

Ref No: OP 2023 - 03	Title: Health & Safety	
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Policy:

This policy sets out Galway Community Circus commitment to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment, for everyone using Galway Community Centre on circus business and working for or with Galway Community Circus.

Objective:

Provide a safe place to work and working environment. Develop a health and safety policy. Undertake risk assessments. Liaise with health and safety experts when necessary.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Participants & Parents, staff, contractors, workers as defined under the Health and Safety Act and anyone visiting the Galway Community Centre on Circus business.

Statement of Intent

This document sets out the Health and Safety Policy of Galway Community Circus and specifies the means provided to achieve that policy. Galway Community Circus is aware of the duty of care it holds towards its members and employees/volunteers and the importance of providing a safe environment for all our activities. The endeavour of this policy and its day to day execution is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all our members work and an equally safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and to minimise the level of risk to which all concerned are exposed.

The success of this policy depends on the cooperation between our staff, members and board members and it is therefore important that this document is read and noted by all whom it concerns. As laid out in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, Section 20, it is our intention and present working practice to review this statement at least bi-annually.

Organisation and Responsibilities

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the organisation's Executive Creative Director. Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the organisations Head of School. To ensure health and safety standards are maintained/improved, the following people have responsibility in the following areas:

Name	Role	Responsibility
Ulla Hokkanen	Executive Creative Director	Overall and Final responsibility for Health and Safety within the organisation
Brady Hughes	Head of Circus School	Day to Day responsibility ensuring this policy is put into practice during workshop activities
Gwen Le Guillou	Administration Officer	Fire safety checks, first aid kits and recording of accidents and administration maintenance of all records
Tony Mahon	Technical Manager	Carry out inspection of all circus equipment and PPE. Manage and maintain the circus equipment & PPE

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Safety Programme

Effective leadership and programme administration is vital to the success of a safety programme. All persons of authority within our organisation will be actively involved in the implementation of this safety programme. All staff members within our organisation are expected and required to accept responsibility for the health and safety of all other staff and all our members.

Galway Community Circus ensures that adequate consultation between all staff, board members, volunteers and service users is maintained on all matters of health and safety.

Planned Inspections/Safety Audits

The primary objective of these inspections is to identify and control sub-standard conditions and practices before they result in injury/illness or accident. Planned inspections involve the systematic examination of the organisations facilities, equipment, tools, materials and method of use by the Health and Safety Representatives.

Properly trained personnel at an established frequency shall conduct general inspections throughout the facility. The primary responsibility for conducting these inspections and for implementing corrective action is assigned to Executive Creative Director

All staff and members are actively encouraged to report substandard conditions and procedures.

Risk assessments will be undertaken by the Health and Safety Representatives

The findings of the risk assessments will be reported to the Executive Creative Director.

The Director will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented

Audits will be reviewed every year or when the work activity changes, whichever is sooner.

Risk Management

Due to the inherent nature of the circus education programme there is an unavoidable element of risk involved in some activities. These risks are controlled by training, awareness and education of staff, members and volunteers. This includes comprehensive risk assessment, professional training and access to and use of best practice manuals. All staff members and volunteers are made aware of the risks and agree to sign declarations of awareness and fitness to participate.

Organisational Rules

Where training, advice and persuasion fail to achieve compliance with established health and safety rules, it is the policy of Galway Community Circus to utilise disciplinary action in accordance with disciplinary procedures. Disregard for Health and Safety rules will be treated as serious misconduct and will be followed with disciplinary action up to and including dismissal

Violence and Assault – Aggression, Bullying and Harassment.

Galway Community Circus fosters a collaborative work/educational environment based on teamwork, accountability, and respect for the dignity and value of each and every member regardless of age, race, creed, ability or religious or sexual persuasion.

The following acts by an individual or group of individuals, irrespective of position with the organisation, may be construed as violence, assault, aggression and harassment or bullying. These are examples and are not necessarily conclusive:

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- Using violence or the threat of violence towards another's person or property.
- Persistent aggressive behaviour towards another.
- Persistent criticism or condemnation.
- Repeated verbal harassment.
- Uncomplimentary remarks, use of songs, jokes or laughter as a form of ridicule.
- Repeated ridicule by the display of or circulation of words, images, emails or material.
- Repeated physical harassment
- Continued and deliberate staring, obstruction or other non-verbal physical behaviour.
- Showing hostility through sustained unfriendly contact or exclusion.
- Unfair selection for difficult or unpleasant tasks.

It is the impact of the conduct on the recipient and not the intent of the perpetrator that determines if the behaviour is unacceptable.

