



SAFETY AND HEALTH IN ARTS PRODUCTION AND ENTERTAINMENT

1998 ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the industries involved, the WCB endorsed the creation of SHAPE, Safety and Health in Arts Production and Entertainment, as a vehicle to promote safe and healthy worksites on film sets, stages and theatres in British Columbia. SHAPE was incorporated as a Not-for-profit Society on March 23, 1998. SHAPE's mission includes the promotion of health and safety in the industry and compliance with WCB Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. SHAPE achieves these goals through information, education and industry consultation.

The Prevention Division of the Workers Compensation Board of British Columbia will provide the funding for SHAPE for five years. Eventually SHAPE will be funded through assessments levied on employers in the sub-classifications that fall under the SHAPE "umbrella". The current employer sub-classes that represent the industry sectors covered by SHAPE do not permit the separate identification of employers in the performing arts and motion picture and television industries for assessment purposes. A new classification system, to be implemented by the WCB in the year 2000, will permit SHAPE constituents to support it directly.

During the first year of operations SHAPE has been inclusive, serving workers and employers in the performing arts and motion picture and television industries regardless of their representative association's status with SHAPE.

A Board of Directors with five Directors and two non-voting members governs the Association. Separate standing committees represent the motion picture and performing arts industries and appoint the SHAPE directors. One worker and one employer representative is appointed from each of these two sector committees. The two standing committees, in conjunction with the WCB, appoint a neutral Chair. A WCB representative and the General Manager of SHAPE sit on the Board as non-voting members.

Throughout this first year, aside from the activities associated with establishing an office and beginning operations, SHAPE concentrated on the development of safety partnerships, educational activities and methods of communication. Since SHAPE is an association of associations, it sought to identify member associations to broaden its constituency. SHAPE worked closely with its advisory Standing Committees to develop an operations plan for 1999.

Apart from the necessary tasks of establishing the organisation, SHAPE delivered a variety of services to its members. It held orientation sessions introducing SHAPE and health and safety issues to industry members and brought experienced workers and regulators together in forums concentrating on the safety issues of special effects pyrotechnics and underwater film making. In 1998, SHAPE began a first aid training program that carried through into 1999.

PARTNERSHIPS

Standing Committees provide a platform for SHAPE's members to raise the health and safety issues of their constituents. Committee membership includes employers' associations, trade unions and arts organisations. These members provide a valuable link to the community of performers, musicians, filmmakers, etc. Many sectors of the

performing arts and motion picture industries are however, not structured or organised in a manner that facilitates participation in SHAPE. Establishing and expanding a network of participants in SHAPE has been a priority since incorporation. Where no organisation exists, SHAPE facilitates the formation of an association of workers or employers for the purpose of health and safety promotion.

In April of 1998 SHAPE made an initial entry into the community with two health & safety orientation forums. These sessions attracted over 150 workers and employers who were interested in entertainment industry health and safety issues. Participants that attended not only represented larger established employer and worker groups, but musicians, small theatres and event providers as well. Sign-in lists became the first entries in a database of contacts that is used continuously to disseminate program information.

SHAPE has developed relationships with key contact persons at the WCB. We have brought WCB departmental specialists out to SHAPE to hold open forums on health and safety topics of interest to our members. The entertainment industry is, in many ways, new to the WCB. Conversely, the WCB and regulations are new to members of the entertainment industries. These meetings have allowed the industry and the regulator to view the issues from each other's perspective and to work together towards identifying the issues that need to be addressed by the industry. The ensuing dialogue between the parties is enhancing the understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.

In November, SHAPE hosted a meeting between the WCB, the Explosives Regulatory Branch of Natural Resources Canada (NRC) and members of the special effects department of I.A.T.S.E. 891. The agenda of the session was to explain the introduction of a new certification process by the NRC and to consider the safety, and safety regulatory, issues associated with this specialised occupation in motion picture production. Over seventy workers attended the meeting. The result was an initial clarification of the certification process and the acknowledgement that the Workers Compensation Board has jurisdiction over all safety issues on BC worksites, including pyrotechnic activities. After the meeting, the special effects community and NRC raised

several issues with the WCB to ensure that industry practice is compatible with WCB Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.

