



Metropolitan Police Service Film Unit

Guidelines to Filming on the Move



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POLICE**

Metropolitan Police Service Film Unit



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

Contact us: filmunit@met.police.uk or 0203 054 5555



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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide clarity for productions and camera vehicle companies that plan to film on the move 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 on the move on public roads within their respective boroughs.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Film Unit manages complex commercial filming across London and provides officers where filming is taking place on location in London and the filming requires police assistance. Annually the Film Unit provide officers for approximately 2000 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.

The MPS Film Unit is the single point of contact for advising, managing and assisting 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 assist where required.

Although it is not responsible for what takes place within them, for productions planning extensive driving sequences, the Film Unit will liaise with the Location Manager, Stunt Co-ordinator and traffic management company to enable a 'joined up' approach to be taken towards reducing risk and ensuring the safety of the public, as well as that of cast and crew. The Film Unit is also able to provide marked police vehicles to implement a 'Rolling Road' to assist with the safety of members of the public, the film crew and other road users and to ensure that hero vehicles, action vehicles and camera vehicles do not endanger or come into contact with other road users.

The following guidelines apply to public roads/places only. Some locations may not be a public road but still fall under Road Traffic Act legislation because they are public places. If you are on private land which is not open to the public, then Road Traffic legislation does not apply.

Filming should only be completed from vehicles that are made or adapted for such purposes. The Metropolitan Police do not condone filming from front platforms unless the vehicles have the appropriate certification from the Vehicle and Operator Standards Agency (VOSA) or from bonnet or side mounted cameras without a police escort.

Productions can film from inside a vehicle as long as the camera person is restrained with suitable straps and to suitable load-bearing anchorage points. Equipment should be secured with different straps for the camera operator to prevent the camera from becoming a dangerous projectile. All doors are to be secured in the closed position. Productions could of course film from a convertible, roof mounted (remote controlled camera rig) or through open windows where equipment does not protrude further than the width of the vehicle.

All lights and original number plates must be clearly visible. All vehicles must be of a roadworthy condition and comply with legislation when driving on the road. Driving at slow speeds can in some cases be as much a danger as driving too fast.

Any use of tracking, low loader or 'A' frame vehicles must be referred to the Metropolitan Police Film Unit with the identified route. The Metropolitan Police Film Unit can not make any decisions until the production identify the exact roads on which they wish to film. Any filming on roads over 40 mph will require a police presence. The type of road and its layout will dictate what level of police presence will be required to manage the associated risks. Any use of the Strategic Road Network will be with the agreement of Transport for London (TfL).

Rigging

The MPS film unit recommends that any camera rigging, in or on vehicles and tracking vehicles is carried out or supervised by NVQ III certified grips.





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A Frame



Slow

This is where the roads to be used all have a speed limit of **40mph or below** and the production vehicles are to obey all road traffic legislation. We also assume that there are no other issues relating to the low loader work that we should be aware of e.g. rain machines or jib arms etc. and that this is a straight forward shot of a dialogue scene with all personnel and equipment secure within the confines of the vehicles. The use of seatbelts inside the "hero vehicle" would be required by law.

We would also suggest a production vehicle of any kind follows directly behind the hero car. This prevents a member of public's car being directly distracted and also provides some continuity for the production. Clearly this vehicle can be changed amongst themselves if continuity is *not* what they are after and can drop back out of shot if required.

Things to consider in addition to the measures mentioned would include the manner in which all vehicles are driven. The manner of driving could result in allegations of dangerous or careless driving, so vehicles must not drive in a way to cause problems to other road users. Additionally the drivers must be confident and competent to do the task and should be reminded that they drive on their own license from a prosecution view point.

Fast

It is our view that A frame work on any A class roads where the speed limits are **over 40mph** should be carefully assessed by production with a view of being supported by the assistance of police. This is based on the nature of the activity involved and in particular the type of vehicle and the manner in which it is being used, combined with the speed limits and traffic flows associated with trunk roads. If the speed limit is greater than the speed you will be travelling at, i.e. a 50mph road limit with the crew travelling at 25/30 mph to shoot, then we consider you will need to request the presence of police.

Light Board



To comply with the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989, the vehicle being towed must have a correctly wired and fitted light board that also shows the vehicle registration mark of the towing vehicle.



