



MAKE IT SAFE

THE PGA IS GIVING YOU
THE TOOLS TO PROTECT
YOUR TEAM

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“ut! Alright that’s lunch, one hour! Make it safe, then break!”

Whether they are shooting in the middle of an active war zone or within the four walls of a studio soundstage, a producer is tasked with keeping an entire production on its feet and to help provide every cast and crew member a safe space to create. Being the managers at the top of the production food chain, crew members have certain expectations of producers: You will pay them on time, you will feed them, you will tell them when and where to report to for work and by law, you will provide a workplace free from recognizable hazards. Production moves at such a fast pace that a producer may find themselves faced with a snap decision in a circumstance that carries risks. A responsible, well-trained producer is consistently able to make the right decision in that moment.

OSHA GENERAL DUTY CLAUSE

“Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are required to provide their employees with a place of employment that is “free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious harm.”

A hostile workplace is often a hazardous workplace. If you’ve ever felt ambushed by an aggressive

crew, it may be because they have convinced themselves you will put them in harm’s way just to make the day, stay on budget or get the shot. Conversely, as a producer, you’re likely to encounter impulsive or daring crew members willing to put themselves (or the entire production team) at risk to get the shot. When does a producer need to speak up? What if the content being produced is inherently risk-based? Are you filming wild animals in the desert? Chasing storms? Does the script call for crashing cars or burning buildings? (Or cars crashing into burning buildings?) How does a producer recognize a potential hazard or risk? What action might correct it? You must have a plan for safety. A safety plan is not just the law. It could save your life and others’ lives and it’s up to the producer to create it.

Educate yourself, make it safe and protect your team.

A safety plan is designed to mitigate risk to people, locations and equipment, reduce liability concerns and maximize worker safety. It is the plan for the moment that things go wrong after all precautions have been taken. Everything relies on proper action and communication.

Studios and major production companies are required to have a safety program in place, including a plan to be implemented if and when risk control measures fail. Obtain a copy and conform it to the needs of your production. A comprehensive safety program should outline the company policy on such topics as management leadership, worker participation, hazard identification and assessment, hazard prevention and control, education and training, program inspection, evaluation and improvement, and coordination with other employers. Principles of workplace safety are not unique to the film and television industry. Being able to distinguish between common hazards and high risk activities on a production, or knowing the specific precautions to take when working with high-hazard departments (such as stunts or special effects) or in hostile environments (such as a desert or war zone), involves production safety awareness education. An educated producer makes responsible decisions.

As the saying goes, you don’t know what you don’t know; that’s why you hire qualified crew. Does their work history indicate experience in the position? An employer is required to provide safety training. If your show is a signatory to the collective bargaining agreement between the AMPTP and the unions, for every union crewmember on the production the employer

pays into the Contract Services Administration Training Trust Fund. Through their Safety Pass program, Contract Services provides customized film and television safety awareness and education classes.

"The Safety Pass program is a cooperative commitment between major motion picture and television studios and labor unions to consistently and effectively deliver required safety training to get the job done efficiently and safely without injury and illness." -CSATTF

As part of an industry-changing collaboration, the Contract Services Administration Training Trust Fund for the first time ever will allow all PGA members access to their customized Safety Pass program on-line courses. The first classes being offered include "General Safety/IIIP," "Environmental Safety," "Hazard Communication" and "Harassment Prevention." The coursework derives from OSHA guidelines and is customized to the film and television industry, incorporating federal, state and local laws and regulations. All classes are relevant and take the participant through clear and detailed content, with short quizzes throughout to ensure understanding of the information. There is a highly nominal fee per participant per class.

The General Safety class (coded "A") is a great overview and highlights production safety measures that can be implemented immediately. It includes topics such as the rights and responsibilities of the employer and employees, personal protective equipment, emergency action procedures, the scope of an injury illness prevention program and discusses the General Code of Safe Practices for production created by the Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee. (PGA member fee: \$8.08)

The Environmental Safety class (coded as "A2") covers a wide range of workplace safety, general location and environmental awareness, severe weather, transportation of dangerous goods, disaster and emergency response, fire safety and prevention, electrical safety, workplace cleanliness and bloodborne pathogens. (PGA member fee: \$19.36)

The Hazard Communication class ("P")

addresses what a responsible employer or producer must communicate to their cast and crew when they might be exposed to a hazard, how to avoid the hazard and steps that are being taken to eliminate the hazard. (PGA member fee: \$19.36)

The Harassment Prevention class ("HP2") offers information to assist in identifying behaviors that constitute harassment, discrimination and retaliation. In addition, it offers information on how to assist in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment in the workplace. (PGA member fee: \$13.57)

Some classes are longer than others, but you are not required to take the entire class in one session. Classes have an accompanying coursebook, and each concludes with a comprehensive open-book test. As a responsible producing team member, you can immediately take advantage of this opportunity by contacting Kyle Katz at kyle@producersguild.org to get started.

Especially in light of tragic on-set accidents over the past couple of years, production crews are taking greater initiative to recognize hazards and speak up. As the producer, you may need to rely on their experience to communicate potential risks to you. Then it is up to you to address the situation and collaborate to find a suitable solution. But sometimes a crew member may not be comfortable speaking up to the unit production manager or producer. For this reason, it is important to establish the production's safety culture from the moment a crew member is hired. Make sure they know they can come to you with a concern. At the same time, ensure that you have communication protocols in place that keep the crew informed of any potential risk and how, as a responsible producer, you are taking measures to mitigate it. While you may be "for hire" like the rest of the crew and not the direct employer, it's your responsibility to ensure the crew has been educated on how to perform their jobs safely. The best way to assure your crew that you have their interests in mind is to lead by example. Creating the environment for a safe production starts with education, information and the use of

appropriate outside resources.

The PGA continues to be one such resource. Over the past several years, the Guild has offered a variety of events and workshops designed to educate and inform producing team members, empowering them to become leading advocates for production safety. From panels on best practices when working with high hazard departments such as stunts, special effects, animals and minors, as well as when doing marine, railroad and aerial work, to a summer panel on working with your insurance broker to mitigate risk in pre-production, as well as annual CPR and first aid training organized by PGA member Melissa Friedman, the PGA provides numerous offerings to guide you in becoming an informed and responsible producer. The most recent "Protect Your Team" workshops offer a broad overview of the producers' role on the safety team, including creating an effective plan for a safe production, collaborating with high-hazard departments during prep, assessing high-risk production activities on nonfiction/reality productions, and engaging local resources to support and facilitate a safe set.

Videos of these seminars can be found on the PGA website under the heading "Safety Initiative." The webpage also includes useful resources, helpful apps, current news regarding production safety and informational links to communication tools like "Safety Bulletins," which are guidelines developed by the The Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee. The committee is composed of guild, union, and management representatives active in industry safety and health programs.

The "Protect Your Team" Los Angeles workshop (#PGAprotectyourteam) will be held May 5, 2018, followed on Sunday, May 6 with the annual "Safety Rights of Workers" seminar presented by the IATSE Safety Committee at IATSE Local 80. Your first responsibility as a producer is to provide a safe set for your crew and cast. You owe it to your team, your project and yourself to maintain a hazard-free workplace. It's your production. Make it your responsibility to #makeitsafe. ■

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