

## **Risk Assessment for interactive circus performers:**

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### **Types of interactive circus performance**

Juggling (various object manipulation including knife juggling), unicycle, hula hoop, acrobatics, accordion, unicycle, character interaction.

### **Brief Method Statement**

- During the set-up period:

Set up requires putting on costumes, make up – then warming up and getting apparatus and props ready. Requirements: a private space to big enough for performers to get changed in and stretch + store equipment.

- During the Event:

Interacting with crowd and putting on short pieces, acting out scenes. Showing off circus disciplines close up.

- During take down:

Going back to the space, taking off costumes and packing away equipment.

## **Risk Assessment**

### **The Following Terms will be used**

Hazard: This is an item or activity that could potentially cause harm.

Risk: What harm would the hazard produce. (note there could be several risks)

Control Measures: What measures are taken to eradicate or minimise the risk. What are you doing to make it safe?

Circus requires concentration, any ground obstacles could cause a tripping hazard while moving through the crowd. Time must be taken to check environment periodically.

Performers may make a mistake and drop their apparatus so that it makes contact with a member of the audience. This is particularly true for juggling, object manipulation and hula hoop. Performers are highly trained to know their discipline and the likelihood of making a mistake. They will keep a reasonable distance at all times from the audience to ensure that even at maximum failure distance they still could not make contact with the audience.

Performers could fall on to a spectator or member of the audience. This applies particularly to a discipline like unicycle or acrobatics. At all times performers will stay a safe distance away to ensure they cannot make contact with a member of the audience even at maximum fall distance. Performers are experienced at different conditions and have been taught to “safety fall” in the correct way, so they are better able to fall away from people.

Performers are also used to asking for help first if they feel in any way uncomfortable. It is better to ask someone “excuse me, can I just put my hand on your shoulder” or “would you mind keeping back” to make sure both they and audience are entirely safe rather than risk falling or hitting a member of the audience with apparatus. If the crowd becomes too densely packed. Performances will stop until they can be resumed again safely.

Performers are also used to working with each other and can move to help the other person if needed.

High wind conditions. Performers props could be blown off balance. For example a hula hoop could be thrown in the air and be brought by the wind to make contact with a member of the audience. Performers will stop performance under high wind conditions, either changing the time of the performance to a later time / move it to an indoor, or within a tent / or find a more sheltered location.

Muddy or wet environment. Performers could slip. Performers are used to working in different environments, and before performance will check the ground condition. Wet mud or wet pavement are both dangerous which may cause performance to be moved to a later time / moved to an indoor, or within a tent / or to find a more sheltered location, or better surface. This is particularly true for unicycle and acrobatics which rely on good ground conditions.

Performers could be pushed or knocked by members of the audience. Often at places where people are drinking alcohol audience members want to interact with performers in a physical way such as holding on to them for photos etc. Almost always this is done in a pleasant way; however, occasionally someone is too inebriated and can be a risk to performers. Performers are experienced at dealing with people and asking for help. If someone is too inebriated usually the best thing to do is ask one of their friends to look after them for a while and help the performers. This is usually the best course of action.

If someone is deemed to much of a risk, performers should stop performance leave the area to avoid risk of being pushed or knocked. This is particularly true for acrobatics where performers may be in a position where they could be injured by being pushed and falling.

Interactive performers need to be close to audience to talk to them and run character based comedy off them. Performers where elaborate costumes – these could be knocked or broken by public causing damage or injury. Performers must take care to keep reasonable distance from audience when appropriate and assess any member of the public's level of inebriation if in an environment where people have been drinking alcohol. Performers are very experienced and used to dealing with public in this way.

Apparatus could get lost or stolen. Performers must take care to ensure all their apparatus is being looked after or watched at all times. Apparatus such as unicycles or giraffe unicycles are dangerous when used wrong. It must be ensured no audience member is able to pick up apparatus and try it for themselves as they risk hurting themselves. All performers will help to watch each others apparatus.

Golden rule: in all situations safety is a priority, both for performers and audience. Prior to performance ground and weather conditions should be checked. During the performance if there is any risk the first thing to do is to “ask for help” from either another performer or from someone within the audience - then if the problem is not resolved to stop performance and wait until everything is ok.