Galway Community Circus is committed to ensuring any of the instances outlined above are prevented. To ensure success in this regard, Galway Community Circus encourages prompt reporting of any such behaviour to allow for early intervention.

It is important to note that our organisation's Health and Safety policy holds malicious allegations against another, where confirmed, in an extremely serious light and shall render the proponent of the allegation liable to corrective action.

Information, Instruction and Training

Galway Community Circus will comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare Act, 2005, Section 10 ensuring that training and supervision is understood by all. Staff and volunteers shall receive time off, if necessary, for training and that training shall take account of new and changed risks to the health and safety of all. Appropriate training shall take place, taking into account the workers' education and previous training:

- (a) On recruitment and induction,
- (b) In the event of the transfer of an employee or change of task assigned to an employee,
- (c) On the introduction of new work equipment, systems of work or changes in existing work equipment or systems of work and
- (d) On any changes in public policy or applicable legislation.

Communication: Consultation and Participation of Staff

Galway Community Circus is committed to meeting its obligations under Part 4, Section 26 of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 on consultation and participation of staff. The following consultation arrangements have been agreed:

- Regular personal planned communication between the board of directors and the staff and members.
- Health and Safety to be discussed regularly at board meetings.
- Operational and maintenance: Staff are involved in safety reviews of new projects and modifications.

Consultation

Section 26 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 places an obligation on every employer to consult with their staff regarding health and safety. As employers we welcome and value the view of all our staff, volunteers and members at all levels and we understand that consultation is an important part of our safety management system. The Board of Directors ensures that adequate consultation between management and staff is maintained.

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The Health and Safety Representatives will ensure that all staff and members are consulted with in advance and in good time on changes being carried out which may have an effect on health and safety.

All staff, volunteers and members are free at any time to enquire into health and safety issues. The Health and Safety Representatives are available to all staff, volunteers and members to answer questions regarding any Health and Safety issues.

The Board of Directors through the Executive Creative Director will communicate/consult with staff and members on:

- The appointment and duties of staff with Health and Safety responsibilities.
- The outcome of risk assessments on workplace/activity area hazards.
- Health and Safety information.
- Reportable accidents or dangerous occurrences.
- The planning and organisation of Health and Safety training.
- Purchasing personal protective equipment.

Statutory obligations

Each employee is reminded that they have specific statutory responsibilities. Statutory provision: (Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005), places a number of duties on staff whilst they are at work.

1. To take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other personnel who may be affected by his/her actions or omissions while at work.
2. To co-operate with his/her employer or any other person to enable his/her employer to comply with statutory obligations.
3. To use any suitable appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or other means provided for securing safety, health and welfare at work.
4. To report to management without delay any defects of which he/she becomes aware of in equipment, place of work, or system of work, which might endanger safety, health and welfare.
5. Not to intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any appliance, protective equipment, convenience, equipment or other means or thing provided for securing the safety, health and welfare of persons arising from activities. Such action will lead to disciplinary procedures.
6. To be familiar with the full health and safety procedures and safe work methods.

Welfare Facilities

Personal Hygiene

Galway Community circus' arrangements for providing effective hygiene facilities are as follows:

- Separate male and female wash hand basins, sink, (hot and cold water) and toilet facilities.
- Full separate changing and shower facilities for staff that use facilities (where appropriate).
- Clearly marked potable (drinking) water readily available for all staff, members and visitors.
- Galway Community Circus is committed to meeting its legal obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007.

Canteen Facilities

Staff have full use of a Staff Kitchenette, which is equipped with all necessary basic cooking and eating utensils.

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Babies, Children and Young People

- Children and young people are supervised by staff or volunteers during circus activities
- Care is taken to ensure no under twelve child can leave the venue undetected or unaccompanied
- Venue staff must know which children are present at any one time, where feasible
- There are at least two adults in the premises at all times
- Children and young people are advised of risks involved during workshops

Child Protection Policy

Galway Community Circus in their capacity as an arts organisation, have developed a child protection policy for the company. Having clear policies and procedures in place will minimise the risk of abuse or harm to children and young people. In dealing with complaints and allegations, it will serve to support board members, all staff and volunteers and ease anxiety around the issues of child protection and welfare. Galway Community Circus strives to raise awareness amongst board members, all staff and volunteers of the issues involved. There is an onus on everyone to report any/all concerns. Board members and core teachers of workshops are familiar with the definitions of abuse and are equipped to recognise any signs or symptoms and know how to take a concern or an incident forward. Galway Community Circus' Child Protection Policy is available to all staff, volunteers, members, clients, parents and young people. All Galway Community staff and volunteers understand, accept and agree to abide by the guidelines of our Child Protection Policy.

