

The Fringe Guide to Running a Venue

The Edinburgh Festival
fringe
society

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Feral
(Tortoise in a Nutshell in co-production
with Cumbernauld Theatre)
Photograph by Tortoise in a Nutshell

Introduction

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society exists to support anyone wishing to take part in the Edinburgh Fringe. As a venue manager, you can access support from our Participant Services department every step of the way. You can contact us throughout the year by emailing venues@edfringe.com.

Green Tip

Before undertaking work on designing how your venue will work, sign up to the Green Arts Initiative (GAI) for detailed support on how to truly run a sustainable operation in Edinburgh. www.Efgreen.co.uk

Managing a venue at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe can be a hugely rewarding experience, but is also a mammoth task for all involved. You may be intending to take over an existing space and using it to create a makeshift theatre, or maybe you already manage your own Fringe venue. Whatever your circumstances, you are legally obliged to ensure that your operations comply with all current legislations associated with being a service provider for the general public. What follows represents best-practice and compliance advice, and should be read by all venue managers with any relevant sections being shared with your staff. This document is also available as a word document and in separate chapters so that you can share relevant information with your colleagues. Please think of the environment and only print this document if absolutely necessary.

Contents

Introduction	2	After a Show	20
Legal Issues	4	At Your Lodgings	21
Rental	4	Cash Security.....	21
Payment.....	4	Vehicle Security	21
Box Office Payout.....	4	One Final Note	21
Licensing and Liability	4	Electrics.....	21
Finances.....	5	Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)	21
Licensing	9	Generators	21
An Overview	9	Stage Area Electrics	22
How to Obtain a License	9	Emergency Lighting.....	23
Inspection.....	9	Exit Signs	23
Risk Assessment.....	9	Fire Safety.....	24
Deadlines	9	Performance Risk Assessment.....	24
Changes to Existing Licenses.....	9	License Application	24
Scheduling Your Inspection.....	9	Fire Safety Protocol.....	24
Granting Licenses	10	The Auditorium and Staging.....	26
Your License Application.....	10	The Stage Area	26
How to Submit Your License Application.....	10	Dressing Rooms	26
Risk Assessment.....	12	Seating.....	27
Inspections	13	Scaffolding as a Stage Area.....	28
Alcohol.....	13	Exits.....	28
Weights and Measures.....	14	The Work at Height Regulations 2005	29
Programming	15	Accessibility.....	29
Step One: Choosing your Focus	15	The Disability Discrimination Act.....	29
Step Two: Finding Acts	15	Venue Accessibility.....	30
Venue Leaflets or Websites	16	Customer Service	31
Health and Safety	16	Types of Disabilities.....	31
Regulation within your Venue.....	17	Making Performances More Accessible	32
Regulation Outwith your Venue	18	One Final Note	33
Staffing Requirements	19	Special Effects.....	33
Security.....	20	Firearms.....	33
Before You Come to the Fringe	20	Pyrotechnics	34
At the Fringe.....	20	Other Effects.....	35

Legal Issues

Rental

Venue managers generally have two distinct relationships to consider. The first is with the venue owner, the second with the subletting performers/performing companies. It is essential that you sign some form of written venue agreement or license with the venue owner and a further sub-license agreement with any Fringe company to whom you are subletting. In some cases the space-letting agreement may be a simple exchange of letters, in others, a full, formal agreement is required to protect the rights and obligations of each party. Whatever form it takes, the agreement should be clear, unambiguous and legally binding. You should read the details carefully, and if you are in any doubt about any of the terms, seek professional legal advice. It is vital that all parties understand their respective rights and obligations under this agreement, and what financial and legal liabilities it entails, to avoid potential disputes or disagreements later.

You can contact the Fringe Society to obtain guidelines on how to write a venue contract. While these documents are only for guidance and should be used with discretion, we will provide you with useful pointers on what to consider when it comes to drawing up your own agreement.

You can also consult the [Contracts Checklists at the end of this section](#) for a list of essential components in any rental and subletting agreement.

Green Tip:

Think about accepting scans of signed contracts as a matter of business. Removing the element of postage will help reduce your carbon footprint.

Payment

Rental charges for Fringe companies subletting a space from a venue manager tend to take one of three principal fee structures. You can:

- Ask for a fixed fee only and agree to pass on 100% of box office receipts (minus any extras or box office sales commission).
- Dispense with the need for a fixed fee and agree to split the box office receipts with the performing company.
- Require either the payment of a fixed fee or a percentage of box office receipts, whichever ends up being greater. In this case, you retain the fixed fee and, if your proportion of the box office is greater than the fee, you can retain the difference before returning the box office receipts to the Fringe company.
- If you do opt to take payment of a fixed fee, it is normal practice to seek a percentage up front when you book the performers and the remainder before their first performance.

Box Office Payout

You should agree on a final date for full payment of venue box office monies to any subletting performer, making sure to allow sufficient time for you to calculate and subtract any permitted deductions from the box office receipts. Money from sales at the Fringe Box Office will be paid out to you or the performers (as specified at the time of registration form submission) in the last week of September at the latest (about a week later if it has to be converted into a different currency). If you are taking a box office share, you should typically be in a position to hand over the performers' share in early October.

Green Tip

Go paperless with payout by generating PDF documents and emailing them to companies. If they'd like a hard copy, wait for them to ask.

Licensing and Liability

Insurance

You must take out a policy against damage to your own property and accident to the public and your employees when they are in your venue. If you are subletting the venue, you should insist that individual performers take out insurance to cover against risks to their employees, members of the public and their property arising out of the performers' use of the space (and require evidence of such insurance policies).

Your contract with the performer should provide that the performer would not do anything that would invalidate any insurance policy you hold as venue manager.

You will also want to ensure that the venue owner has material damage and consequential loss insurance on the venue and its contents. The contract should also provide that the venue owner would not pursue a claim against you for negligence or breach of contract if those costs can be claimed under his or her insurance.

The Fringe Society has worked closely with various insurance providers to develop bespoke packages for the Edinburgh Fringe. These companies normally advertise on edfringe.com. If you need help identifying them, email participants@edfringe.com.

Licenses

A venue will require an appropriate venue license before any events can be held there. Find out whether it is your responsibility to obtain the license—and remember that if you or any visiting performer is doing a show with special requirements that may affect the granting of a license, you must ensure that these are included in the license application.

Please note that the application has to be applied for three months in advance.

It is very important to remember that if you or a visiting company intend to make any changes to the venue (eg, rearrange seating or extend a stage), you must comply with the conditions in your venue license, and should ask the public safety officer, fire prevention officer and environmental officer to approve these alterations before performances commence.

Advise companies wishing to use your venue of the terms and conditions of your license (particularly of any restrictions) and require them to seek your approval before making any changes to the venue. Note that if you plan to sell alcoholic beverages, an additional license will be required. [For more information on licensing your Fringe venue, see the Licensing section.](#)

Liability for the Actions of a Subletting Performing Company

As venue manager, one of your most important concerns will be to avoid incurring any legal liability by virtue of the actions of the companies putting on shows at your venue.

It is crucial, for instance, that you are not responsible if a company uses indecent or defamatory material, or if it breaches copyright by not obtaining permission from the creator of any copyrighted material used in its show or publicity. It is, however, prudent to question the company in regards to the status of the performance rights to any piece being presented.

As far as the venue owner is concerned, however, the venue manager will be the one responsible for the activities of subletting performers. It is therefore important to understand that venue managers cannot protect themselves completely from performers' activities. The best you can do is have a presence at the venue in order to anticipate and defuse problems and include clauses in the subletting agreement that serve to ensure that if a claim is made by the venue owner, then you the venue manager is at least in a position to make a corresponding claim against the subletting company.

In your contract you should obtain confirmation (known as a warranty) from the performing company that their show does not contain indecent or defamatory material and that they have obtained all copyright licenses for performance of the show.

Your contract should also contain a provision that the theatre company will be responsible if you suffer any loss because of a breach of this warranty (known as an indemnity).

You will want your contract to require that the company complies with the terms of the venue license and observes all relevant legislation, such as health and safety and the laws governing the use of children and animals in performances. Again, your contract should contain an indemnity covering you for breach by the company of the license or relevant legislation.

Performing Right Society (PRS for Music)

If you plan to play any music at your venue, you should obtain a license from the PRS. However, there is an agreement between the Fringe and PRS in place. It stipulates that in return for a reduction in fees, the Fringe Society administers the process of any charges levied by PRS including background music licenses to be used in foyers, bars and auditoria out-with performances.

Companies will be sent a link to an online form at the start of the festival and will then be responsible for completing it with the correct information. If music is being used that is PRS-registered, then a percentage of the corresponding show's takings will be deducted and paid out. This information will be distributed to companies and venues each year in accordance with the agreement reached. If companies fail to complete the form, a fee will be deducted based on the highest percentage.

The PRS does not license the performance of complete musical works (musicals/opera) or music that is used in dramatic works or ballets for which the music was specifically composed. In order to use these types of music, permission must be obtained from the copyright owner, which will generally be the composer/lyricist or his or her publisher.

Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL)

You should be aware that the copyright on a recording of music is separate to the copyright on the musical work itself. PPL is the UK record industry royalty-collection society and licenses the playing in public of a sound recording. If you plan to play original sound recordings of music then, in addition to paying PRS dues for the performance of the music, you must also contact PPL to obtain a license for use of the recording.

Finances

Trading Entities

When acting as a venue manager, you will need to decide whether to trade as a sole trader or to incorporate a private or charitable company. Trading in your own name means you avoid the time and expense involved with incorporating and running a company. However, you should be aware that as a sole trader you could be personally liable for any debts you incur or for any losses you suffer if a claim is brought against you.

Incorporating a company is relatively quick and simple. A lawyer or a company formation agent should be able to incorporate a simple company for you in about a week for a cost of approximately £200 plus value-added tax (VAT) and outlays. Alternatively, if you are based in the UK you can register online with Companies House for a fee of £20.

<http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/infoAndGuide/companyRegistration.shtml>

Trading as a limited company may make an organisation appear more reputable and you may also find it easier to attract sponsorship or outside investment. While there are some statutory requirements, such as preparing annual accounts, the main benefit of incorporation is that your trading liability is limited to the value of your shareholding only.

Naturally, there are some administrative costs involved in running a limited company and you should factor this into your budgeting.

Another option is to incorporate as a charitable company. In order to obtain charitable status, your organisation must exist for the public benefit and meet one or more of the specified charitable purposes as set out in the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. An arts organisation or theatre company can usually meet the charitable test where its objectives come within the definition of 'advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science'.

While there are tax advantages, a charitable organisation is more expensive and time-consuming to form and is also subject to increased regulatory control. Operating as a charity may make it easier to obtain public support and open up funding avenues for a company that would not be available otherwise. However, a charitable organisation must only apply its profits or funds towards the core charitable purposes for which it was established and cannot raise capital through commercial activity. Thus, a venue manager operating as a charity cannot engage in trading activity such as running a shop or bar. If such activity is envisaged, it is usual for the charity to form a subsidiary trading company to cover ancillary commercial enterprise. Any resultant profit is then usually covenanted by the trading subsidiary to the charity to avoid taxation.

In short, forming and operating a charity is a task not to be undertaken lightly. You should seek professional legal advice before pursuing this option; by way of self-help, you can also consult the web pages of the Scottish Charity Regulator at www.oscr.org.uk (or in England and Wales, www.charitycommission.gov.uk).

Sponsorship

As a venue manager, you may want to try and gain sponsorship for your venue. Practical suggestions on obtaining sponsorship can be found in the Fringe Guide to Doing a Show [LINK]. Before accepting a sponsor, you should bear in mind that some venue owners, such as local authorities, have policies prohibiting certain types of sponsorship (for instance, from alcohol companies). If you are fortunate enough to obtain a sponsor for your venue, you should make sure that you agree and set down a sponsorship arrangement in an agreement.

Depending on the nature of your deal, this agreement will cover a number of different matters. At the very least, it is essential to agree exactly what form of mention the

sponsor will get in publicity for the venue and to make sure that the sponsor is aware that individual shows may have their own sponsorship.

Also, you will need to agree the basis for calculating the sponsorship fee and when the fee is payable. If you are in any doubt as to what to cover in your agreement, you should consult a solicitor.

You should require visiting performers to notify you in good time of any sponsorship agreements they may have secured for their show. You should make provision in the letting contract to ensure that the sponsorship of a show does not conflict with that of the venue.

Green Tip

Most businesses are now happy to receive initial sponsorship proposals by email. Calling your prospects for a scoping chat will let you know who to send the information to and negate the need for glossy print outs until necessary (if ever).

Funding and Profit Sharing

If you are raising finance to fund a production or to run a venue, it is advisable to seek professional advice as it is easy to fall foul of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. This act sets out complex rules governing the categories of persons to whom an investment invitation can be issued and about paying out returns to investors. The penalties for breach of these complicated regulations are severe and can involve imprisonment. For the full text of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, visit: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

Also, if you plan to enter into a profit-sharing arrangement with a third party (other than the usual box office split arrangement) or a royalty-pool sharing agreement with key talent, you should bear in mind that these aspects can be quite complicated and legal advice should be sought before the start of the let:

Contracts Checklists

It is essential that you sign a venue-letting agreement with the venue owner. You should make sure that the agreement covers at least the following points:

- the name and address (to which documents may be served) of the venue owner
- the start and end dates of the let
- details of any facilities to be provided as part of the let
- the right to sublet the whole or parts of the venue to third parties for performances (this may be essential)
- the amount of rent and how this is to be paid
- whether a deposit is required and when it will be returned
- whether VAT is payable on the rent

- the venue owner's responsibility for paying rates and taxes and for keeping the premises wind – and watertight
- your responsibility for paying for electricity, gas and telephone use during the let
- a statement that no partnership is formed or shall arise out of the lease
- the requirement for a pre-let inspection where the condition of the premises and an inventory of contents are agreed and recorded. Be careful you are not required by implication to return the premises in a higher standard of condition at the end of the let than at the outset
- a requirement that you leave the premises in the same condition as it was in at the start of the let (fair wear and tear permitted)
- provision for a post-let inspection to compare the venue's condition with its condition at the end of the let
- the venue owner's responsibility for insuring the venue
- the terms of any access permitted to the venue owner
- broadcast and filming rights for the venue and whether you have permission to install recording and filming equipment
- a jurisdiction and/or mediation statement.

