

Advice on smoking on stage

The following is an interpretation of the law and what BYT believes to be the case. However we would urge anyone concerned to look into this for themselves - BYT cannot be held responsible for any misinterpretations of the law.

The law in Scotland regarding smoking has recently changed. We should all strive to discourage smoking and no-one should be seen to promote or condone it. In theatre performances, smoking is acceptable if it can be justified artistically. BYT would advise that the Artistic Director provides a statement saying why smoking is artistically justified. It is also advisable for the organisation to apply to its local Environmental Health team (but this is not obligatory) as it may help if a member of the audience makes a complaint (re. the ban on smoking in public places).

You are not allowed to rehearse smoking apart from once at the final Dress Rehearsal. You must provide notices saying that this performance contains smoking. All of the above are the legal guidance for all theatres. However in youth theatre there is the issue of young people and we would advise that no-one should encourage a young person to smoke tobacco-based products as part of their involvement in youth theatre. With or without parental consent, there are issues of the other young people in the cast (they could bring a case against you for passive smoking) and in terms of role models, etc.

The director should consider alternatives, like not actually lighting the cigarette or using a non-tobacco based replica (be careful though as herbal brands contain tar).