

STAGE SET BUILDERS

The stage sets used in modern productions can range from a simple raised platform or platforms placed on the stage for items such as drums and keyboards through to ramps, steps, staircases, platforms, walk-ways to very large “theatre” style sets depicting any kind of scene imaginable – from Manhattan skyline to Stone Henge or the surface of Mars. The small platforms for equipment (known as “risers”) are often on wheels (with a braking system) to facilitate the easy movement of equipment on stage.

Automated sets are also becoming more popular such as moving pieces of set, raising and lowering platforms, lifts, escalators and travelators. These sets are operated either by motors, electronically or by hydraulics. Many sets also have various lighting units built into them, the lighting crew will be responsible for this aspect of the set build and breakdown.

Sets are designed (to very high safety standards) and then constructed from light weight metal such as aluminium in a workshop, wooded sets are still occasionally used but are getting rare, they are designed to be easily assembled and dismantled rather like Meccano, the sections are transported specially designed in barrows or dollies that can be loaded onto the trailer unit of a truck and lifted with a fork lift truck, the sections then clip or bolt together on site, assembly and dismantling work is often carried out at height.

Set builders obviously need to be made aware of the stage sizes to be encountered on a tour to ensure the set can be accommodated or if necessary altered to fit the stage, adaptability is essential.

Small risers are usually dealt with by the back line crew but large sets will require a specialist crew to build and dismantle them on tour, automated sets will require crew with a more specialist range of skills to deal with the automation.

Once a set is built it may also require “dressing” with drapes and curtains (soft goods) etc. These must be fire proof or fire retardant to the relevant regulations.

Core Skills

Metal work, engineering and fabrication skills.

Welding including MIG, TIG, Arc and Oxy-acetylene.

To be able to set up, maintain and repair stage sets.

Ability to perform simple calculations.

Keeping of simple financial records and accounts.

Ability to understand and interpret written material incl. engineering plans, CAD drawings, method statements, schedules and risk assessments.

Must be able to get on with people easily and have good communication skills.

If automated sets are used a knowledge of the relevant automation system is essential to be able to service, operate, maintain and repair the system is essential, this can include mechanical or electrical engineering and hydraulics.

Qualifications

An engineering qualification.

An electro-mechanical engineering qualification.

Training and certification for ladders and steps.

Plant operator training and certification by one of the following recognised training bodies certification by one of the following recognised training bodies;

- Construction Industry Training Board
- LANTRA National Training Organisation
- The Independent Training Standards Scheme and Register (ITSSAR) is the administrative arm of the Association of Industrial Truck Trainers training accreditation scheme.
- National Plant Operators Registration Scheme
- Road Traffic Industry Training Board

Training and certification is also available from IPAF (International Powered Access Association) for Scissor Platforms, Cherry Pickers and PASMA for Aluminium Access Towers.

Underpinning Knowledge

Conversant with "Temporary demountable structures - Guidance on design, procurement and use". Third Edition published by The Institution of Structural Engineers.

An understanding of Health and Safety practice particularly manual handling, plant and machinery operations, work at height and fire safety.

A through understanding of event production process, methodology and terminology.

Basic IT skills.

Insurance

Self employed set crew will require their own Public Liability Insurance, Employers Liability Insurance will be required if self employed set crew instruct local crew or other members of the crew.