

STANDARD PROCEDURES FOR AUDIENCE SAFETY IN THE STOUGHTON OPERA HOUSE

During any sort of crisis situation in public areas, the greatest danger is not from the crisis itself, but from the element of panic within the audience. This manual of standard procedures for handling crisis situations is dedicated to the elimination of panic - both in the audience and in ourselves. It is imperative that every Staff Member and Volunteer read this manual and be familiar with its contents. If those in charge during a crisis appear calm and collected, the casts, musicians, crews and audiences will follow suit.

The intent is not for complete memorization and retention of the contents of this manual; while that might be an "ideal", there are too many specifics and chronological procedures involved. "What" is done is only part of the job; the sequence of events is often crucial in averting panic. This manual is set up to provide quick reference to procedures. Copies should be permanently located at all major Staff and Volunteer stations so that individuals charged with responsibility may know what the sequence of events will be in the event of a crisis. This factor would be especially important in the event of a loss of intercommunication systems.

Ideally, this manual will never be needed. Should a situation arise when it may become necessary, it is essential that Staff and Volunteers are familiar with its contents. Additionally, it is important that Staff and Volunteers can easily locate this manual should time and circumstance allow a review of procedures that relate to the particular crisis in question. When action is required – act quickly and decisively. Confidence in yourself will instill confidence in others. Confidence, more than anything else, helps to avert panic.

Common Sense also plays a very important part in safety awareness in the Opera House. There should be one knowledgeable individual from the theatre staff at each performance who is the "Person in Charge" of making decisions associated with emergencies; ideally, this will not be someone with primary production commitments, but someone who is relatively free and able to operate in this capacity without needing to shut down the show. All theater staff should receive training in CPR and AED use. Phone numbers for local Police, Fire, EMS and a local Crisis Intervention Center should be posted permanently at all major Staff and Volunteer stations. All Opera House staff should know the location and operation procedure for each fire prevention device within their area of responsibility. Opera

House staff should maintain a checklist of those things that must be done before each performance regarding audience safety. This should include lobby area, rest rooms, theater, parking lots, entrance sidewalks, and any other areas to which the public has access when they are on the premises. When the Opera House is open to the public, the facility becomes responsible for their well-being while they are present. Additionally, while this document deals primarily with the safety and protection of the audience, a portion of that protection must extend to the theatre and its staff and volunteers as well.

AUDIENCE SAFETY PROCEDURES.....ILLNESS AND INJURY

ILLNESS

1. Upon discovering a subject who has become ILL notify or send notification to the "Person in Charge" on duty.
 2. If the subject is conscious, attempt to move subject into a comfortable position, preferably out of direct audience traffic.
 3. If subject is conscious, question as to location and type of pain. Identify all symptoms (internal as well as external). DO NOT administer any medication unless subject both provides and requests it. Offer to summon medical aid.
 4. Do not attempt any treatment yourself unless you have been trained in both diagnosis and treatment procedures. Limit your involvement to making the subject comfortable, and obtaining information which might be of importance to an EMT or physician.
 5. If a conscious subject does not seem to be improving after a few minutes, offer again to summon medical aid. If in a few more minutes there is no change, call 911 and request assistance.
 6. If subject is unconscious call 911 and/or send for the "Person in Charge". Stay with the subject. On the phone first clearly identify yourself and your location, then describe the situation and condition of the subject.
 7. The "Person in Charge" should first call 911 or ensure 911 has been called. Second, the "Person in Charge" should call Stoughton Police Dispatch or instruct an additional staff person or volunteer to call dispatch.
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INJURY