Green Tip

At the start of negotiations, it's much easier to ask the venue owner to conform to sustainable practice as part of your agreement. Many venues will already have year round agreements with waste companies. Ask to access these services and question their commitments to carbon reduction.

If you are subletting the venue you should enter into a space-letting agreement with each Fringe performing company that has been given a time slot for the performance of its show within the venue. This contract should seek to pass on some of your obligations under your agreement with the venue owner and should also cover at least the following matters:

- the name and the address details (e.g., registered address, correspondence address) of the performing company
- provisions dealing with the start and end dates of the overall sublet and the time slot available per day (with limited power to vary) and penalties where there are overruns
- details of the applicable rental and/or box office split (including any booking deposit)
- provision as to the number of ticket sales that must come through your box office. Keep in mind that a minimum of 25% of a show's tickets must be sold through the Fringe Box Office
- details of all those deductions that you are entitled to make from ticket sales, such as credit card charges and Festival Fringe Society commissions. Try and be fair about this and ensure that these costs are deducted before the net box office income is split between you and the performers—the costs should not be borne by the company alone
- a date for paying out box office settlement with full accounting statement and right of audit

- details of seating, equipment, facilities, staff and technical assistance being provided and the charges (if additional to basic rental) for those services. Try and be transparent and give the company as much information as possible to enable them to identify what is included in the rental and where additional costs may be levied (and if levied, to what extent)
- a provision requiring that you be given, in advance, full details of the production and the artists involved
- provisions dealing with charges for running a box office (in addition to the central Fringe Box Office), press office and for publishing flyers/ posters/programmes, where applicable.
- details of which charges are liable for VAT
- a provision governing compensation payable by the performer if they cancel their show. Watch that this is not penal, and that if you manage to re-let the slot then reduced compensation is payable
- provision that you are not responsible for loss suffered by the performer if the venue is not available for any reason beyond your control (Force Majeure)
- a requirement for the company to comply with the terms of the venue license (eg, not to admit more people than the maximum amount permitted under the license), to ensure the company's compliance with relevant legislation (such as health and safety legislation, fire regulations, etc), and to display any insurance certificates and notices as required under such legislation.
- provisions to ensure that it shall be the responsibility of the performing company to obtain any relevant work permits and to be notified of non-EU-resident artists engaged by the performing company
- a warranty that the performer has obtained all necessary rights or permissions for the show and paid all authors' or publishers' royalties
- a provision covering PRS and PPL and any other licenses that may be required by the performer in order to be allowed to perform (eg, special licenses must be obtained when the performance includes children)
- an indemnity from the company protecting you from loss as a result of negligence of its employees or breaches on its part of the venue license, relevant legislation or the terms of the sublet contract
- a provision to relieve you from any liability where damage to the venue is caused by equipment brought in by the company
- provisions to cover any deposit paid to cover damage to the venue, to make good any damage at the performers' /lessee's expense and, if required, to take costs out of the deposit and/or box office receipts
- a provision requiring the performers to obtain and maintain during their engagement suitable public liability insurance for a set minimum amount and employees' liability insurance (and to provide evidence of these insurances)
- provisions on the sale of merchandise and commissions payable, approval of the company's sponsorship and whether facility fees are payable for television recordings of shows

- a requirement to ensure that all scenery and properties on the stage are fire-resistant.
- the terms of your permitted access during the company's let
- a provision for termination of the agreement if the company breaches any of the applicable terms (where such breach is not remedied after due notice)
- provisions that the venue may only be used for the designated purpose
- a provision to prevent the installation of fixed fittings and to ensure that all temporary fittings and equipment erected or brought into the venue will be removed immediately at the end of the lease
- a jurisdiction statement (eg, the agreement shall be governed under Scottish law).

Green Tip

At this point, you can make a big difference to your organisation's carbon footprint by specifying conditions in your contracts. Include the following provisions:

- flyers and posters should be printed on recycled paper, or paper from a sustainable source.
- Edinburgh based printers should be used to reduce transportation emissions
- lower print runs should be recommended
- companies must use on-site recycling facilities where provided
- companies should access the Fringe Society Reuse and Recycle day where possible

Licensing

An Overview

If you are performing at the Fringe, the venue must have a license. The procedures set out in the following pages have been approved by all of the relevant authorities in Edinburgh and this publication has their endorsement. One person from each venue should apply for a license and be responsible to the authorities for that venue. In some instances, the venue owner or someone else may already hold a license on the venue's behalf, in which case you should ascertain what theatre or public entertainment events this covers. Once this is established, you will need to ensure your own production comes within the terms of the license and to enquire whether your production contravenes standard regulations. If it does, a special item must be included in the license application.

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How to Obtain a License

There are very few cases when you will not need a license, among them:

- when the building already has an annual theatre license or public entertainment license (check this with the owner of the venue).
- when the event being staged is of a predominantly religious or educational nature.
- It is essential that you contact Diane Hill in the Licensing Section of the City of Edinburgh Council to verify requirements. Check with other users of the venue that they are not already applying for a license. Decide amongst yourselves who will take responsibility for the license and collectively apply for one license to cover all the performances. Do this at the earliest opportunity, but definitely before the end of May.

If you do need a temporary license you can request a form from:

Licensing Section
249 High Street
Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ
Tel: 0131 529 4208

Alternatively, you can download an online form from www.edinburgh.gov.uk/licensing.

Inspection

If you are running the venue yourself, authorities such as Public Safety of City of Edinburgh Council will need to come and inspect the venue. Their brief is to 'ensure that each venue meets an acceptable level of safety', and although their role does not include actually giving advice and guidance, they are happy to do so. We recommend you take their experience on board as it could prevent against danger and serious accidents during the Fringe.

Risk Assessment

You are also obliged to prepare a risk assessment that identifies potential risks to the health and safety of building users in relation to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The authorities have been concerned with the increase in potentially dangerous interaction between the audience and the performers. If shows in your venue includes any risk of injury to the audience (ie, stilt-walking through the audience, motorbike stunts, fire juggling, trapeze swings, objects being projected into the audience, etc) contact Public Safety in good time to discuss your proposals. You may be required to submit the risk assessment when applying for your license. Public Safety can advise you quickly and efficiently if you have prepared your risk assessment in advance.

Deadlines

Once you have filled in the necessary forms, you must return them with your plans and your payment for the fees; an incomplete application will not be considered. The deadline for application processing for venues wanting to be part of the Fringe is usually the start of May. If you are well prepared, your application is welcome at any time prior to this deadline. In particular, if you are planning a performance that takes place after midnight, you need to submit your application as soon as possible.

Changes to Existing Licenses

If the venue has a license already and you plan to make changes to the venue (rearranging the seating, for example), you must advise all the authorities by writing a letter explaining these changes and seek their approval before the show starts. They may wish to inspect the venue again to check that the changes comply with local regulations.

Scheduling Your Inspection

Please advise the authorities of the actual date of your first public performance in Edinburgh on the application. There have been several incidents of inspectors having to return to a venue several times in search of the performers. When you send in the

application, suggest preferred inspection dates and times. Ideally these would be 48 hours in advance of your first performance to allow time to sort out problems, but even 24 hours is a considerable help. This does not, however, mean you can give them only 48 – or 24-hours' notice of your plans.

Granting Licenses

Licenses will be granted once the Council considers that public safety is not compromised by the condition of the venue and the sets/features within it for each show. Do not change your plans after assessment unless you obtain new permission. The authorities will make spot checks throughout the Fringe period and may withdraw your license if they perceive any alterations that are deemed unsafe. Do not take this risk—licenses are not refused or withdrawn without good reason.

Your License Application

Which License to Apply for

There are four relevant types of license: theatre, public entertainment, cinema and liquor. The fourth type, liquor licenses, will be covered at the end of this section. You must specify which you are applying for.

Theatre

You are most likely to need a theatre license governed by the Theatres Act 1968. This covers plays, street theatre, operas, musicals, dance shows and revues 'where actors and actresses play a role, whether by way of speech, singing, acting or dancing'. It also covers stand-up comedy, mime, dance or visual performances where there may not be any dialogue or script in the traditional sense.

You need a license whether you charge for admission or not. Voluntary payments, membership cards, the purchase of a programme or refreshment are not ways of avoiding licensing. Even if your show is completely free of any charge, a license must still be obtained. Remember, if your venue already has a license, check that it covers your type of production and the times. On the form, you should include the dates and times that the venue will be open.

Public entertainment

This covers music concerts (rock, jazz, classical or otherwise), variety shows and cabaret not covered under the definition of revue. It also includes exhibitions for which an entrance fee is being charged. If the venue already has a theatre or cinema license, you do not need to apply for a public entertainment license, provided that the entertainment is held during the permitted hours of the existing license. If you are planning to programme a hypnotist show, you should always check with the licensing

authorities. Any exhibition for which a charge for entry is made now requires a public entertainment license.

Note that an indirect charge (for example, for a programme) does not allow you to avoid obtaining the license. The exhibition space has to conform to all safety regulations. Free exhibitions or those taking place in the foyer of a licensed theatre do not require a further license, but will be checked by the authorities for adequate safety precautions.

Cinema

Any public showing of films or video (including video games), even if it is only an occasional content in a theatre or entertainment show, needs to be passed by the director of corporate services. The showing of slides does not come into this category. This type of license is very rarely needed on the Fringe. If you are not sure which heading your show comes under, ask when you apply, giving full details. If you are still in doubt, apply for a theatre license as the regulations covering this category are applicable to the other categories (ie, the conditions covering a theatre license will cover you for almost any event). This, however, does not work the other way around. All events that use fireworks, pyrotechnics or lasers require either a theatre or public entertainment license.

How to Submit Your License Application

Together with your license application, you must send four copies of a scale plan (usually 1:50 or 1:100 metric) of the premises. This includes the stage, backstage, any other space being used by the performers, the auditorium, and any other areas that the audience has access to. You must show the exit routes from your auditorium through to the open air.

Plans

Additional plans must show details of any scaffolding or stage construction and the seating layout. Don't forget, you must show your layout and measurements, the materials being used, sections, loading calculations, etc. Include a key to all symbols and titles for all drawings. Too many plans do not actually show which venue they are for, and as a result are ignored, lost or confused with another venue. In most cases, the venue must have a minimum of two exits from the auditorium and at least one toilet for each sex. Exceptions can be made for venues accommodating fewer than 60 people (including performers).

The plans must show:

- the layout and position of the stage and seating
- gangways and passages and their widths
- all doors and their direction of opening

- all exits
- toilet facilities
- stage, scaffolding and step construction
- support members, boards, fixings, sections, measurements and all other calculations
- a title block with the venue name, performing company, name of the person managing the venue, name of the person responsible for the venue and date.

The plans should be checked by a qualified structural engineer or be accompanied by a design certificate.

License Fees

Go to the City of Edinburgh Council website at www.edinburgh.gov.uk and look under License Fees for up-to-date fees. You will need to check the City of Edinburgh Council website regularly for the latest licensing costs as fees have changed recently and are set to change further over the next few years.

Safety

It is very important to have someone check your structural plans as it is easy to make simple but potentially catastrophic mistakes. Check:

- all areas to which the public has access
- the point from which the electrical supply will be taken. If possible, indicate the maximum anticipated electrical load and write this on the plan. Check that your venue power supply can handle this
- any unusual staging arrangement which could affect the audience.

The premises must be generally structurally sound, must not present any danger to people using the premises and must be able to support the loading imposed on a building of public assembly: 5KN/m² (or 104lbs/sq ft). Send someone who knows the regulations to see the hall and arrange for Public Safety to go along as well, as they know most of the buildings.

Deadlines

The application forms, together with four copies of each plan, must reach the director of administration by the end of May. Allow enough time to cover postal delays. The application must be delivered or posted with a cheque or postal order (not cash) for the appropriate fee made payable to 'The City of Edinburgh Council'. In the event of subletting a venue where the responsible management company changes, a separate application must be made to vary the terms of the license. Once again, you will need to check the City of Edinburgh Council website for current fees; costs have changed recently and will also change significantly in future.

Application Checklist

Please note that your application may not be processed if any of the following items are missing:

- Name, current address, date, place of birth and age of the applicant. Make sure the address and phone number is always available so that you can be contacted at short notice; a university or college term-time address is not sufficient.
- The name, address, date and place of birth and age of the responsible manager of the premises. This person must be on the premises at all times it is open to the public. If a venue is open all day, you may wish to organise a shift system. In this instance you must list all the details for each of the intended responsible managers and the times they are on duty. Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.
- The full address of the premises and any names under which it might be listed in the Fringe Programme or in publicity material.
- The name of the society, theatre company, etc that will be making use of the premises. There may be more than one—be sure to list them all.
- The period applied for (ie, the date of the first performance to the date of the last inclusive, not counting get-in days). If you intend to open earlier or continue longer than the official Fringe period, then these dates should be included as well.
- The types of performance taking place: eg, drama, mime, dance, revue.

