

## CATWALK SAFETY IN LIVE EVENT AND PERFORMING ARTS VENUES

November 2021

**This fact sheet is intended to give information on safe work procedures when working on catwalks installed at a live event or performing arts venue.**

### What is a catwalk?

- An elevated platform from which many of the technical functions of a venue, such as lighting and sound, may be serviced or altered.
- Not always a solid walking surface; expanded steel, boards, and tension grids are common.
- Often located above a false or suspended ceiling.
- May have openings to access equipment or the auditorium.
- May contain lighting, audio, video, and rigging equipment.
- HVAC components may also be present.



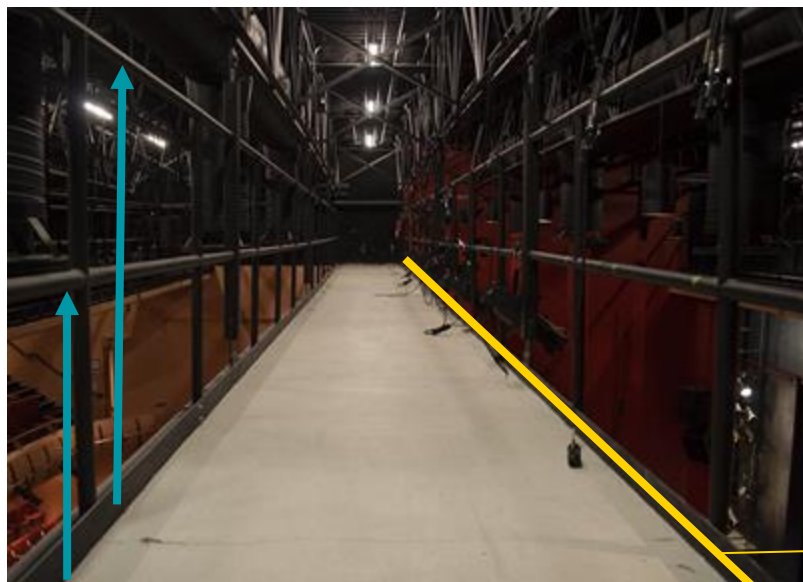
### WHAT SHOULD CATWALKS HAVE FOR SAFETY?

- ❑ Guard rails
  - ❑ Handrail located ~42" above the platform and
  - ❑ Midrail located ~21" above the platform
  - ❑ Able to withstand 125 lbs horizontally and 100 lbs downward force
- ❑ Toeboards (a.k.a. Kick Rail) to prevent objects falling to areas below
- ❑ If head bump hazards exist, they should be identified and protected where possible.
- ❑ Minimum width of 22 inches and adequate lighting (more than a penlight or 10 lumens)
- ❑ Regular inspections of catwalks (minimum of once per year) include but are not limited to:
  - ❑ Ability of the catwalk to support the weight of the work and materials
  - ❑ Anchors provided that meet the needs of your fall protection plan
  - ❑ Clear and safe access and escape routes
  - ❑ Good housekeeping (no clutter, trip hazards, or food and drink)
- ❑ Step units should all be secured from movement
- ❑ Cables should be consolidated and run overhead where possible

***If you are considering adding or modifying a catwalk, please consult an engineer as catwalks are often structural members of your facility!***

Handrail ~42" above platform

Midrail ~21" above platform



Toeboards (a.k.a. Kick Rail) to prevent objects falling to areas below)

## CATWALK SAFETY IN LIVE EVENT AND PERFORMING ARTS VENUES

### Safe Work Practices:

- Ensure you have oriented tenants/shows/labour designees/representatives and users to the catwalk.
  - ensure they have appropriate fall protection gear and training when required.
  - include information about facility rules and possible consequences for failure to follow them.
  - all tools should be secured with a lanyard or tether to keep them from falling if dropped.
  
- Provide supervision at key times such as load-in, during the show, and strike.
  - maintain a list of authorized personnel who received the orientation prior to use.
  - restrict access to only those oriented and trained.
  - have trained workers shadow or supervise guest workers.
  
- Have a rescue plan (practiced) for workers who may be suspended after a fall.
  
- If guardrails must be removed for performing work:
  - assess appropriate fall protection for work with handrails removed.
  - you must be clipped in/use provided PPE.
  - ensure you replace the handrails immediately when done.



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### Without fall protection: DO NOT



- Do not lean out so as to move your centre of gravity outside the guardrails without fall protection.
- Do not use any materials or step ladders to elevate your feet off the catwalk without fall protection.
- Do not sit on the catwalk with your legs over the edge.



### What should I do if I have a question or think there may be a hazard?

- Report any hazards immediately to your supervisor.
- Remember you have the right to refuse unsafe work!