

PRAYAS THEATRE

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

PRAYAS THEATRE INCORPORATED

This manual is prepared for all Prayas volunteers, mentors, directors, actors, producers, crew, creatives, contractors, company members, executive committee, and all participants in our initiatives, productions, and other company activities.

It contains guidelines to ensure their safety and the safety of people in their care, working alongside them and/or visiting a Prayas workplace or rehearsal room.

Version: June 2026

To be reviewed: June 2027

Introduction

This Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) manual contains practical steps to provide a safe workspace for all our workers: mentors, directors, actors, producers, crew, creatives, contractors, company members, management, and all participants in our initiatives, productions, and other company activities.

It ensures we comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act (2015), but more importantly is written to help everyone who works with Prayas understand and remember the steps we need to take to check the venues we are working in are safe, and that our activities are carried out in the safest way possible.

Within this manual, the use of the term 'employee' includes employees and people working under contract for the provision of our core activities (i.e., management, tutors, directors, producers, stage managers, designers, actors, crew and volunteers).

It is a living document. If anyone identifies a need for an update, edit or clarification please get in touch with the Executive Director or email contact@prayas.co.nz. This needs to be a workable document for everyone, so we welcome all input.

Ngā mihi

Amit Ohdedar

Honorary President, Prayas Theatre
contact@prayas.co.nz

1. Basic Safe Practice Outline

The following pages will provide more detail, but this is a basic running order and outline of what is expected for all our workshops, rehearsals, productions, and other events and activities:

1. There is a key leader for Health, Safety, and Wellbeing for each workshop or rehearsal
2. The key leader checks over the workshop or rehearsal venue for any possible hazards or risks
3. The key leader briefs everyone involved in the workshop or rehearsal on health and safety (H&S)
4. The key leader handles any incidents

All participants and attendees are expected to:

- Attend the H&S briefing
- Tell the key leader, director, or stage manager if you have any pain or injury (no matter how minor) straight away
- Tell the key leader, director, or stage manager if you are feeling unwell straight away
- Tell the key leader, director, or stage manager if you notice something that looks unsafe, or you are worried about the safety of any activity or situation
- Tell the key leader, or any other tutor, director, or stage manager present if you are worried about someone's safety and wellbeing or if their actions feel unsafe
- If feeling unwell with fever, respiratory symptoms, or other contagious illness, stay home and notify the key leader

2. Appointing a Key Leader

Workshops

The key leader will be appointed by Prayas before any initiative. The key leader will lead the briefing so:

- Participants know who to go to for help
- Everyone knows who will lead an emergency evacuation
- Record-keeping is completed and handed to the Producer and/or any other nominated persons after the activity

The key leader can change from day to day during a multi-day workshop as long as all participants are clear who is leading on any given day.

Prayas workshops or initiatives: The key leader shall be the person conducting the workshop (tutor) or any other person nominated by Prayas. The key leader will be responsible for Health, Safety and Wellbeing and will brief all the participants involved. The key leader needs to make sure that they are briefed about what to do if there is an emergency or an incident.

Rehearsals

The Stage Manager should be the key leader. If they are not present at a rehearsal, the Director will be the key leader for that time. Actors and other attendees present at a rehearsal should be told they can talk to either the Stage Manager or the Director about any HSW concerns. If there is any conflict of interest, the attendees can reach out to Prayas Executive Committee members.

Productions

The Stage Manager is the key leader once the rehearsals move into the performance venue. Performance venues will usually run an H&S induction during pack-in, but the Stage Manager is still the key leader.

3. Risk Assessment and Hazard Management

The H&S plan for productions (in the theatre or performance space) needs to consider the pack-in and pack-out of set items, lighting and materials used in set and costume construction.

The Producer and the Stage Manager need to create the H&S plan for the performance in consultation with the Director, Set Designer, Costume Designer, Lighting Designer, and the venue. The completed H&S plan should be given to the venue in advance of the pack-in.

The venue will also have its own H&S Plan and will organise an induction before work begins at the venue.

A copy of the Risk Assessment and Hazard Management forms are included in this manual for your reference (Appendix A & Appendix B).

Important: During the H&S briefing, the Producer and Stage Manager must remind participants to disclose anything which might affect their safety during the event or any potential medical assistance required – including food allergies and health conditions such as asthma. Give participants a chance to share during the briefing, but also set aside time immediately afterwards for anyone who prefers to speak privately.

