

Met Police Film Unit Guidelines To Filming On Location



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Metropolitan Police Service Film Unit



A black and white version of this document is available from the MPS Film Unit.

Contact us: filmunit@met.police.uk or 0203 054 5555

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide clarity for production companies and Location Managers that plan to film in London, as to when a police presence is and is not required during filming. It also provides the same guidelines to Borough Film Services for use when considering filming requests to film within their respective boroughs.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Film Unit manages complex commercial filming across London and provides officers where filming is taking place on location in London and the filming requires police assistance. Annually the Film Unit provide officers for approximately 2000 filming days and is part of the Film London Partnership, supported by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the MPS, the Mayor Of London and Film London.

For productions planning extensive action sequences, the Film Unit will liaise with the production to enable a 'joined up' approach, reducing risk and ensuring the safety of the public along with that of the cast and crew.

When on location in London, there are seven types of filming that may require a police presence:

- **Filming with weapons**
- **Filming with replica / imitation / airsoft firearms**
- **Filming with actors / extras in police uniform**
- **Filming with replica / fake police/emergency vehicles**
- **Filming scenes of crime or violence**
- **Filming real or perceived nudity**
- **Filming with issues of public safety**

The following pages outline each in more detail together with the level of police presence required.

Filming with weapons



Please refer to HSE Management of Firearms and Weapons in film and TV productions. Sheet No 20

The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming.

A weapon includes any object which is designed for the purpose of inflicting bodily harm such as crossbows, catapults, any sharp-edged instruments used in a fight sequence (swords and knives) or martial arts weapons (such as rice flails) and batons, battering rams, swords, spears, longbows. This guidance also covers articles such as replica weapons and props which are not designed



specifically for inflicting bodily harm but which may pose such a risk when used as a weapon.

Please contact the MPS FILM UNIT as a police presence may be required.

GUIDELINES:

If filming in a public/private place or an area that can be overlooked, please ensure that:

- All replica / imitation weapons are supervised at all times and controlled on set by the Film Armourer or responsible production person.
- Any replica / imitation weapons are not removed or taken from set.
- Any replica / imitation weapons are not left unattended.
- FILMWEAPON CAD required. Please see firearms
- All crew in Hi-visibility jackets
- Film signs
- Permissions granted by land owners/borough film office
- Local residents letter dropped.

Filming with replica / imitation / airsoft firearms



Please refer to HSE Management of Firearms and Weapons in film and TV productions. Sheet No 20

The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming.

Supply of replica / imitation or airsoft firearms

It is Metropolitan Police Service policy that any production requiring replica/imitation or airsoft firearms, **must** have obtained them from a Registered Firearms Dealer (RFD) or a correctly licensed supplier that is a Company who's business is to supply replica / imitation or airsoft firearms to film, television and theatrical productions.

Use of replica / imitation or airsoft firearms

For all production work, a Film Armourer **must** be engaged where a firearm that requires a licence or certificate is to be held or used by someone who is not working within the privileges of their own licence, such as an actor. The Film



Armourer must be competent and experienced in such work. Holding licences or shotgun and firearm certificates does not qualify a person to be an armourer.

A Film Armourer is a Registered Firearms Dealer (RFD) or their agent or another properly authorised person, who is insured to provide firearms for use in film and TV productions.

The safety and security of Replica/imitation/airsoft firearms should be treated in the same way. The production must seek the advice of the relevant weapons expert to make sure that adequate information, instruction and training is given to all those involved with, or affected by the use of the weapon. The production must ensure a written risk assessment is in place which clearly identifies the controls for the procurement, transportation, storage, crew and artiste briefings, handling, and disposal. All production personnel must follow the instructions. All weapons must be accounted for at all times.

FILMWEAPON CAD*

If a replica / imitation or airsoft firearm is to be used in, heard or seen in or from a public place or where the public have right of passage, the production must make sure that the police have been informed and that a point of contact for them is nominated, e.g. the Film Armourer. Keeping the police informed will prevent possible misunderstandings involving police armed response units and reduce the likelihood of public distress and possible breach of the peace.

