



Health and Safety for Murals Toolkit

 + Street**ART**Toronto
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Disclaimer: Please note that the information found within this toolkit and attached checklists is meant to be used solely as a guide. These toolkit and checklists are not meant to offer or replace professional advice. It is your responsibility to ensure your own research and training is up to date for your project, as needed. In the event that you need professional help to deal with your specific situation, it is highly recommended that you consult with a Health and Safety professional. Mural Routes and StreetARToronto do not assume responsibility for any errors or omissions taken herein.

About this Toolkit

This Health and Safety Toolkit for mural making has been created by Mural Routes with the support of StreetARToronto, in an effort to gather various resources around mural health and safety into one Toolkit

Who is this Guide For?

This guide is meant to be used as a resource by mural artists at all stages of their careers. Specifically, this Toolkit provides resources and standards for artists working in Ontario, Canada.

Where is this information gathered from?

The information is a combination of past Mural Routes' health and safety workshops, StreetARToronto artist panels, interviews with a number of mural artists, as well as current research and existing resources.

This Toolkit will help you to:

- ➔ Assess your project's unique risks in terms of health and safety
- ➔ Best prepare for your project's health and safety needs
- ➔ React and mitigate any health and safety issues or concerns that arise

It is our hope that this resource helps you with your Risk Management* in the many mural projects you may lead or be part of.

***Risk Management:** The art of looking into the future, recognizing potential problems and putting steps in place to avoid those problems or to minimize their impact.

Mural Site Risks

Your mural site will be unique each time, and it is your responsibility to assess the site for potential risks and to plan for ways to set up and prepare your site, as safely as possible.

The RACE Methodology is a commonly used process for dealing with hazards. RACE stands for Recognize, Assess, Control and Evaluate. These steps, when done in order, help you identify and control hazards.

RACE Methodology:

- R - Recognize all hazards in your working area

- A - Assess and evaluate the Hazards Using the 5X5 risk matrix

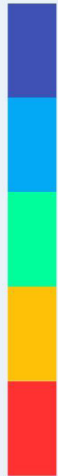
- C - Control all moderate and high ranking hazards using the hierarchy of controls

- E - Evaluate the effectiveness of the controls as you are performing your working activities.

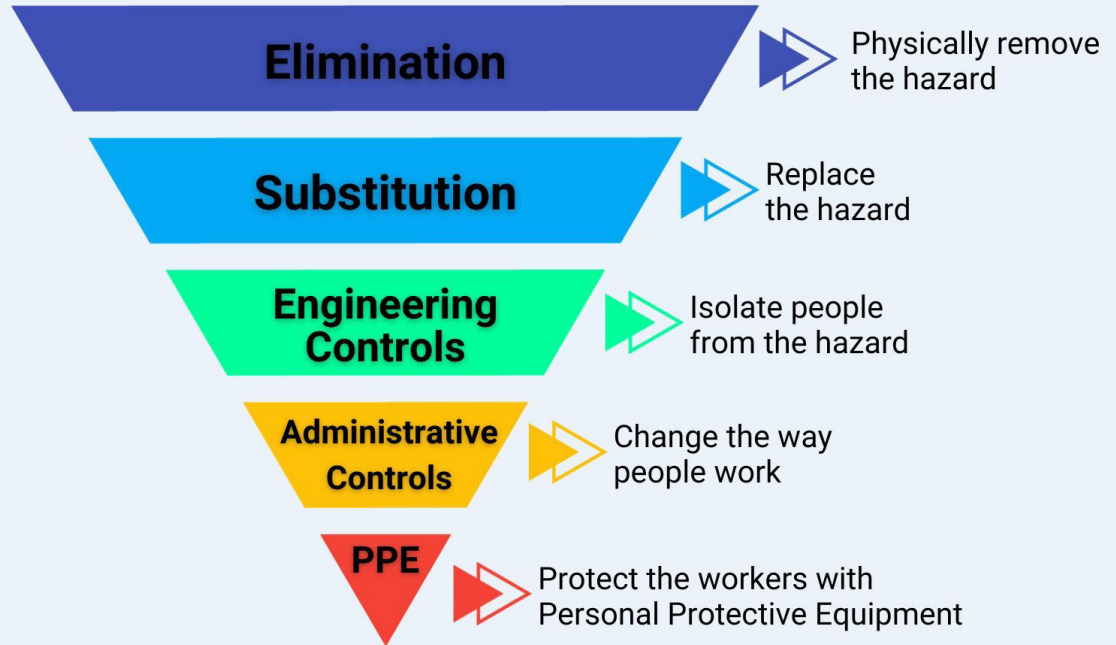
Risks and controls can evolve as the project evolves.

Hierarchy of Control

Most effective



Least effective



5x5 Risk Matrix Example

Impact

How severe would the outcomes be if the risk occurred?

Probability
What is the probability the risk will happen?

	Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Significant 3	Major 3	Severe 3
5 Almost Certain	Medium 5	High 10	Very High 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
4 Likely	Medium 4	Medium 8	High 12	Very High 16	Extreme 20
3 Moderate	Low 3	Medium 6	Medium 9	High 12	Very High 15
2 Unlikely	Very Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	Medium 8	High 10
1 Rare	Very Low 1	Very Low 2	Low 3	Medium 4	Medium 5

Examples of Where Incidents Can Occur

Incident	Cause	Solutions
Overhead hazards or Slips, Trips and Falls	While using scaffolding, ladders, or other platforms. No toe boards on scaffolding, forgetting to put cans/brushes back in the bucket.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitution: Use a scissor lift instead of a ladder • Engineering: Use a scissor lift. • Administrative control: Ensure your site materials are well organized. Install toe boards on scaffolding. • PPE: Wear hard hats at the job site. Improve housekeeping.
Altercations with traffic/traffic accidents	Lack of signage, permits, communication, narrow spaces, isolation, workers distracted, poor house-keeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use delineators and caution tape to mark off the jobsite. • Have a site person to direct traffic. • Wear safety vests (Artists and staff) • Obtain and post street occupation permit. • If required, have a clear traffic redirection plan. • Avoid using headphones at job site. • Have highly visible signage around the site to alert people it is a worksite
Conflict with members of public	Passerbys in your mural site area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid areas at night. • Never work alone, ideally work in a group. Ensure a staff supervisor is present.
Biohazards	Not assessing or cleaning the site beforehand, especially in downtown areas with heavy littering. Discarded syringes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use nitrile glove, place syringe carefully in empty glass bottle or container. • Goes to HHW (Household Hazardous Waste). • Ensure any storage and portable toilets are locked overnight.
Exhaustion	Working for too long without a break, and/or in extreme conditions (i.e. heat or cold) without proper water and food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take regular breaks, and be mindful of working in the sun, wearing sunscreen and having water and food breaks as needed.



Photo credit: ©Marta Keller-Hernandez

Overhead Wires

If you and your team will be working in close proximity to overhead wires, you must have a company professionally wrap the wires beforehand (please note that there is a cost associated with this service).

Electrical Safety Rules to be 3 metres from 750 volts to 150,000 volts, 4.5 metres from 150,001 volts to 250,000 volts, and 6 metres from more than 250,000 volts.

(Source: <https://www.ihsa.ca/Topics-Hazards/Powerline-Contacts-Know-Your-Limits.aspx>)

We recommend to contact your local hydro provider first:

- ➔ HydroOne: <https://www.hydroone.com/business-services/builders-and-contractors/line-cover-up>

There are also companies you can contact to have your wires assessed and covered, for example:

- ➔ Entera: <https://www.entera.ca/services/line-cover-services/>

Products and Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

Potential product hazards should be identified before the production of a mural. The most common potential hazards for mural artists include exposure to products such as paint, thinners and sealers. Always have an SDS for hazardous products on site and readily available.

Some reminders about working with mural products and materials safely:

- ➔ Be aware of major inhalation hazards (graffiti removers, paint strippers and anything containing Isocyanate (Cancer causing agent))
- ➔ ALWAYS wear a mask or other breathing protection device.
- ➔ Make sure to properly clean brushes, trays and YOUR HANDS, especially before eating or leaving the site.
- ➔ Always keep paints, strippers, and other chemicals clearly marked and/or in original containers whenever possible
- ➔ Read and follow the WHMIS instructions on all labels

WHMIS 2015 (GHS) - Workplace Hazardous Material Information System

We strongly recommend that you complete a WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Material Information System) training course, such as:

<https://whmis.ca/whmis-training>

https://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/whmis_workers/



Safety Data Sheets

It is your responsibility as a lead artist to have access to the Safety Data Sheets (SDS, previously MSDS - Material Safety Data Sheets) for each product being used.

The Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) (29 CFR 1910.1200(g)), revised in 2012, requires that the chemical manufacturer, distributor, or importer provide Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) (formerly MSDSs or Material Safety Data Sheets) for each hazardous chemical to downstream users to communicate information on these hazards. The information contained in the SDS is largely the same as the MSDS, except now the SDSs are required to be presented in a consistent user-friendly, 16-section format. This brief provides guidance to help workers who handle hazardous chemicals to become familiar with the format and understand the contents of the SDSs.

The SDS includes information such as the properties of each chemical; the physical, health, and environmental health hazards; protective measures; and safety precautions for handling, storing, and transporting the chemical.

More info at Government of Canada website:

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/whmis_ghs/sds.html

More info at Government of Ontario website:

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/workplace-hazardous-materials-information-system-guide-legislation/whmis-and-employer>

Paint Safety and Health Effects

- ➔ The paint we work with is toxic and if ingested it can be hazardous to your health. If at any time you think or know you have ingested any paint, get medical care as soon as possible.
- ➔ There are always instructions on the paint can which are specific to the type of paint in case of ingestion, which will notify whether you should call poison control or if it can be handled on our own. Do not induce vomiting unless told otherwise.
- ➔ The paint will wash off your skin; however, it is better to avoid direct contact with the paint (use gloves if possible). Over time, your skin will absorb the paint and it can cause negative long term effects to the body.