Health Notes on Cast Involved in Rehearsals

Directors must ask their cast about any physical weaknesses (e.g., tendency to roll ankles, back pain, etc.) or health conditions (e.g., asthma, food allergies, etc.). Physical activity during rehearsal must take these into account with no exceptions. If it is imperative that someone has a particular physical fitness or strength to perform a role, then this must be asked before casting, and the role either cast elsewhere or adjusted to suit the performer's abilities.

4. H&S Briefing Induction

- After the Risk Assessment and Hazard Management has been completed, and before any activity begins, the key leader needs to verbally brief all participants on H&S and what to do in an emergency (see Section 5 for Emergency Planning)
- You will receive an H&S Briefing Induction checklist from the Programme Coordinator (for workshops) or Producer (rehearsals/productions) to help you remember what to cover.

Please use the checklist to tick off items, then sign and give the form to the Executive Director after the workshop/rehearsal period

- A copy of the H&S Briefing Induction form is included in this manual for your reference (Appendix C)
- We recommend having ice packs available in case they are needed for first aid treatment

5. Emergency Planning and Readiness

Emergency Planning is vital to effective Health, Safety, and Wellbeing practices. Tutors, Directors, and Stage Managers are responsible for all Prayas participants/employees at the venue. Each event/workshop/rehearsal must identify one person who will be the key leader in an emergency, and this must be communicated to all attendees.

When you are in a new venue (e.g., workshop, rehearsal space or theatre) there will be relevant emergency procedures available either from the venue's Safety Warden or on posters at some venues (e.g., church or community halls). It is the responsibility of the key leader to communicate these emergency measures to the participants/employees (under the venue Safety Warden's direction, if one is onsite).

At serviced venues, follow venue staff instructions. At un-serviced venues, the key leader runs the evacuation protocol and is responsible for ensuring the correct procedures are carried out.

Standard Evacuation Protocol

- Ensure any evacuation procedures, marshalling, and assembly locations are communicated with all participants/employees under the direction of the key leader or on-site venue Safety Warden
- If you are in a venue without an on-site venue Safety Warden, refer to any evacuation procedures that may be on posters or publications in the space. If there is no relevant information, it is the key leader's responsibility to note these procedures in the emergency planning report and communicate these procedures to the participants/employees
- If you are in a staffed venue, it is your responsibility to locate the relevant Safety Warden for the venue and set up a briefing with the participants/employees regarding the venue's emergency procedures

6. Reporting Incidents, Near-misses, and Hazards

If you are an actor or participant, please tell a key leader, tutor, director or stage manager about any pain or injury no matter how minor.

If you are a key leader, director, or stage manager, you must document all reported or observed incidents and near-misses in a timely manner, or as quickly as practicably possible. Use the Incident & Near-miss Form provided (Appendix D).

Notifiable incidents: If the injury is a "notifiable incident or event" (see Section 7), you must ring senior management immediately after all necessary medical help has been given.

Emergency Contacts

Rishabh Kapoor, Executive Director, Prayas

Amit Ohdedar, Honorary President, Prayas

All other accidents and incidents must be reported at the conclusion of the day in writing using an Incident Form. The Producer will report all incidents to Prayas, and notifiable incidents or events to WorkSafe NZ.

7. What is a Notifiable Incident or Event?

In brief, a "notifiable incident" is a serious illness or injury which requires the environment to be locked down until WorkSafe NZ has investigated. The following definitions are from WorkSafe NZ resources.

A notifiable event is any of the following events that arise from or during work including:

- Death
- An injury or illness requiring a person to be admitted to the hospital as an inpatient for immediate treatment
- An incident leading to serious risk e.g., fire, explosion, electric shock (lethal shock), structural collapse causing an evacuation

Examples of serious injury are:

- Amputation of a limb
- Eye injury that causes or is likely to cause loss of an eye or vision (total or partial)
- Spinal injury (not back strain)
- Head injury (fractured skull, blood clot or bleed, loss of consciousness, etc.)

In the event of a notifiable event, the Prayas Executive Director must be notified immediately.

8. Our Commitment — Prayas's H&S Policy

Prayas is committed to a safe and healthy working environment for everyone using our services as a place of work or participating in our programmes and productions.