1. **Upon discovering a subject who has been injured notify or send notification to the “Person in Charge” on duty.**
 2. **Determine the extent of injuries. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE a subject in serious or questionable condition; moving can seriously aggravate unknown internal injuries. Within these limits, make subject as comfortable as possible.**
 3. **If subject is conscious, determine location and type of pain. Identify all internal and external symptoms. Determine cause(s) of injury if known. Offer to summon medical aid; if subject refuses but is in obvious physical pain do so anyway by calling 911.**
 4. **If subject is unconscious, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE. Ascertain external symptoms (skin temperature, color, texture, bleeding, etc). and call 911 and/or send for the “Person in Charge”. If the situation appears critical, the “Person in Charge” may attempt to find a physician. Requests may be made over the house sound system if necessary.**
 5. **The “Person in Charge” should first call 911 or ensure 911 has been called. Second, the “Person in Charge” should call Stoughton Police Dispatch or instruct an additional staff person or volunteer to call dispatch.**
 6. **Notify "Person in Charge." All injuries, whether sustained by musicians, cast, crew or audience, must be reported for the record.**
 7. **Make subject as comfortable as possible until aid arrives.**
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AUDIENCE SAFETY PROCEDURES.....*FIRE*

The first step in dealing with fire involves every staff member or volunteer in the theatre, regardless of individual production responsibilities or assignments. Each must make it his or her business to know the location of all exits, and their assigned responsibilities in the event of fire.

The location and operating theory of every fire prevention device in the building and what types of extinguishers and other fire-fighting devices exist in the facility, and which types are to be used on specific types of fires is also important. Do not use hoses or water-filled extinguishers on grease or electrical fires; they will spread the fire further!

IMPORTANT: In most cases fighting a fire should be left to trained professionals. Evacuation is always the top priority.

Fire Drills must be scheduled for staff and volunteers so that everyone understands their assigned responsibilities. Staff, Volunteers, and audiences in the Opera House must strictly observe no smoking regulations.

IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

1. If you see or smell smoke notify the “Person in Charge” immediately.
 2. In case of fire the “Person in Charge” will inform staff and volunteers to go to their emergency positions, bring up house lights, and announce to the audience that a “hazardous condition” exists and to exit the theater through the nearest exit calmly and quickly in an orderly fashion.
 3. Staff and Volunteers must remain calm and assist patrons to calmly and efficiently evacuate the theater. Once the audience has evacuated or conditions become hazardous exit the building and report to the “Person in Charge” if possible once outside the building.
 4. Never use the elevator in the event of a fire for any reason.
 5. Balcony handicapped section: The designated usher(s) for this area should immediately move handicapped patrons to the designated waiting area outside the elevator with the fire door to the theater closed.
 6. Main Floor (Orchestra) handicapped section: The designated usher(s) for this area should immediately move handicapped patrons to the designated waiting area outside the elevator with the fire door to the office area closed.
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AUDIENCE SAFETY PROCEDURES.....POWER FAILURE

Power failures can be serious problems because with the loss of power goes loss of lighting and public address capability.

1. **Momentary power lapses (1-3 seconds) are not uncommon particularly during storms. Lights may flicker or go out momentarily, but if emergency lighting does not come on there is nothing to worry about.**
2. **Should emergency lighting come on and remain on for longer than 10 - 20 seconds, the following announcement should be made by the "Person in Charge":**

Ladies and gentlemen; we are experiencing a power failure. Please remain in your seats until we can determine the extent of the difficulty. There is no cause for alarm; these lights will remain on until power is restored. We will continue the performance when power is restored, so please remain in your seats. Thank you.

3. **The "Person in Charge" will determine what procedures to follow if the power remains off for an extended period (more than 5 minutes). The Box Office should have a contingency plan relevant to refunds which can be instantly implemented if necessary. House Manager should report the power failure to the Power Company (if there is a local office), and to the Police Department. The Police should be notified that a public performance was in progress, and that either (a) assistance is required or (b) the situation is under control.**
4. **The "Person in Charge" should notify Police Dispatch that there has been a power disruption during a performance and whether assistance is required. This could be particularly important if the audience is required to exit the theater.**

AUDIENCE SAFETY PROCEDURES.....TORNADO WATCH

During rainy weather in the months of April through July the Opera House Director and Staff must ensure that both the Fire Department Radio Room and the Police Dispatch have accurate listings regarding when Opera House events are taking place.