Aerosol Paint Safety and Health Effects

- ➔ Artists should always use a respirator with a fresh filter when working with or closeby aerosol paint. Always change your filter when the expiry date stamped on the sealed packet has elapsed, in general every 3-4 weeks if being used, and once opened, maximum use time is 6 months. Store in an enclosed air-tight bag when not in use.
- ➔ The carbon will absorb contaminants from the general environment
- ➔ It is good practice to wear goggles as well.
- ➔ Short-term side effects of exposure to aerosol fumes may include eye, nose and throat irritation; headaches, loss of coordination, and nausea.
- ➔ Long-term side effects may be as hazardous as damage to the liver, kidneys, and central nervous system

Resource: Filter Change Out Brochure -

<https://multimedia.3m.com/mws/media/4471210/filter-change-out-brochure.pdf>



Working Outdoors and In Varying Weather

Depending on the time of year and forecast during your painting, you will likely need to prepare for exposure to extreme weather.

Heat

Heat exhaustion can be very serious if not addressed properly. To prevent heat exhaustion, it's important to take necessary precautions.

- ➔ **Avoid Direct Sun when possible:** Note if/when your site is shaded, you may want to schedule your painting hours around the shaded times of day.
- ➔ **Be smart about your clothing:** Artists' clothing should be loose fitting, light colours and lightweight. Excess, dark or tight clothing holds in heat and prevents your body from cooling as it normally would because it inhibits sweat evaporation.
- ➔ **Avoid Sunburn:** Wear a wide brimmed hat and reapply sunscreen while working on the job. Once sunburn ensues, it's much harder to cool off since the sunburn holds in heat.
- ➔ **Monitor** - Monitor yourself and your coworkers for signs of heatstroke (headache, dizziness, hot and sweatless skin, weakness, nausea, rapid breathing)
- ➔ **Seek a cooler place:** If you feel that it has become too much for you out in the sun, either notify your supervisor so that they are aware and can let you rest and re-hydrate, or make the decision to rest and re-hydrate yourself. Ideally you should have a space nearby which is equipped with air conditioning and will be a great aid to prevent heat exhaustion. If possible, everyone should eat their lunch in a nearby indoor space for a chance to cool off.
- ➔ **Stay Hydrated:** This is essential to preventing heat exhaustion. Keep a water bottle on you and refill every two hours (with water not coffee/pop). If you are thirsty, your body is already dehydrated! Ensure you and your artists always have access to water. Remind your team to bring their own water bottles and provide a supply of water bottles on site. Fluids allow us to sweat and help maintain a normal body temperature. Becoming dehydrated puts you at risk for fainting or heat stroke, which is especially dangerous when working at heights or next to a busy road.

Organizing Your Site Set Up

Trips, slips and falls can be a common and serious hazard! Always keep the site tidy underfoot

- ➔ Take time at the beginning of your project and each new day to clean away garbage, debris (this could be old brick, plants and weeds, glass).
- ➔ Wipe up spills or mark them with pylons
- ➔ Clear away broken bottles, glass, needles and other sharp or biohazardous materials with a broom, dust pan and sturdy work gloves. Deposit in puncture proof container.
- ➔ Keep paint, trays, tools, etc neatly arranged and always ensure a clear path with materials off to one side

Marking your site

Use signage and other markers to ensure that drivers and passersby notice your painting area, slow down, respect and give you space.

Have highly visible signage around the site to alert people it is a worksite. This might include:



- ➔ Pylons / traffic cones
- ➔ Signage
- ➔ Temporary fencing
- ➔ Signage/ sandwich board on ground level that cautions “Workers Above” (when working at heights on ladders, scaffolding or lifts, as items or paint may fall)

Working Close to Traffic

If your mural site is close to sidewalks and roads with passing pedestrian, biking and vehicle traffic, you will likely need to acquire special permits for the city to close a sidewalk or part of a sidewalk, lane or part of the lane. To arrange a street occupation permit go to www.toronto.ca and search “Street occupation permit”. There are phone numbers you can call to arrange a permit. For example, for mural sites in Scarborough: 416-396-7505.

Road and Sidewalk Safety: For Legislative requirements, please reference OTM book 15 Pedestrian Treatments

<https://www.library.mto.gov.on.ca/SydneyPLUS/Sydney/Portal/default.aspx?component=AAAAY&record=fa5caef1-9963-4786-b3c9-4b5e50e70321>

For road safety requirements, please refer to OTM Book 7 April 2022 Office edition (this is the first PDF in the link provided, the “OTM Book 7 Temporary Conditions Office Edition April 2022.pdf”)

<https://www.library.mto.gov.on.ca/SydneyPLUS/Sydney/Portal/default.aspx?component=AAAAY&record=34657287-fb36-43a2-84d7-7dc2c5e0d3a6>

Pedestrian Safety Summary

- ➔ Update your artists ahead of time. I.e. *‘The wall we will be painting is located on ___ road, a very busy street. It is very important to always be alert and mindful of how close you are to the road as well as how much sidewalk space you have to move around with’*
- ➔ Ensure that everyone is paying attention to the traffic as they walk around, especially as many artists take steps back to look at their work from a farther angle or to take photos.
- ➔ In extreme cases, you may want to schedule your painting hours around when the traffic is less intense (i.e. avoid rush hours, paint in evenings and weekends). *Note: You should consider the safety issues of choosing to work at night, depending on your site)*
- ➔ All artists should wear safety vests in order to ensure high visibility. This also identifies you as a person working on the site in what is understood and respected as “professional” or “official” attire.



