

Child employment in entertainment

Lights. Camera. Safety plan

Entertainment workplaces can be hazardous.

Special effects, outdoor environments, high props, sets and even elaborate costumes can all be potentially dangerous. When children are working in the entertainment industry the need for a rigorous approach to safety is even greater.



The Victorian Government's Child Employment Officers can only grant a Child Employment Permit when they are satisfied that a child's health, safety, education, moral and material welfare will not suffer from the employment. As part of the permit application process employers need to supply information about the actions child employees will undertake and detail the risks and how these will be managed.

The safety of children working in entertainment is a serious business. That's why simply providing a script is not sufficient.



Stunts and special effects
External locations
Working at height
Weapons
Long working hours
Working in or near water
Involvement of animals
Nudity
Intensity of role
Drug and/or alcohol use
Potentially dangerous props
Babies and toddlers
Noise levels
Duration of production
Very early or very late starts and finishes
Elaborate costuming
Language, violence or aggression
External locations
Working with or around moving equipment

Example script – can you spot the risks?

Scarlett is sitting in her high chair in the middle of the room surrounded by the party goers. Her doting parents look on.

BRANDON: Can you believe that Scarlett is two today?

TIFFANY: I know, it has gone so fast! She looks so grown up in that taffeta party dress.

Aunt Chloe appears with an elaborate cupcake stand with candles on every cake. She puts it on the benchtop next to Scarlett's high chair.

BRANDON: She does look gorgeous. I'll just move those cupcakes a little closer so I can get a photo of her blowing out the candles.

TIFFANY: This is going to be a birthday to remember!

Know the risks

The script alone does not provide enough information. To decide whether to issue a permit, the Child Employment Officer would need details of things such as the environment, number of people in the room, noise, temperature, props, child actions and reactions.

Some questions the employer should consider include:

- Has the high chair been erected according to manufacturer's instructions and has it been tested?
- Is the child wearing a safety harness in the high chair?
- How long will the child be required to sit in the highchair?
- Is the child comfortable sitting in the middle of a crowded room?
- Are the cakes real?
- Will the child eat the cake?
- Will the lit candles be a naked flame?
- Have food allergies been considered?

Through pre-planning, analysis of potential hazards and comprehensive mitigation measures employers can ensure a safe and pleasant working environment. This makes it more likely that a Child Employment Permit can be issued quickly.

Submit a risk analysis

Employers can support their application by providing a detailed risk analysis. Providing a script alone does not give the Child Employment Officer sufficient information to make a decision. For higher risk activities, a detailed safety report may be necessary.

Child Employment Officers can help

Victorian Government Child Employment Officers provide information about child employment and assess permit applications.

Child Employment Officers assist employers in complying with their obligation to ensure that children are not harmed by their employment. They have significant legal powers to enter workplaces to check compliance, investigate alleged breaches and cancel permits where children's health and safety is in danger. Offences such as permit breaches, failure to obtain a Child Employment Permit or hindering a Child Employment Officer attract a significant penalty.

Contact details

 www.business.vic.gov.au/childemployment

 childemployment@dsdbi.vic.gov.au

 1800 287 287

 03 9651 9831
(after hours emergency contact)

 03 9651 9703

**Child Employment Officer
Employment Information and Compliance Unit
Department of State Development
Business and Innovation**
GPO Box 4509
Melbourne Vic 3001

**Department of State Development,
Business and Innovation**
Level 33/121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

Access The Guide for free!

The Victorian Government has published *The Guide to the Employment of Children in the Victorian Entertainment Industry* to make it easy for employers, entertainment industry workers, parents and children to understand the rules and what they need to do.

Download The Guide from
www.business.vic.gov.au/childemployment
or call 1800 287 287 for a free copy.