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If requested, Police would provide a high visibility police presence to:

1. Brief drivers of vehicles involved in the production whilst the A frame is present
2. Manage traffic at the rear of the A frame and a production car where the police vehicle needs to be obscured from camera POV.
3. Cover "on" and "off" slips to other roads if applicable.
4. Provide an immediate emergency response and take control should an incident occur on the carriageway.
5. Provide a fend off and safe working area while working at the roadside.
6. Provide direction on safe working when on a public road.
7. Engage with other emergency services, authorities and local police boroughs where necessary.
8. Any traffic holds or road closures necessary during filming will require a Traffic Management Order (TMO) or Temporary Traffic Order (TTO).

Bonnet and/or side mounted cameras



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming using a bonnet and/or side mounted movie camera on public roads and filming will not be approved without the presence of a police escort. Please talk to the MPS Film Unit and we can discuss the provision of a police motorcycle escort or advise regarding road closures for filming.

The protocol on bonnet mounts and front platforms is guided very much by the legislation contained in the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and the Road Traffic Act (RTA) 1988 that legislates the dangerous condition of vehicles. Basically vehicles are designed and constructed with safety in mind and the front of a car in particular is made to be as pedestrian friendly as possible. Sunken wiper posts, fold back mirrors and wrap around bumpers are all examples of features to reach this aim. If a production fixes any extra equipment on the vehicle's bonnet or front that compromises this safety, then the driver, the owner and the user (production) have a shared legal responsibility.



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We therefore cannot condone the use of a vehicle that would compromise this safety and the Courts would consider dangerous. Bonnet mounts with large fixed movie style cameras, in general fall within this definition because a court only needs to prove that in a collision a pedestrian **may** be injured more due to the equipment (an accident need not have actually occurred) .

We would consider the use of GoPro type cams or DSLR camera bodies, which are a much more suitable solution if using limpet mounts due to their small size. These may be acceptable on quiet roads at certain times of the day when there is little pedestrian traffic, but each request would be dealt with individually. Also if the POV is forward facing, we have seen and been generally satisfied with a roof mounted cameras of any size. The control measures for this would be to keep the vehicle's speeds low, in order to prevent a pedestrian, if hit, being thrown up and over.

Fake or 'ghost' number (registration) plates



Film or TV productions may need to film a 'hero vehicle' with fake or 'ghost' * number (registration) plates and the reasons for this may be that the 'hero vehicle' is registered in a different country or that it may need to appear older or younger than it really is.

It is also the case that the 'hero vehicle' may be required to not display any number (registration) plates at all, so that the film may be shown without revealing the country where the filming took place. This last requirement is most common with car commercials.

In the UK, vehicle number (registration) plates must be displayed in accordance with The Road Vehicles (Display of Registration Marks) Regulations 2001.

To avoid potential prosecution, productions **MUST** engage with the MPS Film Unit who can arrange police attendance whilst filming takes place.



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It should be noted that the following requirements still apply:

1. To be driven on public roads, the vehicle **MUST** be registered in the UK or country of origin. This requirement still applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
2. The vehicle **MUST** be insured for use on public roads for filming purposes. Public liability insurance is **NOT** sufficient. This requirement still applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
3. The driver **MUST** have a UK driving license or a driving license from another country that entitles them to drive the vehicle on UK roads. This requirement still applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
4. The correct number (registration) plates **MUST** be kept with the 'hero vehicle' during filming so that they can be produced upon request. This requirement still applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.

*** Ghost Plates**

The DVLA can provide 'ghost plates' for use for film and TV purposes. Under these circumstances, the DVLA assign ownership of the number plates to the production company for the duration of filming.
Contact the MPS Film Unit for further information.

Filming with replica / fake emergency service vehicles



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming using replica / fake police vehicles on public roads and filming will not be approved without the presence of a police escort. Please talk to the MPS Film Unit and we can discuss the provision of a police motorcycle escort or advise regarding road closures for filming.

The MPS does not hire out police vehicles to third parties in this manner, however there are several London and home county companies involved in this line of business.



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We would advise that when being driven on public roads to and from the filming, the following steps are taken to ensure that replica / fake police vehicles 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 genuine police presence will be required to form a rolling road. Action vehicle 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. Action vehicles may not use emergency services exemptions to road traffic regulations, or use sirens.



Front or side Platforms



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming using a front or side platform on public roads and filming will not be approved without the presence of a police escort. Please talk to the MPS Film Unit and we can discuss the provision of a police motorcycle escort or advise regarding road closures for filming.

MPS Film Unit is content to allow the use of the front platform as long as the following conditions are adhered to:

1. That a police escort is always driven in front of the vehicle with the platform when used on public roads.
2. That no person is positioned on the front platform when the vehicle is being driven.
3. That the vehicle is driven within the speed limit on roads where the speed limit is no greater than 30mph.
4. That the vehicle is correctly insured for use with the front platform in place on public roads.
5. That the front platform extends no greater than 100cm from the front of the vehicle.
6. That the use of the front platform is included in the risk assessment completed by the production company.

