

Safety

Seven Signs Of Backstage Safety

03/06/2007

Awareness

Complete 360 degree, up and down awareness of everything that is going on around you.

One of the signs of a safety conscious backstage “pro” is the uncanny ability to keep track of everything that is happening above, below, left, right, back, and front; all the time and even in the midst of chaos. The stagehands that exhibit this ability are not only the least likely to be involved in an accident, but they also seem to be the first to notice when a co-worker is in trouble and may need assistance.

Even while focused on coiling up cables on stage right during a strike, they are still aware of whether or not the pit elevator is up or down. They know without conscious effort when the riggers are dropping in lines above them. They note which system pipes are coming in or going out. They keep track of the path where truss sections are rolling toward the trucks and where on the deck there are still scenic units waiting to be taken apart.

Like a good defensive driver, they never lose track of the “potential” dangers and problems around them!

Preparing for trouble

Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.

Although it may take a few extra minutes before each show and work call to check the placement and condition of the fire extinguishers, first-aid kits, and safety equipment; it represents a huge investment in the wellbeing of those that you work with and for. Knowing what you and your crew will need to do in an emergency and knowing that your safety related equipment is ready for use is never a wasted effort, even if your hope is that you will never need it.

Training

The better you know your equipment, your crew, and your facility, the better your chance of making the right (safest) choices.

With any piece of equipment or in any given situation, you will not recognize when something is going wrong, if you are uncertain as to what is right. Experience, training, and continuing education in all aspects of backstage and technical work make you far more capable of correctly diagnosing,

solving, and preventing problems before they can create a real hazard on the job.

Focus on the job

Concentration on the job at hand and mental focus make it less likely that you will inadvertently place yourself or someone else into an unsafe situation.

Willingness to ask questions

Never be afraid of looking foolish, never hesitate to ask if you are uncertain, and never fail to double-check if something "just doesn't seem right".

Consistent maintenance and thoughtful organization

Backstage clutter, debris and poorly maintained equipment represent an unnecessary and preventable risk to anyone using a stage or shop.

Taking care of those that we work with and those we work for

If you and everyone that you work with are always "watching someone else's back", then there is very good chance that someone will be watching your