



# Filming Code of Practice

Royal Borough of  
Windsor & Maidenhead

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## Foreword - Making the Royal Borough a friendly place to film

It is widely appreciated that film production can make a positive contribution to local communities, bringing economic benefits and helping to boost the area as a destination for visitors from within the United Kingdom and from across the world.

The Royal Borough Film Unit aims to promote a welcoming environment for responsible film production companies who work in a professional manner and who recognise the mutual advantages of co-operation to ensure the least possible disruption to residents and businesses.

This comprehensive Code of Practice is designed to help in achieving a film friendly borough. It should be of help to everyone with a stake in filming in the Royal Borough – experienced professionals and new talent alike – providing a checklist of practical issues to make the lives of location managers and film-makers as easy as possible. Importantly, it will also help to ensure that the process of filming does not create difficulties for local residents and businesses.

Although the code is voluntary, it incorporates references to the statutory obligations all those engaged in filming must adhere to. The code will be reviewed regularly by the Borough to make any revisions necessary in the light of ongoing experience and legislative change.

The aims of the code are to:

- Promote a spirit of partnership between film production companies, the Borough and other agencies working in the local community
- Enable the industry to film effectively, efficiently and flexibly and to high standards of practice
- Ensure all involved in location filming act responsibly, professionally and considerately at all times
- Maximise the economic and cultural benefits to the Royal Borough
- Minimise the practical impact of filming on local people and businesses
- Encourage the long-term sustainability of filming in the Royal Borough.

The code applies to all forms of moving image production (including feature films, television, commercials, drama documentaries and music videos) shot on location in public places in the Royal Borough which are likely to, or have the potential to, cause disruption to normal activity.

It does not include shoots where the only equipment used is handheld cameras or for reporting for daily news programmes.

All productions signed up to the Royal Borough Film Unit Code of Practice should display the email address of the council's Film Office, [filmunit@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:filmunit@rbwm.gov.uk)

Any queries regarding this Code should be addressed to: [filmunit@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:filmunit@rbwm.gov.uk)



## General guidelines

This code is intended as a guide to the filming requirements on the streets and other public places of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

To help location managers get to the services they need (such as, streetcare, parking, parks etc) it has established a Film Unit to act as a central point of contact, which will give film-makers easy access to information and enable them to establish contacts with the relevant services and partners to discuss their requirements.

The Film Unit will do everything possible to facilitate filming in the area but at all times its priority will be to reduce any potential disruption to local residents and businesses.

All production companies should inform the Film Unit of any especially complex shoots well in advance to ensure there is effective liaison – and appropriate consultation – with everyone who may be affected. The Film Unit will help facilitate this process in a timely and efficient manner.

It is also important for production companies to let the Film Unit know if a shoot is taking place at a private location where it may have a potential impact on roads, footways or other public areas.

## Application

The completed filming application form should be submitted to the Film Unit in plenty of time to ensure the council can consider the implications to the local community. The more complex the shoot, the greater the lead in time

The online application form is available at <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/filming>



# A-Z of key issues

## 1 Animals

- 1.1 Health and Safety Executive guidance on working with animals, including dangerous animals, must be adhered to.

## 2 Cabling

Film makers must reach advance agreement with the Royal Borough about the laying and positioning of cables as follows:

- 2.1 All cables must be made safe as they are laid in place and not at a later time.
- 2.2 Cables must be laid in the gutter along the highway or in the junction between a wall and the footway.
- 2.3 Cables on steps must be taped down to avoid the risk of tripping.
- 2.4 Wherever possible, arrangements should be made to avoid cabling across the highway. However, where this cannot be achieved cables should be flown at a minimum of 17ft (5.2m) above a public carriageway and 8ft 6ins (2.6m) above footways.
- 2.5 If there is a need to lay cabling across a footway there may be times when this can be achieved by laying cables under a taped rubber mat. The matting should be:
- A minimum of 1m wide and
  - Visible to the public by proper lighting, cones or high-visibility hazard tape
- 2.6 Rubber matting is essential safety equipment and is required to be carried by as a matter of course.
- 2.7 On quieter roads it may be permissible to lay cables using proper cable ramps. If so, appropriate signage must be used.
- 2.8 Council permission must be gained before cables are attached to street furniture

## 3 Camera track

- 3.1 All matters relating to tracking must be discussed and agreed with the Royal Borough in advance of filming. Tracking boards may be required in certain circumstances.

## 4 Catering

- 4.1 Catering arrangements and the positioning of catering vehicles must be agreed in advance with the Royal Borough. Dirty water and food waste must not be deposited in rainwater gullies and caterers should use a dirty water bowser where possible. Wherever possible use of environmentally friendly materials should be used.
- 4.2 Opportunities should be used to source catering from local businesses.
- 4.3 Also see, Litter Removal



## **5 Charges**

5.1 Charges that the Royal Borough is entitled to levy are detailed in the document 'Film Unit Charges Tariff' which is available upon request by emailing [filmunit@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:filmunit@rbwm.gov.uk)

## **6 Children**

6.1 Any filming involving the employment of and performance by children (whether paid or unpaid) must be cleared through the Royal Borough's Education Welfare Service where the child is a resident or, if the child is not British, of the relevant education authority where the film production has its place of business.

