

PRESS INFORMATION

Association of British Theatre Technicians



DATE: Thursday, 9 June 2011, for immediate release

• **New Rules for Working with Tallescopes Announced**

After discussion amongst the Tallescope Working Party – which comprises representatives from SOLT, TMA and a range of UK theatre industry organisations, members of the HSE and the manufacturers of the Tallescope, Aluminium Access Products – the ABTT, on behalf of the industry, is pleased to announce:

Tallescopes have long been and remain one of the methods for Working at Height in Theatres. However as stated and illustrated in the ABTT Code of Practice on Selection of Equipment for Work at Height in Theatres, Tallescopes should not be regarded as the default or first choice tool for working at height. Employers should always refer to the hierarchy for the selection of equipment for work at height outlined in the Work at Height Regulations 2005 before considering means for work at height. However it is recognised that in some circumstances the Tallescope will be the most appropriate means of gaining access to height and in those cases it is important that stringent conditions are in place.

Briefly, these are:

- Strict adherence to Section 5 (Tallescopes) of the revised ABTT Code of Practice, shortly to be published.
- 4 no. "Outriggers" are fitted to reduce the possibility of a Tallescope falling sideways.
- 4 no. "Base column extensions" ("push and pulls") are fitted to the corners of the Tallescope so as to provide steering without the operator bending at the waist.
- 4 no. "Non-lift" castors are fitted so as not to cause movement in the Tallescope basket when the brakes are being engaged or disengaged.

The ABTT will not regard a Tallescope as an acceptable piece of equipment for working at height without the modifications detailed above.

The ABTT reminds employers and employees that they must be able to justify the use of a Tallescope instead of safer methods of gaining access to work at height. This may have to be done in a court of law and it is strongly recommended that employers and employees make themselves familiar with the hierarchy for selection of work equipment in the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

In terms of moving an occupied Tallescope, all of the above conditions should be met. Attention is drawn to the specific conditions in the Code of Practice such as only used on a flat and unobstructed stage with all 4 outriggers no more than 10mm off the floor, only fully trained personnel, a Tallescope that has been inspected and certified by the manufacturer or approved representative within the previous 12 months, all as set out in the manufacturer's instructions laid out in the Code.

The ABTT anticipates that the revised "Code of practice for the selection and use of temporary access equipment for working at height in theatres" will be available at or before the PLASA Show in September 2011. In the meantime the publication of June 2010 remains withdrawn.

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Editor's Notes:

- Association of British Theatre Technicians:
Established 1961. The ABTT is a non-profit organisation whose aim is to promote latest knowledge and best working practice to those in the entertainment industry. It's members include: theatre technicians, designers, architects, local licensing authorities, theatre consultants, mechanical & electrical engineers, health and safety practitioners, government agencies, production & stage managers, plus, many others with a manifest commitment to the technical aspects of theatre