

# THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR FILM PRODUCTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland Screen promotes Northern Ireland nationally and internationally as a location for the production of television drama and feature films. Northern Ireland Screen provides a comprehensive information service, free of charge, to film and television producers from all over the world.

## WHY A CODE OF PRACTICE?

Northern Ireland Screen is here to help complete projects safely and efficiently. We bring together all bodies affected by film-making and work with them and the general public to ensure a film friendly environment. The creation of a code of practice for production companies to follow when filming in Northern Ireland ensures closer co-operation with the public and better management on the ground. The object of this code of practice is to maximise Northern Ireland's potential as a location while safe guarding the rights of its residents.

***Productions funded by Northern Ireland Screen are contractually obliged to abide by this code of practice.***

**NB: This Code of Practice is not intended for news and documentary crews of five persons or less.**

*Whenever this document refers to film and TV production, the term includes all other visual media such as television, on-line, commercials, corporate and music videos and any other commercial filming activity including filming undertaken by bloggers, social influencers etc*

## **THIS CODE OF PRACTICE IS SUPPORTED BY:**

Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Department for Infrastructure (DfI)  
Department for Communities (DfC)  
Department for Economy (DfE)  
Department of Education (DE)  
Education Authority – Children in Entertainment and Employment Team  
National Trust  
Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

## **AND THE FOLLOWING LOCAL COUCNILS:**

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council  
Ards and North Down Borough Council  
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council  
Belfast City Council  
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council  
Derry City & Strabane District Council  
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council  
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council  
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council  
Mid Ulster Council  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

**Northern Ireland Screen and the above named organisations request that  
producers read and abide by this Code of Practice.**

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**Any filming undertaken and any liability is the sole responsibility of the production company and its employees.**

## **1.0 PERMISSIONS AND INFORMATION**

**No filming activity should take place on location until all the relevant parties have granted permission. The production company must ensure that all those affected by filming have been consulted and informed of arrangements.**

**1.1 The PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland) and the relevant Local Council,** should be informed of all filming activity taking place on public property within their area and provided with details of the following:

- a) the name and registered address of the production company, the type of production, a contact person and a telephone number
- b) the scale of the production in terms of personnel and vehicles
- c) productions which depict scenes of a controversial nature
- d) filming involving children or animals
- e) the use of roads – **PLEASE SEE SEPARATE SECTION 2.0 (ROADS)**

The **Department for Infrastructure (Dfi)** may also need to be informed if the filming is on or near a public road. If filming is on a public road then the Local Council has to inform Dfi when it is processing any applications to film on a road. If filming is off road but requires traffic on adjacent roads to be controlled in some way then the film maker should contact Dfi directly about this. Section 2.0 Roads refers.

**1.2 The central PSNI Press Office and local PSNI Operational Planning division** must be informed of filming activity. In addition to advising the police of points 1.1 (a) - (e) above, special guidance must be sought with the following:

- a) the staging of crimes and / or accidents
- b) the use of firearms. **PLEASE SEE SEPARATE SECTION 3.0 (FIREARMS)**
- c) the dressing of artistes in police and / or military uniforms. It is an offence to impersonate a police officer and cast must cover such uniforms in between takes.
- d) use of military personnel, military vehicles, and pseudo military vehicles.

**1.3 Access for all emergency service vehicles** must always be maintained during location filming. Where appropriate the Emergency Services must be duly advised when filming involves:

- a) special effects, fires or explosions (Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service)

- b) the impersonation of fire officers or use of pseudo fire tenders (Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service)
- c) the impersonation of ambulance staff or use of pseudo ambulances (Northern Ireland Ambulance Service)

1.4 **Film makers** should ensure that **location owners** are:

- a) kept fully informed of the intentions of the production company whether they are used for filming or not
- b) given a reasonable site rental fee in accordance with the budget of the film
- c) issued with an approved location contract (see below for National Trust properties) which clearly states the terms agreed between themselves and the production company

**Please note: the National Trust do not sign location contracts issued by production companies and will issue National Trust approved Location contracts to production companies. These must be signed by the production company or they will not be permitted to film on National Trust property.**

- d) given details of any art department requirements including dressing and construction.
- e) thanked in the credits where practical and possible

1.5 **Proof of adequate public liability insurance** and any other relevant insurance should be made available on demand to anyone affected by the location filming activities of the production company. Copies may be logged with Northern Ireland Screen for public scrutiny.

1.6 **Northern Ireland Screen** should always be advised of any filming activity taking place within Northern Ireland.

## 2.0 ROADS

**It is the responsibility of the production company to ensure that, while filming on or near roads, employees are in compliance with current Northern Ireland road traffic legislation. This includes full or partial road closures, lane closures and full or partial footway and footpath closures.**

2.1 **To prohibit or restrict traffic from using a public road or footpath to facilitate filming.**

This is the most common type of application. The Roads (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 amended the Road Traffic Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 Order to provide relevant authorities with the power to

restrict or prohibit by order the use of a public road for the purpose of holding a special event which includes filming.

