

Is Safety Training Required in Our Arts Programs....You Bet It Is!

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Numerous and diverse hazards exist in all facets of University Arts programs. Various types of chemicals are used for painting, photography and costume shop activities and physical hazards are present due to working at height, manual material handling and the use of power tools in Theater, Film and Music programs. So just as we wouldn't expect our scientists or maintenance workers to be exposed to these hazards without proper safety training, we need to recognize that safety training is a key element of injury prevention in the Arts.

In some cases, identifying training needs and providing safety training to undergraduate and graduate artists can be more challenging than similar efforts in the sciences. Programs and activities in the Arts, especially for graduate students, are dynamic and there may not be as clear a one-to-one association between a graduate student and a faculty advisor. Artists may work in more shared use facilities, such as shops and studios, and have a wide range of times to access these areas relative to their colleagues in Chemistry and Biology. In these cases, identifying and establishing training requirements and safe work procedures based on authorization to use the facility and various types of equipment is critical. To be successful at integrating safety training into the use of shared studios and shops, a responsible person must be designated and be granted authority to establish safety training requirements for users working in the space.

So what resources are available to assist with safety training in the Arts? The past couple of years, the university has had a focused initiative on Performing Arts Safety. As part of this focus, a comprehensive safety manual was developed along with a corresponding [website](#). Both the website and the manual provide forms to support training needs identification, documentation of safety training provided, and the resources include Codes of Safe Work Practices for various technical operations in theater programs. The manual was created specifically to assist academic theater programs in identifying, providing and documenting safety training for students and staff. Over 40 Codes of Safe Practice are available covering such topics as ladder safety, aerial lifts, lock out/tag out and material handling. These same documents and reference information can be used to support safety training in other Arts programs such as Music, Film, Sculpture, Printmaking, etc.

Beyond the safety manual, training for the Arts can and should include a blended learning approach that includes use of available Learning Management System on-line courses followed up by instructor-led training. As part of their safety orientation to academic classes and new tasks, individuals can complete appropriate on-line courses for the recognized hazards within the class or activity. Hands-on training can be used to reinforce the key points of the on-line course and to review the procedures and operations for that particular task.

When it comes to safety training in the Arts, follow the key steps outlined below to successfully support the faculty, staff and students in your programs.

- Recognize hazards present in Arts-related teaching and research activities
- Identify and prioritize safety training needs to address recognized hazards
- Develop a training plan using available campus resources such as Learning Management System on-line courses, EH&S training classes and in-house subject matter experts

- Integrate and deliver safety training as part of academic classes, new employee orientation, and shop/studio use authorization procedures

Contact your Campus EH&S Office or the [UC Center of Excellence for Performing Arts Safety](#) to assist you with your Arts safety training program needs.