Apply for variations in the terms of the license on a separate piece of paper – include details, for example, if the venue does not have a telephone or a safety curtain.

Enclose four copies of the main layout plan, correctly titled, and any detail drawings.

Attach a cheque for the applicable fee made out to *The City of Edinburgh Council*.

On a separate covering letter, indicate the most suitable times for venue inspections by the authorities. They will try to keep to these as much as possible.

Don't forget to fill in the appropriate forms for Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service and Environmental and Consumer Services. Send the fire form directly to the Fire Department (Business and Commerce section) at the service headquarters and the environmental form with the main application form. Fill them in, even if you have no special effects or PA systems. For more information, see the Risk Assessment section below.

Send it all as early as possible; you have to make your application at least 21 days prior to the event requiring a license, although the City of Edinburgh Council department recommends you send them by the beginning of May 2014.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of the things that might cause harm to people in your venue and what measures are in place to prevent that harm.

Different departments are looking for different areas to be covered by your risk assessment: the Fire Department want to know about the fire risk and your evacuation procedures for both the venue and each production to be shown.

Public Safety officers need a risk assessment as it relates to the members of the audience from the time that they queue to get in to the time they leave your venue.

Health and Safety are interested in safe working practices, including when building work is in progress converting the space for theatrical use, performers' safety and all aspects of the staff's health, safety and welfare.

A good introduction to creating a risk assessment document can be found in the Health and Safety Executive's Five Steps to Risk Assessment. Copies of this booklet can be downloaded free from: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/index.htm>

The five steps in the booklet are:

- Look for the hazard
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or if more should be done
- Record your findings
- Review your assessment and revise it if necessary.

The Executive defines a hazard as 'anything that can cause harm' and risk as 'the chance, high or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard'.

Making Your Risk Assessment

There is no right or wrong way of setting down a risk assessment, but the simplest way to record one is in table form. Give each of the first three steps from the Five Steps to Risk Assessment listed above its own column. As you go looking for hazards to fill in the first of these columns, put yourself in the audience's shoes and imagine yourself walking through every step of attending a performance. Start in the street. Is there a queue? How is it organised? The hazard here could be *crushing* or *tripping*. Go into the crush hall/corridor. Has the first house left? If not, where do you stand to let the leaving audience past? Again, the hazards are 'crushing' and 'tripping', etc. Are there any hazards in the corridors—steps, tables, art installations, etc? Put down *tripping*, or maybe *hit/struck* if there is anything with sharp edges that could cause rips and

tears on clothing or flesh. Is there anything unusual about your theatre set-up? Does the audience sit on trapezes over the actors ('falling')? Are there any pyrotechnics in the show (*fire* or *burns/scorches*)? And so on. No one expects you to list every single eventuality. It's up to you to decide what constitutes a relevant hazard. And remember that the fifth step of the process is to review your assessment and revise it if necessary, so if in future years you are managing the same venue with the same layout, be sure to revisit your earlier assessment, noting any new precautions taken or new hazards that have become apparent. The Council keeps everything on file, so you will be able to view back copies of risk assessments for your venue if you require.

Fire Safety

The Fire Scotland Act 2005 Part 3 and Fire Scotland Regulations 2006 place responsibility for fire safety measures on the employer in the premises (ie, you) to safeguard his or her employees (i.e. the actors, stage crew) against the risk of fire. Under these regulations you must:

- assess the fire risks in the workplace
- check that fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned
- check that people in the building know what to do if there is a fire
- check that people who may be in the building can get out safely
- provide reasonable fire-fighting equipment
- check and maintain your fire safety equipment.
- These laws also require you, as the employer and/ or person in charge, to provide a written fire risk assessment as part of your Entertainment License application.
- In formulating the fire risk assessment, the following points should be considered:
 - What are the risks from fire and how serious are they?
 - What, if anything, needs to be done?
 - What training should be given to staff?

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service also require a risk assessment that covers each and every production that is going to be staged at the venue. This performance risk assessment needs to cover such things as the material used to construct the props and scenery (Scenery Used) and whether there are to be any naked flames or effects on stage (Special Effects).

Further guidance can be found at: www.infoscotland.com

Noise

We encourage all Fringe companies to consider the implications of very noisy performances, particularly if there are residences nearby. Most venues are not acoustically sealed or designed as concert halls and local residents might not like listening to your show as much as you do. If you have any doubts, please consult with the Noise Control section of Environmental and Consumer Services.

Inspections

Before the temporary license is issued, you will be checked by the following departments who, with the exception of the police, will visit the venue as few as 24 hours before the curtain goes up:

- Property Management—Public Safety
- Electrical Inspectors (or its appointed consultant)
- Environmental and Consumer Services
- Police
- Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service

When you have finished setting up, contact the authorities to arrange the various inspections. You should have everything ready and set up exactly as it will be when the doors are opened to let in the audience. The authorities are all willing to come in advance of the final inspection if you wish to seek their advice on any detail. For example, if you are unsure of how some steps should be built, invite Public Safety to see them as they are being constructed—don't wait until they have been finished as they may be wrong.

The venue manager should be present at all the inspections and take note of any points that may arise. If there are problems, the inspectors will give you time to correct these and will return to check that you have completed the changes before the license is granted.

When the Fire and Rescue Service visit, they will be looking at the venue's general precautionary measures as well as those taken specifically for each show. When they come to look at a stage effect, demonstrate what happens as clearly as you can. Make sure that you know what to do. Do not change anything once you have been granted the license unless you have the permission to do so.

Spot Checks

Remember, the inspectors will return unannounced to make a spot check and, if you have changed the setup, they may remove your license in the middle of a run. Check identification of all of these inspectors and officials before allowing them to wander about your venue. Don't be afraid of asking persons unknown to you who they are and what they are doing. Real inspectors always have identity cards. You will be notified once the license has been granted. You must go and collect it, in person, from the Licensing Assistant at City Chambers in the High Street, prior to your show beginning. The license must then be displayed in a safe but prominent place in the venue. Officials will ask to see the license at the building inspection.

Alcohol

You cannot sell alcoholic beverages without a license. This can be obtained in one of two ways:

Occasional Licenses

The entire business of selling alcoholic drinks can be subcontracted to an existing liquor license holder. This may be a local public house or hotel that pays a rental fee or a percentage of its earnings to you, the venue manager. Obtaining the license and the meeting of all regulations in force becomes the responsibility of this license holder. This license is granted for four-day periods of time only. Please check the City of Edinburgh Council website for up-to-date fees.

Occasional Permissions

If the organisation running the venue is a voluntary association where any monies raised are for their benefit rather than for an individual or business, then the organisation may apply for its own occasional permission. The organisation must be properly consolidated and produce a valid constitution. Again, this is granted for four-day periods only and cannot be obtained if the premises are already licensed. Please check the City of Edinburgh Council website for details and costs. You may apply for liquor licensing up to four times a year; the duration of the Fringe counts as one occasion, providing that it is the same organisation that is running the bar. The application forms are obtained from the Licensing Department at 249 High Street. The completed forms should be returned at least four weeks in advance of the opening performance.

The police will look at the particular conditions appropriate to each application prior to granting permission. Generally applicants should take the following into account:

The license is only for the hours and days set out in the application

It is not an *open door* license. The bars should only be open for the benefit of the audience and staff involved in a particular performance. Applicants should not encourage the general public to use the bar – indeed, bar use should be restricted to ticket holders only.

A nominated person must be available on site at all times when the bar is open. The name(s) of this person or persons should be part of the application, as well as the specific hours and days during which they will be filling the supervisory role.

The applicant must comply with the Licensing (Scotland) Act and any conditions attached to the grant of the license. The applicant must follow the regulations concerning Environmental Health and the Weights and Measures Acts.

Weights and Measures

The applicant must comply with the provisions of the weights and measures legislation that regulates the sale by measure of intoxicating liquor. The legislation is enforced by the Council's trading standards officers as part of their role as weights and measures inspectors. These officers often make visits to venues during festival time. In recent years they have carried out test purchase programmes that have revealed a high number of short measures being served. Applicants are reminded of their legal responsibilities in ensuring that customers are served proper measures. This requires the use of suitable stamped measuring equipment and properly trained and supervised bar staff. Should applicants require further advice or information in respect of these issues, they can contact:

City of Edinburgh Council
Trading Standards Service—
Environmental & Consumer Services
Chesser House
500 Gorgie Road
Edinburgh EH 3YJ
0131 529 3030
trading.standards@edinburgh.gov.uk

If you have any questions concerning a liquor license, get in touch with the police at Fettes Avenue and the City of Edinburgh Council's Licensing Department well in advance.

Green Tip

If you are running a bar or catering facility, think about engaging with a local supplier of compostable packaging like Vegware.

Programming

Programming your venue is the most creative and in many ways the most rewarding part of your job as a venue manager. It is also easily the most important part, as finding a strong line-up of high-quality productions is fundamental to any venue's success on the Fringe. Programming is also a time where the head has to rule the heart (at least most of the time). Filling a venue with your own particular favourites is fine so long as there are hundreds of other people who share your passion. Having said that, commitment to what you are promoting is vital. (Besides, it's the rare individual that takes on the management of a venue without any interest in its artistic direction.) A venue manager's enthusiasm will rub off on performers, staff and audience alike.

Step One: Choosing your Focus

The first thing to consider is the type of programme you would like to present in your venue. This will often be dictated by the nature of the spaces available – their sizes, technical facilities, acoustics, capacities, etc. Other factors that will determine the shape of the programme include location, proximity to other venues, availability of performers, competition and your own interests, experience and contacts. It is important to have a clear idea of the type of venue you are looking to run. Define for yourself the scope of the programme you are looking to present. Do you want to focus on one particular genre (music, comedy, dance, etc), some other specialism like student companies, international companies or Scottish work, or even some heretofore unexplored class of show? There has been a tendency in recent years for venues to specialise in this fashion a bit more, although there are few venues that present work in only a single art form. A number of venues programme different types of work at different times of day, for instance, children's shows in the morning, theatre in the afternoon and comedy late at night. A venue that does elect to specialise will be able to build contacts with artists, agents and media pertinent to its chosen area. It may also, in time, become a magnet for audiences interested in that type of work. However, it does become more difficult to fill out a complete programme if you narrow your choices. Make sure that there are enough performers and audience out there to realise your ambition. A good place to start is the Venue Guide in last year's Fringe Programme. Take some time to analyse how other venues have gone about selecting their shows, many have been running for a number of years and have settled on their current mix of events through much trial and error. Even so, don't just try to copy someone else's formula – chances are that it will not work for you in exactly the same way. The venues that have the greatest likelihood of becoming successful are those that take the basics on board, but more importantly, develop their own character and programming style.

Step Two: Finding Acts

There are basically two possible routes to follow when trying to fill your venue's programme. The first is to make selections from performers who have registered an interest through the Fringe Office and are actively searching for a venue. The second is taking a more proactive approach – going out to find artists who may be interested in appearing at the Fringe. The first route is obviously the easiest, but not necessarily the most rewarding. You will need to remember that Fringe performers are encouraged to try several venues to find the best deal for them, so you will be in competition with other venues. The second option obviously requires more work, but would provide you with more options. In reality, you are likely to end up with a programme drawn from a combination of both. The majority of venues report that the greatest number of requests to use their space come from those attending the Fringe Society Roadshow events and using our Guide to Choosing a Venue or venue search facility. Details of these services are available in the performers' area of edfringe.com.

Here are a few tips for making the most of this resource on your venue's behalf:

- Make sure the Fringe Office has your details in time to make it into the Fringe Guide to Choosing a Venue before December.
- Keep the Fringe up to date with any changes. Let us know if you are having trouble finding particular types of show.
- If you still have space to fill in March or April, remember that you can add your space to the last-minute venue list on edfringe.com.
- Provide as much detail as possible about the type of productions you're looking for. This will save you having to wade through applications that are of no interest.
- Put in place an efficient system for handling applications. Let companies know how to apply, what you need from them and when they are likely to receive a decision.
- It is useful to have a short fact sheet about your venue available to give out on request. This should include some details about your programming intentions, a description of the spaces available (including dimensions) and details of any technical, marketing, press or box office support offered. Other useful content would be some idea of the fees or deals you offer, a map and any photos you may have of the venue.
- Make contact with other venue managers. They will often be able to pass on to you any performers they are unable to fit into their schedule.
- The Fringe Office holds a series of promotional events around the UK during December through February. The best-attended are those in London and Edinburgh. Venue managers are welcome to come along – indeed, it is a great opportunity to meet and talk with prospective performers.

Green Tip

Ask for electronic submissions from companies applying to be part of your programme and state that unsolicited materials will be disposed of.

Venue Leaflets or Websites

If you are looking further afield for acts to come and perform at your venue, the following may be good places to start searching:

- listings magazines such as the List in Edinburgh and Glasgow and Time Out in London
- trade papers such as the Stage and Music Week
- the review sections of magazines and newspapers
- regional arts boards whose websites often carry details of funded performers in the region, along with contact information for their own art form officers, who may also be able to offer some suggestions. Creative Scotland (<http://www.creativescotland.com/>) and the English Arts Council (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>) will also have resources of use to programmers

Publications by trade associations such as Equity, the Musicians' Union, the International Theatre Institute and the ITC. There are a number of these dedicated to listing performers, performing companies and agents, including the following:

The Artistes and Agents Directory

Published by Richmond House
7 0-76 Bell Street
Marylebone
London NW1 6SP
020 7224 9666
www.entweb.co.uk/entertainers/index.html

An online directory of UK entertainers.

