

1.9.1 PYROTECHNICS - THE BASICS

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NOTE: *Derived from Natural Resources Canada, Edition 1, March 1997*

Purpose: To make clear the fundamentals of safety and legal awareness regarding the use of pyrotechnics in the community theatre. Please refer to the manual mentioned above for further clarification on any point.

Regulations and Regulatory Bodies

The use of pyrotechnics for use in the performing arts is strictly regulated by either *the Federal Explosives Act and Regulations* or the *Authority Having Jurisdiction* (AHJ). Whichever has the more pertinent or stringent regulations. It is the responsibility of The Special Effects Co-ordinator (SEC) to ensure compliance with these regulations and be aware of the relevant local authorities. This person has the final decision on the use of and firing of pyrotechnics and may stop a performance if their use is deemed unsafe. The local authorities may comprise of the following:

- Fire Chief or Fire Protection Officer
- Police forces, including Police explosive technicians
- Provincial Occupational Health and Safety Organisations
- Designated representatives for event approval or site inspections

Consequences of Non-Compliance

If a group is found to be using pyrotechnics in an unsafe or illegal manner one or all of the following consequences may occur:

- The Explosives Regulatory Division (ERD) or AHJ may suspend or revoke any licence issued.
- The event or any future events or performances may be cancelled or prohibited.
- Legal action may be taken.
- Insurance coverage may be terminated.

Liability

Liability for unauthorised or unsafe use of pyrotechnics refers to the following:

- The possibility of being prosecuted in criminal courts.
- The possibility of being sued in civil courts.

Individuals who are liable for unsafe use of pyrotechnics refers to the following:

- The lead technician and possibly his/her assistants.
- Supervisors.
- Stage and Production Managers
- Technical and Assistant Directors
- Directors

- Producers
- Property owners (Curtain Club members)

Certification and Licensing

A group using pyrotechnics during live performances must have a certified *Occasional User* (level of certification) or *Assistant* (level of certification) on-site during the performance. In general, theatres fall under the classification of *Occasional User* that includes theatre technicians, musical groups, dancers and disk jockeys. This classification allows the following:

- Applying to purchase, purchase and storage of specific authorised pyrotechnic articles and powders.
- Preparation and use of specific authorised pyrotechnic articles and powders of a minimal quantity, that are safe and compatible with respect to the audience, performer, operator, activity, stage, ceiling height, ventilation and venue.