

What is a Risk Assessment?

Theatre can be a risky business! From equipment hanging overhead, to cables on the floor, different levels and stairs on a set, working in the dark and the sometimes-wild physical actions of performers on stage.

Put it altogether and you've got = **potential risk**.

A risk assessment is not as scary as it sounds. The term is used to describe the overall process or method where you:

- Identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm (hazard identification).
- Analyse and evaluate the risk associated with that hazard (risk analysis, and risk evaluation).
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate the hazard, or control the risk when the hazard cannot be eliminated (risk control).

Start the risk assessment process by 'identifying' any risks or hazards associated with your production or event. Once these have been identified, you then place 'controls' to assist in the mitigation (minimisation) of that risk or hazard. This ensures you meet your duty of care to your theatre company and that everyone remains healthy and safe in accordance with the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and other associated laws and legislations.

It is sometimes difficult to foresee all risks that will be involved with your production or event and many will be identified as rehearsals progress. While the Production Manager and Stage Manager will identify many, it is up to everyone in the company to report any risks or hazards as they see them. We must involve everyone in our risk assessment and the risk assessment should cover everyone; from performers, to wardrobe, lighting, stage crew etc.

This risk assessment is a live document, meaning it is never final. Any updates and changes to risks and their 'controls' should be actioned immediately. The risk assessment must be constantly reviewed during rehearsals, bump in, technical time, dress rehearsals and performances and bump out and input is invited from everyone.

For further information on the Victorian Occupation Health and Safety Act 2004, please follow link provided:

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and Regulations

www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-act-and-regulations

What is the goal of a risk assessment?

The aim of the risk assessment process is to evaluate risks and hazards, then remove that risk or hazard or minimise the level of its risk by adding control measures. By doing so, you have created a safer and healthier workplace.

The goal is to try to answer the following questions:

- a. What can happen and under what circumstances?
- b. What are the possible consequences?
- c. How likely are the possible consequences to occur?
- d. Is the risk controlled effectively, or is further action required?

When should a risk assessment be done?

There may be many times and reasons. A risk assessment is needed throughout the entire process of your production or event. Starting with rehearsals, then bump in/technical time, performances and bump out; things change all the time – so your risk assessment should be completed whenever the following may occur:

- Before new processes or activities are introduced (products, machinery, tools, equipment, set, costumes),
- Before changes are introduced to existing processes or activities, including performance actions (significant blocking changes and new choreography),
- When new hazards are identified (venues change or new information concerning harm becomes available).

Why is it important to review and monitor risk assessments?

It is essential to be sure that any changes in your environments (venues) and performances or events have not introduced new hazards or changed hazards that were once ranked as lower priority to a higher priority.

It is good practice to review your assessment on a regular basis to make sure your control methods are effective. It is important to know that your risk assessment is complete and accurate.

Remember, the UHT production team are always available to assist when you are identifying hazards and controlling the risks of your production. They can offer guidance on how to write your risk assessment.