Spotlight casting directory (actors and agents)
www.spotlight.com

The Agents' Association (Great Britain)

www.agents-uk.com

British Performing Arts Yearbook

Published by Rhinegold
020 7333 1733
www.rhinegold.co.uk

Health and Safety

Employers and the self-employed have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated legislation to ensure the health and safety of employees and any persons, such as members of the public and visiting workers, who may be affected by work activities. These laws apply to all areas of work and the arts and entertainment industry is no exception.

An important part of good health and safety management is carrying out a suitable assessment of the risks employees and other persons may be exposed to and ensuring safety controls and procedures are in place and maintained. You must take into account particular hazards associated with your venue, performances and other work activities.

By following the advice given here, you will go a long way towards meeting your legal duties under health and safety legislation; however, when planning an event, consideration must be given to health and safety matters not only in the auditorium but elsewhere in and around the premises (eg, loading bays, kitchens and storerooms). Safety during construction and dismantling of a set must also be ensured.

Any contractors you employ must be qualified to do the job. Moreover, it's your responsibility to see that your own staff are adequately trained and instructed, and that any work equipment is suitable, well maintained and safe to use. Certain accidents to workers and members of the public must be reported to the Environmental and Consumer Services Department under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publishes many booklets and leaflets on health and safety matters. Free and priced publications are available from:

HS Books
PO Box 999
Sudbury
Suffolk CO10 2WA
01787 881165
www.hsebooks.com

If you require further information on health and safety or food safety, you can contact the Department of Environmental and Consumer Services at the City of Edinburgh Council.

Regulation within your Venue

Smoking

The Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Prohibition of Smoking in Certain Premises (Scotland) Regulations 2006 prohibit smoking in most public places that are 'wholly or substantially enclosed'. These are areas with a ceiling or roof that, except for any doors, windows and passageways, are either wholly enclosed (whether permanently or temporarily) or are enclosed save for an opening which is less than half the area of the walls. This means that designated smoking rooms are no longer allowed.

Smoking is also not permitted on stage as part of a show or in the green room. It is the responsibility of venue managers to take all reasonable measures to ensure that employees, volunteers, performers and audience members do not smoke in their venues.

The following minimum actions are recommended:

- Remove all ashtrays
- Develop and implement a smoke-free policy
- Inform anyone smoking that he or she is committing an offence, and request that he or she extinguish immediately or leave the premises
- Refuse service/admittance to individuals who are smoking against the law

In addition, signs displaying the international 'No Smoking' symbol must be posted in both public and staff-only areas:



Failure to comply with the above regulations and measures will lead to fines for both the smoker and the venue. For more information contact:

info@clearingtheairscotland.com
www.clearingtheairscotland.com

Food Hygiene Regulations

If you want to make some cash out of selling tea, coffee and other refreshments, that's allowed as long as you comply with regulations. These apply to anyone who owns, manages, operates or works in a food business, even on a temporary basis. From a hotdog stand to a five-star restaurant, a church hall to a large supermarket, a hotel to a marquee, whether you sell publicly or privately, sell for profit or fundraising, every enterprise that involves the preparation or sale of food can be classed as a food business.

Generally, anyone who handles food or whose actions could affect its safety must observe set and strict guidelines. You should contact the City of Edinburgh Council's Environmental and Consumer Services Department if it is your intention to do food catering. Doing so early on will help offset any unforeseen problems that might otherwise result in a refusal of licensing. Ask for the Food section of the department as they will carry out an inspection and give advice where required. As a matter of priority, you should make sure you have food safety and hygiene management procedures and other basic health and safety protocols in place.

The most important measures relate to proper temperature controls and the avoidance of cross contamination between raw and ready-to-eat food. Check with the City Council for specifics.

- There must be a separate wash hand basin for the staff preparing food. It is not enough to use the one for washing up dishes.
- No cooking is allowed except in kitchens properly separated from the auditorium and exits.
- Tables and chairs and other equipment must not obstruct gangways or exits.
- If you happen to have a dedicated cafe, remember that you need two exits, a maintained emergency lighting system and exit boxes above each exit.
- You cannot sell alcoholic drinks without a license. (For more information on liquor licensing, [see the Licensing section](#)).
- Provide a proper cash box for money and beware of theft.

Toilets

There must be separate and suitable toilet accommodation for males and females. There are statutory requirements for the provision of sanitary appliances for any number of audiences, and these are shown below.

Appliance	Male	Female
WCs	One for up to 250 males, plus one for each additional 500 males.	Two for up to 40 females, three for 41-70 females, plus one for each additional 40 females.
Urinals	Two for up to 100 males, plus one for each additional 80 males.	
Wash Basins	One per WC, plus one per every five urinals.	One, plus one per every Wash Basins two WCs

(It should be assumed that the audience will be 50% male and 50% female.) The facilities can be shared with performers and stage crew as long as access is freely available and the audience does not have to pass through a stage area to get to the toilets. Do not use the toilets or cloakroom as a scenery storage area. Direction signs to the toilets must be clearly visible. You must have emergency lighting in the toilets and along the routes to them. Remember to check the toilets for any remaining persons before locking up at the end of each day. You will have to provide soap, towels or hand driers, toilet paper, etc, as conditions of your theatre license; it may be refused or revoked if these consumables are not available. It is also your responsibility to clean the toilet facilities regularly. If at all possible, please take into account the requirements of people with disabilities and advise them as to what facilities are available at the time they buy tickets.

Green Tip
Putting a brick or toilet 'hippo' into the cistern of each WC greatly reduces water usage.

Trade Waste

Current environmental-protection legislation places a legal duty on you, as a producer of waste or refuse, to ensure that your waste is securely contained at all times, that it does not escape and that you dispose of it safely and legally. This means you must make sure all waste or refuse produced on your premises is kept securely in bins, bags or some other suitable container, that any spillage is tended to and that litter is cleaned up within the boundary of your venue. Also ensure that whomever you arrange to pick up and dispose of your refuse is legally allowed to do so – they must be certified as registered with the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). Refuse collection days will depend on the area in which your venue operates. A venue in a wheeled bin area will have uplifts as contracted. To use the City of Edinburgh Council's refuse collection service, all waste produced from any venue must be disposed of in a wheeled bin or regulation grey trade waste sack (both provided by the City of Edinburgh Council). Cardboard that cannot be put into a wheeled bin or sacks must be flat-packed, tied into manageable bundles and identified by a trade waste sticker (also available from the Council).

Regulation Outwith your Venue

Noise

While the majority of Edinburgh residents welcome the influx of visitors and the variety of entertainment provided during the Fringe, it must be recognised that most venues are in close proximity to residential properties and the potential for disturbance is extremely high. Disturbance to local residents occurs from a variety of sources, some more obvious than others. Music, late-night get-ins and get-outs, power generators and general street traffic following performances are just some of the many infringements on surrounding residents for which your venue could be directly or indirectly responsible.

Owing to this variety, a great deal of forward planning may be necessary in order to minimise their effect. It is essential that you make early contact with environmental and consumer services department, especially if the proposed event is held in an outdoor or previously unused venue.

Members of the department will be happy to visit and discuss measures for minimising disturbance in advance, an action which may prevent the serious curtailment or restriction of activities in future if noise complaints are received. There will be a condition on your license that requires you to control the music, amplified or otherwise, coming from your venue to the satisfaction of the director of environmental and consumer services. You may, for instance, be required to ensure that your music or PA system cannot be heard in any neighbouring noise-sensitive premises, which usually this means someone's house, but it could also mean a hospital or church.

Keep these limitations in mind when you are looking for a venue to run, especially if you plan on programming loud shows or remaining open at night. If you or your shows are planning promotional activities on the Royal Mile (including Lawnmarket, the High Street and Hunter Square), please give consideration to the residents of this area who are already subject to long periods of disruption from street traffic and performances. Sound amplification is strictly prohibited in these areas by Fringe regulators.

Posters

Fly posting is an offence under section 186 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Do not display your posters on lampposts, telephone kiosks and traffic light boxes. Before displaying any posters, ensure that you secure the permission of the owner of the site. At your venue, ensure that all posters are securely pasted to walls or boards, as loose posters present a fire hazard. Care should be taken to prevent damage to paintwork of the venue and we suggest you provide your own bulletin board to display any posters.

Staffing Requirements

Stage and Front-of-House Staff

Remember, it is a condition of your temporary license that to have a responsible manager on the premises whenever the venue is open to the public. You will, in fact, likely want to have two managers, one backstage and one front-of-house (FOH). These individuals will coordinate all traffic and activity by staff and the public before, during and after a performance. They need to know what to do in a fire or other emergency and where all fire extinguishers, first aid kits and telephones are located. (The backstage manager will also need to certify that all drapes are fire-resistant.) Before each performance, they should check all areas accessible to the public for safety: are gangways clear, fire doors unlocked, emergency lights on? Make a list of the things to check before each performance, just like a stage manager would for props, and have your on-site managers go through it systematically every time. Follow the guidelines in your Conditions of License for the numbers of FOH staff and/or stewards you must have. It is recommended that FOH staff receive a written statement of their duties, a checklist (if appropriate) and a plan showing key features of the venue. Make sure staff know to keep exit routes clear and that audience members should calmly and politely be shown the routes to their seats or exits. They must also know procedures for dealing with unruly or drunken behaviour without being confrontational. Ensure they communicate with the venue manager in the event of an emergency or any unusual incident. All staff should receive some training in fire safety and security protocols. Stage fire drills at regular intervals, don't wait until after an incident to tell them where they went wrong.

Stewards

Liquor-licensed premises within the city that operate with a regular extension of permitted hours and that utilise door stewards are required to employ individuals registered with the City of Edinburgh Council in those roles. This is not a requirement, but is also well advised, for any venue operating with an occasional license. Information about the steward registration scheme is available by writing to the City of Edinburgh Council licensing department. Always have these stewards at the entrance in addition to box office staff. Never leave one person alone at this post.

Medical and First Aid Provision

The organiser of an event like the performance of a Fringe show must give consideration to the provision of first-aid facilities and, dependent on the size and type of the expected audience or the risk involved with the event, qualified medical practitioners and ambulance services. The table below gives best practice guidance as to the provision required.

Required Medical and First Aid Facilities

Audience Size	First Aiders	First Aid Post	Ambulances
500 or less	Two	One	
1,000	Two	One	As agreed
1,500	Three	One	As agreed
2,000	Four	One	As agreed
2,500	Five	One	As agreed
3,000	Six	One	As agreed
more than 3,000	As agreed	One	As agreed

Smaller venue operators may wish to submit a medical risk assessment that may help to minimise the required number of first aid staff. The medical and first aid provision for all venues should be agreed with Public Safety and the agencies mentioned. Please note: a first aider must be fully trained and certified by either St Andrew's Ambulance Association, St. John's Ambulance or the British Red Cross Society. A suitable facility must be provided to treat injuries and must be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. For more information and recommendations visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/index.htm>

Green Tip

When recruiting, add an interest in sustainable practice as part of the desirable criteria in job descriptions.

Security

Like all large cities, Edinburgh has its share of criminals and, from past experience, many of these find Fringe performers easy targets. Even normally secure, full-time theatres do experience intruders in dressing rooms. The Fringe is no time to relax security as more and more organised groups of thieves turn the crowds and chaos of the festival season to their advantage. 'No opportunity equals no crime' is the basic rule of crime prevention. The best defence against crime of any description is an adequate and alert staff. Make sure your staff study and consider the following points. Further advice can be obtained from the community services department at police headquarters. If you see anything suspicious, dial 999 immediately.

Before You Come to the Fringe

Make sure you have adequate insurance not only for public liability but for any equipment you have on site and for the performers' own equipment. Be aware of the terms of hire set by rental companies – in most cases, the insurance of equipment becomes your responsibility from the moment it leaves their premises. If you are subletting to other companies, check that they have insurance as well. Make sure the members of your performing companies have their own personal coverage for both the theatre and their accommodation. For more information, see chapter 1, Legal Issues. [LINK] Plan your security well before you set up shop in Edinburgh: arrange for methods of staff identification, lock-fast stores and so on. Make an inventory – as far as possible – of everything that you are bringing to your venue. For larger pieces of equipment, make a note of serial numbers so that they can be traced in the event of theft. Consider using security marking systems such as ultra violet or etching pens, which can be obtained, free of charge, from local police stations. You should also obtain a counterfeit money detector for use in your box office. Contact the community services department at police headquarters and arrange a time to discuss security matters. Crime prevention officers are happy to talk to your whole company, particularly those with FOH duties. This consultation service is free and will likely prove invaluable.

At the Fringe

Guard or secure all entrances/exits to the venue, bearing in mind fire safety regulations.

Take care that unauthorised persons do not have access to the backstage area or electrics. Always challenge (politely at first) anyone who you don't know. Be wary of feeble excuses as to why someone is where he or she doesn't belong. Keep a special watch during performance intervals and the changeover between shows. For any official visits from the Fire and Rescue services, police or building control, be sure to check ID cards. All legitimate officials will carry identification.

Do not leave property unattended. Most Fringe thefts involve personal property from dressing rooms. If you must leave valuable personal belongings (or cash, cheque cards, credit cards, etc), keep them in a secure place. Take particular care to lock storerooms and empty dressing rooms. Bring a large lockable trunk for your possessions and then chain or screw it to something immovable.

All authorised staff should display some form of official identification. A distinctive T-shirt (one that is not on sale to the public) is a good idea for FOH staff; an identity card with photo should be required for all other employees. A show's director or leading actors, rather than being an exception to this rule, should set the example in following it.

Arrange a system of pass-out tickets for members of the audience who may have to leave the theatre temporarily. Beware of unauthorised persons entering the auditorium during intervals.

