

AOP SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 Shoot/Production Guidelines

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These guidelines have been worked up by the Association of Photographers (AOP) and are adapted from existing APA COVID-19 production guidelines to be more pertinent to stills photography production (including moving image). They have been developed by a cross-section of the AOP leadership, membership and insurers.

The purpose of these guidelines is to enable all those responsible for producing stills and moving image shoots to take reasonable and practical steps to safeguard the health and safety of everyone attending a shoot in relation to COVID-19 and to meet their obligations to do so under the Health and Safety at Work Act, and Government guidelines & regulations on COVID-19, including The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 (expiring 26 Sept 2020).

Photographers, agents and production companies have a responsibility which they can meet by following these guidelines. In addition, everyone working on the production and attending it, has their own responsibilities in respect of COVID-19. They too can meet those by complying with these guidelines. They will be updated regularly in response to feedback on how they work in practice, new legislation and regulation, and the potential availability of practical, accurate on-set COVID-19 testing.

CONTENTS:

- 1. GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES, MEDICAL INFORMATION, KEY PRINCIPLES**
- 2. AOP BEST PRACTICES**
- 3. COVID-19 HEALTH STATEMENT** (to be shown to, or read to, all shoot attendees)

1.1 GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES & CONTEXT

The Government says: (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>)

- stay at home as much as possible
- work from home if you can
- limit contact with other people
- keep your distance if you go out (2 metres apart where possible)
- wash your hands regularly

The Government has also said to carry on with business (but work at home where possible - but commercial photography cannot, on the whole, be produced at home), while making clear that 2m-distancing should be followed in the workplace wherever possible.

Additionally, the Government have stated:

"With the exception of organisations covered above [note: this refers to pubs, restaurants, etc. in the section of closing certain businesses and venues], the government has not required any other business to close - indeed it is important for business to carry on."

(Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>)

Lastly, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), a governmental organisation state: "Keep your business open. With the exception of some non-essential shops and public venues, we are not asking any other business to close - indeed it is important for business to carry on."

Source: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/social-distancing-coronavirus.htm>

1.2 MEDICAL INFORMATION

Some medical context on COVID-19 (also read the WHO's dedicated FAQ):

- The time between exposure to COVID-19 and the moment when symptoms start is commonly around five to six days but can range from one to 14 days.
- COVID-19 is transmitted from an infected person's respiratory secretions or aerosolised droplets (coughs/sneezes) reaching the nose, eyes or mouth of another.
- The most common symptoms are fever, coughing, sneezing and shortness of breath. Less common symptoms are diarrhoea and abdominal pain.
- Some people with COVID-19 suffer or show no apparent symptoms. Asymptomatic sufferers may still be infected and there is strong scientific evidence that they can transmit the virus too.
- COVID-19 can also survive on a variety of surfaces for different timespans and be transmitted to another individual from contact with them.

1.3 KEY PRINCIPLES

The purpose of (social) 2m-distancing and PPE is to break the transmission cycle of the virus and reduce the risk of infection. We should operate on the basis that we could all be potential carriers, and must adhere to the safety principles to minimise risk. Therefore the following essential rules are based on current UK Government guidelines, and must be adhered to:

- Maintain 2m-distancing wherever possible.
- Wash your hands for 20 secs with soap and warm or hot water or use hand sanitiser for at least 30 seconds regularly. Alcohol-based sanitisers should contain at least 60% alcohol.
- Cough and sneeze in the crook of the arm or into a tissue and bin immediately.
- Report COVID-19 symptoms to your employer/production manager.
- Work from home wherever possible.

2. AOP BEST PRACTICES

These are recommendations as to how to structure your production, over and above Government guidelines and, again, they will be constantly reviewed and updated wherever and whenever necessary.

NOTE: Both pre-production and production are likely to take longer to enable compliance as a result.

The number of people on location should be kept to a minimum. Only people who are **absolutely required** to be present at the shoot should attend. This refers to all production staff, cast, crew, agency and client. Furthermore, every person who will be attending the shoot - because it is necessary that they do so - shall be made aware of the COVID-19 Health Statement at the end of these guidelines.

We have organised our best practices as follows:

- 2.1 Pre-production
- 2.2 Budget and contract
- 2.3 Office
- 2.4 Casting
- 2.5 The shoot
- 2.6 Talent on set
- 2.7 Location shooting
- 2.8 Studio shooting
- 2.9 Wardrobe
- 2.10 Hair and Make-up
- 2.11 Crewing up
- 2.12 Technical crew
- 2.13 Hired equipment
- 2.14 Catering
- 2.15 Transport
- 2.16 Health and Safety
- 2.17 PPE and sanitisation

2.1 PRE-PRODUCTION (Including Agency & Client-side considerations)

- (a) (Creative concepts and briefs should ideally already bear in mind current Government level restrictions). Photographers however, are encouraged to advise agencies and advertisers as to how to set a brief which can be shot in compliance with these guidelines in order for safe production to take place.
- (b) Get approval from agency/client as early as possible. Finalise as many creative decisions as possible no later than the pre-production meeting (PPM) in order to reduce last-minute changes on shoot days, and to plan for all health requirements & sanitary accommodations.
- (c) Encourage early confirmation of projects to allow for additional prep time.
- (d) Encourage and explain the need to the agency/client of the importance of sticking to scheduled confirmation dates.
- (e) Where possible all pre-production processes should be managed remotely from home. This includes treatments, budgeting, production meetings, meetings with the agency and PPMs.
- (f) Distribute the AOP guidelines to all involved in the production.