IN THE EVENT OF A TORNADO WATCH (meaning that weather conditions are "right" for tornadoes, but that none has been sighted):

1. When a Tornado Watch is posted prior to the beginning of a performance the Tornado Watch Announcement should be made informing any present audience members of the watch and that they will be informed in case of a Tornado Warning. The same announcement should be made again just prior to the performance.
 2. When a Tornado Watch is posted during a performance the "Person in Charge" should make the Watch Announcement, but at the first convenient "break" in the performance (Intermission or Between songs) with the houselights at half.
 3. If a posted watch is canceled prior to the making of the actual announcement, then no announcement need be made.
 4. If a Watch announcement is made, and there is no change in status by the next intermission, the "Person in Charge" should make the "Watch Continuation Announcement" before houselights have been brought up through the announce microphone at the soundboard.
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AUDIENCE SAFETY PROCEDURES.....TORNADO WARNING

Tornado WARNINGS are usually posted for limited areas and amounts of time. Should sirens be heard without other prior warning, staff on duty should contact the Fire Department radio room before any decision is made as to action to be taken.

IN THE EVENT OF A TORNADO WARNING (meaning that a Funnel has been sighted):

1. On confirmation of a posted Warning, the “Person in Charge” must decide if the theatre should be evacuated.
2. If the decision is made to evacuate the theater the Tornado Warning Announcement should be made.
3. If announcements are made calmly and the Staff seems in control, the audience will trust its judgment.
4. After announcement is complete, ushers should be at assigned shelter positions to assist audience if necessary. The “Person in Charge” should attempt to remain in a safe place where they have access to radio and telephone communications. They may also need to answer questions, assist those who decide to leave, or who arrive seeking assistance.
5. When the Tornado Warning is lifted the “All Clear” message should be communicated via radios to appropriate staff and volunteers.

AUDIENCE SAFETY PROCEDURES.....TORNADO ANNOUNCEMENTS

TORNADO WATCH

Ladies and Gentlemen, may we have your attention please. Attention Please. (*Short Pause*). The National Weather Service has announced a Tornado Watch for Dane County and the Stoughton Area. Repeat - a Tornado Watch has been posted for Dane County and the Stoughton Area. A Watch means that weather conditions are right for tornadoes, but none have been sighted. (*Add the following if known*):

The Watch is expected to remain in effect until_____. We will notify you immediately if there is any additional information or change of status. Thank you for your attention.

TORNADO WARNING :

Ladies and Gentlemen, may we have your attention please. Attention please. (*Short Pause*). The National Weather Service has posted a Tornado Warning for Dane County and the Stoughton Area. Repeat - a Tornado Warning has been posted for Dane County and the Stoughton Area. The Warning is in effect until_____.

A Funnel Cloud has been sighted in_____Police and local Safety Officials have recommended that for your safety we move to designated shelter areas in the building. If you look to your ushers they will direct you to the appropriate route to the designated shelter for your seating section. Please proceed calmly and carefully. We will keep you informed as the situation changes. Thank you.

CONTINUING TORNADO WATCH or WARNING:

Ladies and Gentlemen, may we have your attention please. Attention please (*Short Pause*). The Tornado Watch (Warning) remains in effect until _____. (Has been extended until _____). No further information is known at this time. Our performance will continue as scheduled, and we will notify you immediately of any change of status. Thank you.

LIFTED TORNADO WATCH or WARNING:

Ladies and Gentlemen, may we have your attention please. Attention, please. (*Short Pause*). The National Weather Service has lifted the Tornado Watch (Warning) posted earlier. (*Add whichever of the following is applicable*):

A Tornado Watch remains in effect until _____.

(OR)

A Severe Storm Warning remains in effect until _____.

Our performance will continue as scheduled, and we will notify you of any change in status. Thank you.