Depending on the type of road the application has to be forwarded to the relevant authority:

- For most public roads the relevant authority is the district council and
  - for special roads i.e. All motorways, A12 Westlink and A8m Sandyknowes to Corrs Corner, the Department for Infrastructure.
- a) The application should be applied for at least 12 weeks in advance.
  - b) The application must include full traffic management plans and evidence that traffic management will be carried out by qualified personnel with full public liability insurance cover (£10 million). The Department has a listing of companies authorised for the purpose of placing temporary signs on roads.
  - c) The relevant district council will do their utmost to streamline the various processes and it may sometimes be possible to grant approval to applications received after the 12 week deadline. However, the duration of the public consultation element of the application process is set in law so applications received outside 12 weeks are not guaranteed to be approved. Applications received less than 6 weeks before the proposed road closure are unlikely to be approved.

The relevant authority will recover the full costs of making the order from the applicant.

Some roads are not public roads even though they appear to be, such as Belfast Harbour estate, this includes roads around Belfast's Titanic quarter. Requests to close roads for filming should be made to the relevant landowner. If it's in Belfast Harbour and Titanic Quarter those requests should be sent to Belfast Harbour Police: <https://www.belfast-harbour.co.uk/harbour-estate-access/filming-in-the-harbour-estate>

## 2.2 **Temporary traffic restriction for off-road filming under Article 7 Temporary Traffic Regulations –**

This type of application is used for restricting traffic when filming is off-road but needs traffic on adjacent roads to be controlled in some way. This restriction or prohibition of traffic (including pedestrians) must be completed in accordance with the requirements of Article 7 of the Road Traffic Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. The relevant authority is the Department for Infrastructure. Similar to the "on road" application the Article 7 application should be applied for at least 12 weeks in advance. The application must include full traffic management plans and evidence that traffic management will be carried out by qualified personnel with full public liability insurance cover (£10 million).

Productions can begin the applications process on Northern Ireland Screen's website here:

<https://www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk/filming/road-closures-for-filming/>

2.3 **Permission must also be sought from local council and the Department for Infrastructure (Roads) for:**

- a) the removal, alteration and disguising of street furniture and carriageway markings. Reinstatement must happen as soon as possible after filming.
- b) the placing of any form of Structure /equipment on the public road e.g. the use of cranes, cherry pickers, track, low-loaders, "A" frames and other potentially hazardous equipment in a public place. Depending on the structure technical approval /safety certificates may be required.

**Note: Changes may require payment of a fee to the Department for Infrastructure (Roads). The fee is repayable on reinstatement, provided no damage has been caused to public property.**

- c) the parking of production vehicles on yellow lines, in meter bays or residents' bays.
- d) the use of special effects, fires or explosions, rain or snow machines, wet downs and stunt work on public footpaths or carriageways.

2.4 When filming on footpaths and roads the requirements of **Chapter 8** of the **Traffic Signs Manual** must be observed.

- a) Lighting and other equipment must not cause a hazard to the general public. Cables should be supported to a height of 2.6m above the public footpath or covered with matting. Cables should be supported to a height of 5.2m above the carriageway. Where appropriate warning cones and hazard tape should be used. Cable management and support tower arrangements must be discussed with DfI (Roads) in advance of operation.
- b) No danger or annoyance should be caused by the dazzle of lights.
- c) Maintain pedestrian access to all premises on, or accessible from, the roads on which the filming is taking place.
- d) Bus stops and bus lanes must not be blocked at any time.
- e) Access for emergency services, fire hydrants and fire exits must be kept clear at all times.
- f) Care must be taken when working in the vicinity of street trees, to ensure that no damage is incurred. There are to be no attachments of any nature to street trees.
- g) All work must be carried out by suitably qualified persons.

### 3.0 FIREARMS

**It is the responsibility of the production company and the on-set armourer/ FAC holder to ensure strict compliance with all current Northern Ireland firearms regulations. Any firearms possessed in Northern Ireland are held on a firearms certificate (FAC) by the individual holder. PSNI are the licensing body who make decisions and administer on all FAC applications in line with The Firearms (NI) Order 2004.**

**3.1 In order to assist with additional licensing that may be required for a shoot a list of likely firearm requirements should be provided to Northern Ireland Screen's Head of Production by the FAC applicant/armourer, as soon as a project begins pre-production.**

Please note:

- a) When firearms are used a suitable armourer with appropriate FAC must be on set at all times.
- b) When on set and not in use firearms must be kept out of public sight and locked in a PSNI approved storage area or container.
- c) The armourer/ FAC holder is responsible for the firearms held on their FAC at all times and must ensure they meet all conditions as detailed on the FAC and any additional conditions as may be prescribed in writing by NIO and/ or the PSNI.
- d) The armourer/ FAC holder is responsible for ensuring all of the standard necessary steps have been taken in relation to acquiring the firearms, this includes applications to PSNI and NIO and any other administration as necessary.

