

Location filming at your home

Hosting a film or photography shoot should be a rewarding experience. It's fun to see your property on the screen or in print. Hosting a shoot should be approached in a business-like manner. Film London and filmrichmond will happily assist.

Your Home

Insist on one point of contact with the production company (the location manager, the photographer or a member of the production team). Get the production companies details and your contact's mobile phone number.

Time frames vary. Short shoots may take a day or even half a day. Longer shoots may involve "prep days" before filming, "shoot days" when filming takes place and "strike days" to reinstate your property.

Ask for the numbers of personnel involved on each day. Discover the scale of the equipment to be brought on to your property. Establish the access times from the first to arrive to the last to leave.

Discuss which rooms will be used for filming and if the production company will need extra space for storage, dressing rooms, etc. You may wish to mark rooms as out of bounds (e.g. bedroom).

The crew and cast will need catering and toilets. Can they use your home or do they need to make other arrangements?

If you have vulnerable surfaces or delicate furniture, discuss with your contact how these will be protected and (should the unforeseen occur) arrangements for repairs.

For longer shoots you and your contact may choose to create an inventory of contents either as a written list or a visual record (video/photographs).

Your neighbourhood

The extra on-site activity when hosting a crew and cast of 10 or more is likely to have an impact on your neighbours. If your neighbours are not able to tolerate the filming activity it may affect the shoot you are hosting and the possibility of future shoots.

Your neighbours may be affected by the extra vehicles parking in the area, noise (sometimes film shoots involve early starts or late finishes), even 'light' pollution.

Also, non-filming activities during shoot days, such as catering, getting in/out and having crew/cast on stand-by outside a property may be a source of disruption for your neighbours. Discuss with the production company contact how they plan to minimize disruption.

It is likely that a larger shoot will want to park vehicles near the location. In a controlled parking zone a production company may apply to the local council to suspend parking bays for their use. So, if you live in a built up area your neighbours may find their usual parking space taken up by film crew vehicles. It is important they are aware of this and are on board.

The production company and yourselves should inform your neighbours 5 – 10 days in advance of filming, giving contact details and inviting feedback. Your immediate neighbours should be contacted in person and by a letter dropped through their doors and surrounding neighbours should be contacted by letter.

If your property is likely to be used for several days in a row or several times a year, tell the neighbours and ask for feedback.

Many areas have a resident's association who should be informed. They may be able to assist and may wish to attend preparatory meetings with the filmmaker.

Disruption to a neighbourhood may be balanced by value gained by a neighbourhood from the shoot. This value could take many forms, for example; publicity, education, a charitable donation, the fun of having a famous face locally.

All London's councils have a Film Service. It is important that they are informed of the shoot. They could advise on how any previous filming in your neighbourhood was facilitated successfully.

The police (see contacts below) or fire service should be informed of any filming likely to attract a 999 call from onlookers unaware that the events are staged (e.g. gunplay, fires).

The Paperwork

Film London is not positioned to give legal advice so please treat the following as a guide only.

Contract – A contract should be tailored to the specific needs of your property, the specific needs of the shoot and should lock down four fundamentals; fees (or other value), access times, permission for the filmmakers to use their footage, protection for you and your property.

Public Liability Insurance – During the shoot your property becomes the filmmaker's temporary workplace (this may be clarified in the contract) thus the cast and crew are not considered guests in your home. As with a permanent workplace, responsibility for work activities remains with the company and is covered by their Public Liability Insurance. Ask to see a certificate, check the date is current and the level of cover is £2million or above (an industry standard).

Health and safety should remain the responsibility of the filmmakers but the filmmakers may reasonably assume that your property is sound and suitable for the extra activity on site. If you are aware of any potential risks surrounding activity on your property (e.g. asbestos, low load bearing floors) you would be negligent not to inform the filmmaker, allowing them to make a valued judgment as to the properties suitability for their purpose.

The production company may be compiling information such as parking plans and lists of local contacts (including police and hospitals) that may be of use for your next shoot.

Contacts and Links

Film London – for general locations advice
www.filmlondon.org.uk

Borough Film Officers – for local locations advice
www.filmlondon.org.uk/boroughs

Metropolitan Police Service Film Unit
www.met.police.uk/filmunit/index.htm