

# The Daring Douglasses



Performer Safety  
Guidelines  
2008

## **Purpose of Document**

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of safety guidelines for The Daring Douglasses that attends to the concerns of public health and safety as applied to the performance of our show in its myriad forms. This document is meant to supplement and clarify both the NFPA 160 standards involving 'Group I' devices and the NAFAA Performer Safety Guidelines. Care has been taken to attend to volatile vapor concerns, structural fire prevention, wildfire prevention, and clean air concerns. It is our hope that by the written presentation of these guidelines the concerns of local and state fire prevention units shall be allayed and that a working unity between ourselves and the fire prevention community can be established.

The Daring Douglass  
PO Box 1448  
Oil City, PA 16301-5448  
Phone 1-814-677-5128  
Fax 1-814-676-1352  
seanmiller@thedaringdouglasses.com  
www.thedaringdouglasses.com  
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Fire  
Show  
Guidelines

## **I) General Safety Rules**

All fuels used are transported either in their original retail containers or in governmentally approved red Blitz 3.9 L gasoline containers.

During the stage show, the fuel being used is placed in an open mouthed metal container that measures 9 ½" high by 4" in diameter.

During the street show, the fuel being used is placed in a 1-pint metal jar with a rubber o-ring seal on the lid.

All devices are checked before each performance.

Performance area is to be cleared of audience traffic by ourselves as needed.

Open flame or fuel never enters the audience area.

No untethered devices leave the direct control of The Daring Douglasses while performing.

An ABC fire extinguisher, Model 250RFC Serial Number FR-374838, is present for each performance.

## **II) Safety Guards**

Each performance and lit practice is carried out with safety foremost in the minds of each member of The Daring Douglasses, keeping ready to meet any fire emergency needs. Such needs could include the loss of a lit torch, audience containment, or performer assistance in case of accident.

### **A) Fire safety**

Each member of The Daring Douglasses is well aware of the various aspects of the type of show being performed, stage or street, and familiar with the routine that is being performed.

Each member of The Daring Douglasses is trained in flame extinguishing, response times, untangling equipment and audience control.

When needed, The Daring Douglasses respond to the audience needs, the venue's needs, then our needs, in that order.

### **B) First aid training**

All members of The Daring Douglasses have at least rudimentary first aid training.

### **III) Performer**

Members of The Daring Douglasses act in a professional manner. They are sober, well rehearsed, and safe each time they light up. Respect for the art is first in their thoughts and actions.

#### **A) Sobriety**

The Daring Douglasses never perform or practice lit while under the influence of any substance.

The Daring Douglasses avoid working with lit torches in any condition other than fully awake, aware and capable.

#### **B) Practice**

Although unlit practice can usually be done anywhere, every practice is performed where The Daring Douglasses can be reasonably assured of minimal traffic.

Unlit practice tools have some visible markings on them to ensure others do not accidentally run into the tools during use.

When lit, no new moves are attempted until all members of The Daring Douglasses are confident in their execution. If the flame lasts longer than anticipated, a second member assists with dousing the torch.

Each performance is practiced lit several times to verify duration and capability before a performance is attempted.

## **C) Costume**

Regular performance costumes are made of Flame Retardant material.

Each part of our costumes are checked for flammability, and flame retarded if possible.

Before the performance, The Daring Douglasses practice lit in the expected costume several times to ensure safety.

## **IV) Tools**

The general test of any fire tool is to ensure that the user remains in control of the fire at all times. Attachments should be firm both lit and unlit, and the tool should be able to well withstand the rigors placed on it by the performer.

### **A) Wick Attachment**

Our wicks are made of 100% cotton material and attached to the fire torches via the use of heavy cotton thread.

Our wicks are made in such a way as to minimize loss of any part during use, and are replaced when they become obviously burnt.

### **B) Torch Construction**

Our torches are constructed with a wooden handle that is approximately 4" long and between ½" to 1 ½" in diameter. To this is added a solid metal shaft, usually steel, that extends for 18" to 20". The end of the shaft is bent back onto itself about 1 ½" to provide a mounting point for the wick.