Galway Community Circus maintains an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation

Garda Vetting

All Galway Community Circus staff are Garda vetted and receive child protection training

Other children

Babies, Children and Young People at the Galway Community Circus

Please note that other than children or young people attending classes on our youth programme, or other designated activity, babies, children and young people under the age of 12 may not enter the training spaces at any time other than for ticketed performances. Children under the age of 12 must be supervised by an adult at all times unless in the care of a tutor. Galway Community Circus cannot responsibility for children outside of scheduled circus activities

Accidents and Emergencies

Introduction

Every youth orientated organisation and indeed all other organisations are subject to potential unforeseen emergencies and circumstances which could lead to temporary or permanent injury, loss or damage to their Participants, staff, volunteers, members and equipment. This section is designed to provide basic guidance in instances ranging from minor injuries to major emergencies. The main focus of this plan is to minimise injury to personnel and damage to the community centre until the arrival of the emergency services.

Galway Community Circus is based in St. Joseph's Community Centre, Ashe Rd. Shantalla, which is located near Galway city centre. It is a ten minute walk from University College Hospital Galway and approximately two miles away from Galway Fire Station.

With the above in mind, the objective of this section is as follows:

- a) To highlight potential emergency situations and services.

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- b) To prepare and inform personnel of the appropriate steps to be undertaken in the event of an emergency.
- c) To establish effective lines of authority in order to minimise decision making time.
- d) To provide a flexible guide for action and relief.
- e) To reduce costs by minimising losses.

Plans and Procedures:

Galway Community Circus has in place the following plans and procedures:

- Emergency Plan
- Evacuation Plan
- First Aid Policy
- Incident Reporting Policy
- Fire Safety Policy

It is the responsibility of the Executive Creative Director to ensure that the relevant staff receive appropriate training and are aware of all policies, procedures and plans applicable to their role.

First Aid

- The first aid box is always fully equipped, easily identifiable and in a location known to staff and volunteers
- Substances, which may cause allergies, are not included in the first aid box
- Medical supplies in the first aid box are checked regularly, by a designated person to ensure that any out of date or missing items are replaced
- At least one member of the team who holds an up to date first aid certificate is at a venue at all times
- In the event of an accident/illness where a young person has to be brought to a doctor/hospital, all reasonable efforts will be made to adhere to recommended supervision ratios.
- Records are accessible to all members of relevant staff in case of an emergency
- Minor accidents are treated at the venue and parents/guardians will be informed of the injury and the action taken when the child/young person is collected
- All accidents including minor ones are recorded in the Incident Book
- In case of a serious accident the person responsible for that class/event/workshop will act in accordance with the Emergency Plan
- If the child/young person has to go to hospital before the parent/guardian arrives, an adult known to the child must accompany him/her to the hospital and stay until the parent/guardian arrives
- All accidents must be reported to the insurance company on a monthly basis.
- Workplace accidents involving staff are reported to the HSA using the appropriate form

Raising the Alarm

In case of major accident/fire phone emergency services on 112 or 999 and provide relevant information in the following areas:

- a) Location & nature of accident
- c) Number of personnel involved
- d) Report any injuries

Fire Safety

- It is the policy of the Galway Community Circus to ensure that all adequate measure are put in place to ensure that children, parents, staff and all other persons attending the Galway Community Circus are safe in the event of a fire.

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- All fire safety recommendations and arrangements will be implemented in accordance with instructions arising from discussions with the local Fire Chief and Fire service
- Staff, adults and children are to be made aware of the evacuation procedures at each venue in the event of a fire
- Staff/volunteers and temporary staff are to be informed as to what procedures to follow in the event of a fire
- Assembly points should be marked clearly
- Fire safety equipment should be checked to make sure that the annual check has been carried out and that the records support this by recording inspection dates
- Annual Fire Drills are performed and recorded in Fire Drills Document

Evacuation Plan in the event of a fire

Note: The actions as described hereunder should be carried out only if it is safe to do so. Do not take any risks, which could threaten your own safety or the safety of others. Do not re-enter a building if there is a fire hazard without the express permission of the Health and Safety Officer

What to Do On Discovery of a Fire:

1. Act in accordance with the emergency plan
 2. Alert all occupants in the immediate vicinity to the danger.
 3. Go to the nearest Break Glass Unit (BGU) and sound the evacuation siren.
 4. Raise the alarm, alert staff, workers and occupants in the immediate vicinity, if safe to do so.
 5. Call the Fire Services.
 6. The Health and Safety representatives, or in the absence of, the senior most person in charge is to ensure that all workers and occupants under their supervision evacuate quickly and calmly; the same individuals are to bring their Diary or Roll Book to check off all names of workers and occupants, upon arrival at the Evacuation Point.
 7. The names of any missing people are to be communicated to the designated Health and Safety representatives as soon as known or suspected.
 8. In the event of a minor fire, if possible, try to contain the fire using the appropriate extinguisher only if it is safe to do so and never on your own.
- Note: Remain on the exit side of the fire
9. If you are no longer able to contain the fire then vacate the building immediately by the nearest clear exit. If it is safe to do so, close all doors behind you in order to prevent the spread of smoke and fume.
 10. Remain at the Assembly Point and follow the instructions of the incident controller.
 11. Remain at the Assembly Point (front car park), answer "Yes" to the person carrying out the roll call when your name is called. Follow the instructions of your incident controller.

