



The ABTUK Health and Safety Code

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1. INTRODUCTION

Why a Health and Safety Code for Biodanza Teachers?

Firstly, it is a matter of legal compliance.

Many who hold their own workshops or classes in dance, meditation, yoga and such like in the evenings or weekends at a small local venue like a church hall may be unaware that they are accountable under the health and safety laws of the UK. They may believe that health and safety law applies only to companies and 'normal' 9 to 5 places of work, or only to large companies or at least those above 5 employees, or work where dangerous substances or situations are involved.

The law however is quite clear. If you are taking money at the door for your classes and earning income from the activity then you are operating a place of work and therefore accountable to the Health and Safety at Work (HSW) legislation of the UK. All of us also have a duty of care under the law. We have a duty of care under the law for instance to guests in our own home.

Secondly, but of no lesser importance, to take care of and offer protection to members of the group is quintessentially an ethical and professional requirement

of the Biodanza Teacher absolutely consistent with the central paradigm of Biodanza, the Biocentric Principle concerning the conservation and evolution of life, and also with the Line of Affectivity. It is a requirement of clause 4.1. Ensuring the safety of participants of the ABTUK Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct.

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE FOR TEACHERS OF BIODANZA IN THE UK (Including Students-under-Supervision)

2a RISK ASSESSMENT.

You have a responsibility to exchange information with the venue owner / manager on the risk assessment of the venue. You should ask the owner for the venue's risk assessment. (If they don't have one, draw it to their attention and if necessary create one of your own and discuss it with them). Provide the owner with any information about the proposed use of the venue that would have bearing on the risk assessment. For instance if any combustible materials were to be used e.g. candles. The exchange of information is a legal requirement incumbent on both parties. Points to be aware of are: the building structure, electrical safety, ventilation, heating provision, lighting, and state of the floor.

2b THE FLOOR & TRIPS & SLIPS:

Trips and slips are the cause of no less than one-third of all major injuries each year. They are the single most common cause of injury at work. The 1992 Act requires floors to be suitable, in good condition and free from obstruction.

(I) The most appropriate and advisable floor to use is a sprung floor. If not possible choose wood. If possible avoid a concrete floor, and be wary of linoleum or carpet that just covers concrete!

(II) Check for and avoid uneven floors, loose finish, protruding nails, holes and cracks, worn rugs and mats, upturned carpets and linoleum.

(III) Do not trail loose wiring across the floor, and people's path. If use of wiring cannot be avoided then it should be pinned down and a small mat placed over it where people need to cross.

(IV) Keep the dance floor area clear of objects and obstructions.

(V) Ask for the floor to be cleaned & swept before use, and ask for access to brooms and mops during the class.

(VI) Check for slippery surfaces due to spillage, and if any spillage occurs during the class it should be cleaned up immediately.

(VII) Ensure good lighting so that any potential spillage, slippery surface and obstruction can be observed clearly.

(VIII) Advise participants not to wear loose flowing garments that can entangle or tight garments that restrict movement.

(IX) Refer to <http://www.hseni.gov.uk/indg225.pdf> for good trip & slip practice.

2.c RIDDOR

You are required to comply with the RIDDOR regulations on reporting of dangerous accidents. For an accident to be reported two conditions must apply: 1) it must have happened in your place of work, i.e. the class venue, and 2) the person concerned goes immediately to hospital. Even if it was not found out till nine months later the person concerned went to hospital, then it still has to be reported. The owner/manager of the venue must be informed, as it is their responsibility to report under RIDDOR <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>

Ask the venue owner where all fire exits & fire fighting equipment are located, and request that all fire exits remain unlocked while the venue is in use. (The latter is not automatically the case!). At a large gathering, the fire exits should be pointed out at the start of the event.

2.d Class guidelines

Record the names of all persons who enter the class so that they may be accounted for in the event of fire or any other emergency. Keep contact information (ABTUK Booking and Contact Form).

Ensure you have immediate access to a phone in the event of accident or emergency. This may be a mobile or reliable land line in the venue. Do not rely on a public phone box outside or near the venue. Due to vandalism and irregular maintenance they are unreliable.

In the event of any persons being taken ill, or involved in an accident, other than giving Life Support and Resuscitation, do not advise or attempt any intervention other than that of properly qualified medical authorities and trained personnel i.e. hospital accident & emergency, doctor, nurse or trained first aider. You are only paid for a class of Biodanza, not as a medical adviser. Do not attempt this responsibility. Be wary of participants who wish to offer their own favourite form of healing. You know nothing of their skills & training. Hand the problem over to the recognized authorities! Accidents, even minor ones, should be recorded in the inexpensive accident report book obtained at <http://www.officesafety.co.uk/shop/manuals-and-booklets/accident-report-book.html> or from stationers.

Explain clearly at the beginning of the class the Rolando Toro system for new participants, and explain each exercise so that participants know what to expect,

always stressing progressivity, self- regulation - not pushing themselves beyond their own personal physical limits.

Ensure the venue is heated to a comfortable temperature (reduces risk of muscle strain).

