



Buildings used for locations and temporary studios in film, television and theatre

Entertainment Information Sheet No 18

Introduction

This information sheet is one in a series produced in consultation with the Joint Advisory Committee for Broadcasting and Performing Arts. It gives advice on the safe use of buildings used as locations or temporary studios in the film, television and theatre industry.

Some of these buildings may be derelict, in poor repair or designed for other functions, creating certain health and safety problems requiring control.

This information sheet does not deal with permanent studios or locations.

Legislation

The main legal requirements covering special and visual effects are the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (the Management Regulations).

The Management Regulations require a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to be carried out by employers (or self-employed people) to assess the risk to employees and others who may be affected by their activities and to determine the control measures necessary to avoid risk or reduce it to acceptable levels. An opportunity arises during risk assessment to consider the application of any other relevant health and safety legislation, including the requirement to consider fire precautions and emergency procedures.

You must consult employees on health and safety matters, either directly or through elected safety representatives.

Depending on the nature of the building and any work that requires to be carried out in preparation for filming, the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 may apply. More information on the CDM Regulations can be found in 'Further reading'.

Hazards

The use of buildings for location work or studios brings with it a number of potential hazards that may require assessment and control. Typical hazards may include:

- unsafe structures;
- inadequate fire precautions or means of escape;
- unguarded, faulty or derelict machinery;
- non-availability of services (eg electricity or water);
- hazardous substances or materials, eg asbestos;

- debris and litter;
- pests or vermin;
- lack of welfare facilities;
- additional hazards introduced by the production's activities.

A checklist is included in this information sheet. You do not need to use this but it will assist you in checking locations. There may be hazards present that are not on the list and not all items on the list will be present in every location. Where an item on the list is unsatisfactory, you should seek the advice of an appropriate competent person.

Responsibility

The responsibility for health and safety rests with the producer, who needs to ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is carried out and that the significant findings are made known to all parties. This should cover all stages of the production at the temporary studio, such as recce, construction, setting, filming, striking and reinstatement. The producer should also ensure that any additional control measure beyond those required for a normal set are implemented. These may include:

- the employment of competent contractors and specialists;
- communication arrangements between all parties involved;
- information exchange about the risks between all affected parties;
- adequate security and emergency arrangements including those for first aid, especially for lone workers.

Contractors or specialists, including special effects and stunt artists, need to ensure that:

- risk assessments are conducted for the work to be done, taking into account the nature of the location and ensuring that risks are adequately controlled at all stages of the production;
- the significant results of their risk assessments are passed on to the producer;
- they co-operate with the producer and other contractors.

The owner, landlord or agent for the building has a responsibility to:

- provide all reasonable information, including any results of any risk assessments relating to the safety of the building structure, eg presence of asbestos;

Safety checklist for buildings used as locations and temporary studios

*If the premises are occupied then seek advice from the occupier's representative to help you complete this form. The occupier may have already prepared a risk assessment of the site and the activities undertaken there.
This document is not a risk assessment.*

Name, address, telephone and contact name at location/premises	Name of production

ALL BUILDINGS	SUPPORTING COMMENTS
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✓ Satisfactory ✗ Unsatisfactory

Fire

Risk assessment (part of production risk assessment)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire certificate for building (if required, owner supplies)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoking (no smoking policy, designated areas)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire alarm system	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire extinguishers (number and type)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency exits (means of escape)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire drills and wardens	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency telephones and medical/first-aid facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety of visitors and general public	<input type="checkbox"/>

Structure and facilities

Maintenance of building	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access (adequate and unobstructed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asbestos (condition, encapsulation)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fragile roofs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Falls or falling objects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enclosed/confined spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doors and gates (signage)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Windows, transparent/translucent door, gates and walls	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lifts, escalators and moving walkways	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floor and stairs (sound condition, inspection certificates, load limit)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleanliness and waste materials	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electric/gas/water supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting (adequate working lights)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ventilation	<input type="checkbox"/>

Equipment

Maintenance of equipment, devices and systems	<input type="checkbox"/>
Machinery (guards)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sources of non-ionising radiation (UV lights, lasers etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sources of ionising radiation	<input type="checkbox"/>
High noise levels	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal protective equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>

Hazardous substances

Hazardous processes (procedural safety guidelines)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous substances	<input type="checkbox"/>

Welfare

Catering, dining and rest facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilet and washing facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drinking water	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heating (indoor temperature of 16°C)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilities for changing and storing clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>

Derelict buildings

Heating adequate and safe (boilers certificated)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsafe areas (eg structural faults, unsafe floors, roofs)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken glass and general rubbish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vermin (pigeons, rats, mice etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature	Date
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- ensure that all contractual conditions of any lease, contract or agreements are abided by, including having adequate public liability insurance in place.

Control measures

Building structure

The building should be made safe for its intended use and not be likely to collapse, have loose or unstable flooring, unsafe staircases and unprotected edges. These areas may need to be repaired to ensure a satisfactory standard or to be clearly indicated as being unsafe and have access restricted to prevent injury to any person.

All workplaces need safe means of access and egress. Care should be taken to ensure that all routes for vehicles and those for pedestrians are suitable for the intended traffic and that adequate illumination is provided for the entire crew during the working day.

