

# **Abbey Theatre**

## **Fire & General Safety Policy**

The Abbey Theatre is committed to providing a safe environment for all users of the building. Part of this responsibility is in the provision and management of fire safety equipment, systems and procedures. All users of the theatre have a statutory responsibility in ensuring compliance with the law and complying with the fire safety provisions defined within this policy.

**You are required to confirm your company/organisations understanding and compliance of the requirements of this policy by ticking the relevant box on the booking form.**

Fire is recognised as a risk to the theatre and its users. An outbreak of even a small fire creates risk to both life and property, damage to the environment and may compromise our normal business activities. The Abbey Theatre will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the risk associated with fire will be managed in compliance with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and any other relevant legislation that may impact upon it.

The aim of this policy is to provide a robust fire safety framework which will be implemented to secure the safety and wellbeing of everyone who uses the Abbey Theatre.

### **Fire Safety Provision**

The Abbey Theatre has the following procedures in order to maintain high standards of fire safety:

- An Emergency Evacuation Plan
- A Fire Risk Assessment which is regularly reviewed and updated
- A standard induction briefing given to all users of the theatre normally by the Stage Manager during the first rehearsal
- An appropriate fire alarm system which is regularly tested and maintained
- Emergency lighting to indicate and illuminate escape routes which is regularly tested and maintained
- Portable fire extinguishers located at key areas, which are regularly inspected and tested
- Key staff (volunteers) who are trained in basic fire awareness and operation of portable fire extinguishers
- Defined escape routes which are maintained free from obstruction and maintained in good order

- Minimised risk of fire spread by the use of fire resisting construction, fire doors with self-closer mechanisms and doors to high risk areas which must remain locked shut at all times
- A regular inspection routine to ensure good housekeeping and correct storage of combustible materials
- Provision of appropriate signage to assist with emergency procedures and evacuation
- A defined maximum seated capacity auditorium with no standing or seating in aisles or walkways, with no loose seats and with a maximum of four patrons seated in wheelchairs each with an adjacently seated designated carer
- A defined maximum capacity of other rooms within the building

### **Fire Risk Assessment**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires a Fire Risk Assessment to be completed for the premise. A copy of this risk assessment is published on our website. Hirer's of the Abbey Theatre should familiarise themselves with the content to ensure they can comply with the requirements and control measures contained within the risk assessment. Advice on any aspect of this risk assessment can be sought by contacting the theatre.

### **Fire Alarm System**

The fire alarm sounds in all areas of the building except the main auditorium, which is served by a visible xenon (flashing) strobe. Xenon strobes are also sited with all other audible alarm sounders.

The audible alarm is a two-tone siren and should not be confused with the security door alarm which sounds in the foyer only and is an interrupted single tone siren.

The fire alarm system does not automatically call the Fire and Rescue Service; this call must be made using the 999 system.

### **Fire Exits**

All fire exits in the theatre are clearly marked, and with the exception of the main foyer doors, are equipped with panic-bar systems to open them. At NO TIME must these doors or the access areas around them be hindered by scenery, properties, costumes, chairs, tables or other such obstacle. This includes the corridor through the Green Room area and the area between the two sets of double doors in the dressing room behind stage. In the Etone lounge, chairs/tables etc MUST NOT be left in front of the emergency exit.

All emergency exits are connected to the security alarm system and, if opened, will activate the audible alarm in the foyer unless previously deactivated by a member of Abbey Theatre staff. This alarm is intended for your and theatre security.

### **Responsibilities - Performance days**

During performance days, the responsibility for the cast & crew lies with the Stage Manager, whilst responsibility for the public (audience) lies with the company's Front of House Team. Abbey Theatre staff on duty will assist as necessary, but the company is best placed to deal with its members and patrons.

In a fire or emergency situation pre-defined tasks are allocated to specific staff. This is designed to assist in a smooth and successful evacuation of the building. Tasks are allocated to Stage Manager, Sound and Lighting Technician and Bar Staff. At least two of these roles will normally be undertaken by regular theatre staff who are familiar with the evacuation strategy and have received training.

Stage Manager – Any visiting or company Stage Manager must fully familiarise themselves with the theatre evacuation strategy including the Stage Managers responsibilities in case of fire/evacuation, location of fire-fighting equipment and escape routes prior to any show.