If anything is stolen, report the incident to the local police station as soon as you discover the theft (it is a good idea to display phone numbers of local police stations by each telephone). The 999 telephone system should only be used in an emergency. Most insurance companies require a crime reference number for a claim to be considered, so keep details of the time that you contacted the police along with the name and number of the police officer.

After a Show

Be especially watchful of strangers visiting the backstage area. No person should be allowed to find their own way unsupervised.

Take extra caution during the get-out, as this is a prime time for equipment to go missing. Make sure equipment goes exactly where it's supposed to.

See that all valuable items, including costumes, set dressings, audiovisual equipment and properties are stored in a locked and secured place. Think about what could be easily stolen in a break-in and take extra care in securing these items.

If you go out to a bar or other late-night venue, be conscious of your possessions. Many of the pubs and clubs frequented by Fringe participants are badly affected by handbag and wallet thefts. Be aware that in any large gathering you are vulnerable to pickpockets and handbag thieves.

At Your Lodgings

Lock doors and secure windows before leaving, even if it's only for five minutes.

Do not leave valuables lying around. If there's a secure place on the premises to store such items, use it.

Cash Security

From your box office to your cafe to your offices, having cash on your premises presents opportunities for theft. Securicor, a professional cash-handling company, offers the following advice to venues on how they should secure their money and deliver it safely to the bank.

Your money should always be stored in a secure container or safe, ideally fastened to something solid or bolted to the floor. For transactions, use a secured cash register or moneybox. Never hold more cash at the box office or with programme sellers than is absolutely necessary for adequate trading. Remove excess monies frequently to a secure place by use of at least two able-bodied persons. Takings should be banked daily; no money should ever remain in the venue overnight. A cash carrier is the most secure way of getting your money to the bank. Because it will collect and deliver your money as required, you won't have to worry about having a member of your busy team making the journey to the bank. It also reduces your risk of being a target for criminals and may mean that you could benefit from lower insurance premiums. A cash carrier can also provide additional facilities, such as change delivery services, via your bank, ensuring you won't run out of float at a crucial moment.

Vehicle Security

Crime prevention leaflets on car security are available from any police station. As a general rule, though, you should not leave anything of value inside a parked vehicle and make sure you lock the doors in any case. Try to park in busy, well-lit streets where there is a degree of natural supervision. Also ensure that the vehicle is fitted with adequate anti-theft devices.

One Final Note

Give your performing companies and staff a quick talk about security every now and then. Crime prevention advice and literature is available from the police. A crime can spoil your Fringe experience in more than simply financial terms, so please take all necessary precautions.

Electrics

Before renting a venue, you should make sure the power supply is sufficient and accessible. Negotiate with your landlord to provide this supply. In the case of many smaller venues, the electrical system will provide 230 volts. In larger buildings, you're likely to find a three-phase 400/230-volt system, capable of supplying both a 230 – and a 400-volt supply. (In such cases, it is best to balance your electrical load across all three phases. Keep equipment on different phases spread at least 2m apart.) All technical supplies should be taken from one isolator fit in a position where these can be turned off without disturbing the audience or emergency lighting should an emergency arise during a performance. Tapping into cooker circuits or ring mains power is not allowed. Temporary supplies must only be taken from an outlet specifically provided for that purpose. They should be derived from a circuit independent of the lighting of any area to which the public has access. Before you make your license application, make sure you won't be at risk of overloading the existing power supply system. All electrical equipment, including portable appliances, electrical systems and installations, must comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. If you don't work with one already, find a qualified electrician in Edinburgh who could supervise the work for you, preferably someone with experience of theatre electrics and with knowledge of the current BS7671:2008 (including all current amendments) Requirements of Electrical Installation (IEE Wiring Regulations). Two additional publications worth reading are the HSE Guidance Note PM32: The Safe Use of Portable Electrical Apparatus (HMSO) and the HSE Memorandum of Guidance on the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (HMSO). Many issues of your venue's safety will rely on your thorough working knowledge of its electrical systems. Make sure you know where all the important switches, fuses and isolators are in the building. If there are secondary installations controlling fire alarms, lifts, heating and emergency lighting, find out where they are and how these systems work.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

Portable appliance testing is not a requirement of the theatre license but may be a condition of your lease. We recommend that all portable appliances have an owner's identification number and a valid certificate and record of the testing of the appliance before connecting to the electrical system within the property. All portable appliance connections must be sound both mechanically and electrically. This can best be achieved by using proprietary plugs and sockets. It is unlikely that any ad hoc connectors will satisfy the requirements of the regulations.

Generators

(These guidance notes have been drawn up by the Council to help and assist applicants comply with statutory and other regulations that are required to be followed when applying for a license. They reflect current UK practice when a source of electricity is required to be totally independent of the public supply.)

When installing a generator, it is highly advisable to employ a specialist contractor—one who should be able to size the generator rating, measure the effectiveness of the earthing provided and certify the safety of the complete electrical installation. Unless the generator is to supply only double insulated equipment or is a small portable unit not exceeding 5kVA rating, one point (usually the neutral or star point) of the generator output winding should be connected to earth. The practice of connecting to earth is termed neutral earth bonding. The neutral earth bonding terminal must be connected by a suitably rated protective conductor to a main earth electrode, generator framework and any associated exposed and extraneous conductive parts (electrical equipment enclosures and earthed metalwork, etc) of the installation being served. This will allow a fault current to flow in the event that these parts become live and will enable the protection device to operate, quickly isolating the fault from the supply. Protection devices should operate within a maximum disconnection time of 0.4 seconds for all circuits supplying handheld equipment or portable equipment intended for manual movement during use and within five seconds for all other circuits when supplied at a nominal voltage to earth of 230 volts. When you order a generator it may arrive without neutral earthing, as is standard practice on small portable generators. This is to prevent a person receiving a shock off the generator framework if starting the unit before completing the main earth electrode connection. Unfortunately, for an Residual Current Device (RCD) ([see below](#)) to work properly the generator framework and main earth electrode must to be connected to the generator output winding. It is advisable for the generator supplier to do this neutral earthing connection as a wrong connection could burn out the generator windings.

Main Earth Electrode

The main earth electrode connecting with the general mass of earth may be:

- an earth rod, driven to a depth of not less than 1m
- permanent structural steelwork that is known to be earthed
- metallic items that are known to extend at least 1m down into the ground
- an adjacent fixed electrical installation, provided that the earth connection of that installation is not likely to be disconnected. Oil or gas pipes must not be used because of the risk of ignition.

Electrical Distribution System

All electrical equipment should be installed so far as is reasonably practicable so it cannot be interfered with by unauthorised persons. Wherever possible, all cables should be routed, buried or so protected so that they will not cause a tripping hazard to the public or be crushed by vehicular traffic. Distribution circuits should be protected by suitable rated over-current protection devices and have safe means available for isolating that part of the installation from all sources of supply. Cables and conductors should be of a type and rating suitable for the intended use.

Residual Current Device (RCD)

If the generator is to supply entertainers' equipment or temporary outdoor supplies for lighting and power, an RCD, having a nominal tripping current of 30mA, must be fitted as a backup protection against electric shock. To ensure discrimination and give a wider safety margin against nuisance tripping, a less sensitive RCD may be fitted at the generator provided that 30mA RCDs are present in the circuit(s) before final connection to the electrical load(s). This is usually achieved through the use of electrical equipment supplied on request by the specialist contractor.

Stage Area Electrics

Equipment Hire

Equipment must be functional, safe and well protected. Homemade equipment should not be used. Any equipment to be hired must be ordered in good time, to make sure it is all in perfect working order and is exactly what is required. If possible, make these checks on the premises of the hire company. If not, inspect the equipment on arrival at your venue and again before you commence installation. Some pieces of equipment must have special cable (lighting boards to dimmer, for example), so do check that this has been supplied. Also make sure that isolators, switch-fuses and mains cables are compatible with your venue power supply. Most rental companies enclose spare lamps and fuses with their equipment. If a lamp or fuse blows during the course of your rental period, be sure to keep it after it's been replaced. This will serve as proof of its failure and should help avoid an unwelcome replacement charge at the end of your hire.

Installation

All switchgears, dimmers, lighting fittings, amplifiers, sound equipment, lighting rigs and metal seating units must be bonded to the earth of the permanent electrical installation and (except in the case of audience seating) made inaccessible to the public. Remember also to bond any scaffolding. If you are doubtful about the conductivity of any part (e.g., a rusty section or clamp) then make a supplementary bond to 'bridge over' the suspect part. For installations up to 60 amps, Public Safety recommends you use 16mm squared single core cable. Consult a qualified electrician for larger installations. To attach the earth cable, you must use proper earth bonding clamps (such as the Henley clamp). These are available from local electrical suppliers and are not expensive. Make sure that you make a good bond. Where the earth cable is bonded to the isolator or switch-fuse, make sure it is attached to the same point or spur as the cable going to the permanent earth. Generators must also be earthed. If the generator is outside, this should be done with a suitable length of copper rod or spike driven into the ground to which an earth cable from the generator is attached with a clamp.

Lamp Rigging

Always remember the load that you are drawing and use the correct cable, which must be in a serviceable condition. No tape joins, only proper connectors are allowed. Terminal strip or chocolate block is not allowed for cable connections. Twin flex is not allowed for power or lighting supplies. Instead you must have three cores—live, neutral and earth—that should be colour-coded in compliance with BS7671:2008. The luminaires must be securely fixed to a rigid rig and each one must have a safety chain. If you are using a barn door, make sure it is firmly in place and that any safety line is clipped to the safety chain or around the hanging arm of the lantern. This will be checked by Public Safety. Don't rig lanterns close to scenery or drapes as this presents a fire hazard, even if you are using fire-resistant materials. Don't rig any luminaires in positions that might be reached by the audience – besides the safety factor, luminaires within easy audience access run the risk of being stolen. When you have finished all your rigging work, ensure you tidy up all your cables. Make sure none of them is within reach of the public. If cables are suspended then support them adequately – a cable cannot be expected to carry its own weight. When cables are routed through a doorway, make sure the door does not chafe or rub on the cable. If possible, route these cables through a neat hole in the frame or underneath the door itself. Do not leave cables coiled, as this can generate enough heat to catch fire.

Further Precautions

Do not install any control equipment in any area to which the public has access, or in the dressing rooms or wardrobe rooms. It is strongly recommended that all electrical equipment associated with musicians/performers (eg, sound amplification systems) or that is situated in the stage area (eg, smoke machines) be protected by one or more residual current devices (RCD or RCBO) with a trip rated at 30mA or less. In the event of any electrical fault, these devices will cut the electricity supply in a fraction of a second and should protect everyone from electrocution. They are readily available from electrical contractors and many do-it-yourself shops, and represent a simple, but potentially live-saving precaution.

Emergency Lighting

Any staircases, the auditorium, the stage, toilets, cafe and all areas to which the public has access must be illuminated by an emergency lighting system that automatically takes over in the event of failure in the primary system. This is referred to as a maintained system and ensures that the means of escape can be safely and effectively used at all times. As such, these lights must be lit at all times, especially while the audience is in your venue. Emergency lights are required outside the building if the exit opens into a dark area as well. Venues located under canvas or in the open air are also usually required to have an emergency lighting setup. Know that it is not sufficient simply to rig extra bulbs or lanterns on the primary power supply. A dedicated secondary system must be in place to power your emergency lighting. Please note: if using a battery and charger system for the emergency supply, these must remain

turned on at all times, and be capable of illuminating the lamps at the required level for not less than three hours from the time of primary system failure. When installing your emergency lighting, be sure that the cable is of sufficient size to carry the required current (at least 1.5mm²) and withstand the heat produced by a fire. The bulbs in your emergency system must be a minimum of four watts and be fitted with proper lamp holders. (Typically the bulbs used in a central battery system are five watts and those in exit signs are eight watts, but make sure to check the wattage on yours before installing.) Emergency lights must be securely fitted to the walls at least two metres above the ground. Staircase and seating rakes must also be illuminated, so if you use gangway lights, attach these firmly to the seating structure close to the ground, fit guards (an open ended tin will suffice) and check that they do not reduce the width of the gangways. You should make sure that your emergency lighting is bright enough, with lamps at suitable spacing, to offer sufficient light in all areas that the public has to use should the main lighting have failed.

Exit Signs

All exits and all changes of direction in the exit routes must be indicated by an illuminated sign bearing the running man symbol. Regulations require a white pictogram on a green background (the green part to take up at least 50% of the sign). Buy yours from a sign stockist or hire them from a local lighting company – do not make your own. Use a series of emergency exit signs along the exit route and over doorways. These should be fitted two metres up the wall and every six metres along the exit route. Any change in direction or special hazard should be indicated by a unit nearby. Emergency exit signs must be maintained and remain illuminated for at least three hours after mains failure.

Emergency Lighting Tips

You would be wise to purchase all the parts and spares you will need for the system before you come to Edinburgh, as the local shops and wholesalers tend to sell out during the festival.

When it comes to the inspection, Public Safety is interested in the amount of light available in an emergency. The electrical engineers will be checking the overall electrical safety, including the correct operation of your emergency lighting and location and tidiness of the wiring.

- The system must be fitted with a fuse of the proper rating: current x voltage = watts.
- Do not tamper with emergency lights or alter their location after your inspection.
- Keep the emergency lighting power supply on at all times.
- Remember to check that the emergency lights are working before every performance.

Fire Safety

The Fire Scotland Act 2005 Part 3 and Fire Scotland Regulations 2006 place responsibility for fire safety measures on the employer in the premises (ie, you) to safeguard his or her employees (ie, the actors, stage crew) against the risk of fire.