**3.2 Imitation/Replica Weapons: Under the Violent Crime Reduction Act (NI commencement order 2007) realistic imitation firearms should be treated as real firearms.**

Please note:

A "realistic imitation firearm" means an imitation firearm which:

- a) has an appearance that is so realistic as to make it indistinguishable, for all practical purposes, from a real firearm; and
- b) is neither a de-activated firearm nor itself an antique.



### **3.3 Special effects explosives may come under the Control of Explosives (NI) Regulations 1970.**

Please note:

- a) PSNI permission is required to purchase, store or use explosives in Northern Ireland.
  - b) The PSNI must be given at least two weeks prior notice of all explosives imports, exports, storage and use including:
    - Date and Time
    - Ports of exit and entry
    - Method of transportation (inc. flight number / ferry crossing)
    - Name of sender and recipient (inc. carrier if accompanied)
    - Make, model, registration and drivers name of all vehicles involved
  - c) The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland should be contacted with regard to safe handling, storage and use of explosives in Northern Ireland.  
<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/>
- ❖ *Whenever this document refers to firearms, the term includes all weapons and explosive devices in whole or in part, of any age, calibre, make or design be they working, deactivated or replica.*

## **4.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**It is the responsibility of the production company to ensure that employees are in compliance with current Health and Safety regulations when filming on location.**

Northern Ireland Screen works with the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI).

For more information please contact:

Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland

83 Ladas Drive

Belfast BT6 9FR

Tel: 028 90 243249

E-mail: <mailto:mail@hseni.gov.uk>

<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/>

## **5.0 CAST AND CREW**

**It is the responsibility of the production company to ensure that their employment practices are in compliance with current Northern Ireland Equal Opportunities, Employment and Race Relations legislation.**

- 5.1 The current **PACT / BECTU** Agreements should form the basis of all freelance crew employment.
- 5.2 The current **PACT / Equity** Agreements should form the basis of all cast employment.
- 5.3 Where possible trainees will be engaged, supernumerary to crew members. The current **PACT** Voluntary Code of Practice for Providing Training and Work Experience should be observed and full contributions made under all industry wide training levy arrangements.
- 5.4 Local and visiting cast and crew should be treated with parity of esteem with regard to employment terms, conditions and treatment.
- 5.5 If leaving Northern Ireland it is the responsibility of the production company to ensure that all invoices and location fees have been paid and cleared before the final departure date. In matters of dispute the relevant individuals and union / trade association should be informed of the dispute before the final departure date.

## **6.0 RESPECT FOR RESIDENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

**Film makers on location are visitors and should be sensitive to the community in which they are working. Members of the Public should be treated with courtesy and consideration at all times.**

- 6.1 All neighbouring residents and businesses likely to be affected by filming at a location should be notified in writing at least one week before filming commences at that location. A contact name and number should always be provided.
- 6.2 Noise should be kept to a minimum. Generators should be baffled or integral with the location vehicle.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 Crew and cast should refrain from using lewd or offensive language.
- 6.5 Crew members should keep access to homes and businesses clear at all times.
- 6.6 Consideration must be given at all times to those who recognise themselves as having a disability, including sensory disabilities such as visual impairment.
- 6.7 The production company should make all crew aware of the current Filming Code of Practice.

## **7.0 CARE OF THE LOCATION AND SURROUNDING AREA**

**Film makers are guests on a location and must treat both public and private property with the utmost respect.**

- 7.1 Rubbish bins must be made available by the company and must be cleared regularly.

- 7.2 Protective materials or dustsheets should be provided where appropriate to cover furniture and flooring for interior filming.
- 7.3 Objects belonging to the location must not be moved or removed without the owner's express permission.
- 7.4 All signs or property removed or disguised for filming purposes must be reinstated upon completion of filming. All signs posted to direct the company to location must be removed.
- 7.5 The company must make good any damage caused by its activities immediately after filming and must notify all parties concerned.
- 7.6 Whenever necessary the company must ensure that the location and its environments are protected by security staff.
- 7.7 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.

## **8.0 OBSERVING DESIGNATED AREAS**

**Film makers' activities should be limited to areas and times for which permission has been granted.**

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Drinks and meals should be taken only in designated areas.
- 8.3 No smoking areas must be observed. Where smoking is allowed, cigarettes must be extinguished in ashtrays provided by the company. Guidance on Northern Ireland's smoking legislation can be found here:  
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/smoking-regulations-northern-ireland>
- 8.4 Crew members must not trespass onto neighbouring property or enter areas of location that the owner has stipulated may not be used for filming.

