

2018 Actsafe Event Safety Conference

SAFETY ISN'T FLASHY. It doesn't send you home singing the theme song, nor do you see fans outside the stage door waiting for an autograph.

When I took on the position as Industry Advisor for the Performing Arts at Actsafe Safety Association, the team asked me a big question: *How do we engage the performing arts community in the safety discussion?* After much conversation, laughter, and brainstorming about the evolving needs of our community, the idea of an event safety conference formed. In large part, the content was something I was familiar with and could bring the team up to speed on. Stick with what you know!

On February 21- 23, 2018 in Burnaby, BC, delegates from festivals, performing arts and event venues, suppliers, health and safety representatives, educators, and labour

unions gathered to network and learn about making live events and performing arts workplaces safer from a wealth of experts in their fields at Actsafe's second annual Event Safety Conference. An ambitious follow-up to the highly successful inaugural event in 2017, it grew by double the sessions, an expanded trade show floor, plus additional industry training by Actsafe instructors and industry partners.

The conference is built on personal relationships, open dialogue, collaboration with industry stakeholders, and approachable, relevant content.

After striking the trade show and packing up the last of the materials, I was left sitting in the ballroom with our dedicated staff and volunteers wondering how to explain the success of this event. As is often the case, it can be difficult to quantify results,

particularly when the theme is safety.

Sure, I can run you the numbers:

- 200+ delegates
- 45 presenters
- 40 sessions
- 31 trade show presenters
- 11 cm of snow
- Six days of industry training
- Four Platinum sponsors

But, that's too simple: it's time we measured these events in real human experiences.

A few examples of our success:

- 14 emails requested follow-up resources on "Bullying and Harassment" due to session discussions;
- A BC venue noted that upon returning to their space they retired a dolly for their A-Frame ladder because "it just wasn't safe;"



Geoff McEvoy, Rigg Services, talks rated rigging gear.



Eric Stuart, from the UK's Gention Events, ties-up his students during his two-day crowd safety workshop. Mind blown!



Mason Fulton from Carleton Rescue Equipment leads a hands-on workshop demonstrating rescue systems in the truss cube.

- A BC arts festival invited Actsafe to assist with their site safety;
- Three more venues asked to join Actsafe's Peer Inspection program



Eric Stuart from Gentian Events in the UK, leads the session "Communicating with Crowds."

- (created after the 2017 Conference);
- Heartfelt hugs were had and conversations blossomed from the passionate, intelligent #MeToo discussion nurtured by an amazing panel and facilitator;
- Actsafe received numerous requests to repeat the two-day Crowd Safety Workshop by Eric Stuart of UK-based Gentian Events;
- Eye-popping statistics and conversations were shared at the Concussions Panel with special guest Dr. Jeff Russell from the University of

Ohio;

- A roundtable discussion for the circus industry was applauded as a great introduction for the circus community to available health and safety resources;
- 60 delegates were trained on administering naloxone and left with a free naloxone kit, thanks to our friends at Construction Rehabilitation Plan.

Each of these is a small victory in spreading safety culture into the live event industry.

However, in the midst of writing this article, the real success of this event dawned



Colin Mathie from Live Nation does real-time risk assessments.



Tom Yearwood from Denning Health sharing procedures for assessing impairment in the workplace.

on me: the atmosphere, the environment the Actsafe team created for this conference is the true success. Where else can you bring together Live Nation, WorkSafeBC, RCMP, and local engineers together to discuss event safety issues? When was the last time an industrial hygienist, a theatre general manager, and a stagehand chatted over lunch about smoke and fog research?

I believe this environment, supported by an amazing team, dedicated partners, and a personal touch will make this a major piece of the health and safety scene each year for North America's event industry.

As always, we want to hear from the industry. If you have a session idea, organization you think we should contact, or just want to discuss event safety we're always available.

For more information, contact:

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Visit the conference website at actsafeconference.ca. 2019 session applications are open now! ■



Don Parman is a 20-year veteran of the live event industry in British Columbia. Along the way, he has worked with some amazing organizations, The Massey Theatre, Vancouver Folk Music Festival, Royal City Musical Theatre, The

Canadian Institute for Theatre Technologies (CITT/ICTS), to name just a few. Don now brings all of that experience and love for live performance to Actsafe. From ladder safety to air quality, he has experienced it first hand and can help you navigate the world of Performing arts and live event safety. Don can be reached at donparman@actsafe.ca.