

## INTRODUCTION

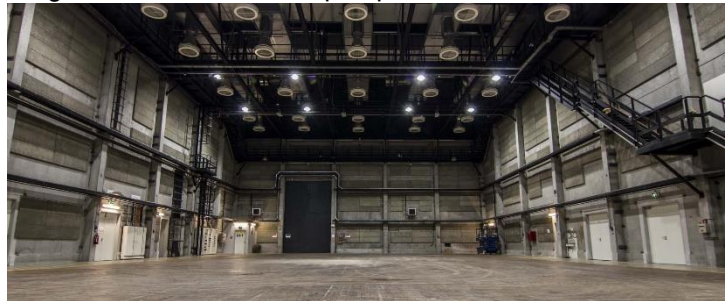
Catwalks are elevated platforms or walkways used in many different parts of the entertainment industry, such as theatres, concert venues, and studios. These areas provide both crew and cast access to lighting, sound equipment, and other fixtures. However, due to the heights associated with catwalks, there is the potential of cast and crew being injured if certain precautions are not followed. In this lesson, we will cover the different types of catwalks used in the entertainment industry, what catwalks are typically used for in the entertainment industry, the hazards associated with these platforms and walkways, the personal protective that may be used by individuals on catwalks, and the safe work practices associated with these platforms and walkways.



## TYPES OF CATWALKS USED IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Depending on the location of the production, cast and crew may be required to work on one or more different types of catwalks. These can include:

- Front-of-House (FOH) catwalks
  - These are catwalks that are positioned over the audience and are normally used for lighting or sound adjustments that target the stage from the audience's perspective.
- Onstage catwalks
  - These are catwalks that are located directly above the stage and are used primarily for lighting and scenery rigging.
- Gridirons catwalks
  - These are catwalks that are usually made of steel, normally positioned over the stage and are designed to support heavy equipment.
- Perimeter catwalks
  - These are catwalks that run around the perimeter of the venue and provide access to various points above both the stage and audience.



## WHAT CATWALKS ARE USED FOR IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

What a catwalk will be used for will depend on the production needs. These needs can include, but may not be limited to:

- Lighting
- Camera angels
- Rigging
- Sound equipment
- Special effects
- Inspection and maintenance of equipment located at heights
- The movement of performers above the audience or stage
- Aerial acts



# ENTERTAINMENT: CATWALK SAFETY

## HAZARDS

There are many different types of hazards that cast and crew can be exposed to when working from or under catwalks, including:

- Falling from the catwalk due to losing one's balance, when there are unguarded edges, or from the catwalk collapsing
- Falling objects from unsecured equipment, tools, or personal items falling onto people or equipment below the catwalk
- Slipping or tripping from uneven surfaces, obstacles, cables, or poor lighting

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

When working from a catwalk, you should wear the appropriate personal protective equipment when performing your job task to help minimize the chances of an injury occurring. PPE may include:

- Hard hat with a chin strap
- Safety glasses or goggles
- Gloves
- Close-toed or steel-toed shoes or boots
- Fall harness

You should inspect all provided for wear or damage before you put it on. Report worn or damaged items to your supervisor. Do NOT wear damaged PPE.

## SAFE WORK PRACTICES

### Before Working on the Catwalk

Before getting on a catwalk, you should do the following:

- Where applicable, make sure that you are familiar with your company's or production's fall protection plan if you will be working outside of the catwalk guardrails or if you will be required to wear fall protection while working on the catwalk.
- Assure that the catwalk will be able to support the individuals, tools, and equipment that will be used on the catwalk.
- Check your pockets for any loose items, such as keys, cell phones, change, and so on.
  - Loose items should be removed from your person and stored in accordance with your company's or production's policies and procedures.
- Inspect all tools and equipment that you will be using for your work task for worn, missing, or damaged parts.
  - Report tools or equipment that have worn, missing, or damaged parts to your supervisor or designated personnel.
  - Do NOT use any tools or equipment that have worn, missing, or damaged parts.
- Make sure that any tools or other items (such as radios) have been properly secured to your person with items such as a tool tie-off or lanyard.
- Only use authorized entrances and exits for accessing the catwalk area.
- Where cast members will be using catwalks for performances, they should make sure that they are comfortable with the space and any choreographed movements that will be taking place on the catwalk.



## When Working from the Catwalk

When working on the catwalk, you should do the following:

- Only allow trained and authorized personnel to access and work from the catwalk.
- Where you will be using ladders to access the catwalk, make sure to maintain three points of contact when ascending and descending the ladder.
- Inspect the catwalk for missing guardrails, damaged areas, or anything else that may create an unsafe work condition.
  - Reporting missing guardrails, damaged areas, or anything else that may create an unsafe working condition to your supervisor.
  - If guardrails were removed for loading items onto the catwalk, make sure that guardrails have been properly replaced after loading is completed.
- Assure that toeboards are in place to help prevent objects from falling from the catwalk while you work.
- Where applicable, make sure that fall harnesses have been properly anchored to designated anchor points on the catwalk.
  - Use all fall protection equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and your company's or production's policies and procedures.
- Assure that cables are properly secured and kept clear of the walkway in accordance with your company's or production's policies and procedures.
  - If you will be dropping cables from the catwalk, make sure that people below are notified in accordance with your company's or production's policies and procedures.
  - If you have questions about dropping cables, please speak with designated personnel about the process.
- Where applicable, maintain firm grips on film equipment that will not be secured to the catwalk.
- Do NOT participate in horseplay or throw objects while on the catwalk.
- Make sure that you have adequate lighting for your work.
- Do NOT use any materials or step ladders to elevate your feet off the catwalk.
- Make sure tools and equipment that are not being used are properly stored.
  - Examples include:
    - Putting tools in tool bags that are secured to a safety line.
    - Keeping tools on tool tie-offs or lanyards.
    - Keeping items in a safe area of the floor if you have to quickly put something down before the task can continue.
    - Storing items in designated storage areas.
- Unless you will be working in areas beyond the catwalk, do NOT extend your extremities beyond the guardrails of the catwalk.
- Make sure all equipment that will hang above the floor has been properly secured in accordance with your company's policies and procedures.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, catwalks are commonly used by many different venues in the entertainment industry. While their use can vary from the specific industry to film or television production, there are certain hazards, such as falling from heights, that cast and crew can be exposed to if certain safety precautions are not in place. To help minimize the chances of an accident occurring, cast and crew should become familiar with the company's or production's policies and procedures for catwalk use. Additionally, the cast should become comfortable with the space and any choreography that will be taking place on the catwalk. If you have questions regarding work tasks that involve being on the catwalk, please speak with your supervisor or designated personnel.