



Essex
Film
Office

Code of Practice for Film-Makers

www.essexfilmoffice.co.uk

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On Location in Essex

This code is directed at all filming with the exception of ad hoc filming e.g. TV news reporting.

The Code is not intended to be unduly restrictive, but aims at setting out good practice, reflecting the legitimate interests and concerns of those who may be affected by filming activities.

The description "filming" refers to every type of filming. In particular feature films, television productions, commercials, music promotion videos, corporate filming, student/short films and stills photography. This document is intended as a guide to the requirements of filming in Essex. It is not exhaustive and the Production must enter into a specific agreement before filming can be started. The Essex Film Office accepts no liability for loss, financial or otherwise, alleged to have been incurred as a result of these guidelines. This document, along with other documentation associated with the filming, forms part of the agreement to film. Please direct any queries regarding the guidelines to: film@essex.gov.uk

In certain circumstances the Council, police, other emergency services or location owners may impose additional stipulations on film-makers.

Permissions and information

For filming activity to take place, permissions need to be granted by all the relevant agencies for example the Local Authority, Police and land/property owner. Who will be involved will of course depend on the location and other relevant circumstances.

The production company also needs to ensure that all those affected by filming have been consulted and informed of arrangements (e.g. neighbouring properties). We would recommend that at least two weeks notice is given to all concerned. For particular public services the following should be followed.

The Council

The Council must be informed of all filming activity due to take place on public property (and on private property where it might impact on highways, or could cause nuisance to neighbouring properties) and be provided with details of the following:

- + The name of the production company, the type of production and a contact person and telephone number
- + The scale of the production in terms of numbers of personnel and vehicles
- + The removal, alteration and disguising of street furniture and carriageway markings
- + The use of cranes, aircraft, cherry pickers, track, low-loaders, 'A' frames and any other potentially hazardous equipment in a public place
- + The parking of production vehicles on yellow lines, in meter bays or residents' bays
- + The use of special effects, rain or snow machines, wet downs and stunt work on public footways or carriageways
- + Productions which depict subjects of a controversial nature
- + Filming involving children or animals
- + Adequate public liability insurance and other relevant insurances

The Police

Local Police should be informed of filming activity within their districts. In addition to advising the police of the points above, special guidance should be sought with the following:

- + The staging of crimes, accidents or use of firearms
- + The dressing of artistes in police uniforms. (Cast should be asked to cover such uniforms in between takes)

Other Emergency Services

Emergency Services may need to be notified of filming activity and access for emergency vehicles must always be maintained during location filming. Where relevant the Emergency Services should be duly advised of:

- + Special effects, fires or explosions (Fire Brigade)
- + The impersonation of fire officers or use of pseudo fire tenders (Fire Brigade)
- + The impersonation of ambulance staff or use of pseudo ambulances (Ambulance Service)

Landowners

Film-makers should ensure that location owners and adjacent property owners are:

- + Kept fully informed of the intentions of the production company whether they are used for filming or not
- + Issued with an approved location contract which clearly states the terms agreed between themselves and the production company
- + Given details of any art department requirements including dressing and construction
- + Provided with written notification, (such as a letter drop), at least seven days prior to the first day on location. If the notice is less than seven days, then a representative of the company should personally discuss their intentions with all relevant property owners

- + Proof of adequate public liability insurance (£5 million) and any other relevant insurances should be made available on demand to anyone affected by the location filming activities of the production company. Essex Film Office will require a copy of the company's public liability insurance document

Images of Children & Vulnerable Adults

In line with the Essex County Council's obligation to take action to protect vulnerable adults and children, it has been decided that the photographing and filming of children and vulnerable adults, on and in land and buildings owned or leased by the Council, will be permitted only when a consent form has been completed and signed in advance of the filming taking place. For children and young people under 18 the form will have to be signed by a parent or carer. This includes activities where children or vulnerable adults are not the main focus, but may be present in the background or as spectators of an activity or event.

Insurance

Proof of adequate public liability insurance and any other relevant insurances should be made available on demand to anyone reasonably affected by the filming activities. They may require a copy of the company's Public Liability Insurance document.

All filming undertaken and any associated liability is the sole responsibility of the production company, its employees and contractors.

Health & safety

It is the responsibility of the production company to ensure that its employees and contractors comply with all current Health & Safety regulations when filming on location. Arrangement should include the following:

- + All locations being assessed for risk and hazard. Where necessary a Health & Safety professional should be consulted and a full Risk Assessment report should be compiled and circulated to all employees, contributors and contractors
- + A person qualified in first aid should always be present during filming
- + The Council must be consulted, well in advance of filming, for advice on traffic control and any related safety measures required. For filming on the public highway, the services of a professional Traffic Management company will be required
- + Whilst working on the public highway, all members of the production team must wear approved protective clothing for example high visibility jackets
- + Lighting and other equipment must not cause a hazard to the general public. The Production shall agree in advance with the Film Contact regarding the appropriate use of cables, the safe laying of agreed cabling and the suitability of attaching cables to street furniture, trees, historic properties and any other relevant items. All cables used for any purpose in the course of filming must be made safe as they are laid and not at some later time
- + Cables should not be laid in the gutter along roads or in the junction between a wall and the footway. Cables on steps should be taped down to avoid the risk of tripping. Wherever possible cables should be flown at a minimum of 17' (5.2m) above roadways and 8'6" (2.6m) above footways. Cables across footways should be laid at right angles under a taped mat. The matting should be a minimum of one metre wide and visible to the public by proper lighting, cones or high visibility hazard tape
- + Cables across roadways should be covered using proper cabling ramps unless otherwise agreed in advance. No attachments may be made to any street furniture without the prior written consent of the Essex Film Office

Respect for residents and members of the public

Film-makers on location are asked to be sensitive to the community in which they are working. The Production Company should therefore address the following;

- + All neighbouring residents and businesses affected by filming should be given at least seven days notice by letter of filming arrangements in their area. If the notice period is less than seven days a representative of the production company should contact, in person, any affected property owners. A copy of any residents letter should be shared with the Essex Film Office and include contact details for the Essex Film Office
- + Noise should be kept to a minimum, especially during unsociable hours (normally 10 p.m. to 8 am). Generators should be baffled or integral with the location vehicle
- + Crew members should aim to dress decently at all times and in all weathers. Dress codes imposed on particular locations for religious or other reasons must be adhered to
- + Crew and cast should refrain from using lewd or offensive language
- + Access ways to homes and businesses should be kept clear at all times, unless otherwise agreed with the individuals concerned
- + Lighting and other equipment must not cause a hazard to the general public. Cables should be flown to a height of 2.6m above the footway and 5.2m above the carriageway or covered with matting when crossing pavements. Where appropriate, warning cones and hazard tape should be used
- + No danger should be caused by the dazzle of lights
- + If filming activity blocks a footway, an alternative safe route for pedestrians must be provided
- + In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to provide alternative parking arrangements for residents if parking is affected by the filming

Observing Designated Areas

Film-makers activities are limited to the areas and times for which permission has been granted. Accordingly:

- + Production vehicles should be parked where agreed at pre-arranged times. Engines should be switched off on arrival. Cast and crew should not park in the immediate vicinity of a location unless spaces are provided
- + Drinks and meals should be taken in designated areas
- + No-smoking areas must be observed. Where smoking is allowed, cigarettes must be extinguished in ashtrays provided by the production company
- + Crew members must not trespass onto neighbouring property or enter areas which the owner has stipulated may not be used for filming

Care of the location

Film-makers are guests on a location and must treat both public and private property with respect. Whilst detailed arrangements are a matter for the production company to agree with the owner, the Council would expect:

- + Rubbish bins should be made available by the production company and must be cleared regularly. It is the responsibility of the production company to ensure that all rubbish is cleared from the location immediately after filming has ceased
- + Protective materials or dust sheets to be provided where appropriate to cover furniture and flooring for interior filming
- + Objects belonging to the location must not be moved or removed without the owner's express permission
- + All signs or property removed or disguised for filming purposes must be reinstated upon completion of filming. All signs posted to direct the production company to location must be removed
- + The production company must make good any damage or mess caused by its activities immediately after filming and must notify all relevant parties. This might include adjacent public and private property that may be indirectly affected eg by materials used to dress the highway. For example, extraneous dust due to bad weather
- + Whenever necessary the production company must ensure that the location and its environs are protected by security staff
- + The crew member responsible for the location should check it thoroughly before departure to ensure that the property has been restored to its original state and that any evidence of filming activity has been removed unless otherwise agreed

The Environment

That no launch of lanterns or balloons shall take place, this includes all airborne launched lanterns, latex balloons and similar free-floating devices that are not under control once launched, any such device containing a naked flame, fuel cell, helium gas or similar elevation mechanism and includes any item described as biodegradable.

Film-makers should look at reducing the use of single use plastic and overall carbon footprint whilst filming and use alternatives instead.

Historic Buildings and Conservation Area

Special attention and care must be taken when a production is planning to use any historic buildings, heritage sites or conservation areas. Access by the general public may be a requirement by law.

The use of lights and any tracking in historic properties must be passed by the custodian and where relevant chemical or a heat analysis must be provided. Props such as smoke effects, candles or any flames may require special permission.

Filming in Areas of Outstanding natural Beauty (AONB) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) may have restricted use and will require assessment. Details of the productions requirements must be discussed and agreed in writing with the Film Contact. The Production shall adhere to any conservation regulations laid down by the respective Film Contact.

It is the responsibility of the production company to commission any relevant ecological or heritage surveys required by the owner or guardian of any historic buildings or heritage sites in advance of any filming being permitted.

Reporting

The Council is currently carrying out a study of the level of filming activity in Essex. We ask the Production Company to submit the location spend form on completion of the filming. This information will be treated in strict confidence and will be used only as a cumulative total of all filming in Essex. This research will then be used as an economic argument for the continuing support for film making in the area and for the development of initiatives for the Film & TV sector in Essex.

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