In December a similar session was held between the WCB and the underwater filming community. Participation came from film unions, diving schools and independent workers in this field. The WCB provided an outline of the regulations surrounding diving in the workplace and concentrated on individual sections of the regulations that appear difficult for the industry to adopt. The participation of the experienced members of the diving film community meant that realistic examples accompanied each of the discussions. The meeting left the parties more knowledgeable about the requirements of the Regulations, and the WCB more aware of specific aspects of the Regulations that concern the industry. All parties agreed that, through SHAPE, administrative practises could be developed to facilitate underwater filming in BC and compliance with the Regulations.

SHAPE facilitated additional information forums at the request of members of the Standing Committees. These included hearing conservation and registration issues. Hearing conservation is an important issue to a majority of the Performing Arts Standing Committee. The WCB and the industry will identify exposure levels experienced by musicians and stage workers. Of similar concern to those who work in the performing arts is a definition as to who can register with the WCB. Many of the constituents of SHAPE's members routinely rotate between employment positions and contracts. Our forum with members of the Assessment Department of the WCB helped to clarify the issues that are arising when attempts are made to register.

SHAPE collaborated with the Occupational Hygiene Program at UBC to prepare a grant proposal for the *Finding Solutions Program* at the WCB. The research project will study the content of theatrical smokes and fogs and the effects of exposure on workers and performers. If funded, the project would begin in the year 2000.

COMMUNICATIONS

SHAPE's mission statement includes a declaration that it will "*assist in the development and administration of safety programs*", "*work to achieve a high degree of health & safety standards*", "*facilitate compliance with regulations*" and "*act as a liaison for the industry and the WCB*". All of these activities require a level of communication throughout the industry that previously did not exist. SHAPE began the development of the communications systems and designing the information for dissemination.

SHAPE's constituents are widely dispersed throughout the Province. As an initial form of information distribution, SHAPE has relied upon existing systems used by members of SHAPE. Most associations, guilds and unions have newsletters, mail-outs and fax distribution programs that have enabled SHAPE to disseminate safety and health information to the industry. SHAPE has used these systems to distributed Safety FAQ's, Information Releases and Hazard Releases on topics suggested by members.

For 1999, SHAPE will expand its communications network through a web site, a regularly published newsletter and direct fax mailings to requesting members of the performing arts and motion picture community. SHAPE's goal is to maximise the use of technology in order to reach the widest possible audience.

PUBLICATIONS

One of SHAPE's goals is to accumulate and to produce safety and health information and guides that pertain to our industry. In 1998, we began generating this information through the development of various publications. A partnership with the WCB will result in a safe work practises guide for the motion picture industry. Compiling industry safety information and integrating this with the OH&S Regulations, this manual will be a comprehensive guide for all employers, workers and WCB Officers in the Province. Publication of this manual is expected in the summer of 1999.

Both the motion picture and the performing arts committees identified the need to develop safety program template documents to help their membership comply with the Regulations. These generic programs will especially help smaller and independent producers and performers become familiar with the requirements for a health and safety program. Members of the Standing Committees worked with consultants to design and prepare a document that will meet most of the industry's needs.

SHAPE also developed "check list" style documents for fall protection and location hazard assessment. These tools were created to help the workers and employers identify and then solve hazardous situations and conditions. SHAPE distributes these documents with the request that when completed, the users send a copy back to SHAPE. This will help create a database of information that can be accessed by the industry in the future.

Pending the production of materials tailored for its industry, SHAPE has disseminated existing WCB safety documents. SHAPE maintains a library of WCB publications that apply to its members. Since incorporation, SHAPE has distributed over five hundred copies of the Regulations, pamphlets and booklets. SHAPE also receives requests from all types of productions for information packages suitable to their specific requirements. The library also includes a number of video titles, from the WCB and external sources, which are available for loan.