Insurance and Liability

As an artist and especially as a lead artist or supervisor/ manager of a project, you should be aware of your liabilities and ensure you have the correct insurance to cover the activities of your projects. We recommend you use your current insurance company (i.e. if you have car, rental, or house insurance) or reach out to other mural artists for recommendations.

What is liability insurance?

With liability insurance, you're protected in the event that your business is found legally responsible for injuries caused to another person, or damage to their property.

General Liability Insurance

With general liability coverage, your business is protected if you're found legally liable for injuries or property damage caused by your product, accidents on your premises, your operation or at your client's location.

General liability insurance is a good way to protect your business in case you ever have to defend a claim against your business in court. With this coverage, you'll receive funds up to your policy limits to cover damages assessed by the courts to compensate third parties, and cover legal defense fees and settlement charges.

In most cases, you need to ensure your policy covers everyone involved (funders, clients, employees, licensees, designers, fabricators, installers, other artists, contractors and invitees involved in creating the Work and/or attending at the site) as a named insured during the duration of the work on site. This is typically done through the addition of a rider to the insurance clause. If an organization is producing your mural, those listed as "volunteers" for the organization can fall under the organization's insurance.

Note: General Liability Insurance and third party contractors - we strongly recommend that you request that other artists working with you onsite carry their own General Liability Insurance (either lead artists or assistant artists). These third party contractors are usually not covered by your general liability coverage, because they are not considered employees, so it is a good practice to ensure that everyone onsite is covered by their own insurance. In a similar fashion, volunteers are also not usually covered by your general liability coverage.



Personal Accident/Injury Insurance

Although usually not mandatory, we recommend that you consider acquiring this type of insurance. This insurance helps you cope with the financial hardships that can accompany a serious accidental injury while producing a mural. It helps you deal with the effects of lost income and unplanned medical expenses associated with the injury. Personal Accident Insurance is something that artists should consider as part of their professional risk management.

WSIB (Workplace Safety and Insurance Board)

About WSIB

Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) plays a key role in the province's occupational health and safety system. The WSIB provides no-fault collective liability insurance and access to industry-specific health and safety information for employers; provides loss of earnings benefits and health care coverage for workers; and provides help and support for return to work after an injury or illness incurred by workplaces covered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

WSIB Ontario provides wage-loss benefits, medical coverage and support to help people get back to work after a work-related injury or illness. They are funded by premiums paid by Ontario businesses. They provide no-fault collective liability insurance and access to industry-specific health and safety information.

To note:

It is our understanding that the business of mural painting is not automatically covered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. This business activity currently falls under WSIB's Class O, NAICS code 711511: Independent Visual Artist and Artisans¹.

For that reason, it is strongly recommended that artists carry personal accident insurance.

¹ The current WSIB premium for mural painting is \$0.94 on every \$100 of paid wages (Dec 2022). According to WSIB, mural painting is a business that does not require mandatory WSIB coverage. However, **business owners** can choose to opt in for WSIB coverage to cover lost wages in the event of a workplace injury. Call the WSIB Directly for more information (416) 344-1000

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Mural Artists

Activity	Equipment
For all job sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand cleaner• Hand sanitizer• Sunscreen• First aid kit• Nitrile gloves
Airbrushing, scraping, sanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Particle mask or respirator with appropriate filters (N95 or P100)• Goggles
Spray/ Aerosol painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respirator with charcoal filters with a particulate filter (N95 or P100)• Nitrile gloves or green gloves• Barrier cream• Goggles
Working on or close to the ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knee pads
Setting up or taking down scaffolding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CSA approved safety boots/shoes, harnesses, lanyards, hard hats, Gloves.
Working at a jobsite with scaffolding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hard hats, safety boots/safety shoes
Working in a high traffic area (alley, sidewalk, street, parking lot)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fluorescent safety vests



Artists' Clothing and Footwear

Wearing proper safety equipment is an important component to painting murals. You should have a safety vest on at all times while working on the site - wear your safety vest so that people can see you, especially if they're driving.

You will also need to wear close-toed shoes. Steel toe boots are even better if you have them but are not mandatory. This is important in case of paint cans or other objects falling onto your feet.

Any time there is a risk of an overhead hazard, the Law requires the worker(s) wear a hard hat.

Artists' Food and Drink

- ➔ It is common that when working on site we often disregard our physical needs with food and drink.
- ➔ Remind yourself/your team that each artist should bring their own water bottle, but it is also good practice to have extra water and snacks on site.

Working at Heights

Working at Heights

Oftentimes mural projects require you to work at heights. It is important to be prepared with the proper equipment for our height access needs, as well as a strong understanding of good practice as well as the proper training and certification.

