

SAFETY & HEALTH AWARENESS SHEET

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING FRESHLY PAINTED OR PRINTED BACKDROPS AND OTHER GRAPHIC ARTS

INTRODUCTION

A wide variety of products are used to create backings and graphic arts in motion picture and television production.

The following safety guidelines should be considered when handling, hanging, and installing freshly hand-painted or digitally printed backdrops and other graphic arts such as posters, carpets, wallpaper, and vehicle graphics, or when working around these products.

PRODUCT INFORMATION

The creation of backings and other graphic arts involves a wide variety of technologies which use dyes, inks, paints, and sub-strates.

Off-gassing, the process in which the chemicals from the paint or the products in the inks are released from the completed product, is a normal part of the drying/curing process and may result in the presence of odors. Off-gassing is more prevalent in printed backdrops which use a wet solvent process.

The presence of odors may be the result of the product not having adequate time to dry and cure before being shipped. It is recommended that you allow at least 24 hours for the product to fully cure after drying before it is rolled and shipped. Remember that some products and sub-strates may require additional time.

Workers should refer to the current Material Safety Data Sheet(s) (MSDS) and, if available, the Manufacturer's Technical Specification Sheet(s) for precautions, personal protection recommendations, and fire and health hazards associated with the materials used to create the product(s).

POTENTIAL HEALTH EFFECTS

It is important that workers fully understand the potential health effects which may occur from exposure to the chemicals present in the various solvents, inks, paints and sub-strates used to create painted or printed backdrops and other graphic arts. These health effects can include headaches, dizziness, nausea, and respiratory problems. Exposure to high concentrations of these products also may affect the central nervous system or cause unconsciousness.

The routes of exposure that can cause these health effects include inhalation, ingestion, and direct or indirect absorption through the skin and eyes. Refer to the MSDS for an explanation of the potential health effects associated with the materials used to create painted or printed backdrops and other graphic arts. Anyone with chemical sensitivities, allergies, asthma or other respiratory illnesses or limitations should take appropriate precautions.

ACTIONS

The following are some actions you can take to minimize potentially harmful or dangerous exposures:

- Remove unnecessary personnel from the area(s) in which the products will be used.
- **Open or unpack the product in a well ventilated area(s), or provide ventilation by placing fans in the work area.**
- **Additional ventilation can be provided by opening stage doors, using roof vents or turning on general exhaust fans to ventilate the work area(s).**

- Know the products that you are using as well as the location and conditions under which they will be used.
- Obtain and review current Manufacturer's Material Safety Data Sheet(s) (MSDS) and, if available, Manufacturer's Technical Specification Sheet(s).
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) may be necessary while unpacking, unrolling and installing the product.
- Allow sufficient time for the product to fully cure after drying before working with or around it.

OTHER SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Be aware that some solvents are flammable and are especially dangerous when in a gaseous form. **Do not** use freshly painted or printed backdrops or other graphics arts around open flames, set lighting, or other potential sources of ignition, especially if strong odors are still present.
- Temperature increases (from activities such as set lighting) may increase the rate of off-gassing resulting in the reappearance of odors.
- Be aware that vapors may be more concentrated above the product because vapors have a tendency to rise. Therefore, employees working in elevated areas should be made aware of the work that is going to be performed before unpacking the product. Such employees also should take appropriate safety precautions.

REGULATIONS

Refer to federal, state, and local laws and regulations for further requirements and information.

SUMMARY

There are many different product(s) available to create backings and graphic arts in motion picture and television production. You need to understand the specific product being used. Each has its own unique properties and potentially adverse effects. Refer to the current Material Safety Data Sheet(s) (MSDS) and, if available, the Manufacturer's Technical Specification Sheet(s) for physical properties, safe handling, and emergency procedures associated with the materials used to create the product(s).

If a backdrop is new or freshly painted, these are items to remember:

- Increase the **ventilation** by opening doors or roof vents, utilizing house air, or using additional portable fans.
- Allow the product sufficient time to fully cure after drying before working with or around it.
- Use appropriate PPE as necessary while unpacking, unrolling, or installing the product.
- Inform other employees working in the area of the potential vapors caused by off-gassing, especially above the product and when set lighting the product. These employees should take appropriate safety precautions.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

- Studio or Production Safety
- Manufacturer/Distributor
- AMPTP/CSATF
- Supervisor
- Business Agent/Union Office