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Distressing News: Advice for Wardrobe Workers

We all want to work safely, but knowing the risks and precautions to take when our job involves chemicals and allergens is critical. In the case of Wardrobe and Costume workers who distress clothing, it's not just the choice of products, but how they're used that matters.

After hearing concerns from these workers, we reviewed Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for materials used to distress clothing. One of the most commonly found ingredients is Crystalline Silica. Long-term exposure to silica can cause silicosis, a form of pulmonary fibrosis, and cardiopulmonary impairment.

On some products, you may also find warnings that state, *"This product contains chemicals known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm."*

As the product user, protect yourself and others you work with by reviewing these guidelines for distressing clothing:

Know what you're working with
Chemicals such as Schmere or Schmutz powder, talc or talcum powder, fullers earth, bleaches, solvents, glues and some dyes are used to distress clothing.

Ensure you have an up to date MSDS before using any of these products and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Use them properly
Use products bound in medium whenever possible. Instead of powders, use crayons, e.g., "Schmere" wax based pig-



ment product. Mix products with a liquid medium (e.g., water, baby oil) of low toxicity to make it less likely to become airborne.

Choose water-based products over those that contain solvents. Even when product names are changed, the newer products may still involve similar hazards. Always read the MSDS of each product you intend to use.

Take precautions when sanding props and costumes. If materials are being scuffed or sanded, or worn by using sandpaper, wire brushes, steel wool etc., hazardous fibers may become airborne. These fibers may have other hazards if they have been treated for permanent press (formaldehyde), sizing, fire retardants, stain guarding chemicals, or even moth balls. Proper ventilation like table hoods could be used, or the costume or prop could be contained inside a box or bag while being distressed.

If a respirator is required, ensure that workers wear an appropriate respirator

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that they have been fit-tested for, with proper filters for the chemicals being used. Actsafe offers free respirator fit testing. Just give us a call and we will come by and fit test all workers.

The team approach

Supervisors should give instructions to workers, explaining the method they will use and how to do the work safely (safe work procedures). If necessary, the use of personal protective equipment should also be reviewed, such as respirators, type of gloves, full length smock or coveralls and eye protection.

Workers must have WHMIS (workplace hazardous material information system) training and MSDS should be available to workers for all chemical products used.

Never distress a costume while it is being worn and make certain chemical products will not come into contact with the face, head or skin of either wardrobe workers or actors who will be wearing the costume.

For more information, refer to *The Artist's Complete Health and Safety Guide* by Monona Rossol or *Fabric Painting and Dyeing for the Theatre* by Deborah Dryden.

If you have information you would like to share regarding products or methods, or would like to arrange for fit testing, please e-mail: marty@actsafe.ca

Fork Lift, Fall Protection and Aerial Training - Why Recertify?

We are often asked by workers "why do we have to recertify every two years?" The simple answer is it's the law.

To answer the question in more detail, BC's film industry, working in conjunction with WorksafeBC, adopted an Industry Recognized Practice (IRP) to identify a minimum industry standard for Aerial and Lift Truck Training and Certification. The IRP was created to make it possible for the motion picture industry to meet the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards, which are enshrined in WorkSafeBC's regulations.

CSA standards by themselves are not law. CSA is an independent, not-for-profit organization. Their standards are developed by volunteer technical committees consisting of representatives from groups such as government, industry, and users affected by the standard. Those standards become law when WorkSafeBC adopts them.

The principles behind the development and acceptance of the IRP by the Motion Picture industry are twofold: to clarify compliance requirements; and, to contribute to the reduction of accidents and injuries that occur among workers in our industries.

Compliance to the CSA standards for

aerial and forklift training is complex for the motion picture industry as there are different standards for each of the two types of equipment. In addition, there are some expectations that employers will determine worker proficiency and that employers, or the authority having jurisdiction, will make decisions about re-training intervals. Most motion picture workers move from show to show, without having a consistent employer. This means that an industry wide practice is required to ensure compliance with CSA standards.