Ensure the electrical plugs of the sound system have the appropriate fuses for their capacity, and there is good wiring. Annual Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is advised and sometimes required by venues.

2.e FIRST AID.

ABTUK strongly recommends teachers attend Life Support and Resuscitation Training. You may find your GP surgery provides it annually for free for their patients. You may be able to pay a small fee to attend their staff training, to receive a certificate that lasts three years.

Teachers are required to keep an Accident Book and have a First Aid Box on hand in the class, unless access to one of sufficient standard is provided by the venue. However, it is advised by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) that it would be good practice to take a First Aid box to all classes regardless. There is no standard list of items for a first aid box. A minimum stock of first aid items as recommended by the HSE would be;

- (a) The enclosed HSE Leaflet 'Basic advice on First Aid at Work'. This should be studied and understood.
- (b) 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes).
- (c) 2 sterile eye pads.
- (d) 4 individually wrapped triangular bandages (preferably sterile)
- (e) 6 safety pins.
- (f) 6 medium sized (approximately 12cm x 12cm) individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings.
- (g) 2 large (approximately) 18cm x 18cm) individually wrapped sterile unmedicated dressings.
- (h) 1 pair of disposable gloves.

NB. Tablets or medicines should not be kept in the First Aid Box. Medication of any kind should only be given by the proper medical authorities.

As mentioned above, an Accident Reporting Book is now available to comply with changes to comply with changes to the law on data protection. This may be obtained from any good office stationery supplier.

2.f REASSESSMENT & REVIEW.

A review of the code and Health & Safety provision should take place each year. Your feedback is welcome. You may notice something not previously obvious that needs to be addressed. All feedback is to be directed to the current Secretary on the Steering Committee of the Association of Biodanza Teachers in the UK (ABTUK): abtuk-secretary@hotmail.co.uk

The ABTUK Important Notice is a document giving health and safety information that should be placed in a prominent position at the door for new people to read before entering the class. The ABTUK Booking Form and Contact Details form, which participants complete on attending their first class, highlights any health problems the Biodanza teacher needs to be aware of. These documents are found in the passworded teachers' resources at www.biodanzaassociation.uk .

For further references; The HSE operates a telephone helpline: Infoline 08701 545500 or <http://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm>

3. LEGAL BACKGROUND TO HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE UK

At one time there was the Office, Shops & Premises Act - which was not much enforced.

Then came the: Robens Report which worked closely with the Unions.
Followed by the: 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act.

A lot of this was based on the rationale of Robens. The Act had an enormous impact 'the mother and father of all H&S legislation', but it was broad and not well defined. The message was 'be safe'.

European Union Health & Safety legislation seeks to establish minimum general standards across the EEC. A 1985 Framework Directive outlined specific measures for managing health & safety.

Under the umbrella of the 1974 Act this European Directive became the;

1992 Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations Act.

Most importantly and significantly for Biodanza teachers it introduced the idea of; Risk Assessment, a more proactive stance incumbent on all involved with health & safety. The 1992 Act placed basic legal duties on an employer to adequately assess, reduce and monitor risks to the health & safety of employees and persons not in his employment. (N.B. although a Biodanza Teacher may not employ anyone, by taking money at the door, the venue becomes a place of work).

'Risk Assessment' is a concept and practice Biodanza teachers need to grasp and adopt. It carries the chief legal obligation incumbent on us as teachers of Biodanza. This is not something complicated or technical. 'Risk assessment' is something we naturally do every day, in crossing the road to avoid going under that bus, and from the moment we get up to avoid the banana skin! We do it especially in our own home. We would not have an upturned carpet in the doorway for guests to go flying, or leave exposed wiring for our children to touch.

In Risk Assessment, there are two guiding principles:

Reasonable Foreseeability - in the assessment of possible accidents and risks to health & safety, and Reasonable Practicability in the steps taken to avoid or reduce the possibility of such risks and accidents happening.

'Reasonable' as defined by the judgment of Lord Denning that what is reasonable is what 'the man on the top of the Clapham Omnibus' considers to be reasonable. That is, the common sense reasonableness of the ordinary citizen.

The Risk assessment is chiefly the responsibility of the owner/management of the venue. The ABTUK code is based on the assumption that teachers of Biodanza in the UK presently only hire a venue. This requires Biodanza teachers to co-operate with the venue owner/manager in health & safety obligations. In the

event of a Biodanza teacher leasing or owning their own venue then they will take on responsibilities beyond the scope of this code. Risk Assessment would then be the Biodanza teacher's responsibility alone, as would the reporting of accidents under RIDDOR described below.

1995 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, known as RIDDOR for short. Again it is a legal requirement to report accidents and ill health to the enforcing authority. In our case this is the Health and Safety Executive. Again the matter requires co-operation with the venue owner/manager.

1999 Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (Management Regulations)

The risk assessment provisions of the Management Regulations require employers and self-employed to assess risks created by their undertaking so as to identify measures they need to have in place to comply with H&S law. As such, the assessment provisions of the Management Regulations are superimposed over all other workplace H&S legislation including the general duties in the Health and Safety at work Act.