Under these regulations you must:

- assess the fire risks in the workplace
- check that fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned
- check that people in the building know what to do if there is a fire
- check that people who may be in the building can get out safely
- provide reasonable fire-fighting equipment
- check and maintain your fire safety equipment.

These laws also require you, as the employer and/or person in charge, to provide a written fire risk assessment as part of your Entertainment License application.

In formulating the fire risk assessment, the following points should be considered:

- Who is at risk?
- What are the risks from fire and how serious are they?
- What, if anything, needs to be done?
- What training should be given to staff?

Performance Risk Assessment

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service also require a risk assessment that covers each and every production that is going to be staged at the venue. This performance risk assessment needs to cover such things as the material used to construct the props and scenery (Scenery Used) and whether there are to be any naked flames or effects on stage (Special Effects).

License Application

From the time you apply for a license, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will be directly involved in various inspections of the venue and its production(s) and would appreciate your cooperation in completing these. When you apply for a license, you will have to complete a fire risk assessment and send this with a covering letter with the heading Edinburgh Festival Fringe to The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. A fire risk assessment should be completed for every show at the venue and all the forms should be sent directly to the Fire and Rescue Service, not to the City of Edinburgh Council. Venue managers should collate all FRA's and ensure that all performers are complying with the stated requirements.

The Venue FRA should also be forwarded onto the Fire and Rescue Service.

Fire Safety Protocol

Fire Drills

You should formulate a procedure to be adopted in the event of a fire occurring. This routine should be rehearsed so that members of the performing companies and venue staff are aware of their responsibilities and specific tasks. A notice detailing the action to be taken in the event of fire should be posted in the dressing rooms, prompt corner and in the front-of-house area. A designated member of staff (typically the FOH manager or duty manager) should be given responsibility for calling the Fire and Rescue Service by dialling 999, asking for the Fire and Rescue Service and stating the address of the venue. It is the responsibility of the theatre licensee to ensure that the Fire and Rescue Service is called to all fires, and that all persons in the building are evacuated. Do not shout 'Fire!' if one occurs, as this may induce panic. You are instead advised to use a code phrase, such as 'Mr Sands is in the house', which is traditionally used in theatres to convey 'there is a fire, evacuate the premises'. Members of your company and venue staff should all be made aware of your venue's code phrase and of the action they should take on hearing it. You should make a member of your staff at each performance responsible for fire safety, with the responsibility to:

- check that all the exits are unlocked and unobstructed.
- check that all the fire extinguishers are in position and still serviceable.
- In the event of fire he or she should:
- ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has been called.
- go on stage and announce in a clear, audible voice that the performance is being interrupted and then instruct the audience to leave the auditorium by the nearest exit.
- check that everyone has left the building when it is safe to do so, await the arrival of the Fire and Rescue Service and make contact with the incident commander when he or she arrives. The stage manager and FOH manager should assist in evacuating their respective areas.

Fire Extinguishers

You are required to have fire extinguishers beside each exit and a CO₂-filled one beside the electrical intake and lighting control position. Extinguishers can be wall-mounted or placed on a dedicated floor plate. All must be checked and certified serviceable sometime within the previous two calendar months. Other types of fire extinguishers may be required by the fire officer to cover specific risks. If you are not bringing your own extinguishers, you are advised to contact a supplier in Edinburgh well in advance (check the Yellow Pages or on yell.com).

Electrical Luminous Tube Signs

When using electrical luminous tube signs within a venue, you must contact the Fire and Rescue Service prior to installation to ensure the fitting complies with the Electrical Luminous Tube Signs (Scotland) Regulations. This will normally include the provision of a fire fighter's switch.

Fireproofing

It is the Fire and Rescue Service's job to check that drapes and scenery are fire-resistant and they may require a practical test on a sample of the material in question. They will gladly give advice and may highlight things you haven't considered. The basic rule is that all drapes and most scenery in the venue must be fire-resistant, though compliance with this rule will also take the degree of risk into account. The major exception for fire-resistance requirements is in the case of items that may come into contact with the skin, such as costumes and bed sheets, as some people are allergic to the chemical treatments used in fireproofing. Other soft materials, such as a tablecloth on a table or curtains, should, however, be fireproofed. If you have any questionable items or materials, show these to the fire officer in the context they will be used in performance. The following are guidelines for the fire-safe use of various materials on stage:

- Paper is obviously flammable and will catch fire at once. It is generally not allowed on stage if it is near lights or anything that may cause it to combust.
- Drapes, curtains, blackout materials, gauzes, muslins, etc, will burn if set alight and will need to be treated to counteract the fire risk. Drapes made of nylon, polyester, acrylic or other synthetic fibres are best avoided, but can be used if properly treated.
- Wood (eg, rostra, doors, furniture and tree trunks) is combustible, but would take some time to catch fire. These items do not need to be treated unless you have a large set made entirely of wood. (If you are planning to take a show from Edinburgh to a London theatre then all wood used in building a set will have to be treated to Class standards). Scenery made of cloth on a wooden frame – such as flats or screens – must be made fire-resistant.
- Plastic is difficult to treat, so should be avoided if it is to be placed near a potential source of fire.
- Certain materials like polystyrene and other expanded foams are highly combustible, give off toxic fumes and are usually not allowed in the building, let alone on stage. These and other manmade materials should be avoided as they are difficult to fireproof. If you must use them, consult the Fire and Rescue Service in advance and purchase materials treated during manufacture.

Chemical treatments can be painted or sprayed on while smaller items can be dipped directly into the solution. Complete and even penetration is essential for effective fireproofing – two or three light applications can be more effective than a single heavy one. Do not treat only the edges of a cloth, the middle is just as important. Always treat a sample of the material first for suitability and colourfastness. Take care, excessive solution strength can cause crystals to form on the material. Treatments are water-soluble and can be removed by thorough washing with water, but are less affected by dry cleaning. Fireproofing solutions can be stored indefinitely, but should be protected from frost and cold conditions. They can be purchased from decorating supply shops. In addition to these treatments, one can use certain intumescent coatings, special varnishes and gloss or emulsion paints. These have to be obtained specially from Bollom Fire Protection (go to www.bollom.com for details). After you have treated the

material, cut a small piece off and test its flammability in a safe place with a match. If it burns, you will have to try another treatment, or may ultimately have to forego using the material in your performance. Send a piece of any problem material to the Fire and Rescue Service, who will give you their advice. Don't forget that they can ask you to remove anything from the stage that fails a match test, so check.

Storage

You may be limited to the amount of scenery that you can store on stage. Scenery cannot be stored in the auditorium or other parts of the premises to which the public has access, nor can scenery be stored in exit corridors, under the stage or under staircases. Make sure fire extinguishers are easily accessible and not hidden under scenery or props. Arrangements should be made to ensure that any refuse is stored only in a safe area, possibly outside, while awaiting uplift.

Portable Heaters

You should try to use the building's existing system to heat your venue. Portable heaters should only be used for pre-heating and they must be removed from the auditorium and other points of assembly before the public is admitted. (These heaters should not be stored beside any combustible material, or in any corridor or room that constitutes an escape route.) Dressing rooms are by nature disorganised and untidy, so any portable heaters used in these areas should be fixed in position and protected by an additional guard. If space heaters are being used, ensure there is adequate ventilation. Spare cylinders and fuel for heaters should, if possible, be stored outside. The refuelling or changing of cylinders should take place in open air.

Catering and Kitchens

If you seek to boost your takings by providing food, the fire officer will want to see your kitchen area and may require additional fire-fighting equipment be on hand, as this activity poses a risk.

Sleeping Accommodation

Venues are designated for performances only and are considered totally unsuitable for use as accommodation and/or sleeping quarters in the eyes of the Fire Authority. For legal and safety reasons, then, if you or your companies are planning unusual accommodation arrangements, including sleeping in a room adjoining the performance space, you should clear these plans with the fire officer, or risk a sudden eviction.

Special Effects

In order to stage your special effects, it is first necessary to ensure the safety of the public. Give as much advance information as you can about the effect to the authorities. You should include details of any known special effects on your license application forms, and inform the authorities in writing if any subsequent special effects

are added to any of the venue's shows. If the fire officer is satisfied that an effect entails no undue risk then he or she will approve it for performance. However, he or she may require additional precautionary measures to be taken and will inform you of these measures by means of a written tear-off slip, which you will be required to sign. If precautionary measures are required, the fire officer will ensure that regular inspections take place during performances to see that these measures are being complied with. You should bear in mind that the temporary nature of many Fringe venues can make the use of a number of special effects unacceptable. For more information on fire safety as it pertains to special effects, [see the section on Special Effects below](#).

Some Don'ts

- No cooking on stage.
- No real flames (use an electrical effect as a substitute). Do not use real candles unless you have special permission.
- No balloons with flammable gas—use helium where necessary.
- No fire-eaters without approval of the fire officer.
- No explosions without approval of the fire officer.

Further advice on all the above matters can be gained by contacting;

Edinburgh Festival Fire Safety Co-ordinator

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Service Delivery East Area
76-78 Lauriston Place
Edinburgh
EH3 9DE
0131 228 2401

The Auditorium and Staging

The Stage Area

The stage area is defined as any space used by the performers for the presentation of their show, as well as any spaces to the back or side (ie wing space). Any stage structure will need to meet the following criteria before licensing will be issued:

- It should be built and arranged so that the risk of fire is minimised
- It must not obstruct the fire exits. The audience should not have to cross the stage to reach a fire exit
- It must be able to support a minimum load of 5 kN/m² (104lb/sq ft)
- If you have an orchestra between the stage and the auditorium, whether at ground level or in a pit, the orchestra should be partitioned off so that neither can any instruments fall across the gangway nor can any member of the audience fall on or into the orchestra.
- If the stage is at the end of the hall, there must be a separate exit for performers from the stage area, independent of the public exit. Performers should not have to exit through the audience
- If you are raising the stage, plans must be submitted along with the application for your venue license that shows all elevations, sections, calculations, etc. You may be required to send a structural certificate to the Department of Property Management (Public Safety) once the structure has been completed.

Dressing Rooms

- You will probably want your dressing rooms as near to the stage as possible, but a room that only exits onto the stage is not suitable.
- Where performers change and make up, allow 1.1m² per adult person. Space is often at a premium, but always be conscious of the cast's health, safety and comfort.
- Never use a lobby between a stage exit and an outer door (or between the auditorium and an outer door) as a quick-change area.
- Keep a first-aid kit and fire extinguisher in the dressing room.
- Do not have more than one appliance connected to the same socket at the same time.

Seating

Your theatre is divided into two: the stage area and the auditorium. The more seats you have, the more money you can make. There are, however, strict regulations you'll need to comply with, in order to ensure the safety of your audience.

Basic Seating Arrangement

Criteria

- Gangways must be a minimum of 1.2m wide (or 900mm where the room seats fewer than 60 people).
- They must be kept free of obstruction at all times.
- Gangways must connect the seating to a minimum of two exits from the auditorium.
- The maximum allowed distance to a point of divergence (a choice of exit routes) is 1.5m.
- The minimum allowed distance from the edge of a raised stage or orchestra pit to the first row of seats is 1.4m.
- The minimum allowed distance between rows is 300mm.
- No seat can be more than 3.5m from a gangway.
- The seats in each row must be fixed together in groups of at least four. Fixing them together prevents individual seats from falling across the gangways and helps to channel the audience towards the exits.
- The individual seating area for each person should be at least 450mm deep and 500mm wide when the seats have arms, or 450mm wide without arms.
- If seating is on a level floor then benches without backs are allowed.
- If extra cushions are being used, these must be fixed in place with Velcro, ties or pop studs.

Raised Seating

If you are going to have seats raised on rostra or scaffolding, complete plans of these structures must be submitted with your licensing application. A few key points to keep in mind:

- the structure should be designed to withstand a loading of 5kN/m² (104lb/sq ft)
- make sure you provide the required number of gangways based on the criteria above
- Public Safety will check for travel distance off the grandstand from the furthest seat
- you may have to construct an exit stair off the back if the exits from the venue are not well placed
- a structural certificate may be required by Public Safety upon completed.

Rostra Seating

If you use rostra:

- they must be tight-fitting so that there are no gaps.
- all gangways and landings must have a smooth surface.
- each step up to the rostra must be at least 280mm from back to front and at most

150mm in height. Steps count as part of the gangway, so they must also be at least 1.2m wide. The depth of the step plus twice the height must be between 550mm and 700mm

- if the rise of the step is greater than 100mm then kickboards must be fitted
- the edge or 'nose' of each step must be painted white
- you are not allowed to place steps at the end of a row of seats in the direction of travel
- all seating must be fixed in position

On a flat and level floor you can use benches without backs instead of seats.

Cabaret

Some venues opt for cabaret-style seating arrangements with loose chairs and tables.

In such a set-up:

- there must be provision for clear gangways
- gangways should be clearly delineated on the floor by tape or paint
- gangways must be kept free of chairs, tables and standing members of the public at all times

Despite a more open and casual auditorium set-up, you are only permitted to sell tickets corresponding to the number of seats available. Public Safety will consider venues on their individual merits and will decide on a fixed capacity for that layout. Once this is decided, you cannot change the layout or the numbers of seats.

Promenade Performances

In some venues, the performing companies may decide not to use seats at all, but instead to carry out a promenade performance.

- You cannot have a mixture of seated and standing audience – it must be one set-up or the other.
- Generally, you are allowed one standing person for every square metre of space after gangway and performance space have been set and deducted.
- Public Safety will usually arrive at a final number of audience members permissible once the premises have been inspected. Once this capacity is agreed it cannot be changed.