The production must obtain a **FILMWEAPON CAD** number from the Met police Film Unit. The number is unique to each date and location of filming and the CAD ensures that local police as well as armed response units are aware of the filming taking place with replica / imitation / airsoft firearms.

** CAD is an MPS acronym for Computer Aided Despatch*

IMPORTANT: When productions are filming in London, DO NOT call 101 for filming with firearms/weapons or any filming enquiry. All requests/enquiries MUST be directed to the Met Police Film Unit. Filming outside of London, please contact the local Police Service.



Please contact the MPS FILM UNIT as a police presence may be required.

GUIDELINES:

If filming in a public/private place or an area that can be overlooked, please ensure that:

- **All replica / imitation or airsoft firearms are supplied and controlled on set by the Film Armorer.**
- **Any replica / imitation or airsoft firearms are not removed or taken from set.**
- **Any replica / imitation or airsoft firearms are not left unattended.**
- **FILMWEAPON CAD required.**
- **The MPS Film Unit will require Armorers name, company name and phone number or responsible person's name and number for the FILMWEAPON CAD. We will also require type of firearms, amount of firearms on location, do you plan to discharge, if so how?**
- **All crew in Hi-visibility jackets**
- **Film signs**
- **Permissions granted by land owners/borough film office**
- **Local residents letter dropped.**
- **FILMWEAPON CADS ARE ALSO REQUIRED WHEN FILMING INTERNALLY AND OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW**

Filming with actors/extras in police uniform



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming.

The law on "impersonating police"

- Any person who with intent to deceive impersonates a member of a police force, or makes any statement or does any act calculated falsely to suggest that he is a constable, shall be guilty of an offence.
- Any person who, not being a member of a police force or special constable, has in his possession any article of police uniform shall,



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unless he proves that he obtained possession of that article lawfully and has possession of it for a lawful purpose, be guilty of an offence.

Please contact the MPS FILM UNIT as a police presence may be required.

GUIDELINES:

If filming in a public/private place or an area that can be overlooked, please ensure that:

- Any SAs who own their own police costume do not travel to and from set wearing it.
- Any actors or SAs wearing police costume do not leave the set whilst wearing it.
- Any actors or SAs cover the uniform between takes.
- Productions who require SA to play the role of Firearms officers or Taser trained officers are to make this known to the MPS Film Unit so a FILMWEAPON CAD can be issued.
- Any actors or SAs wearing police costume act in a sensible and appropriate manner and do not bring the uniform and police service into disrepute.
- All crew in Hi-visibility jackets
- Film signs
- Permissions granted by land owners/borough film office
- Local residents letter dropped.

Police baton

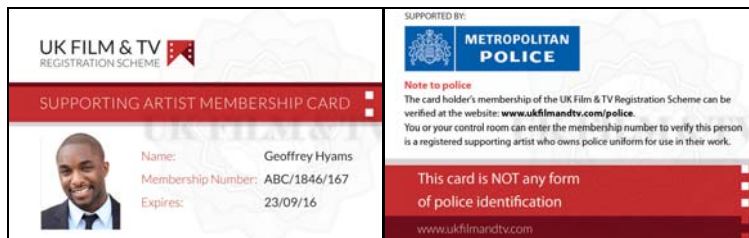
A police 'friction lock' or 'acrylic' baton is a 'made' offensive weapon as defined by the Prevention of Crime Act 1953. Therefore actors or SAs are only to be in possession of a working baton when on set and filming. If found in possession when off set or travelling to or from filming, they could be arrested for possession of an offensive weapon.



UK Film & TV Registration Scheme STAGE 1

The UK Film and TV Registration Scheme is a voluntary nation-wide initiative supported by the Met. The scheme provides an online database that will help police officers verify why someone they stop is in possession of a police uniform.

