

Filming Code of Practice for the District of North Hertfordshire 2023

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A - Code of Practice

North Herts Council's Code of Practice is a voluntary agreement designed to work alongside its Filming Guidelines and applies to all forms of production (including feature films, television, commercials, music videos and short films). The purpose of the document is to outline the expectations and requirements to ensure that standards and consideration by all parties to all affected is a priority. The code is not intended for news crews.

The Council's aim is to ensure that North Hertfordshire is a place where location filming can be conducted efficiently and successfully thereby delivering the significant economic benefits associated with filming (including local employment and tourism) while also being sensitive to the needs of those who live and work in North Herts.

North Herts Council supports amateur and student photographers taking photographs for a private portfolio, educational coursework or other non-commercial use. North Herts Council is keen to support emerging talent and will offer reduced rates where possible to low-budget and student film-makers. Risk assessments will need to be shown.

No filming activity should take place until the appropriate permissions have been granted by all the relevant parties. North Herts Council must be informed of all filming activity due to take place within our area whether on public or private land.

Definitions:

Filming – The term filming refers to all moving image production. This includes Feature Films, television, commercials, music videos, drama, documentaries, corporate productions, Video, and interactive media.

Photography – The term refers to all forms of still, digital and photo imaging. This includes advertising, and corporate photography.

Production – refers to the Producer or Production Company, Production Manager, Location Manager or any other authorized officer of the audio-visual project being made.

Introduction

- Fame Pro is our dedicated provider who will manage filming enquiries on our behalf.
- Should further, more detailed information be required, our Communications Team can be contacted at: [Filming enquiries | North Herts Council \(councilplatform.com\)](https://www.northherts.gov.uk/councilplatform.com)
- North Herts Council has signed up to work with FamePro, a film permit service for Councils and they should be contacted in the first instance with regards to any filming in the district. Telephone:01903 905223 or email hello@fame-pro.com.

- We are also a member of Creative England's Film Friendly Partnership network, welcoming filming to North Hertfordshire and ensuring cooperation and commitment to assist film and television production.
- North Hertfordshire offers a diverse range of film locations with rural settings, woodlands, picturesque villages, historic market towns and the world's first garden city, Letchworth.
- We are keen to encourage film and television companies to film in the area. North Hertfordshire has an established pedigree as a film and TV destination because of its proximity to a number of major studios and the variety of locations it provides.
- We recognise that many production companies act in a responsible and professional manner. However, all filmmakers are asked to take their surroundings into consideration.
- Productions must be sympathetic to the environment that is to be used.
- North Herts Council as a local authority has a duty of care towards residents and businesses and may exercise control if a particular production is causing an unreasonable nuisance or noise. Residents should be given at least seven days-notice by letter of filming arrangements in their area.
- Production companies must take every precaution to ensure the safety of the general public at all times and a contact for the production must be made available to the Local Authority and the Police.
- Areas which may require any sort of set building, dressing, disguising or are subject to any sort of special effects, will require a guarantee to be completed and returned to a required standard.

This code of practice sets out the standards which North Herts Council would ask production companies, and/or their sub-contractors to follow while filming in the district.

Pre-application advice

Enquire about filming

Contact FAME Pro, a film permit service for the Council, to ask about filming, or to get pre-approval or a quote to film on council land or property:

[Filming enquiry \(fame-pro.com\)](http://fame-pro.com)

For further advice and enquiries, call FAME Pro on 01903 905223 or email hello@fame-pro.com.

An initial conversation and/or site visit with Location Managers may be required to discuss the logistics of a filming request; particularly where a complex shoot is planned. This enables us to determine from an early stage what may or may not be achievable.

Filmmakers must provide as much detailed information as possible, including dates/times, proposed locations, content and nature of script, crew numbers and public liability insurance details.

Location Managers and producers will be given early warning when any aspect of their proposal may not be possible with an explanation of the reasoning behind any declined request. North Herts Council will always strive to find a compromise or an alternative location.