Scaffolding

Rules for scaffolding structures (ie, loads, steps, gangways, landings, etc) are the same as for rostra:

- if your seats are on boards on the scaffolding then you must fit rails to prevent the audience from climbing over
- the drop at the sides and at the rear of the structure must be guarded by a crash barrier that should be strong enough to withstand a crush. It should be at least 900mm high, and preferably

- solid. If not, then any gaps should be less than 100mm. Wire mesh may be used provided it is firmly anchored top and bottom and that there are no protruding points
- any clamps along the handrail should be padded so there are no protruding parts
- all structural steelwork should be bonded with a Henley clamp and 4mm insulated copper cable to the same electrical earth as your mains distribution
- the sides of the rostra or scaffolding between the level of the seats and the floor have to be filled in to prevent the audience from climbing underneath
- the facings of each riser underneath the seats should be filled so that gaps between them are less than 100mm
- the in-fills on gangways should be solid

Remember to bond the scaffolding, be it for stage, seating or lighting purposes, to the electrical system's earth connection. Rusty scaffolding is not a good conductor, so you may need more than one bond.

You must check for and clear away any litter that finds its way under the scaffolding structure between each show. Do not allow debris to collect just because it is out of the audience's view. If you are in any doubt about any of these guidelines, please ask the advice of an independent civil or structural engineer. Keep in mind that most scaffolding companies will require trade references, so bring two or three with you when you go to rent their services.

Scaffolding as a Stage Area

- This must be a stable structure.
- It should be braced in three dimensions include diagonals.
- Uprights need base-plates at the bottom.
- Square pieces of plywood or scaffolding planks can be used as secondary base-plates to spread the load.
- Although scaffolding clamps are extremely versatile, remember that butterfly clamps and pin couplers are not designed to take a load.
- Scaffolding as a Seating Area
- The same rules must be observed as for raised seating and scaffolding as a stage area.
- The safety of the audience must be paramount.
- It is both your responsibility and in the interest of your ticket selling to stop and think: would you pay money to sit on this structure without life insurance?
- Scaffolding as a Lighting Grid
- Plans of the scaffolding showing all sections, elevations, calculations, etc must be submitted with the licensing application. It may also be necessary to submit a structural certificate to Public Safety once the scaffolding has been completed.
- What are the ceiling member sizes? Include these measurements in your plans.
- Ensure you know the load-bearing capacity before you suspend anything

- from the ceiling.
- In addition to the main fixing or hanging points, there must be secondary fixings in case of failure.
- If you are using steel cables and wire rope grips, make sure that these are the correct sizes for the working load and that the grips are properly attached.
- Try to locate the hanging point next to where the beam attaches to the wall or to the nodes of the roof beams as these are the strongest places.
- Loop the hanging wire around the beam with some protection or sleeving so the wire does not cut into the wood.
- Try to keep scaffolding to a minimum in audience areas and avoid cantilevered portions projecting into the auditorium if possible.
- All the clamps protruding into the seating area must have some padding to protect the audience.

Exits

An auditorium seating up to 600 people must have at least two exits. For more seats, additional exits are required.

- Exits must be independent of each other and lead directly to a place of safety.
- The exits (and routes) must be a minimum of 1.2m wide and be lit by a maintained emergency lighting system.
- All exit doors must open in the direction of travel (ie, outwards).
- There must not be any locks or glass panic bolts on the doors. Push bars that open under pressure are allowed, provided they are accompanied by signs saying 'push bar to open' in letters at least 100mm high.

Exit Signage

- If you do not want the audience to exit via a particular door, post a *No Entry* or *No Admittance* sign on it. A sign saying *No Exit* is not allowed as it might be mistaken for *Exit* in a panic.
- In places where there would be a sign saying *Exit* you should use the EU approved logo for an emergency exit:



- At no time when the public is present should any exit door be fixed shut other than by a panic-bolt, nor its access remotely compromised by loose chairs, tables, counters or any other obstruction.
- An exit route must be at least 1.2m wide along its entire length, from the seats in the auditorium to the open air, and must be kept free of obstructions at all times. If the audience capacity is over 300 persons, these routes will have to be wider.

Consult Public Safety with reference to your venue's particular requirements.

- You must not use fibreboard anywhere along the exit routes. Any posters, photographs, reviews, etc must be pasted or taped around all edges to the wall or notice board.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 applies to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury. As a venue manager you must do all that is reasonably practical to prevent anyone falling by ensuring that:

- all work at height is properly planned and organised
- weather conditions are taken into account
- proper training is given to staff
- the place where work at height is done is safe
- equipment is appropriately inspected
- the risk from fragile surfaces or falling objects is properly controlled.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 is available online at: www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20050735.htm. See also: www.hse.gov.uk/falls

Accessibility

Each year, the Fringe Society offers bespoke training opportunities for venue staff that looks at issues of access and equalities. We highly recommend that you build staff attending one of these sessions into your plans. We'll email you information once dates are confirmed.

The Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) introduced new laws aimed at ending the discriminations that many disabled people face. (For the full text of the act, go to www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1.htm) The DDA gives disabled people new rights in the areas of:

- employment
- access to goods, facilities and services
- buying or renting land or property
- As a service provider, you must not discriminate against a disabled person because of his or her disability. You may be breaking the law if you treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else. Terms of the DDA state that you must not:
 - refuse to serve a disabled customer
 - offer a disabled customer a lower standard or worse manner of service
 - offer a disabled customer less favourable terms

Further information from the Disability Rights Commission is available by calling 0845 762 2633.

Implications for Venue Managers

Service providers must take reasonable steps to remove physical features that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use the service.

It is the duty of the provider to:

- remove the feature or
- alter it so that it no longer has an impedimentary effect or
- provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature or
- provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service available to disabled people.

The term *reasonable steps* should be considered in the context of the size and resources of an organisation and what is reasonable for one may not be reasonable for another. In determining what measures to take, a venue manager needs to consider all of the following:

- how effective any implemented measures would be in overcoming the difficulty faced
- how practicable it would be to take these measures
- how disruptive taking the measures would be
- financial and other resources available
- health and safety issues
- listed building legislation.

Beyond this basic requirement to make your venue physically accessible to all, the DDA has many further implications for venue managers, including matters of customer care, employment and enforcement. Service providers are liable for the actions of all their employees and volunteers and you should consider offering disability awareness training sessions. Both you and your staff need to know what access facilities are in place and be prepared to be challenged on any lack of these and know (and understand) the reasons for their absence. Furthermore, all promotional literature about your venue should state clearly the level of accessibility and, equally important, what services are not available – for example, that there is no wheelchair access or accessible toilet facilities.

Venue Accessibility

Mobility

Some venues are very difficult for people with mobility impairments to get into. Steps, stairs and narrow doorways can form insurmountable barriers. In some cases there is no simple solution. Many venues, however, have flat floors and level access, but become inaccessible because of scaffolding seating rigs or other imposed temporary layouts. It is the latter that should be avoided. It can be simple to avoid these problems by remembering to include basic facilities for people with disabilities at the planning stages.

Wheelchairs

The main access issues for wheelchair users arise from having to manoeuvre from a stationary position. In planning spaces to cater for wheelchair turning, you should allow a minimum diameter of 500mm of clear space which should generally be adequate to the purpose. As a rule, the more generous you are in providing space, the greater the level of access. When a high degree of accessibility is required, such as in eating areas, make sure to allow as much room as possible. Considerable energy is needed to propel a wheelchair manually up ramps, over changes in level, or across soft or uneven surfaces. High thresholds and frequent changes in level should be avoided. Ground and floor surfaces should be hard and even. Don't forget to allow space for any person pushing a wheelchair at the top of a ramp. Handrails should be provided on steps and ramps for ambulant disabled people. Seats along the route are also useful

(but not always necessary in small venues) as people with heart and lung diseases may only be able to walk a short distance and may be unable to climb stairs in one go.

Hazards

To minimise the risk of falls and injuries, hazards both inside and outside the building (eg, posts, single steps and overhangs) should be eliminated wherever possible. Hazards should be highlighted by means of illumination and signage in wall contrasting colours. Contrasting colours may also be used to aid the identification of doors, stairs, ramps and skirting boards. Directional signs, etc, should be specially illuminated. Handrails can be used as a location aid (for example, the end of a handrail can indicate the top or bottom of a staircase).

Signage and Visuals

Signs should be placed thoughtfully and not obscured by temporary displays. Size, clarity and contrast of print are important, along with a consistent height throughout a building. Attach signs to the wall at between 400mm and 700mm above floor level. Signs should be directional (ie, incorporating an arrow directing the reader to a specific facility) and locational (ie, marked with an identifying symbol that also appears at the location of the facility). The wheelchair symbol should never be used on its own without text or visual explanation. People with impaired hearing often have particular difficulty in comprehending sounds and words in noisy environments. They are also more dependent than others upon their vision for communicating. Even if they do not lip-read or use sign language, they will need to concentrate on gesture and expression. Think about ways to reduce echo and design lighting to provide clarity without glare and dazzle. Clear lighting will also help people who have visual impairments.

Designated Seating

Inside the auditorium, places should be set aside for wheelchair users. For a Fringe venue, the minimum provision should be six places or one percent of the total number of seats, whichever is greater. Don't forget to provide adjacent places for able-bodied companions. An ideal arrangement is for fixed seats to be removable, thus facilitating a flexible response to the need for wheelchair spaces. It is important to remove the seats with the minimum of fuss, and it helps to mention in publicity material that the facility is available and can be requested when booking tickets. The spaces should be located so that the sightlines of the rows immediately behind are not obscured by the greater height of the person in the wheelchair. As far as possible, disperse the wheelchair spaces around the auditorium for maximum integration and to avoid the wheelchair pen effect. The wheelchair places should have access to other parts of the building. Also, give some thought to the length of time a wheelchair user needs to reach various facilities during the interval.

Toilet Provision

It is helpful if you can advise customers with disabilities of the toilet facilities available at the time they purchase their tickets. Please bear the requirements of these patrons in mind, and attempt to accommodate them as far as possible in the planning of your WCs.

Customer Service

Pricing and Publicity

While it is not compulsory, we recommend that ticket concessions be made available to people with disabilities. If these became more widespread, it would encourage greater attendance at arts events. Wheelchair users often have a limited choice of seats, and deaf and partially sighted people are often discriminated against because they want to sit in the front of the auditorium, which may be more expensive. In unreserved venues, please keep aside some front row seats to cover for this possibility. Some wheelchair users can only attend performances if they have an escort, so you may wish to consider offering them two seats for the price of one. While venues will often answer the question 'Do you have facilities for disabled people?' with a 'yes', there is rarely any detail provided on what is constituted by 'disabled', 'facilities' or even 'yes' in the exchange. Coordinate your publicity to give clear and up-to-date information about facilities available in your venue. We suggest that you consider using appropriate disability access symbols in your publicity material to indicate the facilities that are available.

Staff Training

Know that the first barrier that gets in the way of a customer with any kind of impairment is lack of information. Staff who are well-informed about facilities and services and who can offer appropriate assistance to disabled people can minimise access problems at your venue. Some staff can be nervous about their ability to cope with disabled visitors, which can result in an overcautious or overenthusiastic response to the patron. Proper education is key to providing appropriate and helpful service to all your venue's customers, and to counteracting the ignorance that adversely affects the disabled community. The City of Edinburgh access officer can also provide information and advice on the following number: 0131 529 4512.

Types of Disabilities

Hearing Impairments

Hearing Concern managed the Sympathetic Hearing Scheme and made the following suggestions about communicating with a hearing-impaired person:

- Speak clearly and not too quickly.
- Turn towards the person so that your mouth can be seen clearly and make sure your face is in the light.

- Do not speak with anything in your mouth or in front of it.
- Try to eliminate background noise as much as possible.
- Rephrase your sentence if asked to repeat it. Sometimes certain sounds or words cannot be picked up. Do not simply say 'it doesn't matter' when asked to repeat what you have said.
- Do not assume that a person who cannot hear properly is stupid, and do not shout or speak in an unnatural way, as this distorts your speech.
- Do not assume that because a person is wearing a hearing aid that he or she can hear perfectly.
- Do not be afraid to write things down if you cannot make yourself understood. For this reason, keep a piece of paper and a pen or pencil handy.
- Check if the venue has any equipment to assist people with a hearing loss (eg., an induction loop for people with hearing aids or infrared or radio systems which have headsets). If so, ensure that they are advertised and in working order. If you offer signed performances, use the appropriate symbol on your literature.

Visual Impairments

There are many misconceptions about blindness. For example, blindness does not give a person magical hearing or exceptional memory, although blind people can often make more use of their other senses such as hearing and touch. Many visually impaired people have some degree of sight and make great use of this residual sight. Many younger visually-impaired people suffer from diabetes and have impaired tactile sensitivity, a side effect of the disease. Keep the following in mind whenever dealing with a person with a visual impairment:

- Talk to the person as you would anyone else. Don't talk down to him or her through an accompanying friend
- Ask the person how he or she wishes to be guided
- Do not be offended if help is declined
- Always try to give clear instructions or directions when acting as a guide
- Remember to say 'Goodbye' when you leave a blind person so that he or she does not go on talking in your absence
- Admit a blind person's guide dog. If the owner is to be at the event for any length of time, offer a bowl of water for the dog
- Never try to lead a guide dog by grasping at its harness, but consult the owner on how best to help.
- Check if the venue has any equipment to assist people with visual impairments (eg, infrared or radio systems for audio description). Note that any audio-described performances need to be planned well in advance and their facilities advertised.