SAs who own their own police costume should be a member of the scheme which is supported by the twenty-four main SA agencies across the UK. Once registered, SA's are issued with a registration card.



Filming with replica/fake police vehicles



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming.

The MPS does not hire out vehicles to third parties in this manner, however there are several London and home county companies involved in this line of business.

Please contact the MPS FILM UNIT as a police presence may be required.

GUIDELINES:

We would advise that when being driven on public roads to and from the filming, the following steps are taken to ensure that they are not mistaken for genuine police vehicles:



- Any external 'POLICE' graphic is thoroughly taped over with black masking tape.
- If the light bar is surrounded by blue plastic, that it is covered from view.
- If blue beacon lights are fitted, that they are covered from view.
 - All crew in Hi-visibility jackets
 - Film signs
 - Permissions granted by land owners/borough film office
 - Local residents letter dropped.
 - USE OF TONES IS NOT PERMITTED
 - Clear light bars that are only blue when switched on, may remain uncovered whilst in transit.

Use of blue lights when filming

A police presence will be required to form a rolling road and blue lights may only be used when it is safe to do so, no other vehicles will be affected and only when authorised by the officers escorting. Police exemptions to road traffic regulations may not be used. Sirens may not be used.

UK Film & TV Registration Scheme STAGE 2

The UK Film and TV Registration Scheme is a voluntary nation-wide initiative supported by the Met. The scheme provides an online database that will help police officers verify why someone they stop is in possession of a police vehicle.



Filming scenes of crime or violence



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming.

The concern when filming scenes of crime or violence is that members of the public do not realise that filming is taking place and think that the event is 'real' and either call the police or intervene themselves. Scenes of violence can be from mild implied or actual force or scenes of severe disorder.

Please contact the MPS FILM UNIT as a police presence may be required



GUIDELINES:

Please ensure that:

- **The film crew wear high vis clothing so that it is obvious to members of the public that filming is taking place.**
- **Suitable signage is used so that the public are aware of the nature of the filming.**
- **Local residents are leafleted in advance so that they are forewarned of the filming.**
- **Adequate stewards are present for public re-assurance and to preserve the security and safety of the film set.**
- **Any weapons will require a FILMWEAPON CAD**
- **May require Traffic Management, road closure authorized by the local authority.**

Filming real or perceived nudity



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming.

If scenes of nudity or perceived nudity are to be filmed in public or in a private place which can be overseen or overlooked, the production must make sure that the police have been fully informed and that a point of contact for them is nominated.

Please contact the MPS FILM UNIT as a police presence may be required.

GUIDELINES:

Please ensure that:



- The film crew wear high vis clothing so that it is obvious to members of the public that filming is taking place.
- Suitable signage is used so that the public are aware of the nature of the filming.
- Local residents are leafleted in advance so that they are forewarned of the filming.
- Adequate stewards are present for public re-assurance and to preserve the security and safety of the film set.
- May require Traffic Management, road closure authorized by the local authority.

Filming with issues of public safety





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The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming.

For the purposes of this guidance, a stunt is where a competent person, such as a professional stunt performer, simulates an apparently dangerous activity in a careful and controlled manner during the production of a film or television programme. A stunt coordinator listed as a full member on the Joint Industry Grading Scheme (JIGS) register or equivalent may also be required to oversee the dramatic effect.

Stunts of this nature may include:

- Fire, heat, explosion or pyrotechnics
- Noise
- Moving vehicles or equipment
- Animals
- Weapons
- Projectiles and other flying debris
- Falls from height
- Violence

Explosions because of their very nature are of serious police concern. They can be both seen and heard and so often result in numerous emergency calls to the emergency services.

Please contact the MPS FILM UNIT as a police presence may be required.

GUIDELINES:

- Suitable signage is used so that the public are aware of the nature of the filming.
- Local residents are leafleted in advance so that they are forewarned of the explosions.
- That adequate stewards are present for public re-assurance and to preserve the security and safety of the film set.
- FILMCAD will be set up to detail the event. This information will be passed to local Police teams and borough agencies.
- **EXPLOSIONS:** Police will require decibel readings and size of blast to gauge the Police response.
- Cordons will be required to safeguard public safety.