Make a formal application

When you're ready, you can apply for a full filming and photography permit here:

[Apply for a filming permit](#)

A copy of Public Liability Insurance (minimum expectation of £5,000,000 per incident/each occurrence £10,000,000 for large scale production) should be included along with a risk assessment.

Film makers will be asked to provide in writing as much information as possible on the following: proposed dates and times; potential locations; content and nature of the script or relevant script pages; talent; public liability insurance; potential stunts, special effects, pyrotechnics, wet-downs, use of helicopters, gun-fire/fire-arms, nudity and reference to royalty, politicians or public figures; road closures; numbers of vehicles, cast, crew and extras; equipment; parking and budget. Filming of a blasphemous, salacious or derogatory nature will not be permitted. The Council's Safety Advisory Group, which includes Herts Fire and Police, will be notified of all filming enquiries directly from Fame Pro.

Receipt of a formal application will be acknowledged within 48 hours. Each application will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the various sensitivities and commitments of the Local Authority, but with a flexible approach designed to help Location managers achieve their creative brief.

Depending on the scale of filming, a planning meeting and/or site visit to confirm logistical arrangements may be advised at this stage once the request has been generally agreed.

Charges

North Herts Council is committed to proactively raising income to benefit the residents and service users of community provision and will therefore charge for location filming on Council owned premises in most cases.

The Council has a schedule of fees (to be inserted) which are dependent on the size of the crew, the length of time filming is required to take place, plus an administration fee, depending on how much staff time is required to fulfil the request.

Location Agreements

A formal Location agreement will be issued by FamePro, confirming all mutually agreed arrangements and restrictions. A copy signed by both parties will be lodged with both North Herts Council and the filmmaker – check with Fame Pro

Any changes proposed once the location agreement has been signed must be mutually agreed in writing and appended to the original agreement.

De-Brief

North Herts Council welcomes the opportunity for a conversation or meeting once filming is finished to discuss what worked well and what didn't work so well in order to continually improve the service to filmmakers.

B - Commercial Filming Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a checklist for all parties wishing to film on location and to ensure that all areas of consideration and safety are a priority. If there are any aspects that are not covered, or if there is doubt of any kind, please raise an enquiry with the Communications Team prior to filming.

Filming the exterior of a building

Although this does not infringe its copyright, you will need to get permission from the council or property owner based on where you have physically placed your camera in order to shoot.

Animals

When filming with animals the production shall agree to follow either the RSPCA guidelines for the use of animals in the audio-visual industry or the PAWSI code.

The use and movement of certain species of animal may require the issue of a licence from the authority where the animal is kept, under the provisions of the Dangerous Wild Animals (DWA) Act 1976. The appropriate Authority contact should be approached for further advice and information regarding the intention to use, or move, any relevant species covered by the act or associated regulation.

Other animals that fall outside the remit of DWA licensing that are kept and/or trained for the purpose of exhibition (including in films) would also need to be licensed by the home authority.

Cabling

The [highway authority](#) must be consulted if you intend to lay a cable on or over a highway that is to remain open to normal traffic.

All cables must be made safe when they are laid, not at some later time.

It is preferable to lay cables in the gutter along the highway or in the junction between a wall and footway.

Cables on steps must be taped down to avoid the risk of tripping.

Wherever possible cables should be flown at minimum 5.2m above a public carriageway and 2.6m above footways and verges. The Council will wherever possible seek to make generator parking available which avoids the need to cable across the highway.

If there is a need to lay cabling across a footway, there may be times when it will be sufficient to lay cables at right angles under a taped rubber mat. Rubber matting should be regarded as essential safety equipment and carried as a matter of course. Matting should be visible to the public by proper lighting, cones or high visibility hazard tape.

Camera Track (Dollies)

All matters relating to camera tracking shall be discussed and agreed with film contact in advance of filming. Tracking boards may be required in certain circumstances. The Production shall ensure that any activity requiring tracking is risk assessed.

