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Christmas Regulations - a sketch about Nativity Health and Safety

Theme - What the Nativity story would have looked like if health & safety got involved...

Scene - the stable where Jesus is about to be born.

Characters - Joseph, Mary, the innkeeper, and the health & safety expert (abbreviated to H&S and called a 'he' but both the H&S and the innkeeper can be male or female). The H&S individual is a bit of a geek and knows his stuff. If you've ever seen Red Dwarf or the Brittas Empire, then think 'Arnold Rimmer' or 'Gordon Brittas').

To get the most out of the sketch, the H&S needs to almost over-play his zealous obsession with the rules. Mary, Joseph and the innkeeper should constantly be reacting to what the H&S person is saying. The H&S person is a bit power-mad and likes the sound of his own voice and sense of authority.

Mary is pregnant, so it's up to you how convincing you make this look (or not!)

The sketch

H&S - *(Making lots of tutting type noises and disapproving noises as he walks around the stable with a clipboard. If you have things like light meters or similar, H&S can be seen testing various things, knocking on the walls etc. He is constantly scribbling things down).*

(During the long and drawn out 'testing' procedures from H&S, everyone is watching on, the innkeeper especially nervous).

H&S - Ohhh dear, oh dear, I'm afraid this just won't do.

Innkeeper - What's the problem?

H&S - Problem? Problem? It's problems I'm afraid, sir. With a capital 'S'.

(Pointing at the innkeeper). You sir have contravened several regulations. Your many failings can be categorised under the Building Regulations of 2010, the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1954, the Animal Welfare Act of 2006, the National Health Service Acts of 1946 and 1977 and the Health Acts of 1999, 2006 and 2009.

Mary - So what are you saying?

H&S - I'm sorry madam but this stable is simply not a safe or legal place for the birth of a baby.

Mary - But we've got nowhere else to go.

H&S - I'm afraid that you'll just have to hold the baby in.

Joseph - Hold the baby in? Don't be so ridiculous.

H&S - I'm afraid I cannot allow a baby to be born in this location. It contravenes so many health & safety laws it's the most flagrant breaches I've seen in my career.

Innkeeper - What breaches? What health & safety? It's not a maternity ward!

H&S - *(flipping through his notes)*. Well for starters, if you are to have people stay, you need to be fully complying with the landlord and tenant regulations. Has this building been registered for use as a bed and breakfast? Have you obtained the necessary planning documents from the Bethlehem Bureau of Building Business?

Innkeeper - Of course not. It's only for temporary use for these two weary travellers *(pointing at Mary and Joseph)* as it's the census!

H&S - Ignorance of the law or exceptional circumstances are not, I repeat not, an excuse for willful disobedience of said law or regulatory statutory instruments.

Innkeeper - But it's a stable, for animals. It's not a B&B!

H&S - Have you for example got valid insurance for this property? Buildings and contents insurance? Public liability insurance? Is there an appropriate fire exit?

Innkeeper - *(interrupting)* - Fire exit? It's a stable with a door bigger than the stable...

H&S - *(points sternly at the innkeeper)*. Silence while I'm trying to give an overview in the shocking lapses that I've observed and noted in my report... Where were we? Ah, yes. Do you have sprinklers fitted? Is there someone on hand who is first aid trained? I see no fire retardant doors here, or fire extinguishers. There appears to be no emergency first aid kit to hand either.

(Mary and Joseph looking at each other through this time, worried)

Mary - But I've got a baby on the way!

H&S - Aha. Therefore we must fulfil the regulations for hospitals under the Care Quality Commission guidelines. As a neo-natal stable, there are various procedures that must be adhered to in order to satisfy the Bethlehem Health Service standards. BHS as we call it.

Innkeeper - It's not a neo-natal unit, what are you talking about?!

Mary - *(groans)*. Ooooh, the baby.

Joseph - Take a seat. *(Helps Mary and encourages her to sit down on a log)*.

H&S - Aha! *(Looks at the innkeeper)*. I'm assuming this log meets the standards for outdoor seating, subject to EU legislation: 2006/514/EC

Innkeeper - But we're not in Europe!

H&S - (*Writes down on his paper, tutting*). So I'm assuming that's a 'no' then... That's another fail.

Innkeeper - Look... It's a stable. A stable for animals!

H&S - Which brings me to animal welfare rights. That donkey over there in the corner looks a bit worse for wear.

Joseph - It helped carry Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

H&S - Aha. So, a long distance journey. Did it have its mandatory breaks when driving? After 5 hours 30 minutes, there is a legal mandatory stop for at least 30 minutes. I sincerely hope it didn't do more than it's 10 hours driving per day?

Joseph - Driving? It was walking.

H&S - Call it what you like my friend. That donkey was journeying. And it's noisy. I hope it was obeying all relevant legislation and using a hands-free kit?

Joseph - Are you mad?

Mary - I need the toilet. I don't feel so great.

H&S - Toilet. There's another issue. And sanitation...? I see no running water, hand towels, soap, or toilet facilities.

Innkeeper - There is a hole in the ground...

H&S - Hole in the ground? Hole in the ground? Well that won't do, I'm afraid. This isn't the 18th century you know. I've got a hole in my garden made by moles but I don't go to the toilet in it.

Innkeeper - Are you legally mad as well, or just like this naturally?

H&S - (*Laughs*). Very funny my friend. But joking isn't going to get you out of this pickle. No, no I'm sorry. This just won't do. This is no place for anyone to stay and certainly no place for a baby to be born.

... Now, I need a room for the night. Have you got any?

Innkeeper - How about here in the stable? It'd be free.

H&S - (thinks briefly). I'll take it.

(All exit).