Filming on the move



The MPS Film Unit is the single point of contact for advising, managing and assisting the film industry when filming on the move on the roads covered by the 32 London Boroughs (City of London is not included). We are able to advise productions how to facilitate filming on the move, provide 'no objections' and deploy officers to assist where required.

Please see MPS Film Unit 'Guidelines to Filming on the Move'.

Drones



Air Navigation Order 2019

MUST NOT:

- *Be flown dangerously anywhere*
- *Drop anything from them*
- *Fly them out of sight of the operator*
- *Fly them above **400'** (300' if you're near a helicopter route)*
- *Fly them in and around airports*
- *Fly them within 150m of congested spaces or organized gatherings of more than a 1000 people if fitted with a camera*
- *Fly within 50 metres of any vessel, vehicle, person or structure not under the control of the person in charge of the aircraft*
- *Take off or land within 30 metres of any person unless they are under the control of the operator.*



- *If your drone weighs more than 7kg, additional rules apply if you fly in certain types of airspace*
- *If your drone is fitted with a camera, there are also a number of additional limitations surrounding where you can fly it, and how close you can fly it to other uninvolved people or objects. In order to be able to fly within these areas, or closer than the minimum distances that are in the regulations, you must obtain prior Permission from the CAA to do so.*
- *Flights of drones around airfields or airports that are designated as 'protected aerodromes' are tightly restricted. Drones must not be flown closer than 1km from the boundary of a protected aerodrome without first checking that you have permission to do so.*

From 30th November 2019 new laws have come into force

The new laws will require owners of drones weighing 250 grams or more to register with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and for drone pilots to take an online safety test to ensure the UK's skies are safe from irresponsible flyers.

GUIDELINES:

- **Permissions to fly a drone, take off and land in a public place MUST be sought from the borough film office or Local Authority.**
- **Permissions to fly a drone, take off and land on private land MUST be sought from the land owners. Some private land will also be borough, council owned.**
- **Licensed drone operator will contact CAA, NATS to file an flight plan for approval.**
- **The MPS has a specialist unit who deal with drone applications within restricted London airspace. Drone operator will file a flight plan via the CAA and if within restricted airspace, the MPS will give approval or refuse flight. The MPS FILM UNIT do not give drone flight approvals or letters of no objections but can advise productions, drone operators on protocol.**
- **The MPS FILM UNIT will submit a DRONE CAD to pass to local Police and any specialist Police units. We will require, date(s),**



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times, location(s), production name, production contact and drone operators contacts.

- **Drone operator MUST comply with the AIR NAVIGATION ORDER 2019. Any offences identified will be investigated robustly.**
- **Cordons will be required to safeguard public safety.**
- **Some drone operators will have special dispensations to fly their equipment closer to structures.**

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Please see below for the Health & Safety Executive 'Management of firearms and weapons in film and TV productions':



<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis20.pdf>

Please see below for the Health & Safety Executive 'Stunts, fights and other potentially hazardous production activities':



<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis17.pdf>

Please see below for the Location Filming in London Code of Practice from Film London:



http://core.filmlondon.org.uk/library/documents/CodeOfPractice_.pdf

COVID-19

Productions on location are now requested to comply with the following guidance when filming

- ✓ All UK Government guidance with regards to Working Safely During Coronavirus COVID 19
www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19
- ✓ The BFC COVID 19 Code of Practice June 2020
- ✓ The UK Broadcasters TV Production COVID 19 Guidance May 2020 (www.pact.co.uk/member-services/resourcelibrary.html?q=Industry+wide+TV+Production+Guidance)



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- ✓ The APA COVID 19 Guidelines May 2020 [APA Covid 19 Guidelines](#)

For any further information, please contact the MPS Film Unit:

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