved. All data received will be handled sensitively, in line with company policies, GDPR and anonymised as necessary.

3.10 A database will be generated featuring all reports of incidents and non-compliance in order to analyse Venue or Production issues and recurring themes. Major incidents will be reported to the Union & Member organisation led Theatre Safety Committee (TSC) for discussion and the dissemination of information on health & safety matters of relevance to the wider theatre industry. In addition, developing industry trends will be elevated to the Joint Advisory Committee for Entertainment (JACE).

Part 4 - Safe systems of work

4.1 The Production Manager will ensure that appropriate arrangements for loading in and out are in place and appoint a suitably competent person to supervise the loading and unloading of vehicles.

4.2 The Theatre Technical Managers & Production Managers will jointly ensure that there is adequate access for vehicles, and that there is sufficient lighting for safe loading and unloading.

4.3 The appropriate supply of ramps and vehicle suitability for transporting the production loads must be discussed with the Haulage Company and Production Manager prior to arriving at venue. Management will jointly ensure that ramps and vehicle tail lifts are working and operated correctly before commencing work. Ramps must be designed to ensure safe loading and unloading, with non-slip flooring. Special attention must be given when moving lighting racks, flight cases and other wheeled items such as wardrobe cases up any ramps. The ramp must be wide enough to prevent wheels getting stuck and care taken when crashing racks onto the edges at the top of the ramp.

4.4 Production Manager will ensure scenic workshops weigh and mark up scenery prior to leaving the workshops and suitable manual aids should be provided in order to load/unload scenery safely from vehicles into the venue. Each item which needs more than one person to lift it will be clearly marked either with the approximate weight, or the optimum number of people who are needed to lift it or, preferably, both. All hazardous activities will be clearly set out in the loading instructions and RAMS. At all times alternative methods to move objects should be considered before resorting to physical manual handling techniques.

4.5 The Theatre Technical Manager will ensure that any venue lifting machinery is working, marked with appropriate SWL and operated correctly. Operators must be competent, and where appropriate, have the necessary valid licences. The Production Company should follow the same requirements for any brought in services or equipment.

4.6 Production Companies should discontinue the use of Tri-Wall boxes for the transportation of stage props/costumes/cloths etc. where practicable. Wheeled flight cases should be used as a substitute, but safe working loads not exceeded. Tri-Wall boxes that *are* used must be in good condition, rope handles must be in working order and the maximum weight must not exceed 50kg.

4.7 Staff not directly involved in the loading/unloading who pack items for transit will be given suitable training to ensure that boxes, skips and flight cases are not over-filled, top heavy or unbalanced. Weight markings must be clearly shown on the visible face (exterior) of the

box (when loaded). Triple stacking of flight cases or other heavy items should always be avoided when realistically practicable.

4.8 Other staff not directly employed in the fit up or get out who may still require access to controlled areas of the stage, pit/performance area or auditorium to retrieve personal items or equipment will only be permitted when safe to do so and only after agreement between the individual, Company Manager and relevant Production/Technical Management.

4.9 Flooring must always be secure and stable and safe working practices identified in the RAMS. Extra care is required to reduce the risk from flooring falling during the loading and unloading. Where there are several pieces of a similar shape and size, they should be toured in purpose built wheeled racking. As a minimum such sheets should be toed out and tied off every 10 sheets in the wagon. If it is not practicable to toe out, they should be tied off every 5 sheets.

4.10 Working at height legislation applies when working near the front of the stage and when inside a wagon, loading or unloading. As a minimum, a highly visible marker, such as a yellow chain, will be hung across the stage front. In addition, inside wagons/vans suitable working light must be provided to ensure the edge of the wagon is highlighted and clearly visible. Management are jointly responsible for general cable management across the stage area and other work areas while the set is being carried in and built.

4.11 Where loading/unloading occurs on public highways or pavements the Theatre Technical Manager & Production Managers will ensure all reasonably practicable methods are in place to minimise disruption to the public, protect their right of way, and ensure their safety. The RAMs should indicate the required safety control measures including:

- Obtaining appropriate Local Authority licences and permits prior to work commencing.
- Suspending parking bays near dock doors/loading bays, where practicable, to reduce risks from crossing traffic routes during unloading.
- Parking arranged to give close access for trailers as close as possible to load in door to minimise the movement of set/equipment.
- Training suitable members of staff allocated to marshalling duties in the unloading/loading operations or throughout the entire procedure, as identified in the RAMS. Marshalling staff must not be engaged on any other task for the duration of the works, and to be given suitable instruction as to their role and responsibilities.
- Wearing identifiable and protective clothing, preferably with supervisory roles clearly indicated.
- Employing traffic cones, appropriate placed signage, lights and allocation of additional staff, all wearing appropriate PPE, to direct traffic/pedestrians if necessary.
- Keeping Pedestrians separated from vehicle and load in activities by a fixed barrier or clearly marked safe pedestrian route. Extra precautions may need to be taken if public congregate around Stage Door/Foyer areas.
- Storing and stacking scenery/equipment in a safe place with items secured in position. Large items should be kept horizontally where practicable.

4.12 The general principles highlighted apply for all productions from large scale productions using HGV's to one nighters where transit vans or equivalent are utilised.

Non-exhaustive list of relevant regulations & standards as at time of writing:

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
Personal Protective Equipment at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2022
Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
Work at Height Regulations 2005
Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005
Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

ABTT Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment 2020

Incident & Non-Compliance Report

Appendix 2

Production:	Theatre:	Date:

Description of Incident or Non-Compliance Incident (What happened? or What was missing?):

Identified Accident / Near Miss causes:

Identified Non-Compliance causes:

Corrective action required:

Date completed:

Name:	Position:	Signature:	Date: