

# Indian Productions' Guide to London FAQs



## 1. How can Film London help me?

We provide free advice and information about filming in London. We make available to you useful contacts – crew, facilities, locations. We can facilitate pre-production meetings for you with locations and we offer a mediation service should you need it.

We have an extensive library of locations - 6,000 here in our office library for you to visit when in London, and 3,000 online: [www.filmlondon.org.uk/locations](http://www.filmlondon.org.uk/locations).

We can also create folios of locations and email them to you.

## 2. What subsidies will the UK give me?

To claim UK tax relief the production needs to pass the cultural test and spend a minimum of 25% qualifying expenditure in the UK. The UK Film Production Company (FPC) is then able to claim tax relief.

Find out more on the BFI's website: [www.bfi.org.uk/about/qualifying](http://www.bfi.org.uk/about/qualifying).

Although Film London is not able to fund your movie we offer advice on how to make your production cost effective.

## 3. My visa application has been rejected. What can I do?

You will need to follow this up with the British High Commission - Film London has no influence over visa applications. However, if you wish to film in London, you can email details of your production to [locations@filmlondon.org.uk](mailto:locations@filmlondon.org.uk). We will then email you guidelines which you can use as evidence of correspondence with us. This will assist your application.

Film London is unable to issue letters of invitation.

**You will need both a visa and a work permit if you are shooting for longer than 6 weeks and in any studio locations (i.e. where you erect your set); if you are shooting for under 6 weeks and only locations then you will just need a visa.**

## 4. How much will it cost me to film in London?

It depends what you wish to do. Most locations charge a fee. For filming on the streets most boroughs have standard charges and are listed here: [www.filmlondon.org.uk/boroughs](http://www.filmlondon.org.uk/boroughs).

Some iconic locations, like Trafalgar Square and Royal Parks, also have standard charges which they publish on their websites.

Most other locations charge on a case-by-case basis. An experienced location manager will be able to get you the best possible price for the shots that you require. You will have to pay for parking and in Central London this can be expensive. Again, an experienced location manager will source nearby parking for the best price for your budget.

In order to film in London you will need **public liability insurance**. See point 8.

You will need a location manager experienced in filming in London. Location managers with experience of working with Indian production companies are listed here:

[www.filmlondon.org.uk/indiaexperience](http://www.filmlondon.org.uk/indiaexperience).

The Freelance Production Agreement between BECTU and PACT (Producers Alliance for Cinema & Television) sets out **minimum rates of pay** for freelancers across film and television production. Find out more here:

[www.bectu.org.uk/resources/agree/agreep1.html](http://www.bectu.org.uk/resources/agree/agreep1.html).

EQUITY is the trade union which represents artists including actors, dancers, choreographers, walk-on and supporting artists and stunt performers in the UK.

They publish guidelines to rates of pay on their website:

<http://www.equity.org.uk/AboutUs/IndustryRates/default.aspx>.

## 5. How can I save money and get the shots I want?

Hire an experienced location manager as early as possible. The UK-based facilities company you hire can suggest location managers, or you can hire one yourself:

[www.filmlondon.org.uk/indiaexperience](http://www.filmlondon.org.uk/indiaexperience). When hiring a company or individual you should check references to ensure they will provide the best services for your project.

Locations and some services such as the police (should you need their assistance, for example, for traffic control) will be cheaper if you give them plenty of advance notice. It has been proven that productions which hire a location manager early on spend considerably less on locations than productions that do not.

Clearly the more fixed and realistic your schedule can be and the more you can give advance notice to locations, then the cheaper your filming will be.

Location fees can vary enormously depending on where you film, the shots you require, size of cast and crew, etc. For example, filming Tower Bridge for half a day can cost £500 or £1,000 depending where you film it from; filming in Trafalgar Square can be free or can cost £500 per hour, again depending where you film from. An experienced location manager will be able to advise you on your options. You can find a list of popular iconic locations with camera positions here: [www.filmlondon.org.uk/londonstreets](http://www.filmlondon.org.uk/londonstreets).

Competitive rates on anything from your travel and accommodation needs to car hire and mobile phones can be sourced through our Concierge Service:

[www.filmlondon.org.uk/concierge](http://www.filmlondon.org.uk/concierge).

6. Why do I need to hire a location manager?

Filming in London can be complex, so we recommend you hire an expert. An experienced location manager knows the procedures and has the relationships with locations. He or she will ensure your shoot will be as smooth as possible and will get you the best deals.

7. What is public liability insurance and do I need it?

You will only be given permission to film at a location if you have public liability insurance. All productions, international and domestic, need this and will need to show it in order to receive permission to film.

This policy indemnifies your production company against claims made against you by third parties, whether in respect of bodily injury, death or property damage. The limit of indemnity selected is very much dependent upon the studio/location facilities being used for filming. The National Trust, for instance, looks after 250 stately homes in the UK and requires a minimum of £5m. For some street filming this figure can be less.

8. How do I obtain public liability insurance?

Arranging cover – there are three options:

1. Arrange the required cover through an Insurance Broker based in India. You must ensure that the policy includes cover for filming activities and that the territorial limits of the policy include the area where filming in. In this case, the UK.
2. Set up a company in the UK.
3. Ensure that your Production Company employ the services of a UK based local facilities' company. If the Production does engage a service company, they must ensure that their interest is noted on the policy, in respect of the filming activities undertaken. This is a reasonable request, as there is a financial interest between both companies.

More information about insurance for film can be found on the British Film Commission website: [www.britishfilmcommission.org.uk](http://www.britishfilmcommission.org.uk).

9. What are the Health and Safety (H&S) regulations in the UK?

There are various H&S rules and regulations that apply to filming in the UK - particularly when filming in the public domain. The majority of these are referred to in the Filming in London Code of Practice under different sections such as 'stunts and special effects', 'cabling', 'rivers & waterways' as well as a specific H&S section: [www.filmlondon.org.uk/cop](http://www.filmlondon.org.uk/cop).

Electrical safety should be understood and adhered to, at all times. We recommend that you hire, at the very least, a UK qualified gaffer for your production. There is further H&S guidance here: [www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/information.htm#film](http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/information.htm#film).

Your gaffer and sparks should be completely familiar with electrical safety in the UK. There have been serious electrical incidents that have occurred on film shoots due to unfamiliarity with UK electrical systems which have cost productions thousands of pounds.

It is the producer's responsibility to ensure compliance with H&S regulations. Failure to do so could invalidate your insurance policies (including your public liability and employers liability insurance), lead to your filming being stopped and/or criminal prosecution.

10. How much prep time do I need?

This will depend on your script and your location requirements. Instant access to locations is extremely unlikely. Westminster requires 10 clear working days notice to process filming applications. Arranging parking in Central London can take two weeks to organise.

You will need to give a location scout/manager sufficient time to source and secure locations. Typical prep time for a London based feature is two to three months. You should plan to do at least one initial recce, and nearer the shoot date you will need to do a technical recce with all heads of department present.

11. How can I trust the crew and services I hire in the UK are experienced and reliable?

Film London does not check the credentials of crew and services. You will need to follow up references yourself to ensure you hire the best professionals for your project.

12. How do I pay for crew and services in the UK?

You should always have signed contracts for crew, locations and facilities. This ensures everyone is clear about the terms of hire. You will need to set up a UK bank account or make arrangements with your UK-based facilities company to transfer funds over from India to their bank account. Many locations require payment on the first day of principle photography. Some locations require payment in advance. You must ensure you have sufficient funds in the UK to cover these costs.