More than just the law

The simple answer to the question "why do we have to recertify every two years?" may be "because it's the law". However, the values behind the law, and behind the IRP, are to make sure all the workers in our industry go home safe at the end of the day. And that's what's really important.

Where to find it

The IRP is available on Actsafe's website at <http://www.actsafe.ca/resources/library/shop-studio/industry-recognized-practice-aerial-platform-and-lift-truck-operator-training/>

Please feel free to give us a call at Actsafe, at 604-733-4682, with any questions.

Reminder: New Certification Launched

Actsafe's new Live Performance Electrical Certificate (LPEC) launched February 1. As an introductory offer, the test will be offered free for the first six months (until July 31, 2011). The exam fee will be \$50 beginning August 1, 2011. This is a one-time only certification, with no expiry date or requirement for renewal.

The LPEC does not apply to the motion picture or television industries, whose workers require an LE or FE. It is required for electrical work performed in touring shows and festivals in addition to theatres, concert halls and other performing arts venues.

The application package and more information is available on our website at <http://www.actsafe.ca>.

Keep Up Your Energy...All Day Long

Over the next few months, with a lack of daylight, a ramp up on productions and long work hours, it's important to maintain a healthy amount of energy through the day (or night).

Take a closer look at the foods you eat and when you eat them to stay energized and prepare your body for a more restful sleep at night. The snacks you eat and the beverages you drink can have a positive or negative effect on energy levels throughout the day, and affect the quality of sleep you get at night.

Having snacks in between meals is a great way to keep nourished and get the energy needed to complete work shifts. At Craft Services, opt for healthy snacks that include combinations from a variety of foods from the four food groups.

Recommended by the Dieticians of Canada Fruits & Veggies

Look for foods that are green or orange (oranges, grapefruits, carrots, spinach, broccoli, asparagus, Brussels sprouts and kale).

Beans & Lentils

Beans and lentils are a great source of potassium and carbohydrates. Kidney beans, lentils, baked beans and many others provide a great source of energy for your body.

Seeds

Sunflower and pumpkin seeds are also a great source of energy for your body. These are great as a stand-alone snack, and also combined with other ingredients in nut bars.

Yogurt

Yogurt is full of vitamin-B, and this vitamin helps your body convert other nutrients into energy. You should not eat excessive amounts of yogurt due to the fat content.

Eggs

Eggs are a great source of energy, and this food will supply a high amount of protein throughout the working day. Some experts advise not to eat more than three eggs a week, so try to mix your weekly food plan up with other high energy foods.

Here are some snack ideas. Pick them up from Craft Services or purchase and pack them in advance: Crackers and cheese, social tea cookies and milk, yogurt and a small low fat muffin, celery sticks with peanut butter, baby carrots with low fat cream cheese dip or cut-up fresh fruit mixed with plain yogurt.

Check your Caffeine Intake

Caffeine stimulates the adrenal glands to release adrenalin, the 'flight or fight' hormone that prepares the body to react to a threat. Ideally this adrenalin release happens very occasionally during times of great physical stress.

However, when we consume excessive amounts of caffeine we promote a sustained adrenalin response that exhausts the adrenal glands. As a result, these glands are unable to produce even the small amounts of adrenalin required to help us maintain focus and concentration, which in turn creates feelings of physical fatigue and malaise.

Excessive intake of caffeine can cause insomnia, headaches, irritability and nervousness. Try to avoid food or beverages containing caffeine five hours before sleeping.

Common sources of caffeine include coffee, tea, iced tea, cola drinks, chocolate and headache relievers.



Alternatives include decaffeinated coffee or herbal tea, non-cola beverages and water.

Snacks for sleeping well

Going to bed with an empty stomach or immediately after a heavy meal can interfere with sleep. If you get home hungry, have a snack that is low in fat and easy to digest. A light snack before going to bed helps in getting a good restful sleep.