SAFETY TRAINING

In December 1999, SHAPE began a pilot program in WCB Level One Occupational First Aid instruction. Through St. John Ambulance, SHAPE co-ordinated training for an initial 24 workers in the performing arts and motion picture industries. The popularity of the program identified the need for us to provide introductory first aid training for our members and to expand its availability. To facilitate delivery of this training, the First Aid Division of the WCB designated SHAPE as an *in-house training agency* for Level One First Aid. SHAPE provided instructors, equipment and supplies, meaning that courses could be delivered more inexpensively. SHAPE will be scheduling the delivery

of the Level One course on a regular basis through 1999 and is planning to co-ordinate the delivery of the program on Vancouver Island.

As requested by the Standing Committees, SHAPE is delivering awareness training for WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) beginning in 1999. Designed to familiarise workers and employers with the requirements of this federally and provincially regulated program, this will reach the performing arts community where WHMIS training has been rare.

Another course in 1999 will be a Basic Safety Awareness course for the entertainment industry. Specifically commissioned by SHAPE, this course will provide participants with the practical tools necessary for identifying and remedying hazards in the workplace. The course has been designated as a prerequisite to membership in some unions and guilds.

PERSONNEL

The Directors of SHAPE, from incorporation in March of 1998 through to December 31, 1998 were:

Mark Thompson (Chair)
Beth Hanham (I.A.T.S.E. 891)
Burt Harris (PMIA)
Linda Kinney (CFTPA)
James Pollard (VPTA)

Standing Committee representation:

Motion Picture and Video Standing Committee (as of December 31, 1998):

Beth Hanham	I.A.T.S.E. 891
Joe Laurin	I.A.T.S.E. 669
Steve Sassen	AMPTP
Jack Vlahovic	Teamsters

Linda Kinney	CFTPA
Julia Courtenay	DGC
Fred Keating	UBCP
George Horie	BC Negotiating Producers
Conor O’Sullivan	ACFC West
Susan Croome	Studios
JJ Makaro	Stunts
Damon Faulkner	IATSE 348

Performing Arts Standing Committee (as of December 31, 1998):

Gene Ramsbottom	VMA
Burt Harris	PMIA
Chantal Deeble	CADA/BC
Jennifer Mascal	The Dance Centre
Ingrid Turk	CAEA
James Pollard	VPTA
Colin Campbell	IATSE 118
Miles Muir	Large venue operators
Prem Marimuthu	Event venues
Ian Pratt	CITT
Mary Ann Moir	Large ensemble orchestras
David Horwood	Event producers
Martin Huhn	Sound engineers

Manny Gomes, P.Eng , a Program Manager with the WCB, sits on the SHAPE board as a non-voting representative. The General Manager of SHAPE, Rob Jackes, also sits on the SHAPE Board as a non-voting member. Robyn Carrigan is SHAPE’s office administrator.

CONCLUSION

SHAPE faced many challenges in 1998. Since incorporation, it created a safety association to meet the special characteristics of the industries that it serves. SHAPE also needed to establish a physical presence, hire office staff and develop its membership roster. By the year ended December 1998, SHAPE was well on the way to realising these initial goals and had begun delivering industry programs for its members.

SHAPE quickly became known as a valuable source for health and safety information. Staff routinely receive calls from all sectors of the entertainment industries needing re-direction to competent authorities and or delivery of printed materials. All information that leaves the SHAPE office includes information on contacting the association. Word of mouth has been an effective tool for advertising SHAPE.

Having completed its preliminary development, SHAPE will expand its delivery of safety and health programs for the entertainment industries. The association will gather data to measure the success of its programs through accident and injury statistics and by feedback from members. Currently, the WCB classification system does not provide enough accident data.

Although the performing arts and motion picture industries, compared to many others in the province, are not highly dangerous, many hazardous activities are associated with them. In 1998, the inaugural year of SHAPE, a fatality occurred on a motion picture set. SHAPE will help the industry to learn more from this tragedy about safety and the prevention of accidents and illness in our workplaces. SHAPE will continue to focus on activities that put entertainment workers at risk and to promote safe work practices that respond to those risks. SHAPE hopes that fulfilment of the goals and objectives, originally described in our Mission Statement, will help to ensure that the industry does not incur serious injuries or another fatality.