

INDUSTRY WIDE LABOR-MANAGEMENT SAFETY COMMITTEE

SAFETY BULLETIN #09

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR WORKING IN AND AROUND BASE CAMPS

These safety guidelines apply to setting up and maintaining base camp locations on motion picture and television productions. This would include logistics, as well as the safe use of production equipment and support vehicles including tents, dressing room trailers, toilet facilities, production trucks, costume trailers, catering trucks, and other vehicles set up in and around base camps.

General Information

Base camps are the mobile production hubs that service a company on location. They are usually set up in areas away from the filming activity. It can also include cast and crew parking, areas for pre-rigging or other production-related activities, and holding areas for the background artists. A well-planned layout, general safety plan including the security of the camp, route to the set, and proper power distribution are all important considerations when setting up the base camp.

Productions may use Addendum A – “Base Camp Inspection Checklist” to assist in setting up a safe base camp.

Base Camp Layout for Vehicles and Equipment

The location and transportation departments play important roles in determining the layout of the base camp. Items to include are:

- Security to control access, which may include perimeter fencing.
- Cast and crew should only park in designated areas, pay attention to their surroundings, and drive slowly around pedestrians.
- Install signage to indicate pedestrian pathways and speed limits for drivers.
- Ensure lighting levels for safety and security are adequate for those arriving early and/or departing late, including designated employee parking areas and all pathways.
- Safe and well-defined pathways to trailers, vehicles, and equipment that require access by employees throughout the day.

- Include procedures for escorting employees to and from their vehicles upon request.
- Smoking is only allowed in designated areas and supplied with butt cans. Smoking is prohibited near combustible materials or dry brushes.
- Equipment and vehicles should be parked so they do not interfere with access to fire hydrants, ADA sidewalk ramps (if required), or the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- Access stairs for trailers shall comply with all applicable regulations for minimum tread width, minimum tread depth, maximum riser height, and required railings. All steps shall be stable, securely constructed, and when possible, have non-skid material applied. Unsecured apple boxes should not be used as steps.
- Power distribution systems should be routed so they do not create a tripping hazard.
- Exhaust from generators, catering trucks, or other internal combustion engine equipment, should be ventilated away from air intakes, dressing rooms, and other enclosed areas where people are located.
- If the base camp is located near residences, general area lighting used at night should be oriented away from homes and noise should be kept at a minimum during the evening and early morning hours.
- Where vehicles and equipment are permitted to park on the public street:
 1. Follow all local ordinances regarding on-street parking.
 2. Should not block driveways, crosswalks, or other access ramps without proper approval.
 3. Should not block access to any business or location without the permission of the owner.
 4. Allow access for service vehicles, such as emergency vehicles, deliveries, mail, trash pickup, etc. unless alternative arrangements are made.
 5. Vehicle or trailer access stairs should be facing away from vehicular traffic, and not completely block pedestrian walkways.
 6. Warning signs and traffic cones should be placed in advance of any control points, parking areas, and/or reduced walkways.

Electrical Power Distribution

Potential hazards, such as electrical shock and fire, can occur at the base camp if using damaged or improperly wired equipment. Only qualified persons should install, operate,

and disassemble the portable power distribution for the base camp. The following steps can help to improve electrical safety:

- Inspect cables and distribution equipment for damage and remove them if found.
- Flexible cords or cables should be arranged to minimize the tripping hazard and covered with nonconductive matting if crossing any walking paths.
- Ensure equipment is protected from wet weather and will not come in contact with standing or running water. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) should be used where necessary to comply with NFPA 70—National Electrical Code (NEC).
- Ensure polarity is maintained for all phase conductors, neutrals, and grounds.
- Electrical panelboards and equipment installed in dressing room trailers, restroom trailers, catering trucks, or other vehicles shall comply with applicable sections of the NEC. The following are requirements for internal grounding and bonding:
 1. Grounded circuit conductor (neutral) shall be insulated from the equipment grounding conductors, equipment enclosures, and other grounded parts.
 2. Bonding screws, straps, or buses in the panelboard or appliances shall be removed and discarded.
 3. All exposed non-current-carrying-metal parts that are likely to become energized shall be effectively bonded to the grounding terminal or enclosure of the panelboard.
 4. A bonding conductor shall be connected between any panelboard and an accessible terminal on the trailer or vehicle chassis.
- Before plugging the vehicle in, use a continuity meter between the neutral blade and the ground pin of the male connector on the main supply cord to verify there is no continuity.
- Check for any electrical current on the equipment grounding conductor of the supply circuit while the equipment is operating. Locate and correct any improper wiring if there is an electrical current flowing on the grounding conductor.
- Where power is supplied by a generator that is isolated from earth-ground, ensure the equipment they are supplying is completely insulated from earth by means of rubber tires, rubber mats around metal stairways, and under any type of liftgate or jacking device. Metal supports for trailers should be insulated by means of wooden blocks.

