



Tips for Students and Low Budget Filmmakers

Locations

When making a film on a low/no budget the most cost effective, hassle free way of finding a location is to ask friends and family if they would be willing to let you use their property. If it is a student production you could also try asking your University or college – they will often have empty rooms/buildings that are available for you to use.

Bristol Film Office's locations library is a professional database and as such the property owners on our books will expect to receive income for allowing filming to take place in their property at professional location fee rates.

Please note that Bristol Film Office has limited capacity to assist with low/no budget location searches because property owners who have registered on our locations database have done so in order to earn income through professional location fees. We will, however, assist as much as we are able to.

Permissions

If you are interested in filming in a public place or municipal building then you must seek permission from Bristol Film Office.

We have recently introduced a new permit scheme to make it easier for students to obtain permission for very low key filming on pavements, parks and open spaces in the city. If your University/College is signed up to the Low Key Student Filming scheme your tutor may be able to issue you with a copy of the permit which covers your class' small scale filming.

For private residences you must gain the permission of the property owner. If the property is rented you need to gain permission from both the people who live there and also the landlord.

Filmmakers should ensure that location owners and adjacent property owners are:

- Kept fully informed of your intentions
- Given details of any art department requirements including dressing and construction
- Issued with a location contract which clearly states the terms agreed between themselves and the filmmakers

Local Police should be informed of filming activity within their districts. In addition to advising the Police of the points above, special guidance should be sought with the following:

- The staging of crimes, accidents or use of firearms



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- The dressing of artistes in police uniforms. It is an offence to impersonate a police officer and cast should be asked to cover such uniforms in between takes

Where relevant the Emergency Services should be duly advised of:

- Special effects, fires or explosions (Fire Brigade)
- The impersonation of fire officers/ambulance staff or use of pseudo fire tenders or ambulances

Insurance

For all filming you will need to provide evidence of adequate public liability insurance (ask your tutor about this or look at the PACT website www.pact.co.uk). For filming on land managed by Bristol City Council you are required to have at least £5,000,000 public liability indemnity.

Notifying Local Residents and Businesses

All neighbouring residents and businesses affected by filming should be notified by letter at least seven days in advance. You should include your contact details in this letter and encourage people to get in touch if they have any concerns about your proposals.

Filmmakers on location are visitors and should be sensitive to the community in which they are working. Noise should be kept to a minimum, especially during unsociable hours (10pm to 8am).

Green Filmmaking

The following list of practices can be easily adopted by low budget productions to reduce the impact of their filmmaking on the environment:

1. Reduce waste materials e.g. provide reusable drinking containers
2. Avoid printing materials where possible and always print double sided
3. Provide recycling bins
4. Limit vehicle numbers by lift sharing
5. Switch off equipment when not in use
6. Use local crew and cast as much as possible to reduce travel
7. Make sure all crew and cast are aware of your green policy by including details in your call sheets

These practices are extracts from South West Screen's Green Filmmaking Guidelines that has been adapted from *Code of Best Practices in Sustainable Filmmaking*; the work of the Bristol based wildlife producer, Andrew Buchanan, and Larry Engel, a US producer. To read the guidelines in full click [here](#)



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