**A cast and crew sign in sheet must be completed for every performance.** All cast, backstage crew, FoH staff and technical staff must sign in and out at every performance. A separate list for crew and cast can be used if preferred. The responsibility to operate this list is the Stage Manager who can delegate to a suitable responsible person.

Front of House (FoH) Manager - The company's FoH Manager must be fully aware of the fire alarm points within the building, the assembly points and the location of appropriate firefighting equipment. He/she must have at least one deputy, also familiar with the above. The FoH team are responsible, together with theatre staff, for ensuring all public areas (auditorium, foyers and first floor rooms) are cleared in the case of an evacuation.

Liaison must take place after evacuation between all key roles to ensure all persons, as far as practicable, are accounted for and this information passed to any responding emergency service personnel.

### **Responsibilities – Non-Performance & Rehearsal days**

During days when rehearsals/meetings are in progress, responsibility for evacuation lies with the organiser of each space being used. If more than one space is in use, other users must be advised if a fire is suspected, either verbally or via use of the break-glass fire alarm system. The organisers must ensure all spaces in their area are clear before leaving and make their way to

the assembly point. A lead person for any group using the theatre, other than for performances, must receive a basic safety induction during their first visit. This should be recorded in the Stage Managers safety folder, located on the stage.

During any evacuation when multiple groups are using the premise liaison between groups must take place at the evacuation point to ensure all persons can be accounted for and this information relayed to the responding emergency service personnel.

### **General Action in Case of Fire**

If you discover or suspect a fire you must immediately raise the alarm by contacting either the Stage Manager or FoH Manager who will decide on the action to take. If you are unable to make contact with either person then activate the nearest Manual Call Point (Break Glass). Call points should only be used when absolutely necessary as it will normally be most effective to begin an evacuation via verbal commands given by the Sound Technician or direct from the stage.

If the fire alarm sounds at any time a full evacuation **MUST** be carried out and all users must leave the building via the nearest and available exit. Personal belongings should be left in the building and no-one is to remain in the building or return to collect belongings or search for missing persons.

Evacuation must be carried out calmly with everyone in each area moving in the same direction.

**DO NOT RUN.**

All users are expected to follow directions from the Stage Manager or FoH manager, particularly with respect to exit routes to be avoided.

All cast and crew members must receive the initial safety briefing given by the Stage Manager which can be located within the Stage Manager Safety Folder and located in the Stage Managers corner.

### **Assembly Point**

The assembly point for all users and patrons is the recreation field by Pool Bank Street Car Park adjacent to the play equipment. All persons when leaving the building by any exit must make their way promptly to this location.

## **General Theatre Safety**

### Stage/Dressing Rooms:

The stage area must be kept clear of all obstructions as far as possible. Any piece of scenery that creates a trip or other hazard must be clearly marked so cast/crew may avoid it in low light or blackout situations.

Dressing rooms must be left tidy at all times, with no obstruction to any doors. Costumes and other flammable material must be kept away from all heaters and lighting. Litter is to be disposed of in the bins provided. It is the responsibility of the SM to ensure bins that are filled during a performance are emptied, removing a potential fire hazard.

Smoking is not permitted at ANY TIME anywhere in the building.

Drinks purchased from the theatre bar may be consumed in the dressing rooms, but it is the responsibility of the SM to ensure all glassware is returned to the bar area, thus removing potential hazards in the case of evacuation.

### Front of House/Auditorium:

The doors to the auditorium must be kept clear of obstruction at all times.

The FoH team is responsible for ensuring that patrons are aware that no smoking is permitted at any time in the auditorium. No glassware or crockery is allowed into the auditorium.

### Parking

It is the responsibility of the FoH manager to ensure that no cars are parked at any time on the theatre forecourt (paved area) as this not only obstructs the emergency exit doors but also may hinder emergency vehicles and their crews.

### Disabled Patrons/Cast/Crew:

It is the responsibility of the Stage Manager to ensure that any cast or crew not able to evacuate themselves due to disability or injury are assisted by responsible members of their team.

It is the responsibility of the FoH manager to ensure that any member of the audience not able to evacuate themselves due to disability or injury are assisted by responsible members of their team.

Any patron or user on the first floor unable to evacuate themselves due to disability or injury must be assisted by the organisers of meetings/rehearsals or by the FoH manager in the case of performance days.

The SM and FoH manager must be made aware of ALL persons of limited mobility.

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