

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 01-013	
Subject: PERFORMING ARTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS	Effective Date: 03/01/2008 Review Date: 04/22/2025	Page 1 of 3

PERFORMING ARTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

These guidelines are designed to assist University faculty, staff, students, and non-University personnel in developing safe productions that will not endanger the cast, crew, vendors, attendees, or the audience of performances and special events. Each person involved with the event should be familiar with the potential hazards and associated corrective actions. The University's Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) is available to review safety procedures for any event and provide recommendations to reduce the risk of injury or illnesses.

1. Producers of these functions should notify and consult EH&S at the earliest phase of production when any of the following special effects are planned:

1.1 Open flames or pyrotechnic devices (e.g., flashpots, flash paper, fireworks, sparklers, luminaries)

1.1a. All use of pyrotechnic devices before a proximate audience must comply with all Pennsylvania and City of Pittsburgh codes. If the use of pyrotechnics is desired, a written plan must be submitted to EH&S for approval.

1.2 Lasers

1.2a. Laser and strobe lights can induce seizure in some people with epilepsy or photosensitivity. When laser and/or strobe lights are approved for use in a production, warnings must be given.

1.3. Snow, Confetti (including Confetti containing Mylar) & Foam

1.3.a. Artificial snow may be made from chemical mixes, shredded paper, or plastic. Chemically produced snow may pose hazards such as skin and eye irritation. Share the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) with EH&S, the performers and crew. Shredded paper, shredded plastic, or foam may be used as confetti or artificial snow. These materials can produce dust that can be a fire hazard, and/or result in eye or respiratory irritation.

1.3.b. Never use these materials when an open flame or other ignition source is present.

1.3.c. Provide dust masks to crews assigned to clean up the material.

1.3.d. Never reuse disbursed material, as it can become contaminated with moisture or other debris from the floor.

1.3.e. Clean up the disbursed material immediately following each performance or rehearsal.

1.3.f. Dispose of the material in closed metal containers.

1.3.g. Use flame-proof materials when possible.

1.4. Atmospheric Smoke, Fog, and Haze

1.4.a. The use of the equipment to produce these special effects can result in operator injury from chemical exposure, fire, or explosive discharge. Train all operators prior to permitting them to work with the

1.4.b. When smoke, fog, or haze is approved for use in a production, warnings must be posted.

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- 1.5. Unusual stage effects that pose safety or health concerns relating to but not limited to food, water, or waste; noise or light exposure; egress: fire safety; electrical safety; or suspended equipment (other than lighting and grids)
2. **Electrical repairs:** Repair or retrofit of electrical equipment is only to be conducted by qualified and University-approved personnel. Report any defects, accidents, or problems with electrical systems to Facilities Management at (412) 624-9500.
3. **Electrical Cords and Wiring:** **Electrical** extension cords are designed for temporary, not permanent, use. Use of thin, light duty extension cords is prohibited. Exposed electrical cords or wire on the floor must be taped, placed under an electrical chase, or protected by a floor guard to prevent tripping and wear. Stretched or pinched cords can cause overheating and fire. Never use more than one extension cord in series. See the Guidelines for Electrical Safety found in this Manual for more information.
4. **Lighting:** Never use ordinary paper, cellophane, or other combustible materials to cover light bulbs or lighting fixtures. Ensure that lighting equipment is secured and separated from combustible screens or scenery. Do not obstruct exits or egress paths.
5. **Light Control Area:** To reduce the risk of electrical shock, beverages are not permitted in the Light Control Area. Only trained and University-authorized personnel are permitted to work with lighting equipment, circuitry, dimmers, and controls.
6. **Fire Extinguishers:** Do not attempt to use a fire extinguisher (unless you have been properly trained by EH&S). Regardless of your training, activate the fire alarm before using an extinguisher.
7. **Flammable Liquids:** Flammable Liquids such as paints, lacquers, thinners and solvent-soaked rags must be stored in flammable storage cans or containers until they can be disposed properly via the University's Chemical Waste Disposal Program. For more details see the Flammable and Combustible Liquid Guidelines found in the Fire Safety section of this Manual.
8. **Housekeeping:** Ensure that unwanted chemicals are properly labeled and disposed via the University's Chemical Waste Disposal Program. Surplus Property should be contacted for the removal and recycling of waste batteries. Spent lamps/bulbs, recyclable consumer materials, and regular trash are handled by Facilities Management.
9. **Tools and Equipment:** All persons operating power equipment should be trained in the safe operation of that equipment and the potential hazards involved. Discontinue the operation of defective or unsafe equipment as soon as the defect becomes known.
10. **Power Tools:** Before use, inspect all power tools for loss of integrity such as frayed cords, exposed wires, and missing ground plugs. Users should be properly trained with the safe operation and limitations of the tool being used.

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11. Hand Tools: Inspect all hand tools before use to ensure integrity, such as secure hand grips. Only use the tool for its designed function.
12. Scaffolds, Ladders, and Work Platforms: The use of “makeshift” extensions to a standard scaffold, ladder, or work platform is not permitted. Do not build or construct scaffolds, ladders, or work platforms “from scratch” without approval from EH&S.