Catering and removal of litter

All refuse and street cleaning will be the responsibility of the production and arrangements for its removal must be made by the production company. If litter clearance directly attributable to the production is left to the Council for clearance, the production company would be charged at cost.

North Herts Council encourages filmmakers to use local food suppliers whilst they are filming. Get in touch for details of these suppliers. Wherever possible the Production shall make use of environmentally friendly materials. Waste created on location should be recycled wherever possible.

Charges

The following services may incur charges at cost:

- a) Provision of vehicles to wet down the street
- b) Refuse collection
- c) Removal of street furniture
- d) Removal of unit signs that have not been removed by the production company
- e) Suspension of parking meters and any other parking provisions
- f) Any additional refuse collection or street cleaning required.

- g) Council employee time in making the above, or any other arrangements relating to a specific production.

Any damage caused by a production company to the carriageway, footway or street furniture will be charged for.

Fees for the use of locations are dependent on ownership and will vary across the different private and council owned sites. A reasonable fee should be paid for all local authority properties used by the production in accordance with the scale and scope of the planned activity.

Children

The employment of child actors is governed by licensing regulations made in 1933,1963, 1968 and amended in 1988.

- All filming sets are required to have a safeguarding policy in place
- Child performers under the age of 17 are likely to require a Child Performance License. These licenses are issued by the local authority in which the child resides unless the child is at boarding school. 21 days is required to process an application. The NNCEE can provide more information.
- Producers must make adequate provision for the education and health needs of all children employed when filming.
- Where the child is not from the UK, they will remain subject to UK requirements.
- Any filming involving the employment of children (whether paid or unpaid) must be cleared through Herts County Council.

Celebrities and Look-alikes

Police should be informed of any celebrity presence or any celebrity lookalikes which are to be used.

Coning

Cones have no legal force to secure parking and their use must be agreed with the local Council and Police. Not aware we have any.

Consultation

Successful filming relies upon the local residents and businesses receiving adequate notice where appropriate. Letters should be sent to local residents and businesses outlining fully, the intended filming. It should include:

- a) Date, time and exact location of filming
- b) Date of Letter

- c) Location Manager and the local authority contact numbers
- d) Number of crew or production personnel expected on Location
- e) Clear details of lighting plans
- f) Clear details of parking proposal
- g) Emergency arrangements and contact details.

Cranes, camera cranes and aerial platforms

When planning to use cherry-pickers or cranes on the public highway, the highway authority must be consulted via: Filming@hertfordshire.gov.uk An inspection may be required.

The location manager or crane hire company must also discuss the specific weight and the exact positioning of such equipment with the relevant authority, and the conditions of any permission granted should be adhered to at all times.

Any obstruction on the highway must be appropriately signed and guarded

Rigging or de-rigging must be carried out at times that will not cause an unreasonable noise or nuisance.

Particular attention should be given to assessing the proximity of any existing overhead cables before erecting platforms or cranes.

Camera cranes, jib arms and cherry pickers must be tested, have proof of documentation and shall be operated by certified qualified technicians. Productions will consult codes and guidance from recognized bodies in the safe operation of cranes and aerial platforms and shall carry out a risk assessment when using such equipment.

Employment

It is advised that all genres of production must implement all current UK legislation that informs and guides the employment of all workers. The production must also observe their legal responsibilities and obligations with regards to the National Minimum Wage and Working Time regulations.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

The Council has a key role to play in advancing equality, fostering good relations between different groups within our community, and helping those who are disadvantaged to feel heard and represented.

The Public Sector Equality Duty places an obligation on local authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities. The Council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy sets out how the Council's approach to demonstrating this commitment. This strategy applies to all those who live, work in, and visit North Hertfordshire.

Filming from Vehicles

All Road Traffic Legislation must be complied with subject to the grant of any concessions by the Highways and/or Traffic Authority and the Police.

