

Information for Employers seeking Riggers

The purpose of this document is to assist potential employers assess prospective riggers before engaging in a contract.

The information provided in this document is generic advice, intended for use as a starting point for both parties to broker a constructive deal that acknowledges the risks and fulfills the project requirements satisfactorily. It may not be suitable for your project or requirements.

Please use advice listed here as a guide, ensure due diligence is done when engaging riggers for High-Risk work.

rigging for Circus and Physical Theatre (CaPT)

Rigging and aerial safety is of critical importance for the CaPT and Live Performance sectors.

Rigging work is labelled by WorkSafe Victoria as high-risk work and as such any work within that context must be performed by a qualified and experienced rigger.

Live Performance Australia ([LPA Event Rigging Guide](#)) gives examples of specific work which should be undertaken by Doggers, Basic, Intermediate or Advanced Riggers. The LPA's guide lists examples of Advanced rigging to include:

- Flying persons
- Rigging of circus or aerial acts

While the LPA guidelines are not mandated by law, they are a useful industry standard and one a court of law may cite if required.

It is of note that, none of the training required by law to attain a high-risk rigging licence teaches specific circus or performer rigging techniques, skills or theory. There is currently no set standard for circus rigging in Australia. Many different practices and procedures are used.

When rigging for Circus and Physical Theatre there are many factors to consider such as engineering requirements, dynamic forces and apparatus manufacturing. Equipment and techniques for circus rigging are often borrowed from comparable industries such as rock climbing, rope access, construction, sailing, adventure tourism, and scaffolding.

Therefore, it falls to the riggers and employers, to manage themselves safely and appropriately, using experience, common sense, preplanning and good communication. Safety in a live performance environment is everybody's responsibility.

Hiring a rigger

When looking to employ a rigger for live performance it is important to ask for:

- A copy of the rigger's High-Risk Work License and any other relevant qualifications such as:
 - IRATA qualification (Industrial Rope Access Trade Association)
 - Working at Heights
 - Construction Induction
- A copy of the rigger's public liability insurance policy for rigging activities, if insurance for rigging is not included in your event's insurance.
- Any relevant experience in a CV with a list of all companies the rigger has previously worked for
- At least two references from industry professionals with their contact details

Next steps

Safe Work Method Statement or SWMS are an important part of engaging a rigger. It is a legal requirement for SWMS to be prepared in advance of every job. This reduces risk and helps all stakeholders understand the risks and how to mitigate them.

Detailed SWMS take time to prepare and should be accounted for when deciding on costs.

What can't a rigger do?

A rigger is not a structural engineer, and as such cannot tell you how much load a building can withstand safely.

Questions to consider when hiring a rigger

Do I need an Advanced rigger?

Legally you do not need an Advanced rigger unless you are rigging suspended scaffolding, guyed derricks, or cable ways. However, LPA does recommend an Advanced rigger for aerial and circus acts. This is an industry standard.

How much experience is enough?

This depends on the job at hand.



If you are planning to manage large-scale tours with multiple venues, aerial acts, and performer flying you should hire an Advanced rigger with extensive experience i.e. having been qualified for at least 5 to 10 years.

If you want a single aerial point hard-rigged in a venue with existing engineering documentation, a Basic rigger with 2 years experience and an understanding of performer safety requirements will be ideal.

Do I need engineering?

Engineer Certification is a critical part of rigging. A structure or building **MUST** have an engineer's report detailing the allowable loads and critical technical information. The venue owner/manager should provide the engineering report of the building.

Some equipment comes with pre-existing engineering documentation. For example, aluminium truss has a load chart detailing the allowable loads and must be used within these limits.

Do I need insurance?

Public Liability Insurance is always required by festivals, theatres and events. A rigger should also have their own Public Liability Insurance and rigging insurance. When engaging a rigger, there should be a clear conversation about what activities are covered by which parties' insurance.

For more information about insurance for the Circus and Physical Theatre (CaPT) sector, [read TNA's Circus Insurance Deep Dive](#).

How much does a rigger cost?

Rigging rates vary depending on the level of experience, risk, insurance status, and any equipment and preparation time required. It's common to see \$50 to \$100 an hour.