## **7 Coning**

7.1 Cones have no legal force to secure parking and their use must be agreed in advance with the Royal Borough.

## **8 Consultation**

8.1 Successful filming depends on the goodwill and co-operation of local residents and businesses who may be affected by the proposal filming. The production company should take into account advice from the Royal Borough concerning residents and businesses who should be consulted and given an appropriate level of notice – at least one week. The council may be able to provide the contact details needed for the consultation.

8.2 Letters should be sent to local residents explaining the filming proposals and containing the following information:

- Date, time and location of filming
- Contact number for the location manager
- Number of crew or production personnel expected on location
- Clear details of any planned stunts or dressing
- Clear details of lights and parking proposals.

## **9 Council property**

9.1 When filming on Royal Borough-owned property e.g. in parks, schools, civic buildings etc, the production company must obtain the council's agreement and adhere to the usage/fire/health and safety rules applicable to the property in question.

## **10 Cranes, camera cranes and aerial platforms**

10.1 When planning to use 'cherry-pickers' or cranes on the public highway, the Royal Borough must be informed and clearance obtained, including the specific weight and positioning of the equipment and the need to maintain access.

10.2 At night or in poor visibility, warning lights should be placed on the equipment

10.3 Rigging and de-rigging must be done at times that will not cause an unreasonable noise or nuisance in accordance with statutory obligations.



## **11 Emergency access**

- 11.1 The production company must ensure that access to the location site is maintained at all times.
- 11.2 Not less than one week's notice must be given to the emergency services about the accessibility of the site to emergency vehicles.

## **12 Firearms**

- 12.1 No firearms of any kind may be used without agreement in advance between the production company, the Royal Borough and the police.
- 12.2 An armourer must be present during film shoots involving firearms.
- 12.3 Local residents and businesses must be made aware of the use of firearms.

## **13 Health & Safety Legislation**

- 13.1 All production companies must ensure that they fulfil their obligations and responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and associated regulations.

## **14 High Visibility Clothing & Personal Protection Equipment**

- 14.1 The appropriate level of safety clothing must be worn for the safety of the crew when filming on the public highway and in the public domain.
- 14.2 Failure to wear appropriate high-visibility clothing may invalidate any insurance provision for the entire shoot.

## **15 Highway/traffic management**

- 15.1 The production must liaise with the Royal Borough about using public highways and footpaths.
- 15.2 Any traffic management measures put in place must also be agreed by Thames Valley Police.

Note: There is currently no legislation to allow a road closure specifically for filming purposes in Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. However, if adequate notice is given it may be possible to accommodate the needs of a production without closure.

## **16 Historic and cultural locations**

- 16.1 The production must adhere to any conservation regulations that apply in the Royal Borough.



## **17 Indemnity and insurance**

- 17.1 All production companies filming in the streets and in all public areas, including public buildings, must carry public liability insurance.
- 17.2 The production company will be expected to indemnify the local authority, its officers and employees against any claims or proceedings arising directly from any injury to persons or damage to property as a result of the activities of the production company or its agents.
- 17.3 A minimum of £5 million public liability insurance is required.
- 17.4 The production company must produce a copy of the relevant insurance needed before shooting starts. The need for insurance is governed by statutory obligation.

## **18 Lighting**

- 18.1 The positioning and safety of lighting stands must be agreed in advance with the Royal Borough
- 18.2 While an appropriate degree of flexibility may be agreed, providing it complies with Health and Safety legislation, the following considerations must be taken into account:
- All lights and lighting stands must be properly secured
  - Lighting stands placed on a footway must be attended at all times
  - Lights must not be placed in such a way as to dazzle motorists
  - Light must not be shone directly towards residential properties at any time without the permission of the property owners.

## **19 Litter removal**

- 19.1 It is the producer's responsibility to ensure that all litter is removed immediately at the end of each day's filming and that the location and its surrounding area are returned to the same condition in which they were found.
- 19.2 The production company may ask the council's streetcare services to remove litter – such services to be provided at additional cost.
- 19.3 Waste created on location should be recycled wherever possible.

## **20 Night filming**

- 20.1 Filming on the public highway will normally be limited to no later than 11pm (10pm on a Sunday) and no earlier in residential areas.
- 20.2 Night filming in residential areas can cause problems for the local community and production companies must consult with the council, residents and businesses when planning their filming schedules.
- 20.3 A legitimate complaint to the council about noise or nuisance can result in the termination of the film shoot and the confiscation of equipment so it is advisable to shoot all scenes requiring noise above conversational level before 10pm.
- 20.4 Walkie-talkies should be turned down to a minimum and earpieces used
- 20.5 When filming equipment must be left in place overnight, this must be approved in advance with the Royal Borough.