When you know your site will be used for ladders, scaffolding and lifts, be sure to look at the ground by your mural. If it is uneven or sloped, you will need to take extra precautions and this will require assistance with set up. Scaffolding and lift companies can offer suggestions of how to erect scaffolding around barriers or which type of lift to rent in order to reach surfaces that are obstructed at ground level.

Additional Resource: StART's video recorded workshop on Artists Wellness - Health & Safety: Working at Heights <https://www.facebook.com/Museartsto/videos/673597360358602>

Working at Heights Training & Certification

Working at Heights Certification is required in Ontario wherever there is a risk of falling. This not only includes working off of ladders and scaffolds, it includes working around floor openings or off of ledges, into water or another hazardous substance, etc. For more information on Working at Heights standards please visit the Ontario Ministry of Labour's website. This is a full day course, which includes an in-person equipment demonstration and practice, at the end of which participants will receive Ministry of Labour-approved Working at Heights Certification, valid for three years. A WAH refresher course must be taken every three years to maintain this certification. Make sure you take this training from a [Ministry-approved training provider](#).

Note: If you are creating a mural outside of Ontario, or working in Ontario but with an artist who has received WAH training from a province outside of Ontario, consult the Government of Ontario website for instructions, as you likely require additional training <https://www.ontario.ca/page/training-working-heights#section-6>

Additional Resource - Working at Heights Guide (downloadable PDF): <https://www.ihsa.ca/PDFs/Products/ld/V001.pdf>

Additional Reference: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/training-working-heights>



Additional mandatory training

In addition to your Working at Heights certification, and as per the Ontario Regulation 297/13: Occupational Health and Safety Awareness and Training, taking the “Worker Health and Safety Awareness in Four Steps” and the “Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in Five Steps” training programs from the Ontario Ministry of Labour is mandatory.

“Worker health and safety awareness in four steps” course: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/worker-health-and-safety-awareness-four-steps>

“Supervisor health and safety awareness in five steps” course: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/supervisor-health-and-safety-awareness-five-steps>

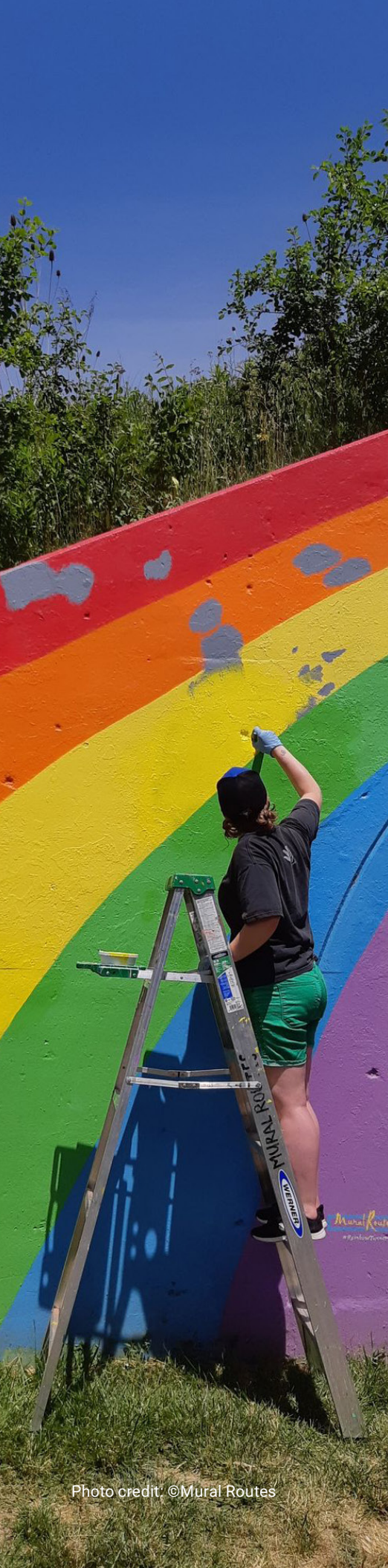
A Note About Equipment Storage

You must have a plan to safely store your working at heights equipment at the end of the day to ensure people don’t hurt themselves overnight. This may include behind fences, or secured by chains. Never leave the keys or the remote control box to a motor operated lift in the lift while you are away.

A Note About Alternatives

If it is difficult to work at the height of your project, you could explore the option of creating the mural on panels and have the work installed professionally. This tends to increase the material cost of the project but it does minimize risks relating to working at heights.

Also, if you do not have WAH training or do not wish to work at high heights, you can choose to create a smaller scale mural. Stop the mural at a height of 8 - 10 feet, which would be reachable by step ladders or ladders.



Equipment Options for Working at Heights

Ladders

- ➔ Pros: ladders can be moved around a job site with relative ease. Cons: Difficult to perform prolonged work from a ladder. Hydro wires may need to be insulated.

