

# The Association of British Theatre Technicians

## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PYROTECHNICS OPERATORS

**This code of practice relates to the use of indoor or stage pyrotechnics. It is a code of best practice for working with articles pyrotechnic within the Venue.**

1. Only pyrotechnics supplied specifically for stage use should be used as part of a stage presentation. The mixing of loose powders may be dangerous and is not permitted on site. Specialist manufactures supply pre-packed pyrotechnics that enable strict control of the quantities of components and the easy repetition of pyrotechnic effects.
2. Pyrotechnics must only be used by competent adults. If misused they can be dangerous and cause serious injuries.
3. The operator is required to inform the venue of every intention to use pyrotechnics at any venue no later than 28 days prior to the event. Included in the proposal should be a list of all the devices that are to be used along with the name of the manufacturer.
4. The person responsible for the control and firing of pyrotechnics must ensure it is safe to do so. The loading and positioning of all devices must be undertaken with safety foremost.
5. Firing systems used must always be of a recognised design and manufacture, incorporating both electrical and mechanical “fail-safes” e.g. key switch with circuit switch systems.
6. The person in charge should carry the ignition key with them at all times, and should only insert the key immediately prior to ignition. At no time should the key be left unattended in or near the controller.
7. Devices, hardware and controllers may not be used unless a recognized and respected supplier has manufactured them.
8. It is illegal to mix up/make-up, charge or recharge devices on premises other than those licensed to do so. Therefore all devices used must carry a Health and Safety Executive Competent Authority Document. The manufacturer should be in a position to supply copies.
9. All pyrotechnics must be stored in a safe and locked room, displaying “No Smoking” signs, until they are required. Only devices immediately required should be loaded, other “spares” or such like should be present on the “stage”. All pyrotechnics must be delivered to the venue in packaging as defined by the Competent Authority Document.
10. When positioning devices, account must be taken of all personnel, scenery and other objects etc. in the immediate vicinity. The operator must ensure that all materials in close proximity are of a non-flammable nature.
11. When pyrotechnics are in use, the operator must have sight of all devices. If it is unsafe to detonate any device, then he must not fire.

12. Suitable fire-fighting equipment should be deployed in strategic positions, and all stage technicians made fully aware of both their position and that of the devices.
13. If any doubt exists about the suitability or positioning of any device, a test firing should take place with the relevant competent personnel present so that a proper risk assessment can be made.
14. All pyrotechnics are potentially dangerous and must be strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and any relevant data sheets.
15. The Organisers and Venue Event Manager must be in receipt of a Risk Assessment and Method Statement concerning all Special Effects and Pyrotechnics.
16. Pyrotechnics must only be fired from an approved key-protected control/firing box and never directly from the mains electricity supply.
17. The operator must have a direct view of the pyrotechnic device from the firing point and be competent in their operation.
18. The device must not be operated if there is any risk to anyone. In the event of a miss-fire the circuit should be switched off until after the performance.
19. Maroons must only be used in suitable bomb tanks.
20. Pyrotechnics to be contained in suitable containers for safe transportation and storage
21. The Inspecting officer may need to see all the effects demonstrated as they will be used so that the effects can be assessed and, if satisfactory, approved.
22. Pyrotechnic devices should not be sited where they could discharge into an audience, where any person would be exposed to danger, or adjacent to scenery, props or drapes.
23. For further advice on the use and storage of pyrotechnics see the ABTT Code of Practise for Pyrotechnics and Smoke Effects.
24. It is recommended that the Firer is a member of BTEC, BPA, ASP or EIG.
25. Suitable, documented miss-fire procedures must be in place and the venue must be notified of this procedure.