### **C) Checking**

Before each show, each torch is checked over to ensure that all parts are in good condition and stable. A quick test is to grasp each wick and tug it away from the normal point of contact.

Before each lit performance, special care is taken to ensure all torches to be used are tight and secure. Grips and handles are thoroughly checked for security and the wicks are tested thoroughly. Any sign of wear is treated as a failure.

## **D) Dipping and Soaking**

The torches are only dipped in the fuel long enough to soak them completely. They are never left soaking in the fuel before or after a presentation.

Excess fuel is shaken from the torch before performing.

After a torch has been used for the last time during the course of a show, it is set aside so that any fuel that remains on the wick can evaporate before it is repacked for transportation.

## **V) Fuels**

The basics behind fuel safety are to ensure that an uncontrolled burn does not occur, and that the audience and passive safety devices are not affected. High flash point (150 degrees +) fuels do not usually pose a threat of explosive flashback, but often burn smoky or with toxins that could pose a threat to public health. Low flash point fuels could form a vapor cloud at ambient temperatures or in direct sunlight that could be ignited by a flame source very far away. Also, they burn at high temperatures, which could activate some sprinkler systems and ignite otherwise fire safe materials.

### **A) Types and properties**

The primary fuel used by The Daring Douglasses is a mixture of Coleman Camping Fuel and of Zippo Lighter Fluid. To one gallon of Coleman Camping Fuel we add 12 oz. of Zippo Lighter Fluid. MSDS sheets are on file for both of these fuels.

### **B) Storage and transport**

The fuel is stored and transported in governmentally approved red Blitz 3.9 L gasoline containers.

The fuel is kept out of direct sunlight, and away from sparks or flame.

### **C) Onsite handling**

Fuel not needed for the show in progress is kept well away from the performance and audience areas.

Fuel needed for the show in progress is kept well away from the audience and the audience areas

During the street show, the fuel container is closed and sealed after each torch is dipped and removed.

## **VI) Indoor specifics**

The Daring Douglasses always avoid creating a vapor cloud indoors.

The venue is checked for sprinkler systems.

If a sprinkler system exists, The Daring Douglasses learn how it is activated.

If no sprinkler system exists, extra fire extinguishers are placed around the performance area to protect the venue.

The performance area is checked for flammable curtains, floorings, ceiling tiles and decorations. Any hazards are moved away from the performance area or the performance area is shifted.

Though some areas require water to be present for the performance, it should never be used with petrochemicals. Though intended to extinguish wicks, this could create a larger fire hazard. Sand is preferred.

## **VII) Outdoor specifics**

For a stage show, extra fuel is stored in a governmentally approved red Blitz 3.9 L gasoline container in a locked box on the corner of the stage.

For a street show, extra fuel is stored in a governmentally approved red Blitz 3.9 L gasoline container in our locked vehicle and retrieved as needed

The Daring Douglasses check the area for flammable grasses and brush, making sure that there are no trees above the performance area. All plant life is treated as if extremely flammable.

## **VIII) Traveling guidelines**

Before travelling on public transportation (plane, train, bus), all fuel is secured in governmentally approved red Blitz 3.9 L gasoline containers. Wicks are dry and stored away from the fuel containers.

These guidelines are followed rigidly, using all suggested precautions and complying with the requests of all officials immediately and politely.

## IX) Terms

**Fire performance** - The act of using wicked devices with fuel in a dance or moving theatrical performance.

**Fire art** - any use of fire for the purposes of entertainment.

**Flame retardant** - any material with inherent or added properties to deter the spread of flame or the production of dangerous burn by-products.

**Flash point** - the temperature at which a liquid fuel can produce a volatile (re: explosive or ignitable) gas.

**Hard limiting attachment** - Any method of attaching wicks that impedes their removal by a solid device, such as screws, wires, washers, etc.

**NFPA 160 guidelines** - guidelines set up by the National Fire Prevention Agency. Code 160 refers to flame performances.

**Tethered devices** - Any fire device that is connected to the user in such a way that intentional restraint need not be maintained.

**Untethered devices** - Any fire device that is not connected to the user and requires conscious effort to maintain grip.