## **21 Noise**

- 21.1 Particular regard must be paid to noise levels at all times but especially when setting up in the morning.
- 21.2 Use of audio playback and megaphones will be permitted only in agreement with the Royal Borough.
- 21.3 The parking position of generators must be agreed in advance with the Royal Borough and will depend on local sensitivities.

## **22 Parking**

- 22.1 Making robust parking arrangements is a key element in planning for a successful film shoot and location managers should consult the Royal Borough at the earliest possible stage about parking requirements.
- 22.2 Detailed parking plans for eligible vehicles must be submitted to and agreed by the council in advance of the shoot, particularly if on-street parking is required for technical vehicles, equipment and bays reserved for continuity purposes. The production company must make every effort to find off-street parking for all facilities vehicles. Note: cars are not 'eligible vehicles' and the production company must ensure that cars are parked off the highway in appropriate car parks or other legal locations.
- 22.3 Location managers will be responsible for ensuring that the parking and vehicular arrangements agreed with the council are adhered to at all times.
- 22.4 It is worth noting that residents' parking bays are rarely suspended. Disabled bays (whether for a designated person or for disabled drivers in general) will not be suspended, unless an acceptable alternative can be provided.

## **23 Police and other emergency services**

- 23.1 It is a legal requirement for the production company to inform the police of all details of filming on the street or in a public place.
- 23.2 The staging of crimes and accidents, plus use of firearms and special effects must be agreed, in advance of the shoot, with the police and/or appropriate emergency service and the Royal Borough.
- 23.3 The production company should inform the police and/or appropriate emergency service when filming involves celebrities who may cause security or crowd control issues.
- 23.4 If police officers are required to be in attendance on location, their role is to maintain the peace and uphold the law. The production company will be responsible for covering any costs of providing this service.



## **24 Prop or mock emergency services**

- 24.1 The emergency service in question must be informed in advance if there are actors to be dressed in a specific uniform (police, ambulance, fire brigade or armed forces). Uniforms and any vehicles resembling the emergency services must be covered whenever possible and in particular between takes. Any markings on vehicles must be taped over when not being used for filming.
- 24.2 Sirens and flashing lights shall be isolated or switched off when not in use for filming purposes

## **25 Problem solving**

- 25.1 In the event of a dispute arising between the production company and other parties on location, please contact the Royal Borough film unit.

## **26 Risk assessment**

- 26.1 Risk assessments are required by the self-employed and by any company with employees to be able to satisfy their insurance provisions and statutory obligations to employees and those affected by their actions.
- 26.2 Risk assessment for more significant film shoots in the Royal Borough may need to be reviewed by the council's Corporate Health and Safety Team.
- 26.3 Additional location specific risk assessments may also be required depending on the type and nature of filming.

## **27 Rivers and waterways**

- 27.1 When planning to film on any waterway, the production company will need to liaise with the relevant governing body (e.g. the Environment Agency) as early as possible

## **28 Road markings and signs**

- 28.1 The temporary painting-out or disguising of road markings, lines or other road signs is subject to agreement in advance with the Royal Borough and the police.
- 28.2 Full reinstatement of any affected signs or markings is the responsibility of the production company. The reinstatement must be to a standard acceptable to the council's highways service (who can give advice on the use of appropriate contractors).

## **29 Scaffolding**

- 29.1 All requests to erect scaffolding in a public area, highway or footway must be agreed in advance with the Royal Borough. A temporary structure licence may be required.

## **30 Security**

- 30.1 Security issues local to the Royal Borough or location in which the filming is taking place must be respected. Production companies may be asked to work alongside on-site security officers. It is acknowledged that these security officers are not employees of the production company.



### **31 Signage**

31.1 Unless approved by the Royal Borough, unit direction signage on the highway is illegal. The production company must consult the Royal Borough before attaching all other non-public highways signage.

### **32 Sound playback**

32.1 The filming of artists to sound playback at any time must have prior agreement from the Royal Borough.

### **33 Street signs/street furniture/street lighting**

- 33.1 The removal of street furniture, including street signs, and the adjustment of street lighting is subject to agreement in advance with the Royal Borough.
- 33.2 Agreed work will normally be carried out the council's Streetcare services and charged to the production company, who will be responsible for these costs and for re-instatement.
- 33.3 The council may allow the production company to carry out minor works, with prior approval, with reinstatement costs (and costs of repairing any damage incurred) met by the company.

### **34 Stunts/special effects/pyrotechnics**

This section refers to, but is not limited to, all car chases, river chases and explosions.

- 34.1 All stunts, special effects (including weather effects and wetdowns) and pyrotechnics must be under the direct control of a named qualified stunt co-ordinator or special effects operative and comply with the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 34.2 Plans must be discussed with the council at least a week in advance and a full method statement and risk assessment may be required.
- 34.3 Wet downs and rain effects may only be carried out with the approval of the council and other relevant authorities, following a proper evaluation of the forecast weather conditions and with the appropriate signage as required.