Prayas will:

- Set Health, Safety and Wellbeing objectives, and performance criteria for all managers and work areas
- Encourage accurate and timely reporting and recording of all incidents and injuries
- Investigate all reported incidents and injuries to identify all contributing factors and, where appropriate, formulate plans for corrective action
- Actively encourage the early reporting of any pain or discomfort
- Identify all existing and new hazards and take all practicable steps to eliminate, isolate or minimise the exposure to any significant hazards
- Ensure that all participants are made aware of the hazards in their work areas and are adequately trained so they can carry out their duties in a safe manner
- Encourage consultation and participation in all health and safety matters
- Ensure that all contractors and subcontractors are actively managing health and safety for themselves and their employees
- Meet our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, codes of practice, and any relevant standards, guidelines and regulations
- Organise regular H&S (including first aid) refresher training for the H&S leader/champion

9. Cast/Crew Rights & Requirements

Everyone is expected to share in the commitment to health and safety at Prayas. Every Producer, Tutor, Director, and Stage Manager is accountable to the Executive Director for the health and safety of people working under their direction. Everyone is expected to:

- Follow all safe work procedures, rules, and instructions
- Properly use all safety equipment and clothing provided
- Report any pain or discomfort early on
- Take an active role in the company's treatment and rehabilitation plan for an early and durable return to work
- Report all incidents, near-misses, injuries, and hazards to the appropriate person
- Cease an activity if it is perceived to be unsafe
- Stay home if feeling unwell with contagious symptoms and notify the key leader

We acknowledge that mistakes can occur, however, intentional actions or disregard for safety standards (e.g., not using hazard controls or procedures outlined in this manual) will be considered neglectful behaviour and result in disciplinary action.

10. Illness and Communicable Disease

To protect the health and wellbeing of all participants, Prayas expects anyone who is unwell — particularly with fever, respiratory symptoms, gastrointestinal illness, or other potentially contagious conditions — to stay home and notify the key leader, director, or stage manager as soon as possible.

If a participant becomes unwell during an activity:

- The key leader should arrange for them to leave the venue safely
- Where appropriate, advise other participants of any necessary hygiene precautions
- Record the incident in the day's report

Prayas will follow all current guidance from the Ministry of Health and public health authorities regarding communicable diseases. If specific public health measures are required (e.g., during a pandemic), Prayas will issue supplementary guidance as needed.

11. Review and Planning

Prayas will undertake annual reviews of the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing procedures to ensure we are continually achieving a high standard of Health & Safety performance.

Additional reviews will be undertaken if:

- Feedback indicates there are any hazard controls that are not working or need improvement
- Evidence shows that hazard controls are not adequate
- Relevant legislation or public health guidance changes

The Honorary President and the Executive Committee are responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and planning health and safety policies, systems, and practices.

Appendix A — Risk Assessment and Hazard Management Form

For workshops, rehearsals and productions.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Event Name | |
| Location | |
| Plan Prepared by | |
| Start Date | |
| End Date | |

| Hazard / Risk | Likelihood | Severity | Control Measure | Person Responsible |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |

Appendix B — Venue Safety Checklist

To be completed by the key leader before each activity.

| Item | Checked |
|--|---------|
| Fire exits identified and unobstructed | |
| Assembly point identified and communicated | |
| First aid kit located and stocked | |
| Fire extinguisher located | |
| Trip hazards checked (cables, mats, uneven surfaces) | |
| Lighting adequate for safe movement | |
| Venue Safety Warden contacted (if staffed venue) | |
| Emergency procedures communicated to all attendees | |
| Any specific hazards noted and communicated | |

Checked by: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C — H&S Briefing Induction Checklist

To be completed by the key leader at the start of each activity period.

| Briefing Item | Covered |
|---|---------|
| Introduced yourself as the H&S key leader | |
| Fire exits and assembly point | |
| Location of first aid kit | |
| How to report incidents and near-misses | |
| Asked about injuries, conditions, or allergies | |
| Reminded participants to report pain/discomfort immediately | |
| Reminded participants to stay home if unwell | |
| Specific hazards for today's activity | |
| Time set aside for private disclosures | |

Key Leader: _____ Date: _____

Event/Activity: _____

Appendix D — Incident & Near-miss Report Form

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Date of Incident | |
| Time of Incident | |
| Location | |
| Event/Activity | |
| Name of Injured Person | |
| Role | |

| |
|--------------------------------|
| Description of Incident |
| |

| |
|---------------------|
| Action Taken |
| |

| |
|---------------------------|
| Follow-up Required |
| |

Reported by: _____ Date: _____

Received by (Executive Director): _____ Date: _____

Is this a notifiable event? If yes, the Executive Director must be contacted immediately and WorkSafe NZ notified. Do not disturb the scene until advised by WorkSafe NZ.