

## Ensuring the Safety of Expectant Mothers in Your Stage Productions



Pregnancy is a time of great change for a woman's body and mind. As a result, it is important to take steps to ensure the safety of expectant mothers who might be taking part in a production – amateur or professional. The guidance we should follow, to keep the mother and unborn child safe is really important.

NODA Safe have now included an amateur theatre expectant mother risk assessment on the downloads section of the NODA Safe page on the NODA website. All member societies can access this in the usual way.

A risk assessment is a formal way of identifying and evaluating the risks associated with a particular activity. In the context of drama or theatrical work, a risk assessment should consider the specific hazards that may be present, such as:

- Heavy lifting
- Long hours
- Standing for long periods of time
- Exposure to loud noises
- Exposure to chemicals or other hazardous substances
- Physical contact with other actors or crew members

Once the risks have been identified, they can be evaluated, and steps can be taken to mitigate them. For example, if heavy lifting is a risk, pregnant actors may be able to be given lighter roles or be allowed to use lifting assistance. If long hours are a risk – such as for 'Band Call' or Tech rehearsals, pregnant actors may be able to be excused from certain aspects of the day or be given breaks more frequently.

It is also important to consider the individual needs of each expectant mother. Some women may be able to continue taking part without any restrictions, while others may need to make some adjustments to the rehearsal schedule, performance involvement etc.

By conducting a risk assessment and taking steps to mitigate the risks, societies can help to ensure the safety of expectant mothers who are taking part in their production. This is important not only for the health and safety of the expectant mothers, but also for the health and safety of their unborn children.

Here are some additional tips for conducting an expectant mother risk assessment:

- Involve the expectant mother in the assessment process. She will be able to share her own concerns and needs.
- Consider the specific stage productions that the expectant mother will be involved in. Some productions may pose more risks than others.
- Update the risk assessment as the pregnancy progresses. The risks may change as the woman's body changes.
- Keep the risk assessment confidential. The expectant mother's privacy should always be respected. Think carefully about who needs to be involved in the process from a privacy perspective.
- Consider the use a 'stage buddy' as a method of helping to ensure the safety of the pregnant actor and her unborn child. This is a person (or persons) who are designated to the actor to provide support during rehearsals and performance. Directors can then 'pair up' actors for the production. The buddy can make can monitor the expectant mother and provide support when needed.

By following these tips, societies can help to ensure that expectant mothers who are performing or indeed, working as crew, do so safely and comfortably. This is important for the health and safety of the expectant mothers, their unborn children, and the entire production team.

Also, if you have any questions or queries regarding expectant mother risk assessments or any other production safety concern, please email [nodasafe@noda.org.uk](mailto:nodasafe@noda.org.uk) and one of the safety consultants will get back to you as soon as possible.