In many cases adequate information will be available through the owners or agents for the building; always take advice on the suitability and state of repair of such buildings. If in doubt regarding the safety of any building, seek advice from a suitably qualified structural engineer.

Fire

There are numerous ways a fire could start on location and unless measures are taken to minimise the risk, there could be serious injuries to people or loss of the location. Typical sources of fire include:

- use of flammable substances;
- special and visual effects;
- faulty electrical equipment or poor quality wiring within the building;
- untreated scenery and dressing;
- heaters;
- hot work (eg welding or gas burning during construction or setting phases);
- poor housekeeping;
- smoking.

Steps need to be taken to minimise fire risk within premises. A fire risk assessment should be carried out to identify the hazards and ensure that adequate precautions are taken to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

The producer needs to ensure that adequate emergency procedures are in place for the production as a whole and contractors need to ensure that there is adequate control of their activities.

Smoking should only be permitted in specified areas away from potentially combustible materials.

The producer must ensure that:

- adequate fire extinguishers are provided given the nature of the location, the type of fire risks present etc and that the crew know their location and how to operate them;
- suitable means of raising the alarm in the event of a fire are available;
- where there is existing fire detection equipment, that the production's activities will not interfere with its safe operation;
- an evacuation plan is developed to ensure everyone can be safely evacuated from the building. A minimum of two exit routes must be identified and clearly signposted (this need can be reduced where a building is in use for a short period). There should be means of accounting for everyone on the location at any given time;
- where emergency procedures are already in place, the producer must ensure that such procedures are suitable and ensure the information is clearly communicated to all parties.

It may be necessary to consult with the local fire brigade if a complex site is in use.

Contractors, such as special effects designers, need to ensure that potential sources of ignition are fully considered in their risk assessments. They should also consider factors that may increase the fire loading of the location, such as temporary heaters, large amounts of paper or any hot work being undertaken.

Machinery and equipment

All work equipment used needs to be suitable for the task and in good working order. Any protective devices, such as guards, must be fitted and used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Redundant equipment and dangerous areas should be marked off as exclusion zones.

The producer should ensure, where appropriate through the contractors employed, that all equipment (whether owned or hired) is suitable for the task. They should also ensure it is adequately maintained and, where required, that testing or inspection has been carried out.

Electricity, gas and water supplies

Steps should be taken to ensure the safety of the utility supplies. There should be an assessment by a competent person or contractor of the electricity, gas and water supply to the building if these are to be used. In many disused buildings the wiring may be unsafe or unsuitable and power will need to be provided by a generator, with the obvious attendant risks and controls. Similar controls may be needed for gas supplied from tanks or cylinders.

Hazardous substances and materials

Some locations may contain hazardous materials or substances, for example chemicals, asbestos or micro-organisms that could potentially be a risk to people working on the production.

Steps should be taken to control such risks by ensuring these areas are isolated or by removing the material from the location. Removal should be undertaken by specialist waste contractors and can be very expensive. Local authorities keep detailed records on land/buildings which are contaminated and may cause harm. Information should be sought from the Environmental Health department of the local authority if you have any concerns over the former use of the land. Removal of any suspect material should only take place after appropriate advice has been obtained.

Asbestos was used widely until the mid-1970s in building applications. Many older buildings may have asbestos within their structures or associated services, eg pipe lagging. This requires to be assessed. Owners and agents for such properties should be able to provide information regarding the presence and condition of any asbestos within the building. Only licensed waste contractors can be used to remove asbestos.

The building should be vacated immediately if loose or disturbed asbestos is present. It is easier to find another location than to deal with asbestos. The building owner or agent should be advised. If it is uncertain that the material is asbestos, the building should still be vacated until the advice of a competent person has been obtained.

In a building where asbestos has been encapsulated and declared safe by a suitable expert, care should be taken to ensure that the encapsulation is not compromised by the production's activities through drilling, cabling etc.

Debris

Debris such as broken glass, hypodermic needles, bird droppings and rubbish should be removed by competent contractors before the location is used. Where required, creating the appearance of rubbish, debris etc should be achieved by dressing.

Pests and vermin

If a building has been infested with pests or vermin, eg pigeons or rats, the risk assessment should consider the possibility of personnel contracting diseases such as psittacosis or Weil's disease (leptospirosis). The building should be thoroughly cleared and cleaned by specialist contractors and staff reminded to maintain scrupulous hygiene standards.

Welfare facilities

Adequate welfare facilities should be provided at all times. The number of people involved and the intended duration of the production will determine the exact nature of these facilities.

You need to provide adequate:

- toilets;
- washing facilities;
- clean drinking water;
- heating and ventilation;
- storage for clothing and possibly the means of drying it;
- catering, dining and rest facilities.

All the above facilities can be provided in temporary accommodation such as mobile vehicles.

Further reading

Management of health and safety at work. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L21 (Second edition) HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 2488 9

Workplace health, safety and welfare. Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. Approved Code of Practice L24 HSE Books 1992 ISBN 0 7176 0413 6

A guide to managing health and safety in construction HSE Books 1995 ISBN 0 7176 0755 0

Managing health and safety in construction. Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994. Approved Code of Practice and guidance HSG224 HSE Books 2001 ISBN 0 7176 2139 1

Further information

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995 Website: www.hsebooks.co.uk (HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 08701 545500 Fax: 02920 859260 e-mail: hseinformationservices@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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