Learning Difficulties

A group of people with learning difficulties will have needs as diverse as those of any group, and a warm, positive welcome is a good start to ensuring a pleasurable experience. Staff should try to be flexible and generous in recognising that some patrons may be less quiet and subdued than others. Individuals with learning difficulties are often handicapped more by other people's behaviour towards them than by their own lack of ability or determination.

Speech Impairments

One popular misconception is that a person who cannot speak properly does not understand what is being said. Frequently, however, there is some physiological damage that interferes with speech but does not impair understanding. People with learning difficulties are often very sensitive to criticism, overt or implied, and a disapproving look may well be enough to drive somebody away and prevent attendance at an arts event in the future.

Other Disabilities

People with unseen disabilities can benefit from the improvements advocated for other disabled people. Staff should be ready to respond to the needs of people who do not seem at first sight to be disabled. Epilepsy is now largely controlled by medication, but staff in contact with the public should know what to do in the unlikely event of a seizure occurring, just as they should have basic training in first aid.

Making Performances More Accessible

Captioning

Captioning is a process that converts the spoken word into text, providing people with hearing loss improved access to live performance. In a captioned performance, the words appear on a screen at the same time as they are spoken or sung. Captions also include sound effects and offstage noises. One or two display units should be installed on or around the stage to facilitate maximum visibility. The Federation of Scottish Theatre has recently assumed responsibility for co-ordinating captioned performances across Scotland (previously managed by STAGETEXT). FST aims to develop deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing audiences across Scotland through the promotion of captioned performances. If you are interested in presenting a captioned performance please contact FST on: 0131 220 6393. FST will also support theatres presenting captioned performances in developing their audiences. For more information on this service please contact their audience development consultant on: 0131 220 6393.

Signed Performances

The DDA lays the duty of access upon service providers. In practical terms this indicates that performances produced in English should be accessible to Deaf British Sign Language Users.

The act does not specify what proportion of performances should be accessible, only that access should be in place. BSL/English Interpreters can help you comply with this duty. Interpreting for performance is a unique field within the interpreting profession and it is advisable to engage the services of interpreters with specific experience in this in order to ensure quality of service. The Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI) is the professional body that registers and monitors the quality of Interpreters in Scotland. Full Members of SASLI (FMSASLI) have public indemnity insurance, Enhanced Disclosure Scotland certification, are covered by the SASLI complaints procedure, the Code of Conduct & Confidentiality and are committed to a program of Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Audio Description

Audio Description Association (ADA) Scotland offers help to all venues to provide good quality audio description of events for the blind and visually impaired. Members are given free advice and training and portable equipment is available to members who do not have their own. ADA Scotland makes no charge to member organisations for borrowing their 20-person sets of radio broadcasting equipment. Audio description of a show is broadcast by a qualified describer. Usually a pair of describers will work together to cover a performance, unless the piece is especially short. The going rate for a describer is £100 for the five days of work required. The performing company will need to provide an up-to-date printed script in advance and describers will need to see the show at least three, preferably four, times in advance of their broadcast in order to produce a satisfactory audio description on the night. The company must agree the night of the broadcast with the describers. It's best to avoid a clash with other shows described on the same day at the same time.

Check out the [Fringe Guide to Adapting Performance for Deaf and Disabled Audiences](#) for more in-depth support.

One Final Note

Do not be surprised if you have a poor turnout from people with disabilities despite your initiatives in providing facilities and services for them. The reasons for this are varied, but the main one is that since provision for disabled customers at the Fringe is a relatively recent development (venues like the Royal Lyceum and the Queen's Hall lead the way), many people are not aware where or even that such provisions exists and certainly cannot take them for granted. What's more, a longstanding habit of non-participation is hard to break and logistical problems with getting to a venue are still obstacles to widespread attendance. Please bear all these factors in mind and expect it to take a little time to get a response. If you wish further ideas or information on improving your awareness of the needs of disabled persons, please contact one or all of the following:

Artlink

3a Spittal Street
Edinburgh EH3 9DY
0131 229 3555
www.artlinkedinburgh.co.uk

City of Edinburgh Council Access Officer

Property Management, Public Safety, City of Edinburgh Council
329 High Street
Edinburgh EH 1N
0131 529 45 2
www.edinburgh.gov.uk

The ADAPT Trust

PO Box 16817
Glasgow G 2 8WX
0141 357 55 15
adapttrust@btconnect.com
www.adapttrust.co.uk – LINK NOT WORKING

Special Effects

The safety of performers, crew members and the audience must be paramount in the planning and staging of any special effects as part of your venue's shows. To that end, you should give the authorities as much information as you can about an effect as early as possible, even in your license application. Any additions or developments should likewise be communicated in writing. If the fire officer is satisfied that there is no undue risk, he or she will conditionally approve the effect. However, the officer may require additional precautionary measures be taken and will inform you of these measures by means of a written tear off slip, which you will be required to sign. Regular inspections will then take place during performances to see that these measures are being complied with. You should bear in mind that the temporary nature of many Fringe venues can put severe restrictions on the number and kinds of effects that will be deemed acceptable.

Firearms

Under Section 12 of the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended), special allowances are made for the use of firearms in theatrical productions, including even prohibited weapons such as sub-machine guns. In the case of real, functioning firearms (classed as Section-1 or – 2 firearms), including shotguns, rifles, pistols and some air weapons – even those adapted for firing blanks only – a representative of the performing company will have to obtain a firearms certificate from the police in his or her place of residence (ie, not necessarily Edinburgh). This application should be made at least two months before the start of a Fringe run. Prohibited weapons (such as machine guns) require further Home or Scottish Office authority (see below). Under the 1988 Act, a weapon that has been completely deactivated, and stamped as such by a Proof House, will not be considered a firearm at all. This process includes destruction of the firing pin mechanism. In such circumstances a de-activation certificate will have been issued by the relevant proof house. This de-activation certificate should be held by the person responsible for the weapon so it can be inspected by a police officer on request. Where an armorer has issued the de-activated weapon, a copy of the de-activation certificate should be available for a police officer to check on request. Relevant contact details for the armorer should also be available.

The firearms (amendment) act 1997 places most pistols and handguns in the category of 'prohibited weapons'. Prohibited weapons will only be authorised for use in theatrical performances under very restricted circumstances. Such authorisation will only be granted after a full enquiry has been conducted by the police firearm licensing section (contact details provided below). It is most unlikely that theatre companies would be granted authority to use prohibited handguns. In most cases companies are advised to use a class of replica or imitation firearms that will not require a certificate or police authority. This often means a 9mm, 8mm or 6mm (.22) blank firing. It should

be noted however that from 2010 the bbm Olympic 380 imitation handgun commonly used as a starting pistol has since been re-classified as a prohibited weapon. Should you be unsure of the classification of a pistol, handgun, or any other firearm the relevant police firearm licensing section should be contacted in the first instance in order that appropriate guidance can be provided.

Furthermore, keep in mind that as many replica weapons are die-cast and susceptible to ageing, more care should be taken with their regular cleaning and oiling. As with all weapons, the use of replicas on stage requires great care and awareness.

Use and Storage

Anyone taking part in a theatrical rehearsal or performance may be in possession of firearms, but the person in the company who is responsible for the firearm (ie, who holds the relevant certificate or in cases of de-activated weapons and replicas the designated person responsible) must be present at all times when the firearm is not in locked storage. When transporting the firearm/weapon to and from a venue the responsible person should ensure that the weapon is covered and secure at all times so it is not readily identifiable by members of the public so as to restrict any unnecessary alarm. In the event of the loss or theft of any weapon, the police must be informed immediately.

Firearms should never be pointed or fired towards the audience or directly at any person on the stage. Be aware of the distances that blank ammunition can discharge wadding and other materials. For a shotgun, the length of discharge may be more than five feet. (For this reason, it is advisable for a performer to aim slightly to one side of his or her 'target', which will still achieve the intended effect from the audience's point of view.)

Equally, if a firearm is mishandled, or if the user is unaware that the discharge of hot gases comes through the top of the barrel rather than through the muzzle, powder burns and other accidents can occur.

The licensing authority may wish to be present at rehearsals to make sure that the weapon is used correctly. In the event of an accident, no matter how trivial, the cause should be ascertained and the action modified so as to ensure that it cannot happen again. All accidents should be written in your venue accident book.

Blank ammunition must be limited to the amount required for each performance and, along with all firearms, be kept in a secure fast box when not in use. Some ammunition may require special storage conditions depending on what style of effect they produce. (Trading standards can advise on such matters.) Never remove more ammunition than is required for the rehearsal or performance. Live ammunition should never be taken into, stored or used in a theatre or rehearsal space. The barrel should not be primed

with any other substance that might act as a missile.

Note that the police rarely permit the use of firearms for offstage effects. Shows should instead use replicas, sound effects or pyrotechnic systems.

You should always post signs to inform the audience that shots will be fired during a show. As a rule, the use of firearms or replicas in an outdoor setting is very unwise and should not be contemplated unless the performing company has full approval from the firearms officer at Edinburgh police headquarters.

Companies should be aware that the public can be very sensitive to images of gun violence, and any frivolous inclusion of guns in a Fringe production will probably be viewed with great disdain.

Further advice on all the above matters can be gained by contacting:

Firearms licensing section
Lothian and borders police
Force headquarters
Fettes avenue
Edinburgh
EH4 1RB
0131 311 3667
Email: firearms.licensing@lbp.pnn.police.uk

Pyrotechnics

The use of pyrotechnics should be carefully controlled to ensure the safety of performers and audience members. All maroons, flash powder, fireworks and other explosive effects are potentially very dangerous and, if used or stored incorrectly, can cause fatal injuries and severely damage property. For most of the effects used on the Fringe, a special license is not necessary, but if there is any doubt be sure to consult Fire Rescue and Services. During his or her inspection, the fire officer will require sight and demonstration of any effect a company plans to use. Know that homemade devices are not acceptable for use in the context of a Fringe performance. Depending on the quantity of product and length of time stored, applicants may need to contact Trading Standards. This is most likely to be necessary if storage is likely to be for a prolonged period. Always store the pyrotechnics in a metal container when they are not in use, and preferably in a room that has been set aside and labelled Explosive

Store so that no one can be in any doubt as to the contents. It is an offence to tamper with, re-mix or re-label any prepared pyrotechnic effects. All switches and cables that will be controlling the device must be properly labelled and all company members and staff should be warned about their location. Always unplug the flash box or detonating device before

loading the effect. Never smoke when handling or using pyrotechnics. For all explosions, the manufacturer's instructions must be followed. Always ensure that flash pods are isolated from the firing source before filling or handling them.

If the effect fails to activate, it must be isolated from the firing device and be made safe before investigating the reason for failure. This cannot be emphasised enough – there have been a number of serious accidents on the Fringe in past years, many of which could have been prevented through greater care and precaution. All maroons must be fired in a 'bomb tank' to contain the debris produced by the explosion. We recommend that you use a professionally made system, but a metal dustbin or water tank with a secure wire mesh lid can also be used. If you plan to set off more than one maroon, place them in the tank as far apart as possible—one maroon has been known to destroy another.

Other Effects

Other Weapons

The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons) (Scotland) Order 2005 made using a selection of martial arts weapons illegal (except in the case of simple possession). This includes the swordsticks that are often used in plays: it is an offence to buy, sell, hire or lend these weapons. (A specific exemption was made for galleries and museums, but not theatres.) All edged weapons should be blunt and inspected regularly for loose parts, jagged edges or damage. Fight scenes should be carefully choreographed to ensure the safety of the audience and performers.

Smoke

Smoke can be generated in a number of ways without the need to set anything alight. The safest method is to use a smoke gun, which can be readily obtained from a lighting hire company. This forces glycerine oil through a heated pump either by a CO₂ gas bottle or by an integral air pump. Make sure that you have spare cartridges or fluid of the correct type for the machine. Smaller amounts of smoke can be made by heating a slow burning smoke pellet or powder on a heating element. This, however, is not a safe method, and also produces a very strong smell. Some smoke effects will fall under the control of the Explosives Act and therefore will require special storage, as per pyrotechnics. Advice on their use can be obtained from Trading Standards.

Dry Ice

Dry ice (sometimes known as Cardice) is frozen carbon dioxide available in blocks or in pellets.

Protective gloves must be worn when handling dry ice, as it sticks to the skin and can cause severe burns. When breaking up blocks, cover the ice with a sack or dry cloth to prevent splinters from flying off and injuring someone's eyes. Do not smoke while handling. Dry ice can now be obtained from Northern Light. Do not store it in

a domestic freezer. The best method is to seal the dry ice in an airtight bag and then embed this in a box full of expanded polystyrene. This will keep it for a day or two; bear in mind, though, that polystyrene may not be permitted in the building, so the container may have to be stored outside.

Lasers

No matter how small, lasers are not allowed unless written permission is obtained from the environmental and consumer services department of the City of Edinburgh Council. The Council will provide special guidance notes, which also contain an application form (ask for a PM 9 form).

Stroboscopes

You must have a sign on the door of the auditorium or the box office if a strobe is being used in a performance. You should be aware that people with photosensitive epilepsy may be adversely affected by strobe effects.

Naked Flame on Stage

Candles will only be allowed if the actor lights and extinguishes the candle on stage. You should take necessary precautions and the fire officer will want to see the part of the play concerned.

Performing Animals

There is a general ban on performing animals in all venues owned by the City of Edinburgh Council. This includes most school halls. Permission may be given for certain domesticated animals such as dogs and horses. Certain conditions also apply to private property. If a company wants to use live animals in its production, it should outline its proposals in writing, and send these to environmental and consumer services at the City of Edinburgh.

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