Escape of Toxic Gas (Propane Cylinders).

As these substances have a very low flash point and spillage or leak is a severe fire and/or explosion hazard.

1. Evacuate the area of unnecessary personnel to a safe area (outside or remote office area).
2. In the event of a major leak, contact the Emergency services (Fire brigade and Gardaí 999/112).
3. If the leak has not ignited, stop gas flow at container.
4. Eliminate all sources of ignition and do not operate electrical equipment, mobile phones, or cigarette lighters in the vicinity of the leak.
5. Stay upwind of release and, if further dangers exist, arrange for the removal of personnel from the community centre.
6. Liquid leaks generate large volumes of flammable vapours, heavier than air, which may travel to lower remote sources of ignition. (E.g. along drainage systems)

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7. Where appropriate, use water / foam spray to disperse the gas or vapour.
8. If spillage has occurred in confined spaces, ensure adequate ventilation and check that a safe breathable atmosphere is present before entry.
9. Do not enter a vapour cloud except for rescue or attempting to stop leakage. (Self-contained breathing apparatus or protective water spray or ideally both should be used by personnel entering a vapour cloud i.e. fire brigade personnel).
10. Wear protective clothing (long sleeved overalls to cover skin, chemical goggles, impervious gloves and safety foot wear).
11. Small quantities of spilled liquid may be allowed to evaporate, vapours should be dispersed through effective ventilation.

Incident Investigation & Reporting Procedure

Incident investigation involves the systematic examination of an undesired incident that did, or could, result in physical harm in people or damage to property/environment. Investigation activities are directed toward defining the facts and circumstances relating to an event, identifying the causes and developing controls to prevent recurrence.

Galway Community Circus has in place an Incident Report Form and this is made available to all staff

All incidents and accidents are recorded and reported in accordance with this procedure

Incidents are reported to the insurance company on a monthly basis. Injuries requiring a hospital visit or emergency services are reported to the insurance company the next day.

Workplace accidents

Accidents and dangerous occurrences are required to be reported to the Health and Safety Authority in line with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences) Regulations 2016 (S.I. No. 370 of 2016).

Only fatal and non-fatal injuries are reportable. Diseases, occupational illnesses or any impairments of mental condition are not reportable

There are three situations in which an accident should be reported:

- (a) arising in the course of employment resulting in personal injury to the person carrying out the work activity. This could be an injury to an employee who is actually doing the work. For example: an employee dislocates a shoulder while manually moving a heavy load or an employee dealing with the public is assaulted.
- (b) arising in the course of employment which results in personal injury to an employee who was not doing the work that is the subject of the accident. For example: a shelving system collapses and injures an employee who is passing by the scene at the time of the collapse.
- c) arising from a work activity which results in personal injury to a person outside of the course of employment. This could be an injury to a non-employee or member of the public.

Work at Height

Galway Community circus staff and subcontracted staff must:

- Carry out risk assessments for work at height activities and make sure that all work is Planned, Organised and carried out by a competent person
- Follow the General Principles of Prevention for managing risks from work at height – take steps to avoid, prevent or reduce risks

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- Choose the right work equipment and select collective measures to prevent falls (such as guard rails and working platforms) before other measures which may only reduce the distance and consequences of a fall (such as nets or airbags) or may only provide fall-arrest through personal protection equipment.

Requirements

- All work at height must be properly planned and organised
- A risk assessment must be carried out for all work conducted at height
- Appropriate work equipment must be selected and used
- Work equipment must be inspected before use
- People working at a height are competent
- Equipment used for work at height is properly inspected and maintained
- Risks from fragile surfaces must be properly controlled
- The risk assessment should include a careful examination of what harm could be caused from working at height with a view to taking the effective steps to reduce the likelihood of this harm occurring, either through avoiding the activity or, where this is not reasonably practicable, by carrying it out in a safe manner using work equipment that is appropriate to the task and the level of risk

Board Approval Date:

24/01/2023

Signature Chair of Board:

