

Filming that requires a police presence.

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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 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.

Uniformed SAs and firearms protocol

Replica / imitation firearms

The MPS Film Unit manages complex commercial filming across London and provides officers where filming is taking place on location and the filming requires police assistance or supervision.

The MPS Film Unit is aware that casting agencies play a key role in film and television productions by providing supporting artists (SAs), some of whom will be required to wear police costume.

Production companies have sometimes contacted casting agencies with requests that uniformed SAs bring not just their own uniform to set but also replica/imitation or airsoft firearms, which has resulted in SAs travelling through or into London with not just a police costume but also a replica/imitation or airsoft firearm. This situation is not only potentially dangerous, but it should also be remembered that the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 does not provide the film industry with any exemptions to possess firearms.

The term “imitation firearm” is defined in Section 57(4) of the Firearms Act 1968 as meaning ‘anything which has the appearance of being a firearm (other than such a weapon as is mentioned in 5(1)(b) of this Act), whether or not it is capable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile.’ This would include airsoft type firearms.

Section 38 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 says a ‘realistic imitation firearm’ means an imitation firearm which has an ‘appearance that is so realistic as to make it indistinguishable from a real firearm’ by someone who is not an expert; without close examination. This would include airsoft type firearms.

The Metropolitan Police Film Unit has agreed a protocol with the UK’s main casting agencies regarding the provision of uniformed SAs.

From 1st June 2013 the following agencies have agreed that whilst they will provide uniformed SAs, they will not accept requests by production companies for the SAs to provide or bring replica/imitation or airsoft firearms to set:

2020 Casting Bobby's & Bloggers Casting Network Fabcasting Mad Dog Casting Ray Knight Casting Shooting Stars Uniforms	999/24 7 Casting Central Cops on the Box Guys & Dolls Phoenix SA19 Uniformed Artistes Solomon Artistes	Alpha Bravo Casting Collective Extra People Lemon Casting Polease Screenlite Agency Universal Extras
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Should a production require replica/imitation or airsoft firearms, they **must** be referred to a Film Armourer who is a Registered Firearms Dealer (RFD) and insured to supply replica/imitation or airsoft firearms to film, television and theatrical productions.

The MPS Specialist Firearms Command (SC&O19) is aware of this protocol via the Firearms Enquiry Teams. The MPS Film Unit has also informed the following organisations:

Film London (www.filmlondon.org.uk)
 Production Guild (www.productionguild.com)
 PACT (www.pact.co.uk)
 Advertising Producers Association (www.a-p-a.net)
 Equity (www.equity.org.uk)
 BECTU /FAA (www.bectu.org.uk)

Any queries regarding this protocol should be referred to the MPS Film Unit who will be glad to provide any further information.

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 during filming may be required due to the nature of the weapons. Alternatively, the production may request a police presence due to the location and time of the filming.

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.

Any production using replica/imitation or airsoft firearms, **must** have obtained them from a Film Armourer who is a Registered Firearms Dealer (RFD) and insured to supply replica/imitation or airsoft firearms to film, television and theatrical productions.

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 fully 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.

To this end, 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 relatively straight forward. The first point to prove the offence is that the wearer has the intention of fooling the general public into believing the officer is real. So a scene where an actor stops an unsuspecting member of the public and deals with them as though a genuine police officer, would amount to an offence. A scene where an actor interacts with other actors in a dramatic scene and there is no interaction with the public (i.e. The Bill), then this would not be an impersonation offence. The other point to prove revolves around the uniform itself and it must have been legally obtained.

Actors dressed as police can give rise to other offences under the public order act, and that is why we would always wish to consider the control measures you put in place to prevent the public being "confused" or "distressed" (e.g. a scene where a burglar is rugby tackled and a fight takes place with an actor police officer, could lead to problems). Clearly this would only apply if the action is in the view of the public (so even on private property). If it is completely contained within an area or building with no chance of being overlooked, there is less of a problem.

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 would be arrestable 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.

We have no objections to clear light bars that are only blue when switched on, remaining uncovered whilst in transit.

Whilst blue lights may be turned on whilst filming, sirens **MUST 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 on the Equity register 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 of course deploy officers to supervise and assist where required.

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



Adobe Acrobat
Document

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

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

Metropolitan Police Service Film Unit

Mail: filmunit@met.police.uk | Telephone 0203 054 5555 | Mobile 07768 055 260

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