Ladder Safety Tips

- ➔ If you are working on a ladder and your feet are more than three feet from the ground, it is recommended that you use fall protection (for example: a restraint, tether or harness)..
- ➔ While working, both feet should be on the ladder at all times.
- ➔ Do not overreach. Move the ladder as you work instead.
- ➔ Always have 3 points of contact on the ladder. This means that three limbs (any combination of hands and feet) must be on the ladder at all times. For example, when climbing up or down a ladder, use three-point contact (two hands and one foot, or one hand and two feet) at all times.
- ➔ Extend the top of the ladder three feet above the surface of the upper landing.
- ➔ Secure the ladder at the top and bottom to prevent it from moving.
- ➔ Be aware of any overhead power lines.
- ➔ Clean any wetness, mud or snow from your shoes before climbing.
- ➔ Keep the area at the top and bottom of the ladder clear of debris and tools.
- ➔ Ensure that the ladder is set up at a 75-degree angle: for every four feet up, it should be one foot out from the wall.
- ➔ When using a stepladder, the legs must be fully splayed and locked.
- ➔ Ladders need to be maintained and be in good condition. A damaged ladder should be tagged and removed from use until it is repaired.

Aerial Lifts

Anyone operating an Aerial Lift is required to be trained on safe use, safety work practices, and operation of equipment as well as any associated hazards.

- ➔ Pros: Safer than scaffolding if operated correctly.
- ➔ Note: Check your site and ensure that you have wide clearance at the wall (no curbs) as well as a plan for where you will park the lift, and a clear path to that parking spot.
- ➔ Note: Visit the site and assess the ground around your mural and its path to the lift parking site: is it level, and what obstacles might you need to navigate when moving and driving it?

Fall Protection Equipment on Aerial Lifts

While working on a mobile elevating device, you must use an approved harness fall arrest system consisting of a full body harness or 5-point harness with lanyard (as per section 26.1(3) of O. Reg. 213/91).

The lanyard or strap shall be attached to the boom, basket, or platform prior to operating or elevating any mobile elevating device, as specified in the Operator's Manual and required by section 148(e) of O. Reg. 213/91.

(Ontario Guideline No. 22: Mobile elevating equipment: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/safety-guidelines-film-and-television-industry/guideline-no-22-mobile-elevating-equipment>)





Photo credit: © Mirna Chacin

Aerial Lift Training and Course

- ➔ It is your responsibility to ensure you are knowledgeable and proficient on how to safely operate a lift.
- ➔ It is recommended that you take Aerial Lifts & Aerial Work Platforms Certification Courses, as needed.
- ➔ The courses cover topics such as: The division of responsibilities, personal protective equipment, fall protection considerations, the different types of aerial lifts, operating procedures, associated hazards, and safe work practices.
- ➔ Ask the company providing the lift about operating their machinery and request machine-specific training, if needed.

Legislation

Ensure that the Aerial Lifts & Aerial Work Platforms Certification program has been developed in accordance with federal and provincial legislation as safety training for workplaces across Canada.

The Canadian Standards Association's standards require that only qualified persons who have been trained regarding the inspection, operation, and application of an aerial platform, including the recognition and avoidance of hazards associated with the operation, shall operate an aerial platform.

Emergency Information

The lead artist responsible for a mural project should create a “health and safety binder” that is kept on location for the duration of the project.

The health and safety binder includes:

- ➔ An emergency contact sheet with names, contact information, emergency contact information and any allergies or medical conditions for each person working on the project. For example, you should be aware if any of your artists or staff have allergies (such as food or bee/wasp) or health conditions (such as diabetes, epilepsy, etc.).
- ➔ Contact information for any people and labour boards that must be notified in the case of critical injury.
- ➔ A critical injury action plan.
- ➔ Records of completing first aid/CPR (photocopies of certificates)
- ➔ Records of completing Working at Heights Certification and/or lift operating training
- ➔ WHMIS info of all products
- ➔ Local emergency numbers and supports
- ➔ Written procedures for operating/setting up/breaking down equipment to be used on site.
- ➔ Any training sheets that have been provided over the course of the project.
- ➔ Each artist team member should initial and date the documents that you have covered.

Personal Well-Being

Mural making not only takes a toll on artists' physical state, but also is a field of work which places a great deal of mental and emotional pressure on the artist.

Avoiding and Dealing with Burnout

In the Artists Wellness series (2022), produced by Muse Arts and StreetARToronto, the following discussion and video recording explores Mural Artists Mental Health and Burnout: <https://www.facebook.com/Museartsto/videos/569193177740749>

Burnout is defined as “is a form of exhaustion caused by constantly feeling swamped. It’s a result of excessive and prolonged emotional, physical, and mental stress. In many cases, burnout is related to one’s job. Burnout happens when you’re overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to keep up with life’s incessant demands.”

(WedMD: <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/burnout-symptoms-signs>).

This conversation featured personal stories and strategies for avoiding burnout as mural artists from artists Shalak Attack, Amir Akbari and Hello Kirsten.

Artists mentioned that the pressure to accept many projects, especially during “busy season”, and the “hustle” culture of freelance work contribute to a lifestyle and workload that incite burnout. Artists also mentioned the physical toll of big projects, which can be intense and very physically exhausting. Mentally and emotionally, these projects are also draining. Some negative experiences, i.e. with staff, partners, or community members can cloud all the positive aspects of a project. Also, because art feels so personal, it is hard to separate our projects and the issues within them from ourselves.