- Fueling should be done in a safe manner consistent with all state and local laws. The following precautions must be taken when refueling a generator:
 1. The generator must be off unless approved by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).
 2. A listed fuel nozzle must be used to prevent static electricity buildup.
 3. Connect a ground bond from the frame of the re-fueler to the frame of the generator.
 4. A serviced, ready-for-use, 2A-10BC minimum rated fire extinguisher shall be available during refueling operations.

Refer to Safety Bulletin #23: *"Guidelines for Working with Portable Power Distribution Systems and Other Electrical Equipment"* for additional information.

Portable Dressing Room Trailers

Portable dressing room trailers are enclosed spaces that are used by cast and/or crew while waiting to work on the set. They may also contain kitchens and restrooms. Special precautions should be followed whenever occupied. These include:

- Each habitable room shall have a suitable carbon monoxide (CO) detector and smoke detector. Always test each detector for proper operation before people use the room. When a CO detector or smoke detector goes off, exit the area immediately. CO and smoke detectors should be checked, including expiration dates, on a regular basis.
- When using an on-board generator to supply power to the trailer:
 1. Inspect the exhaust system on the generator before using it and make sure it is in good working order.
 2. Dented, bent or severely rusted sections of the exhaust pipe should be replaced.
 3. Make sure the exhaust pipe extends at least one inch (1") beyond the perimeter of the trailer.
 4. Park the trailer so that the generator exhaust gases disperse away from the trailer, and away from any other nearby trailers or vehicles.
 5. The windows and doors on the same side as the generator should be closed when the generator is in use.
 6. Skirts or other downward projections encircling the trailer should not be closer than one foot (1') from the ground to prevent the accumulation of any dangerous fumes or gasses.
 7. Know the symptoms of CO poisoning which include headache, weakness, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, shortness of breath, confusion, blurred vision, flu-like symptoms, or loss of consciousness. If you suspect that

someone may be showing signs of CO poisoning, seek medical attention immediately.

- Follow manufacturer's guidelines for cleaning, sanitizing, and storage of any freshwater tanks if so equipped. Antifreeze should not be used to "winterize" the freshwater system.
- Permanently installed gas/propane-powered heaters should be inspected and tested before use. Required repairs should be made as soon as possible to reduce the use of portable electric space heaters.
- If productions plan to use portable electric space heaters, make sure to follow these recommendations:
 1. Purchase a heater with the seal of a qualified testing laboratory.
 2. Keep the heater away from anything that can burn, including people.
 3. Choose a heater with a thermostat and overheat protection.
 4. Make sure the heater has an auto shut-off that turns off the heater in case it tips over.
 5. Keep space heaters out of the way of foot traffic. Never block an exit.
 6. Keep children away from the space heater.
 7. Plug the heater directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord.
 8. Whenever possible, productions should make every attempt to ensure space heaters are turned off and unplugged when rooms are unoccupied.
- Fire extinguishers should be accessible in each dressing room trailer.

Catering Vehicles

Mobile catering vehicles supply food to the cast and crew and are generally located at or near the base camp. Food serving areas can be located outside, inside buildings, or inside tents. The following are basic guidelines when setting up catering areas:

- Catering vehicles must be properly licensed and permitted by the local authorities.
- Catering vehicles are prohibited from cooking inside buildings, tents, or other enclosures. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanks shall be stored outside in an upright position and secured to prevent tipping over.
- Catering vehicles must be located at least ten feet (10') away from buildings, structures, vehicles, and any combustible material.
- Ensure clearance is provided for the fire department to access fire hydrants and fire department connections.

- Cooking appliances should be protected by an approved fire extinguishing system.
- Catering vehicles should have 2A-10BC minimum-rated fire extinguishers readily available.
- Cooking equipment should not be left unattended while it is still hot.
- Operate cooking equipment only when all windows, service hatches, and ventilation sources are fully opened.
- Close gas supply valves when equipment is not in use.

Tents

- All tents, pop-ups, and canopies should be properly secured and provided with the required life and safety equipment including “No Smoking” signs, fire extinguishers, and exit signs. If required by the AHJ, tents may need to be permitted and be treated with a flame retardant.
- All tents, pop-ups, and canopies should be sufficiently and safely anchored to the ground or to the required ballast to prevent uplift during windy conditions.
- LPG heaters should not be used inside tents.
- Cooking under pop-up tents may only be done when the area is well ventilated, the tents have open sides, and the tent material has a fire-resistance rating. Be sure to follow the manufacturer’s guidelines for cooking under the tent.