Low Loader - cars



Slow

This is where the roads to be used all have a speed limit of 40mph or below and the production vehicles are to obey all road traffic legislation. We also assume that there are no other issues relating to the low loader work that we should be aware of e.g. rain machines or jib arms etc. and that this is a straight forward shot of a dialogue scene with all personnel and equipment secure within the confines of the vehicles. The use of seatbelts inside the "hero car" would not necessarily be required by law but may be a good safety measure if used.

We would also suggest a production vehicle of any kind follows directly behind the low loader. This prevents a member of public's car being directly distracted and also provides some continuity for the production. Clearly this vehicle can be changed amongst themselves if continuity is *not* what they are after and can drop back out of shot if required.



Fast

It is our view that low loader work on any A class roads where the speed limits are over 40mph should be carefully assessed by production with a view of being supported by the assistance of police. This is based on the nature of the activity involved and in particular the type of vehicle and the manner in which it is being used, combined with the speed limits and traffic flows associated with trunk roads. If the speed limit is greater than the speed you will be travelling at, i.e. a 50mph road limit with the crew travelling at 25/30 mph to shoot, then we consider you will need to request the presence of police.

If requested, Police would provide a high visibility police presence to: -

1. Brief drivers of vehicles involved in the production whilst the low loader is present
2. Manage traffic at the rear of the low loader or low loader and a production car where the police vehicle needs to be obscured from camera POV.
3. Cover "on" and "off" slips to other roads if applicable.
4. Provide an immediate emergency response and take control should an incident occur on the carriageway.
5. Provide a fend off and safe working area while working at the roadside.
6. Provide direction on safe working when on a public road.
7. Engage with other emergency services, authorities and local police boroughs where necessary.
8. Any traffic holds or road closures necessary during filming will require a Traffic Management Order (TMO) or Temporary Traffic Order (TTO).



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Low loader - motorcycles



Slow

This is where the roads to be used all have a speed limit of 30mph or below and the production vehicles are to obey all road traffic legislation. We also assume that there are no other issues relating to the low loader work that we should be aware of e.g. rain machines or jib arms etc. and that this is a straight forward shot of a dialogue scene with all personnel and equipment secure within the confines of the vehicles.

We would also suggest a production vehicle of any kind follows directly behind the low loader. This prevents a member of public's car being directly distracted and also provides some continuity for the production. Clearly this vehicle can be changed amongst themselves if continuity is *not* what they are after and can drop back out of shot if required.



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Fast

Not to be used on roads where the speed limit is greater than 30mph.

If requested, Police would provide a high visibility police presence to: -

1. Brief drivers of vehicles involved in the production whilst the low loader is present
2. Manage traffic at the rear of the low loader or low loader and a production car where the police vehicle needs to be obscured from camera POV.
3. Cover "on" and "off" slips to other roads if applicable.
4. Provide an immediate emergency response and take control should an incident occur on the carriageway.
5. Provide a fend off and safe working area while working at the roadside.
6. Provide direction on safe working when on a public road.
7. Engage with other emergency services, authorities and local police boroughs where necessary.
8. Any traffic holds or road closures necessary during filming will require a Traffic Management Order (TMO) or Temporary Traffic Order (TTO).



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Motorcycle tracking



The use of motor bikes for filming is not illegal; however as with the use of tracking vehicles, we would always extol the virtues of using a professional company to do the work. Such companies often come with a good reputation, safety record and risk assessment. The rider and camera operator are usually experienced and have worked together on this type of work in the past and the motorcycle is specially adapted to make this type of work safer including footplates and a comm's system etc.

As police motorcyclists, we can tell you that to put someone on the back of a motorcycle can be disconcerting. To have that person then operate a camera and therefore move around a fair amount, can be even worse, upsetting the balance of the machine. The persons and equipment carried must be secured correctly (although this is probably achievable by using a lanyard from camera to operator). Often the type of roads specified and the speed limits, increase the risks involved and that is why we would always suggest a route of roads with speed limits of 30mph.



POD cars



Most POD cars have been adapted purely for film purposes and so the vehicle no longer complies with construction and use legislation. The Road Traffic Act and construction and use regulations still apply to a public road, even one that is closed under a traffic order.

To enable a vehicle that does not comply with construction and use legislation to be driven on public roads, the production **MUST** liaise with the MPS Film Unit who will provide advice and guidance regarding the process of obtaining a Vehicle Special Order (VSO) under Section 44 of the United Kingdom Road Traffic Act 1988, from the Department for Transport.