Symptoms of Burnout

The symptoms of burnout can be a combination of physical, emotional and mental overload.

- ➔ Extreme tiredness, i.e. can't get out of bed, small tasks become overwhelming
- ➔ Artists mentioned symptoms of vertigo, especially if spending long working hours working at heights, on swing stages, etc.
- ➔ If you are experiencing these symptoms, reach out to get counseling, talk to a Dr. for psych assessment.



Strategies for Avoiding Burnout

- ➔ Take the time to manage your admin and calendar, being mindful of your timelines and scheduling to not take on too much.
- ➔ Make time for downtime in your year (i.e. after a busy season, or any intense work project).
- ➔ Be mindful of taking care of your physical self. Eat and sleep, take regular breaks and stretch, etc. We can become intensely focused on our work and these physical needs can get pushed aside.
- ➔ Be mindful of taking on additional tasks beyond your work as the artist, for example communications and bureaucracy behind the scenes. Ask for the support you need from the project organizer or those who have commissioned you.
- ➔ Be mindful of your time on Instagram and judging yourself based on what other artists are posting.
- ➔ Practice saying 'no' and be deliberate with your time. Don't take on everything, as it is tempting. Be more selective with your time and energy and with what you take on.
- ➔ Ask for help. Delegate, especially if you have a 'team' or other artists that can assist and support you.
- ➔ Give yourself the time to enjoy and celebrate your achievements, we feel pressure to move onto the next project without a break or reflecting. Create a ritual when finishing a project, take photos, take time off, write a report.
- ➔ Have a clear artist agreement detailing all expectations, responsibilities and logistics ahead of time, which can avoid stressful moments or being taken advantage of during projects.
- ➔ Set clear boundaries for yourself in order to guard your times. You may even call personal time blocks an 'appointment' - such as exercise, time for yourself.
- ➔ Do your best to take time for personal, family trips and time off, ask for some flexibility for the projects to be worked around your schedule.



Photo of Kseniya Tsoy by ©Mirna Chacin



Working in the Public Space

Best Practices for Working in Public Spaces

Some general tips for safety while working in public space

- ➔ Do not work alone. At minimum, always have a buddy working with you.
- ➔ Safety Check ins: Creating a system/ routine to check in with your fellow artists or have someone check in on you while on site.
- ➔ Ensure that at least one person on site has had de-escalation training, and is knowledgeable about assessing people and situations that may escalate into danger or harassment.
- ➔ Connect with local businesses and/or organizations ahead of starting your projects to let them know about the project and when you'll be working on site.
- ➔ Make a plan for how to call emergency numbers when in difficult situations.

A note on walls/ sites with previous graffiti

- ➔ Especially within the graffiti community, it is likely taken as a negative act to paint over pre-existing tags or artwork on a wall.
- ➔ We recommend you work with someone who has internal knowledge of the local graffiti community to assess how to best work on a wall/site with tags and graffiti already existing, so as to avoid any tension and possible conflict.

Gender and Race Based Harassment

As artists, supervisors and project managers, we must be aware that women and gender diverse artists face higher risks of harassment while working in public spaces. We must also be aware that artists of colour experience higher risks of harassment in public spaces. For example, Black artists have experienced situations where people passing by and even law enforcement have assumed their work was illegal.

In all cases, but especially in these cases, we recommend you:

- ➔ prepare a safety plan
- ➔ include at minimum a 'buddy'/ another person on site with you at all times, to help deal with encounters with the public and to bear witness should any issues arise
- ➔ Include a nearby space where the staff have agreed to act as a safe place to take shelter if needed (i.e. a nearby business, community centre, etc.)
- ➔ Have all permits and permission letters printed, in case questioned.



Further Resources

Workplace Health and Safety Resources

Ontario Ministry of Labour Website, Workplace Health and Safety

Find resources to help you improve your workplace's health and safety and follow Ontario's occupational health and safety laws.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/workplace-health-and-safety>

Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)

Learn about the Occupational Health and Safety Act and supporting regulations and how they protect workers.

The main purpose of the OHSA is to provide the legal framework to achieve our goal of protecting workers from health and safety hazards on the job by:

- ➔ setting out duties for all workplace parties and rights for workers to help establish a strong internal responsibility system (IRS) in the workplace
- ➔ establishing measures and procedures for dealing with workplace hazards
- ➔ providing for enforcement of the law where compliance has not been achieved voluntarily

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/occupational-health-and-safety-act-ohsa>

Ted Rickard Safety Consultancy, Health and Safety for Artists

<https://muralroutes.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/healthsafety1.pdf>

Ted Rickard, MLS, MEd, CRSP, was the Manager of Health & Safety at Ontario College of Art & Design (1988-2007). While at OCAD Ted's educational mandate reached all aspects of health and safety within the university including teaching students, faculty and staff. A leading expert in this field, Ted has advised on health and safety issues for many individuals, institutions and organizations including Art Gallery of Ontario's Conservation Department, Art Hazards Resource Association, Harbourfront Craft Studios and of course past presentations with AHCF and CARFAC. He has published over thirty booklets and articles for various arts and occupational health and safety journals, a number of in-house policies and procedures manuals and audio-visual training kits marketed across North America and around the world.