Firearms, Weapons and Representation of Criminal activity.

The use of firearms of any kind must be discussed in advance with the Local Authority, the police and/or the appropriate emergency service.

Where a live firing weapon is being used, the production must have a license holder for that weapon present (or a registered firearms dealer RFD, or a servant of the RFD). Where the weapon is blank, it is still recommended to have the above present.

Filming on Council owned premises will not include any representation that is deemed to promote prejudiced or bigoted views or behaviour. Any representation of such views or behaviour should have a clear educative purpose. Filming on Council owned premises will not include any representation of prejudiced or bigoted material, nor will the promotion of any religious intolerance's be permitted.

Filming of criminal activity will be discussed with the production company to ascertain the nature of the production requirement. North Herts Council will decline any requests to film any inappropriate criminal activity on our premises.

Health & Safety and risk assessment.

Full consideration of Health and Safety issues for all employees must be taken and proven by the producer.

LOLER (lifting operations and lifting equipment regulations) and PUWER (provision and use of work equipment regulations) should be considered. These cover lighting/sound gantries, staging and the like which are likely to feature on film sets.

The producer must provide proof that a risk assessment has been done by a competent person appointed as the Health and Safety Representative with a minimum of NVQ Level 3)

A full risk assessment of the location must be carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the management of Health and Safety at Work regulation (1999)

Types of risk assessments that may be required include stunts, the use of flammable or toxic materials, construction work, working at heights, and the use of cranes and cherry pickers. This is in addition to a comprehensive risk assessment of the location.

The production is bound by law to take reasonable care and measures to ensure that a healthy and safe working environment is maintained.

A person qualified in first aid should be present during filming activity where possible.

High – visibility clothing

Crew members and production personnel working on the highway must wear high visibility clothing to standard EN471.

Highways and Traffic Management

Where traffic management is required the Highway Authority must be consulted and a traffic management plan may be required. Contact them via:

Filming@hertfordshire.gov.uk

If you require a road closure you must contact the Highway Authority and Local Authority filming contact. Please be aware that road closures may require a lead time of three months for consultation and to process the legal closure order.

Fees will apply for a road closure request, please ask for more details.

The highway authority should be consulted before any signs are erected or any markings are painted on the road. Markings and signs on the highway must be removed as soon as possible and before the highway is returned to normal traffic use.

No attempt should be made by production staff to direct or control normal traffic using the public highway. The only legal way to direct traffic is by using signage. Some areas of exclusion apply, please contact the police and the Highway Authority for more information

No obstruction should prevent pedestrians going about their business safely

No objects should be attached to lamp columns without the permission of the Highway Authority

Any obstructions on the highway must be appropriately signed and guarded. Guidance on road closures in Hertfordshire can be found at

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/roadworks-and-road-closures/roadworks-and-road-closures.aspx>.

Historic buildings and conservation areas.

Special attention and care must be taken when a production is planning to use any historic buildings, heritage sites or conservation areas.

The use of lights and any tracking in historic buildings must be assessed by the custodian and where relevant, chemical or a heat analysis must be provided.

The use of effects such as smoke, naked flames or candles may be prohibited or will require special permission.

Filming in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will have restricted use and will require assessment.

Details of the production's requirements must be discussed and put in writing with the film representative.

Some historic properties are required by law to remain open to the public at all times and filming must work around this.

Some properties are delicate and the possessions unique. Extra insurance or a specific licence may be required.

Particular care must be taken when dressing or lighting historic buildings.

Objects belonging to the location must not be removed or moved without the owners express permission

Indemnity and Insurance

The production company will be expected to indemnify the local authority, its officers and employees against any claims or proceedings arising directly from any injury to persons or damage to property, as a result of the activities of the production company or its agents.

Any filming undertaken is the responsibility of the producer. Suitable Public Liability insurance must be evidenced in writing prior to filming. Risk assessment may necessitate an increase in the insurance cover required, and exclusions to certain activities may apply.

