

Dear BC Film Industry Workers, Supervisors and Employers,

By now many of you are probably aware of the tragedy on the set of "Midnight Rider" that occurred last week near the outskirts of Savannah, Georgia. The death of the 2nd Assistant Camera, Sarah Jones, and the serious injury to seven of her other crew members has been weighing heavily on me since I first heard of it last Thursday. While I do not feel well informed enough to comment on the specific circumstances that led to this tragedy, I do want to let everyone know that the conversation this has ignited around the safety practices in our industry is not going unheard by all of us at Actsafe. As the details come out we must listen carefully and think hard about why this happened and how we can prevent it from happening here in British Columbia.

I spent that last 18 years of my life working in the motion picture and television industry, and as anyone that has spent that amount of time in the industry will know, unnecessary risks are taken all too often. I keep thinking about all the situations in which I have seen risks taken on set. I have seen risks taken by every department and at every level of responsibility from Producers right down to Production Assistants.

Pushing out the dolly track another 6" closer into traffic, working alone at night, having a "leaky" lock up during a stunt sequence, climbing the ladder that is just one step too short, or working yourself and crew 20+ hours are just a few of the practices that could all lead to tragedy. I cannot claim that I have never taken unnecessary risks with my personal safety or the safety of my crew. In the context of the Midnight Rider tragedy, I think back to the early days of my career in film, some of the stupid things I have done, seen done, or known to have been done and I feel physically ill. How many close calls where there that I don't even know about? Take a few minutes and think hard about those times you have pushed the boundaries to "get the shot". Think about it in perspective of what happened to Sarah Jones and ask yourself, "was it worth it?"

There are many reasons why we take risks with the safety of ourselves and the people we work with; fear of being "blacklisted", desire to please, "making the shot", insufficient budget, lack of time, "loosing the light", inexperienced workers, insufficient training, poor leadership, and fatigue are just a few of many reasons. But lets be honest, they are not good reasons, they are just excuses, plain and simple. There is no good reason for someone in our industry to be seriously injured, exposed to harmful products or die doing their job.

I don't want to see the conversation around this tragedy fade away after a few weeks; we need to keep Sarah's death and the injury to her coworkers at top of mind for as long as we can. Prior to this tragedy I was preparing to take Actsafe's stakeholders into a series of conversations about our vision of the future, of how we can achieve change in our community, and how can we make real and tangible improvements to workplace health and safety in our industries. The reasons for this have never been as painfully clear as they are today.

This accident was preventable. All work place accidents are preventable. We all need to stay in this conversation around safety and we need to be engaged all the time, not just in times of crisis. If we are, then perhaps we prevent this kind of tragedy from happening again.

To that end, Actsafe will be hosting a town hall meeting about safety in the film industry on **Thursday, February 27th from 7pm – 9pm at Studio 700 at the CBC, 700 Hamilton Street, Vancouver.** If workplace safety is truly important to you then please try to find the time to attend this event and RSVP to [info@actsafe.ca](mailto:info@actsafe.ca) or call us at 604-733-4682. If you are unable to attend but want your voice to be heard please participate on our online conversation on [www.facebook.com/actsafe](http://www.facebook.com/actsafe) or comment on Twitter #safetyinbcfilm.

Sincerely,

Geoff Teoli  
Executive Director  
Actsafes Safety Association



**Speaking of Safety....**  
An Actsafe Town Hall discussion  
on Safety in B.C.'s Film Industry

Thursday February 27th, 2014  
7:00pm to 9:00pm

Actsafes  
750 Hamilton Street  
Vancouver, B.C.

Please RSVP to Actsafes  
[info@actsafe.ca](mailto:info@actsafe.ca)  
604-733-4682  
[facebook.com/actsafe](http://facebook.com/actsafe)

**It's Time to be Heard**