STS Canada, Health and Safety Training & Consulting Company

<https://www.stscanada.com/>

STS Canada is a health and safety firm that provides technical writing training courses and consulting services for key industries. It was founded in 1992 by Nick Bartzis, who envisioned a future where worker safety has equal priority with the bottom line. STS Group has been providing affordable services since our founding. We believe that safety training should be accessible to everyone. We value continual improvement, integrity, and accountability. Our vision is to educate people on creating a safer tomorrow.

Artists' Personal Well Being Resources

Artists Health Centre

The Al & Malka Green Artists' Health Centre is part of the Department of Family & Community Medicine at the University Health Network. The Centre's health team offers integrated care to artists of all disciplines, and to arts students and educators. The Centre is the only clinic of its kind in Canada that specializes in serving artists. With a mandate that also includes research, education and engagement in the arts community, the Centre strives to understand the health needs of artists to provide evidence-based, artist-centered care.

<https://www.artistshealthcentre.ca/>

CAMH (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)

Mental Distress: Recognition & Response

This workshop is focused on developing your capacity to respond to individuals experiencing distress. It is particularly helpful for groups working with the public or providing customer service. Groups who have requested and benefited from this workshop include security guards, health care providers, employment service providers, government staff and community workers. After exploring how to recognize distress we will focus on communication and de-escalation skills that work.

<https://toronto.cmha.ca/workshops-for-organizations/>

CMHA in Toronto

The Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch can also be a great place to reach out to for support <https://toronto.cmha.ca/>



Photo ©Mirna Chacin

Additional Mental Health and Support Resources

Phone/Text

- ➔ Crisis Services Canada, Toll Free (24/7): 1 (833) 456-4566, Text support (4pm-12am ET daily): 45645
- ➔ Canadian Crisis Hotline, 1 (888) 353-2273

Apps and Online Services

- ➔ Better Help www.betterhelp.com, Online access to professional counsellors, On the web, and available for iPhone and Android users
- ➔ The LifeLine App www.thelifelinecanada.ca, Direct access to phone, online chat, text, and email crisis support, E-counselling, self-management tools, access to crisis centres across Canada, Available for iPhone and Android users

Online Peer Support

- ➔ Big White Wall Canada www.bigwhitewall.ca, Anonymous peer support community accessible anytime, anywhere

What if you're worried about someone else?

If you are worried about one of your coworkers or fellow artists and feel comfortable enough providing them with these supports, point them in the right direction. It is important to remember that we are not mental health professionals and want to ensure we're giving the best advice possible, which in many instances, means pointing our colleagues and friends in the direction of those who can.

Working in Public Space / Safety Resources

METRAC

METRAC: Action on Violence works with individuals, communities and institutions to change ideas, actions and policies with the goal of ending violence against women, youth and marginalized groups. Through education and prevention, we use innovative tools to build safety, justice and equity throughout the City of Toronto and Province of Ontario.

METRAC created the first Women's Safety Audit in 1989. The safety audit was developed as a tool to bring attention to violence against women in public spaces. In general, the goal of a METRAC safety audit to assess and, if possible, to improve a community to make it safer, more inclusive and less threatening for its members.

Our Community Safety Audit explores how the social and physical environment can increase or decrease safety within an area. Throughout the audit process community members will participate in various sessions building skills such as:

- ➔ Collaboration - Community groups learn about diverse safety needs and concerns of their fellow community members.
- ➔ Safety Training & Tour – Participants gain skills to identify safety issues and discuss solutions.
- ➔ Action Planning - Participants are supported in mapping and developing a safety action plan.



Photo credit: ©Mirna Chacin

About

About Mural Routes

Mural Routes activates communities by facilitating the creation of responsive, collaborative murals, and provides opportunities to build and advance careers in mural art. Our vision is to be a leading resource for all artists, organizations and communities creating mural art.

OUR GOALS

- To provide accessible education, training, and consultation services for all aspects of mural making
- To advocate for the creation, maintenance and care of public mural art
- To communicate and engage in dialogue around current and emerging trends, issues, and opportunities in mural art
- To support and work with a variety of mural artists embracing diversity and inclusivity



<https://muralroutes.ca/>

About StreetARToronto

StreetARToronto (StART), an initiative of the City of Toronto, Transportation Services Division, is a suite of innovative programs intentionally designed to showcase, celebrate and support street, mural and graffiti artists and art throughout Toronto. Initiated in 2012 as an integral part of the City of Toronto's Graffiti Management Plan, StART has been successful in reducing graffiti vandalism and replacing it with vibrant, colourful, community-engaged street art.

StART programs make our streets more beautiful and safe, encourage active transportation (walking and cycling), showcase local artists, mentor emerging talent, and reduce overall infrastructure maintenance costs and more.

StreetARToronto

<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/enhancing-our-streets-and-public-realm/streetartoronto/>

