

SCENERY & PROPS – FIRE RISKS

Hazards

- Fire
- Smoke inhalation
- Toxic gases inhalation

Control Measures

Care should be taken to limit all set construction and dressing for scenery as a fuel in the event of a fire. Where possible, materials should be treated with a fire retardancy chemical.

All materials used in the construction of scenery has to conform to the following standards:

Basic Timbers:

- All plywood, hardboard and similar composites incorporated in setting, must have been flame-proofed in manufacture to BS 476, Part 7, Class I
- Although the use of softwood for battens and framing (should not be less than 22mm thickness) is permitted, these must be clad with materials as mentioned in the point above, to present an exterior flame resistant surface where the construction permits this
- Providing Blockboard, Plywood, Chipboard, MDF is not less than 18mm, then they do not require additional fire resisting treatments. Their thickness gives sufficient resistance to the rapid spread of fire.

Wallpapers, Decorative Laminates, Plastics, etc

Wallpaper and any synthetic substitute must be pasted to a flame-resistant surface in a manner which excludes any air space between the material and the surface to which it adheres.

Paints

Only flame-retardant paints are normally allowed. Other paints, including cellulose nitrate based paints must not be used on scenery without risk assessment and studio management approval.

Plastics

Plastics for use in the studios should be either inherently flameproof or rendered flameproof by the use of a suitable fire retardant. Care should be taken to ensure that any plastic used will not emit smoke or drip under heat/fire conditions. As a rule of thumb plastics should not be acceptable if they ignite or burn when a small flame is applied for 12 seconds.

Glass Reinforced Plastic

Fibreglass must be flame-proofed to meet the BS 476 Part 7 Class 1 standard

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Bonding Resins

Bonding resins must be flame-resistant.

Adhesives

Water-based adhesives must be used wherever possible. Flammable adhesives must not be applied in studios/stages unless special authorisation is given by the management of that facility.

Drapes

Whenever possible drapes, curtains and window blinds should be inherently or durably flame-proofed and comply with BS 5687:2008, and BSEN13773:2003. Drapes and curtains which are not inherently or durably flame-proofed must be rendered flame-resistant to a standard which satisfies the BS 3120.

Carpets

All carpets must conform to BS 4790 (Hot Nut Test).

Carpets may only be attached to a substrate which conforms with BS 476 Part 7 Class 1 and must be firmly fixed. They should not be used in the vertical plane (other than standard stair risers).

Furniture

All furniture must conform to The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations.

Artificial and dried foliage

Where practicable greenery (eg dried branches, hay, straw, ferns, grasses etc) should be suitably flame proofed. As flame retardant treatments can be adversely affected by contact with moisture (as this can cause recrystallisation on surfaces), periodic retreatment may be required to maintain the effectiveness of the flame retardant treatment and/or to maintain an acceptable appearance.

Dried flowers and grasses should not be sprayed with hair lacquer or other like substance; as such treatment will only enhance the ease of ignition and rate of fire spread.

In the case of hay, straw etc to be used as fodder or bedding for animals, it must not be flame proofed but only a minimum of untreated material should be kept on site. Other non-flame proofed greenery should be kept damped down at four hour intervals.