## **9.0 UNSOCIABLE HOURS**

**Local Authorities regulate behaviour during unsociable hours (normally 11 pm to 7 am). It is the responsibility of the production company to ensure that they inform the relevant local authority of any planned filming during these hours.**

- 9.1 In addition to observing points **SECTION 6.0 (RESPECT FOR RESIDENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC)**, production companies should ensure the following during unsociable hours:
  - a) Walkie-talkies are turned down or fitted with earpieces.

- b) Lights do not disturb the residents' sleep. If necessary, blackouts should be discussed and provided well in advance.
- c) Cast and crew do not shout (unless residents and the Local Authority have been made aware of the need for shouting or noise in the script).
- e) On arrival and departure vehicles are not revved and doors slammed.

## **10.0 HISTORIC OR ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE SITES**

10.1 In order to preserve the culture and environment of Northern Ireland:

- a) Special care must be exercised when working in historic or environmentally sensitive sites, where any damage caused can be irreparable. Film makers must discuss their plans with providers of such locations thoroughly and well in advance to allow the necessary protective measures to be taken.
- b) When working near or on water NI Water must be advised of:
  - any chemicals (including fuel) used
  - quantities
  - storage facilities
- c) "Before and after" photographs of sensitive locations should be taken.

## **11.0 CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE LICENCING**

**The Education Authority issues performance licences in respect of children (babies up to children of compulsory school leaving age of eighteen) who live in Northern Ireland and propose to engage in public performances in Northern Ireland. This is in accordance with the provisions of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, Part X11, articles 137 – 145 & the Children (Public Performances) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.**

- 11.1 This legislation applies to children who are involved in broadcast performances including those on televisions, film, radio or by way of internet streaming.
- 11.2 Production companies should submit applications to the Children in Entertainment and Employment Team (CEET) for a licence for each child at least 30 days before the first performance is due to take place. This is to ensure that all applications are fully considered, and licences are issued with appropriate safeguards in place. Late applications may result in licences not being issued and any performance that proceeds in the absence of a licence will be deemed unlawful. EA will consider legal action against any production company which proceeds with an unlawful performance.

Application forms, regulations and guidance are available from CEET:

**Email Address:** [Ceet@eani.org.uk](mailto:Ceet@eani.org.uk)

Phone number: 028 95 985591

Or by clicking on the link below: <https://www.eani.org.uk/help-available/apply-for-child-employment-children-in-entertainment-and-chaperone-applications>

## 12.0 SAFEGUARDING SCREEN INDUSTRY PERSONNEL

**Northern Ireland Screen has developed, approved and put in place specific expectations for standards of behaviour within the screen industry in Northern Ireland.**

- 12.1 A brochure and presentation are available on our website via the link below. Hard copies of the brochure are also available:  
<https://www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk/about/publications/safeguardingscreen-industry-personnel/>
- 12.2 The BFI has also published a set of Principles and Guidance to tackle bullying and harassment in the screen industries. Northern Ireland Screen strongly endorse these principles which cover a shared responsibility to: respect others, adopt a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment, adhere to the laws around equality and health and safety, protect victims and witnesses, respect confidentiality, ensure that rigorous processes are in place for reporting and value inclusivity.

The principles are available via the following link and can be downloaded from the BFI website:

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/about-bfi/policy-strategy/set-principles-screen-industry>

These principles should be read in conjunction with the relevant guidance notes which can be found here:

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/about-bfi/policy-strategy/guidance>

## 13.0 SUSTAINABLE FILMING

**Northern Ireland Screen is committed to ensuring that all productions are made in a sustainable way.**

- 13.1 For any production where Northern Ireland Screen is the majority funder, you must apply for and be awarded Albert certification. Evidence that you have achieved certification will form part of the project deliverables and the release of final payment of award will be contingent on this evidence being delivered.
- 13.2 Where Northern Ireland Screen is not the majority funder we would still strongly encourage the use of Albert certification.

Certification is a straightforward process that involves measuring the carbon footprint of the production with the Albert calculator and completing a questionnaire which will enable you to create a Carbon Action Plan in order to reduce the carbon footprint. The Carbon Action Plan will then lead to Albert certification. Albert run free online training courses in sustainable production,

editorial training and the use of their Albert toolkit. All details are available at: [www.wearealbert.org](http://www.wearealbert.org)

**Please note: for information including details of suppliers of sustainable goods for filming please contact Northern Ireland Screen's Facilities and Sustainability Manager.**

**PLEASE NOTE**

**In certain circumstances the local authorities, police, emergency services or location owners may deem it necessary to impose stipulations in addition to points 1 - 13 on Producers.**