

# ***Guidelines to Filming on Location.***



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

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<b><i>Contents</i></b>	<b><i>Page</i></b>
Introduction	4
Filming with weapons	5
Filming with replica / imitation / airsoft firearms	6
Filming with actors / extras in police uniform	9
Filming with replica / fake police vehicles	11
Filming scenes of crime or violence	13
Filming real or perceived nudity	15
Filming with issues of public safety	16
Filming on the move	18
Health & Safety Executive guide to Safe filming	19

## ***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 provide officers where filming is taking place on location in London and the filming requires police assistance or supervision. Annually the Film Unit provide officers for approximately 600 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, armourer and Stunt Co-ordinator to enable a 'joined up' approach to be taken towards reducing risk and ensuring the safety 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 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*



***The MPS Film Unit or local police 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 the purpose of inflicting bodily harm but which may pose such a risk when used as a weapon.

***A police presence may be required.***

## *Filming with replica / imitation / airsoft firearms*



***The MPS Film Unit or local police 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 police. 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*

### ***Guidelines***

If filming in a public 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 Armourer.
- Any replica / imitation or airsoft firearms are not removed or taken from set.
- Any replica / imitation or airsoft firearms are not left unattended.

***A police presence will be required.***



## *Filming with actors/extras in police uniform*



***The MPS Film Unit or local police must be consulted in advance of any filming.***

The law on "impersonating police" is straight forward.

- 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, 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

### ***Guidelines***

If filming in a public 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.
- 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.

### ***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.

***A police presence will be required.***

## *Filming with replica/fake police vehicles*



***The MPS Film Unit or local police 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.

### ***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.

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 supervising. Police exemptions to road traffic regulations may not be used. Sirens may not be used.

***A police presence will be required.***

## ***Filming scenes of crime or violence***



***The MPS Film Unit or local police 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.

### ***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.

***A police presence may be required.***



## *Filming real or perceived nudity*



***The MPS Film Unit or local police 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.

***A police presence may be required.***

## *Filming with issues of public safety*



***The MPS Film Unit or local police 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 ensure that:

- 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.

***A police presence may be required.***

## ***Filming on the move***



The MPS Film Unit is the single point of contact for advising, managing and supervising 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 on the most effective way to film on the move, provide 'no objections' and deploy officers to supervise and assist where required.

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

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

For any further information, please contact the MPS Film Unit:  
**Metropolitan Police Service Film Unit**

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**END**