Lighting, lighting towers, scaffolding and generators.

A special licence may be required for any of the above. Please check with your Local Authority contact.

The construction and positioning of lighting towers and scaffolding must be discussed with the relevant authority well in advance of the shoot.

Any scaffolding constructed must be certified by the Local Authority. A licence may also be required from the Highway Authority where such scaffolding is erected on the highway.

The following considerations should be taken to prevent any risk to the public or production company employees:

All lights above ground level and lighting stands are properly secured

Lighting stands placed on a footway must be attended at all times

- a) Lights do not dazzle motorists

- b) Lights are not shone directly towards residential properties at any time without specific permission
- c) Any generator used should comply with the specific requirements of the Environmental Protection Act (1990) and be positioned as far away as possible from all residential properties.

Museums

Filming at North Hertfordshire Museum can only take place with the consent of the Curator or Manager, who will advise what can be done and when it can be done.

North Hertfordshire Museum will retain control over and use of access to all its resources, premises, staff, collections etc while filming.

Night filming

Night shoots in residential areas are naturally sensitive and it is essential to consider and consult with local residents and businesses in the planning process.

Any activity including filming is subject to the Environmental Protection Act (1990) regarding noise and nuisance.

A legitimate complaint about noise or nuisance from a resident to the local authority can result in the termination of the shoot. Therefore, it is advisable to shoot all scenes requiring noise above conversation level before 22.00 hours. Walkie Talkies should be turned down to a minimum and earpieces used.

There may be cases where equipment or heavy vehicles that cannot be moved silently at the end of filming must be left 'in situ' and attended by overnight security. This must be cleared by the local authority prior to filming.

Noise and nuisance

Local Authorities have the right to take action under the Environment Protection Act 1990 as a result of any unreasonable noise. The use of audio playback and megaphones will require advance permission from the filming contact. The parking position of generators will be agreed in advance and will depend on local sensitivities.

Nudity

Police need to be informed of any nudity during filming. Any scenes requiring nudity of a sexual or pornographic nature will not be permitted on Council owned premises.

Parking

Location Managers should discuss all parking requests with FamePro, preferably with two weeks-notice in advance of filming.

In particular for on street parking requirements, other on street equipment requirements and bays to be kept empty for continuity.

The Council must ensure that no road works or street maintenance has been booked during that time.

Film vehicles will not be allowed to park in such a way that access is restricted or denied unless prior agreement has been secured. The production will make every effort to find off street parking for all facilities vehicles.

Overnight parking of large vehicles can be facilitated at our coach station or public car parks by arrangement on a first come first served basis.

Engines should be switched off on arrival.

The production will not obscure mandatory or warning traffic signs when parking on highways that are not closed to traffic.

Planning

Planning permission may be required for some temporary structures such as:

The building of a set which will be up for more than 21 days from construction to strike.

The prolonged use of a building as a set/temporary studio

Prop or mock emergency service

The Local Authority and emergency services must be informed if the below applies:

- Crime re-enactments, special effects, fires or explosions
- If actors are to be dressed in a specific uniform (police, ambulance or fire brigade).
- Uniforms and any vehicles resembling the emergency services must be covered whenever possible, and in particular between takes. Any markings on vehicles must be covered over when not being used for filming.
- Legally there must be a police presence for mock emergency services filming, please contact Hertfordshire Police for more information.
- Presence of weapons both prop and imitation.

Props

Any props used during the shoot will be removed and the area made good.

Problem Solving

In the event of a dispute arising between the Production and other parties on location, please contact FamePro.

Publicity

The production shall provide the location with publicity material on release of the project where possible.

Public Access

The Council may allow temporary closure to access to public areas to facilitate filming activity. This may require statutory notice periods to be provided to the public, so Production companies are asked to factor this when scheduling filming. Members of the public should be treated with courtesy and consideration at all times. Where filming blocks a footway, an alternative safe and supervised route for pedestrians should be provided. Where filming affects residential parking permit holders, alternative parking arrangements should be considered.