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It should be noted that if a VSO is issued, the following requirements still apply:

1. The vehicle **MUST** be insured for use on public roads for filming purposes. Public liability insurance is **NOT** sufficient. This requirement applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
2. The driver **MUST** have a UK driving license or a driving license from another country that entitles them to drive the vehicle on UK roads. This requirement applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
3. The Film Unit **MUST** have sight of the Method Statements and Risk Assessments from the production. Following advice from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) the Film Unit will not comment on or approve either documents, but merely ensure both documents have been completed.

Quad bike tracking



Quad bikes are not designed for road use and are usually used for tracking whilst filming 'off-road' or in areas where lack of adequate space makes the use of a normal tracking vehicle impossible.

Please note that if used for filming on pavements in public areas, a Traffic Management Order including pedestrian management must be in place to ensure the safety of members of the public.



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Remote Camera Arm



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming using a Remote Camera Arm on public roads and filming will not be approved without the presence of a police escort. Please talk to the MPS Film Unit and we can discuss the provision of a police motorcycle escort or advise regarding road closures for filming.

Russian / Pursuit / Scorpio Arm



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming using a Russian / Pursuit Arm on public roads and filming will not be approved without the presence of a police escort. Please talk to the MPS Film Unit and we can discuss the provision of a police motorcycle escort or advise regarding road closures for filming.

Stunt / precision driving



Film or TV productions may need to film stunt or precision driving on public roads for dramatic effect or so that well known landmarks can be seen in the background.

The stunt or precision driving may include maneuvers that could be in contravention of the Road Traffic Act, such as speeding and/or dangerous driving.

The Road Traffic Act and construction and use regulations still apply to a public road, even one that is closed under a traffic order.

To avoid potential prosecution, productions **MUST** engage with the MPS Film Unit who can arrange police assistance whilst filming takes place.

It should be noted that the following requirements still apply:

1. To be driven on public roads, the vehicle **MUST** be registered in the UK or country of origin. This requirement applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
2. The vehicle **MUST** be insured for use on public roads for filming purposes. Public liability insurance is **NOT** sufficient. This requirement applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
3. The driver **MUST** have a UK driving license or a driving license from another country that entitles them to drive the vehicle on UK roads. This requirement applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
4. Driving stunts that could contravene road traffic regulations such as dangerous and careless driving as well as exceeding the speed limit, can only take place within a Traffic Management Order that excludes both vehicles and pedestrians.
5. The Film Unit **MUST** have sight of the Method Statements and Risk Assessments from the production. Following advice from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) the Film Unit will not comment on or approve either documents, but merely ensure both documents have been completed.
6. That it be made clear to the production that the Film Unit cannot approve or disapprove the driving described. The Film Unit may agree to apply police discretion where it is reasonable to do so as to whether a prosecution of the driver or drivers for the maneuvers described in the Method Statements and Risk Assessments from the production maybe negated.
7. Any driving maneuvers not previously agreed with the Film Unit and specified within the Method Statement and Risk Assessment may be considered grounds for prosecution.

Tail gates



The use of standard vehicles where filming is done through an open window and all the equipment is kept within the confines of the vehicle is not a major issue. It is important that the operator and their camera are secure in the vehicle. However filming from a moving vehicle when the operator is doing so through a raised tailgate or boot lid (e.g. an Volvo or Audi estate) would not be endorsed by us as a safe method of filming on the highway unless the vehicle is approved by manufacturer as having no loss of body strength when driven with tailgates/doors open. We have yet to find a manufacturer who would provide this endorsement for standard hatchback/estate cars as they tend to have no chassis but rely on a monocoque style body shell, which relies on the doors all being shut etc.

However some large 4 x 4 vehicles such as the Range Rover, BMW X5, Volvo XC90, Nissan Pathfinder, Toyota Landcruiser etc. where there is a split tailgate and the upper glass portion can be locked up in a raised position and the lower portion closed shut, results in no loss of strength to the vehicle in the event of a collision (endorsed by Range Rover) and are therefore an acceptable solution. Additionally filming from a cabriolet/soft top car with the roof down is also an acceptable method and should give you an unobstructed 270 degree view to the rear.

Camera and camera operator

The camera and camera operator **MUST** be securely harnessed to the interior of the vehicle.

Things to consider in addition to the measures mentioned would include the manner in which all vehicles are driven. The manner of driving could result in allegations of dangerous or careless driving, so vehicles must not drive in a way to cause problems to other road users. Additionally the drivers must be confident and competent to do the task and should be reminded that they drive on their own license from a prosecution view point.



