

Safe filming and recording in, from and around vehicles

HSE information sheet

Entertainment Information Sheet No 22

Introduction

This information sheet is one of a series produced by the Joint Advisory Committee for Entertainments (JACE). It gives specific guidance about filming and recording in, from and around vehicles in the broadcast and film industries.

It is aimed at production organisations, their employees and freelancers who may be exposed to risks to their safety from vehicle use during broadcast or filming.

Examples of activities this guidance relates to are:

- road testing and driving shots from moving vehicles such as cars, vans, lorries or motorcycles;
- filming moving vehicles from another vehicle;
- recording interviews, dialogue or commentary from a driver/passenger in a moving vehicle;
- filming vehicles from the roadside;
- use of A-frame equipment, mounted cameras, low-loaders or specialist modified vehicles.

In this information sheet, 'must' is used only where there is an explicit legal requirement to take a certain action, 'should' is used to indicate what to do to comply with the law – although dutyholders are free to take other action if that would result in compliance.

What the law says

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (the HSW Act) requires employers to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of all employees and anyone who may be affected by their work. This will include affected freelance staff and members of the public.

Other legislation may apply depending on the details of the work being carried out. For instance, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 build on the requirements in the

HSW Act and require dutyholders to assess and control risks.

Road traffic legislation will apply to many activities involving moving vehicles, including in some cases where the activity is not on public roads. Those in control of productions should liaise with the police and the respective local authority early in their planning process.

Roles and responsibilities

The legal duties for health and safety rest with the employer. This normally means the production company. On a day-to-day basis, the overall responsibility for ensuring that the appropriate standards of health and safety are achieved and maintained throughout the production process normally rests with the producer.

In this information sheet, the term producer is used to represent the person in overall control of the production activity.

The producer is responsible for ensuring appropriate communication, coordination and control of the overall event, taking into account any risk assessments from others, including any specialist contractors involved in the production.

Hazards

Hazards can arise from a number of scenarios when working with or around vehicles. Depending on the production these may include:

- driver distraction or fatigue leading to vehicle collision;
- people or equipment falling from or into the path of moving vehicles/equipment;
- being struck by a moving vehicle or camera equipment;
- collision of vehicle, equipment or people with fixed structures or other vehicles;

- inappropriately mounted camera/recording/ ancillary equipment;
- exposure to hazardous substances such as exhaust fumes, fuels etc.

Risk assessment

The producer in control of broadcast or film production work must make sure risks arising from the work are controlled. To do this they must think about what things in the workplace might cause harm to people and take such steps as are necessary to eliminate or reduce the risk to acceptable levels.

This process is known as risk assessment and it is something required by law. If there are fewer than five employees it does not have to be written down.

The risks to people from vehicle use must be assessed and controlled in the same way as any other risk to the health and safety of those involved in film and broadcasting. The risk assessment must be reviewed, as necessary, in light of new information and as the situation changes. This process is sometimes called dynamic risk assessment.

The risk assessment will inform discussions about how to proceed with the production, what controls must be put in place and whether and how changes to those controls should be made to ensure safety.

Risk management

HSE produces general guidance on the safe management of workplace transport. This can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm.

When deciding on controls to manage risks from the use of vehicles as part of filming and recording the following should be considered:

- Only use vehicles that have been maintained and inspected to ensure they are safe and fit for their intended purpose.
- Use drivers/riders with the specific competences required, especially if unusual or specialised filming is to be carried out, specialist or modified vehicles are to be used, or stunt or high-speed work is to be undertaken.
- Build in adequate time to ensure thorough planning and rehearsal of all driving sequences.
- Choose routes which will allow safe 'run-off' in case of accident.
- Define pedestrian-free zones, especially where it is more likely that vehicles may leave routes unexpectedly, eg on corners or where high-speed manoeuvres are undertaken.
- Reduce the numbers of people working around vehicles to the minimum necessary for the work and ensure thorough briefings for those remaining.
- Minimise the time a driver is talking to camera, eg by using voiceover.
- Position in-car cameras to cause the least distraction and to allow drivers to keep their eyes on the road when doing 'to camera' pieces.
- Wherever possible use remote miniature cameras in vehicles. This reduces both the number of people in the vehicle and the possibility of injury from equipment in an accident.

Use and positioning of equipment

Consider the position of equipment and method of work within the vehicle to ensure it can be safely driven. Consider also the effects of sudden unexpected movement or collision during filming:

- Position and secure in-car filming equipment so that it doesn't create a significant risk of injury to occupants.
- Position equipment so that it doesn't compromise the safety aspects of a vehicle, eg the effective operation of airbags.
- If communication with drivers is necessary during filming it should be via hands-free equipment to reduce distraction.
- Camera operators should not crouch in a footwell, stand up and shoot through the sunroof, an open boot or side doors while the vehicle is moving unless suitable controls are in place to reduce the risk of injury and/or the risk of a fall from the vehicle, eg by reducing speeds, wearing restraints and suitable head protection.
- In situations where there is a risk of overturn, rollover protection and restraints may be necessary, eg when filming from an open-back vehicle on uneven ground.
- The risk of eye injury to a camera operator can be eliminated by using a viewfinder or remote monitor rather than a camera eye piece.
- Ensure that side-mounted cameras and 'through window' camera work do not create a risk to bystanders and other vehicles.

All reasonably practicable precautions must be taken to reduce the risk of camera operators being struck by vehicles during 'up and passes' or 'run-bys' on the side of the route. This is especially important where vehicles are travelling at speed and, wherever possible, remote cameras should be used. The use of long lenses or safe vantage points should be considered where this is not possible.

Tracking vehicles and the use of low-loaders and A-frames

Tracking shots (car-to-car) should only be done from a suitable tracking vehicle, ie one in which the structural integrity in case of an accident is not compromised by having doors/tailgates open.

All the crew must be suitably restrained when the vehicle is in motion, especially those near open doors or tail gates. If there is a risk to other road users, measures should be taken to make sure loose objects do not fall from the moving vehicle.

Tracking on public highways and filming cars and their occupants on low-loaders may require the agreement of the local authority/highways agency and the police.

Safety rails and seating positions on low-loaders and A-frames should not be altered for filming purposes or otherwise altered unless authorised by a competent person.

When using low-loaders or A-frames it should be ensured that they are capable of carrying the weights involved and that they are suitable for the purpose. Any modifications required to accommodate loads or people should be carried out by a competent person.

Consideration should be given to extra front/rear 'buffer' vehicles to give advance warning of hazards ahead and to create a safe area around a 'moving scene'.

Certain incidents that may occur on the public highway during work activities may be reportable to HSE as well as the police, eg when the injury occurs during the filming process. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) apply to all work activities but not all incidents are reportable. Further information can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/riddor.

Further reading

Risk assessment: A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace Leaflet INDG163(rev4) HSE 2014 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.htm

Health and safety in audio-visual production: Your legal duties Leaflet INDG360 HSE 2002 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg360.pdf

Managing health and safety at motorsport events: A guide for motorsport event organisers HSG112 HSE 2016 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg112.htm

Film, TV and broadcasting www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/theatre-tv/film.htm

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This guidance is issued by the health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

This document is available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis22.htm.

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