Public Transport

The production must seek permission from the relevant contact before filming on public transport.

Risk assessment

A risk assessment may be required to satisfy the insurance provisions and statutory obligations to employees and anyone who will be affected by their actions, please check with the local authority if this required.

Additional assessments may be required depending on the type of filming.

The Producer retains a non-delegable duty to ensure that the film production is performed safely, though the Producer can decide to delegate some element of responsibility to 'a competent other'. All such health and safety duties and therefore any liability arising, ultimately lie with the producer – to that extent those duties are non-delegable.

Rivers, open water and waterways

When planning to film on any waterway, the Production must liaise with the FamePro as early as possible. Specific health and safety measures may apply.

Road Markings

The temporary painting out or disguising of road markings, lines or other road signs is subject to agreement in advance with the film contact, and the highways authority. The production will also notify the police in advance of any such undertaking. The production will fully reinstate any alterations to road markings or signage to the satisfaction of the Traffic or Highways authority, and when obliged to use official contractors pay cost price.

Safeguarding

It is the filmmaker's responsibility to ensure there are robust measures in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults who are affected by, or connected to, the proposed filming.

Scaffolding/lighting towers

All requests to erect scaffolding or lighting towers in a public area, highway or footway will be agreed in advance with the film contact. A temporary structure licence may be required.

Security

The production must use SIA licenced security for all licensable activity at all times. Security of vehicles and equipment is the responsibility of the production company.

Street furniture and street lighting

The removal of street furniture, including signs, and the adjustment of street lighting is normally carried out by the highways authority and charged to the production company.

All arrangements for this work must be made through the Highways authority:

Filming@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Minor work by the production company may be permissible with prior permission and any damage or reinstatement costs would have to be met by the production company.

Stunts, special effects and pyrotechnics

All stunts, special effects (including weather effects and wet downs) and pyrotechnics must be under the direct control of a named qualified stunt co-ordinator or special effects operative and comply with the Environmental Protection Act (1990)

Any plans must be discussed with the Local Authority and a risk assessment will be carried out by the production prior to filming.

Sustainability

North Herts Council encourage crews to operate as sustainably as possible to reduce their environmental impact when filming in North Hertfordshire.

Track

All matters relating to tracking must be discussed with the local authority prior to filming.

The production company should ensure that pedestrians and in particular wheelchair users are not impeded by filming.

The area should be fenced off and permission from the local authority should be obtained to do this.

UAV/Drone filming

Production companies should use a Civil Aviation Authority licensed pilot holding a valid 'Permissions for Aerial Works' certificate. Unlicensed pilots will not be insured or have suitable public liability cover and are not allowed to provide commercial services.

UAV pilots will be required to provide evidence of current Public Liability insurance cover of £5,000,000.00

Pilots require permission from the landowners to take off and land the drone on their property.

Pilots should not fly the drone directly over people, roads or buildings which have not given permission. Actors, presenters, extras etc are deemed to be 'under control' and need to be safety briefed and aware that they are to be filmed by a drone. Images collected by drones could be subject to the Data Protection Act. UAV operators should ensure they are compliant with all such requirements.

Drones can fly up to 400ft (restricted air space starts at 500ft)

Drones cannot be flown out of daylight hours unless the company has special permissions for nighttime flying.

The qualified drone pilot should complete a site assessment before commencing flying, and will be required to evidence a risk assessment has been undertaken.

UAV operators should always have a spotter in attendance to ensure that the pilot does not become distracted and all safety measures are accounted for.

UAV operators should comply with CAA recommendations and guidelines at all times when operating a drone.

CAA guidance can be found here: [Events advice and guidance | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk)

Wetdowns

Wet downs may only be carried out with the approval of the local authority after proper evaluation of the forthcoming weather conditions and with the proper signage as required.