2.2 BUDGET AND CONTRACT

- (a) Cost the requirements of this protocol within your quotes. Should regulations change, additional space needs to be made by agency/client to accommodate these if production incurs further costs, since insurance will not assist.
- (b) Anyone attending the shoot for the agency, client and/or production company will be required to be aware of and adhere to the COVID-19 AOP Production Guidelines.
- (c) The production should be planned to minimise COVID-19-related disruption risks so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so. In respect of the COVID-19 related risks to production which remain:
 - (i) Make provision for what happens in the event of such disruption (e.g. an agreement that key persons will be replaced if they become unavailable because of COVID-19)

- (ii) Have an agreement with the agency/client by which the agency/client will meet such costs (according to the terms of such an agreement) because insurance will not cover COVID-19 risks to the production.

2.3 OFFICE

Avoid printing and paper distribution except for clear safety posters on set.

NOTE: COVID-19 can last 24 hours on cardboard, and longer on other surfaces. (Source: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973>)

2.4 CASTING

- (a) Casting sessions and call-backs can be done remotely via video link-ups and self-casting.
- (b) When casting children, their supervising adult should remain close at hand.
NOTE: Depending on the nature of the work and circumstances, licences for child models may still be required from the local authority and is dependent on them being able to do so.
- (c) Note: remote casting may prohibit rehearsal of interacting action.
- (d) Those aged 70 or over, or with known pre-existing conditions should be given special consideration and enhanced measures.
- (e) Consider and agree backup talent and costs where appropriate.

2.5 THE SHOOT

- (a) Stagger call times where possible to avoid congestion.
- (b) Keep the unit as small as possible and minimise the number of crew/ agency/client/talent on set at any one time.
- (c) Wash and thoroughly dry hands on arrival and during the day at regular intervals. Alcohol-based (60% minimum) sanitisers should be easily accessible throughout the set/location as well as soap and water provided wherever possible.
- (d) Consider a video-conferencing facility relaying video remotely to agency/client.
- (e) Consider increasing video monitoring on set to avoid clusters of people.
- (f) All crew to adhere to any safety guidelines or notices given on the day.
- (g) Consider any space markers where possible.
- (h) Walkie-talkies/radios to be correctly sanitised, bagged-up and labelled with crew names before distribution - do not share equipment.

2.6 TALENT ON SET

Where 2m-distancing of talent might not seem achievable on set due to creative or other action required, if possible, adapt the process(es) as much as possible to be achievable within the guidance and regulations (e.g: use members of the same household, shoot individuals as separate plates and composite in post, etc.).

2.7 LOCATION SHOOTING

- (a) Initial location research can be done remotely using location libraries.
- (b) 2m-distancing must be used when visiting locations and meeting property owners/managers.
- (c) Note that councils are unlikely to grant any filming/location permits at the moment.

- (d) Try and ensure common areas and holding areas are outside wherever possible.
- (e) Prefer/prioritise for one location, without unit moves, per day.
- (f) Prefer/prioritise for location in a 4G area, where possible, to transmit live video over the internet, if WiFi unavailable.
- (g) Locations are to be well-ventilated. Consider bringing additional equipment to change (*not* recycle) the air regularly if this is not the case.
- (h) Avoid the use of vapours, steam and hazers (including but not limited to dry ice, oil, mists or glycol) as they are likely to keep airborne infections in the atmosphere longer.
- (i) Where possible, all locations required to share their own COVID-19 preparedness plans.
- (j) Locations to be cleaned prior to and after shooting, if possible. Locations may want to take this on themselves and charge an extra fee for this.
- (k) Avoid distant locations which would require overnight accommodation for those involved. Also avoid locations which will not permit minimum 2m-distancing.
- (l) All reces to involve minimum crew only (self-driving and maintaining 2m-distancing throughout). Masks and gloves available for all attendees as required c/o production.
- (m) Location prep: Pre-light/set-build/set-dress etc., to be undertaken separately by one crew/department at a time, where possible.

2.8 STUDIO SHOOTING

All the above in 2.7 apply to studio productions as well as locations. However, studios are likely to have their own risk assessment and COVID-19 preparedness plans which you will have to adhere to as well.

2.9 WARDROBE

- (a) If fittings have to be done in person, then the stylist can set up clothes and supervise fitting from a safe distance.
- (b) If fittings can be done at home they should be, relayed via video-call or photos.
- (c) Stylist to utilise existing/talent-owned options where possible (shops and hire companies are/may be currently closed through risk of infection).
- (d) Talent to dress themselves wherever possible.
- (e) If styling team need to break 2m-distancing they need to wear enhanced PPE (Tier 2 - see PPE and sanitisation section below).

