

# Performing Arts Safety Bulletin

(Safety & Health In Arts Production & Entertainment)

## EDGED AND PIERCING PROPS

These guidelines are intended to provide recommendations on the safe handling, use and storage of those props that can cut or puncture cast or crew members. These props include but are not limited to knives, swords, razors, darts, bows and arrows, hatchets, saws, spears, cross bows and martial arts throwing stars.

### 1. SAFE USE AND HANDLING OF EDGED AND PIERCING PROPS:

- a. Real or fake prop weapons shall be strong enough that they will not accidentally break into dangerous pieces when being used for their intended purpose. It is best to use dulled or blunted weapons made to order for use as props. Dulling a sharp weapon can lessen its tensile strength. Sharpened prop weapons should only be used when the appearance of cutting or piercing cannot be otherwise simulated.

The cutting edges of saws, knives, cutting heads, and other sharp-edged devices, should be guarded when stored in operating areas.

- b. Prop weapons used to strike other weapons or other hard surfaces should be made of steel or high tensile aluminum. The use of fiberglass props in such situations should be avoided.
- c. The use of these props should be limited to performance and rehearsals supervised by qualified personnel.
- d. Use these props only for their intended purpose. Do not engage in or permit horseplay or target practice on or off the set.
- e. Consult the Props Person (see below), Production Manager or Stage Manager, Fight Director or Technical Advisor if you have any doubts or questions about the proper handling of these props. Actors and others who will handle an edged or piercing prop and who claim prior knowledge will be required to demonstrate their experience in the safe handling of the prop to one of the persons listed in the preceding sentence.
- f. No person is to be coaxed, coerced or forced into handling these props.
- g. Maintain all safety devices and guards (such as sheathes) in place until the prop is about to be used.
- h. Inspect the area in which the action is to be rehearsed or performed, with special attention to the surfaces on which the performers will be standing.

**Safety Bulletins Are Recommended Guidelines Only; Consult All Applicable Rules and Regulations**



- i. Prior to rehearsing the action, inform the cast and crew of the safety precautions to be observed, including their positions during rehearsing and filming.
- j. Allow sufficient time to train performers and to rehearse the action so that everyone involved knows what their part in the action is to be. Keep all persons who are not involved out of the area of the rehearsal.
- k. Know where and what your target is at all times. Do not release the prop unless you have a clear view of your target.
- l. Never propel one of these props until you have received the designated signal to do so from the individual designated to signal. Always have an agreed upon abort signal in case it is necessary to abort the use of a prop.
- m. Report any malfunctions of equipment to the Props Person immediately. Do not attempt to adjust, modify or repair equipment yourself. It is best to have a duplicate immediately available. Malfunctioning equipment should be taken out of service until properly repaired by a person, such as an armorer, qualified to do so.
- n. Never lay down or leave these props unattended. Unless actively performing or rehearsing, all props should be secured by the Props Person or an individual designated for this duty such as a weapons expert if one is assigned to the production.
- o. Use appropriate personal protective equipment whenever other crew or cast are exposed to these props.
- p. All Federal and Provincial safety regulations are applicable and override these guidelines if they are more stringent.

**NOTE:** The Props Person should coordinate these duties with the weapons expert if one has been assigned to the production.

**2. THE PROPS PERSON IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- a. Using simulated or dummy props whenever possible.
- b. Proper storage, possession, control and distribution of all of these props on the set. All such props to be used on the production, whether company owned or rented, or privately owned, are to be given to the Props Person.
- c. Designating individuals under the Props Person's direct supervision to assist them if necessary.
- d. Being qualified to work with the types of props being used, and being knowledgeable in their handling, use and safekeeping.

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- e. Seeking expert advice if he or she is not familiar with the prop weapons to be used.
- f. Being knowledgeable in the laws governing transportation, storage and use of these props and complying with those laws.
- g. Being knowledgeable of and adhering to all manufacturers' warnings, storage and use of these props and complying with those laws.
- h. Issuing of props; the Props Person will issue to untrained personnel only after he/she has confirmed, with one of the persons named in 2.e. above, such personnel have been properly trained.
- i. Retaining possession of all props except during actual use or rehearsal. The Props Person, or an individual designated by the Prop Master, shall collect all such props as soon as they are not immediately required on the set.
- j. Checking each prop before each use. All props should be cleaned, checked and inventoried at the close of each day. All props should be accounted for before personnel are allowed to leave the area. The production company should allow time in its schedule for this procedure.

