



Fire and Safety Policy

Discovering a fire:

The Abbey Theatre does not have, at this time, smoke detectors, although it is planned to investigate the installation of improved monitoring equipment throughout the building in the near future. There is also no automatic signalling to the emergency services in the case of fire.

Anyone discovering a fire or suspects there may be a fire must raise the appropriate alarm by immediately advising the SM or FoH manager. Due to the complexities of evacuating this building during performances, break-glass alarms are to be used only when necessary. If, however, the alarm does sound at ANY time, the building MUST be evacuated immediately.

Fire extinguishers and fire blankets are provided according to law and to specification by Warwickshire Fire Service. However, no-one is to attempt to tackle any fire unless confident that their actions will be successful. Fire safety equipment is inspected annually by a qualified contractor.

If in doubt **ALWAYS EVACUATE.**

Responsibilities.

Performance days:

During performance days, the responsibility for the cast & crew lies with the performing company's stage manager, whilst responsibility for the public (audience) lies with the company's front of house team. Abbey Theatre staff on duty will assist as necessary, but the company is best placed to deal with its members and patrons.

In the event of receiving a fire warning, the SM and FoH manager must quickly meet and decide whether there is a genuine risk and then take appropriate action.

Responsibility for contacting the Fire Service lies firstly with the FoH manager.

He/she must nominate a deputy to make a call to 999 whilst he/she supervises the evacuation.

Stage Manager (SM) The company's SM must be fully aware of the fire alarm points within the building, the assembly points and the location of appropriate equipment. He/she must have at least one deputy, also familiar with the above. The SM & deputy are responsible for ensuring all areas on stage and in the dressing rooms are cleared in the case of an evacuation. The SM must co-ordinate with the FoH manager once evacuation has been effected. He/she must be aware of the door alarm sounder and that this does NOT form part of the fire alarm system.

Front of House (FoH) Manager The company's FoH Manager must be fully aware of the fire alarm points within the building, the assembly points and the location of appropriate equipment. He/she must have at least one deputy, also familiar with the above. The FoH team are responsible, together with theatre staff, for ensuring all public areas (auditorium, foyers and first floor rooms) are cleared in the case of an evacuation.

Evacuation for a suspected fire may be commenced by a calm request to patrons, made from the stage, to leave via the appropriate exits.

The FoH manager must co-ordinate with the SM once evacuation has been effected. He/she must be aware of the door alarm sounder and that this does NOT form part of the fire alarm system.

Non-performance days:

During normal days when rehearsals/meetings are in progress, responsibility for evacuation lies with the organiser of each space being used. If more than one space is in use, other users must be advised if a fire is suspected, either verbally or via use of the break-glass fire alarm system. The organisers must ensure all spaces in their area are clear before leaving.

General Responsibilities:

In the case of an evacuation, all users must leave the building via the closest available exit. Personal belongings must be left in the building and no-one is to remain in the building or return to collect belongings or search for friends.

Evacuations must be carried out calmly with everyone in each area moving in the same direction.

DO NOT RUN.

All users are expected to follow directions from the company's stage manager or FoH manager, particularly with respect to exit paths to be avoided.

All members of all groups using the building must be made aware of the fire and safety policy as well as the location of all exit routes. There must be a pre-production safety message delivered to the cast of any performance setting out these rules.

Attendance Lists The use of attendance sheets is not compulsory for cast/crew, but if used, the SM must ensure this list is updated each evening and then used for roll-call in the event of an evacuation.

Fire Exits:

All fire exits in the Abbey Theatre are clearly marked, and with the exception of the main foyer doors these are equipped with push-bars to open them. **At NO TIME must these doors or the access areas around them be hindered by scenery, properties, costumes, chairs, tables or other such obstacle.** This includes the corridor through the Green Room area and the area between the two sets of double doors in the dressing room behind stage. In the Etone lounge, chairs/tables etc **MUST NOT** be left in front of the emergency exit.

All emergency exits are connected to the security alarm system and, if opened, will activate the very audible alarm in the foyer unless previously deactivated by a member of Abbey Theatre staff. This alarm is intended for your personal security, but does not form part of the fire alarm system.

Stage/Dressing Rooms:

The stage area must be kept clear of all obstructions as far as possible. Any piece of scenery that creates a trip or other hazard must be clearly marked so cast/crew may avoid it in low light or blackout situations.

Dressing rooms must be left tidy at all times, with no obstruction to any doors. Costumes and other flammable material must be kept away from all heaters and lighting. Litter is to be disposed of in the bins provided. It is the responsibility of the SM to ensure bins that are filled during a performance are emptied, removing a potential fire hazard.

Smoking is not permitted at ANY TIME anywhere in the building.

Failure to observe this restriction will result in any performance in progress being cancelled or stopped by theatre management.

Drinks purchased from the theatre bar may be consumed in the dressing rooms, but it is the responsibility of the SM to ensure all glassware is returned to the bar area, thus removing potential hazards in the case of evacuation.

Front of House/Auditorium:

The doors to the auditorium must be kept clear of obstruction at all times.

The FoH team is responsible for ensuring that patrons are aware that no smoking is permitted at any time in the auditorium. No glassware or crockery is allowed into the auditorium.

Assembly Points:

The assembly point for all users and patrons is the recreation field by Pool Bank Street Car Park via the main door and front exits..

For patrons in the first floor rooms, unless advised otherwise, those in the Etone Lounge will proceed to the assembly point via the first floor exit (off Etone Lounge), those in the office or Milby Room will use the front exits via the main stairs.

Anyone in the control booth will use either the main doors or the exit (via fixed ladder) through the rack room and assemble on the recreation field.

Evacuees must not linger close to the building nor is it advisable for patrons to attempt to move cars or remove them from the car park until advised that it is safe to do so. Any movement of vehicles may hinder the attendance of emergency services.

It is the responsibility of the FoH manager to ensure that no cars are parked at any time on the theatre forecourt (paved area) as this not only obstructs the emergency exit doors but also may hinder emergency vehicles and their crews.

Disabled Patrons/Cast/Crew:

It is the responsibility of the Stage Manager to ensure that any cast or crew not able to evacuate themselves due to disability or injury are assisted by responsible members of their team.

It is the responsibility of the FoH manager to ensure that any member of the audience not able to evacuate themselves due to disability or injury are assisted by responsible members of their team. However, it is house policy that able bodied patrons are evacuated first, and wheelchair bound patrons and those with limited mobility are held back so as not to impede the majority. This is recognised as standard practice in public venues.

Any patron or user on the first floor unable to evacuate themselves due to disability or injury must be assisted by the organisers of meetings/rehearsals or by the FoH manager in the case of performance days.

The SM and FoH manager must be made aware of ALL persons of limited mobility.