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Tracking vehicles - small



If not registered for road use, then only to be used on private land.

If registered for road use, then only to be used on roads which have a speed limit of 30mph or below and the production vehicles are to obey all road traffic legislation. We also assume that there are no other issues relating to this tracking work that we should be aware of i.e. rain machines or jib arms etc. and that this is a straight forward shot with all personnel and equipment secure within the confines of the vehicles.

Things to consider in addition to the measures mentioned would include the manner in which all vehicles are driven. The manner of driving could result in allegations of dangerous or careless driving, so vehicles must not drive in a way to cause problems to other road users. Additionally the drivers must be confident and competent to do the task and should be reminded that they drive on their own license from a prosecution view point.

Tracking vehicles - normal



Slow

This is where the roads to be used all have a speed limit of 40mph or below and the production vehicles are to obey all road traffic legislation. We also assume that there are no other issues relating to this tracking work that we should be aware of i.e. rain machines or jib arms etc. and that this is a straight forward shot with all personnel and equipment secure within the confines of the vehicles.

Things to consider in addition to the measures mentioned would include the manner in which all vehicles are driven. The manner of driving could result in allegations of dangerous or careless driving, so vehicles must not drive in a way to cause problems to other road users. Additionally the drivers must be confident and competent to do the task and should be reminded that they drive on their own license from a prosecution view point.



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Fast

It is our view that tracking work on any A class roads where the speed limits are over 40mph should be carefully assessed by production with a view of being supported by the assistance of police. This is based on the nature of the activity involved and in particular the type of vehicle and the manner in which it is being used, combined with the speed limits and traffic flows associated with trunk roads. If the speed limit is greater than the speed you will be travelling at, i.e. a 50mph road limit with the crew travelling at 25/30 mph to shoot, then we consider you will need to request the presence of police.

If requested, Police would provide a high visibility police presence to: -

1. Brief drivers of vehicles involved in the production whilst the tracking vehicle is present
2. Manage traffic at the rear of the tracking vehicle and a production car where the police vehicle needs to be obscured from camera POV.
3. Cover "on" and "off" slips to other roads if applicable.
4. Provide an immediate emergency response and take control should an incident occur on the carriageway.
5. Provide a fend off and safe working area while working at the roadside.
6. Provide direction on safe working when on a public road.
7. Engage with other emergency services, authorities and local police boroughs where necessary.
8. Any traffic holds or road closures necessary during filming will require a Traffic Management Order (TMO) or Temporary Traffic Order (TTO).

Tracking vehicles - with jib arm



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming using a jib arm on public roads and filming will not be approved without the presence of a police escort. Please talk to the MPS Film Unit and we can discuss the provision of a police motorcycle escort or advise regarding road closures for filming.

Tracking vehicles - with telescopic crane arm



The MPS Film Unit must be consulted in advance of any filming using a telescopic crane arm on public roads and filming will not be approved without the presence of a police escort. Please talk to the MPS Film Unit and we can discuss the provision of a police motorcycle escort or advise regarding road closures for filming.

Unregistered vehicles



To be driven on public roads, vehicles must be registered in the UK or country of origin. This requirement applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.

However, film or TV productions may need to film a vehicle on public roads despite the vehicle not being registered in the UK or country of origin. It might be that the vehicle has been manufactured purely for film purposes or that the vehicle is not actually designed for use on public roads.

To enable an unregistered vehicle to be driven on public roads, the production **MUST** liaise with the MPS Film Unit who will provide advice and guidance regarding the process of obtaining a Vehicle Special Order (VSO) under Section 44 of the United Kingdom Road Traffic Act 1988, from the Department for Transport.



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It should be noted that if a VSO is issued, the following requirements still apply:

4. The vehicle **MUST** be insured for use on public roads for filming purposes. Public liability insurance is **NOT** sufficient. This requirement applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
5. The driver **MUST** have a UK driving license or a driving license from another country that entitles them to drive the vehicle on UK roads. This requirement applies even when the road is closed via a Traffic Management Order.
6. The Film Unit **MUST** have sight of the Method Statements and Risk Assessments from the production. Following advice from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) the Film Unit will not comment on or approve either documents, but merely ensure both documents have been completed.



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Please see below for the Health & Safety Executive 'Safe filming and recording involving vehicles':



<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis22.pdf>

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

<http://www.met.police.uk/filmunit/>

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

Consultation

The following organisations were consulted during the drafting of these guidelines:

- Metropolitan Police Service
- TfL (Transport for London)
- Film London
- A number of action vehicle companies
- A number of Borough Film Services
- A number of UK Location Managers

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