Examples include cereal with milk, fresh fruit and yogurt, oatmeal with raisins, digestive cookies and milk, a piece of toast with a small banana or a toasted, lightly buttered multigrain bagel.

From: The Dieticians of Canada, 2002.

Remember to eat well and stay hydrated to maximize your energy throughout the day.

Propane heaters

Recently, there have been some incidents related to the safe use of propane-powered heaters. At press time, Actsafe was still researching best practices and recommendations on this issue.

More information on the safe use of this equipment will be available on our website in the near future.

If you have any concerns about this or other Health and Safety issues, please call our Health and Safety Consultant, Marty Clausen at 604.733.4682.

Follow us on Twitter

For updates, news and Actsafe announcements or events, follow our twitter feed at:

www.twitter.com/actsafe

Easier to share

Like something in this newsletter or on our website? We've added some new features to the website to make sharing the information we provide a lot easier. Share our articles on Twitter, by e-mail or among your Facebook friends with a single click. Visit <http://www.actsafe.ca> to check it out.

ACTSAFE STAFF

Dawn Brennan
General Manager

Marty Clausen
Health & Safety Consultant

Bev Pausche
Communications Manager

Maureen Kaake
Office Manager

Jennifer Hill
Outreach and Project Coordinator

ACTSAFE COURSES

For full course descriptions, dates and to register online, visit: www.actsafe.ca

Courses must be paid in advance to Actsafe. Courses may be subject to cancellation. We would be happy to book a private class if your group has the minimum number of participants.

Call 604.733.4682 for further details.

AERIAL LIFT TRAINING

\$120 (EXPERIENCED - 1 DAY)

\$220 (INEXPERIENCED - 2 DAY)

Experienced:

Saturday, February 26
Saturday, March 26

Inexperienced:

Saturday, Feb 26 and Sunday, Feb 27
Saturday, March 26 and Sunday, March 27
8 am - 4 pm

Instructor: Leavitt Machinery
Operator Training

AERIAL LIFT OVER 80FT - \$220

TBA - Call for training dates.

8 am - 4 pm

Instructor: Leavitt Machinery

Operator Training

COUNTERBALANCED FORKLIFT

\$120 (EXPERIENCED - 1 DAY)

\$220 (INEXPERIENCED - 2 DAY)

Experienced:

Saturday, February 19
Saturday, March 12

Inexperienced:

Saturday, Feb 19 and Sunday Feb 27
Saturday, March 12 and Sunday, March 27

8 am - 4 pm

Instructor: Leavitt Machinery

FALL PROTECTION - \$65

Saturday, February 12
Saturday, March 12

8 am to 12 pm

Instructor: ER Plus

FIREARM SAFETY LEVEL 1 - \$50

TBA - Call for training dates.

MOTION PICTURE SAFETY

AWARENESS* - \$25

Sunday, February 13
Tuesday, March 15

Sundays: 10 am - 1 pm
Tuesdays: 6 pm - 9 pm

Instructor: Marty Clausen

*Take both Safety Awareness and
Supervisor Safety for \$45

MOTION PICTURE SUPERVISOR

SAFETY* - \$25

Sunday, February 13
Sunday, April 10

1:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Instructor: Marty Clausen

*Take both Safety Awareness and
Supervisor Safety for \$45

OCCUPATIONAL FIRST AID LEVEL ONE - \$40

Monday, February 21
Saturday March 5
Monday, March 21

8:45 am to 5:30 pm
Instructor: Kathy Day

PERFORMING ARTS

SUPERVISOR SAFETY - \$25

TBA - Call for training dates.

Instructor: Marty Clausen

ONLINE COURSES

Live Performance Electrical Certificate \$50
(Fee waived until July 31, 2011)

Transportation of Dangerous
Goods (TDG) \$20

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information
System (WHMIS) \$20

Actsafe has an in-house computer station
available to those who do not have Internet
access but wish to take our online courses.