2.10 HAIR AND MAKE-UP (HMU)

- (a) HMU to utilise disposable kit where possible.
- (b) Kit should remain unique to each artist/talent.
- (c) Follow appropriate disinfecting processes, e.g., using Barbicide or equivalent.
- (d) Talent to do their own touch-ups where possible.
- (e) If HMU team need to step in they should wear enhanced (tier 2) PPE (see PPE and Sanitisation section below) as necessary.
- (f) Keep HMU separate from Wardrobe. Provide sufficient space for both departments to maintain a minimum two metres distance.

2.11 CREWING-UP

- (a) A person within the team must be allocated on set to be responsible for monitoring COVID-19-related matters whether that is a health and safety officer hired by production or a nominated crew member.
- (b) Require all crew to notify you immediately if they develop any symptoms.
- (c) Provide crew with an email confirmation of their engagement or call-sheet for them to produce if the police question them on their travel to the location.

NB: a waiver of rights by a crew member in respect of their contracting COVID-19 is of no value - UK law does not permit excluding liability for causing injury or death through negligence, so a waiver is not part of this guidance.

2.12 TECHNICAL CREW

Appropriate PPE must be worn if breaking 2m-distancing around camera or anywhere else on or off set (see PPE and sanitisation section below).

2.13 HIRED EQUIPMENT

- (a) COVID-19 *can* (in certain circumstances) survive up to 72 hours on plastic and steel, so try to work out advance collection/delivery/quarantine of kit/materials where possible. If that is not possible, apply a thorough sanitation process.
- (b) All equipment hire facilities should have their own risk assessments and health and safety practices and should provide you with a copy.
- (c) Refer to the technician or company's cleaning protocols and make sure they work for your own production.
- (d) As equipment is usually expensive and specialised, please rely on crew or companies to clean before and after hire with instructions on how to wipe down during hire period for sanitation.
- (e) Try and only use suppliers with their own clear COVID-19 protocols.

2.14 CATERING

- (a) Consider individual hot-box or individual pre-packed delivery instead of mobile kitchen or buffet.
- (b) Offer per diems to crew bringing their own meals to work, should that be necessary.
- (c) Everyone must wash their hands before entering any catering/ dining area.
- (d) Stagger times for eating to minimise numbers congregating together in any one area.
- (e) Dining space requirements to ensure increased distance while eating with at least 2 metres space to be observed between people.
- (f) Disposable, recyclable plates and cutlery to be provided.
- (g) Wherever possible crew should be asked to supply their own hot and cold drinks.

2.15 TRANSPORT

- (a) Crew to drive themselves to set (one person per car) and be dissuaded from using public transport where possible.
- (b) Where required, production to organise transport using drivers' local service & be able to demonstrate that they can socially distance passengers.

2.16 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- (a) Full risk assessment, on a job-by-job basis, will be carried out by production during prep and tech recesses.
- (b) Consider having a health and safety officer on shoot days for larger-scale shoots.
- (c) Allocate someone from the crew to be a COVID-19 officer to supervise other elements of COVID-19 preparation and conduct on set.
- (d) Production cannot safely confirm any crew or cast who have travelled to, or had any contact with an individual returning from, high COVID-19 risk countries (as deemed by UK FCO) in the 14 days prior to a shoot.
- (e) All crew and talent to provide contacts for family/household in case of emergency on the day of shooting.
- (f) Individuals on the shoot should be contacted subsequently by shoot producer in the event that fellow workers/talent are found to have contracted COVID-19 within the two weeks following the shoot.
- (g) All workers, if they have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 or in advance of work, should report to production and remain in quarantine at home, without going to their workplace.
- (h) Avoid sharing hand tools and personal property (mobile phones, pens, walkies etc.). Crew must be responsible for the safety and sanitisation of their own items.

2.17 PPE AND SANITISATION

- (a) Production to have supplies of PPE for those needing to wear it:
 - (i) Tier 1 - basic PPE: masks (N95/P2/FFP2) and gloves
Note that wearing gloves needs to be managed correctly - wear for single use activities and remove, also in the event that masks become mandatory, the AOP will update according to government guidelines.
 - (iii) Tier 2 - enhanced PPE: mask/respirator (N99/P3/FFP3), visor and gloves.
Those who need to break 2m-distancing and for a length of time to carry out their duties may need to wear enhanced PPE. Crew likely to be required to wear enhanced PPE depending on circumstances will include (but are not limited to): Camera crew if gathering around camera; styling if needing to tend to talent; HMU if needing to work on talent; medic if needing to assess symptoms.

NOTE: remember the correct procedure for donning and removal of PPE: (1) Wash and dry hands thoroughly, (2) Put on mask, (3) Put on gloves. (4) Removal is a reversal of 1,2 and 3, i.e., remove *gloves* first.
- (b) A separate covered bin should be provided for safe and immediate disposal of tissues and PPE.
- (c) Production must have sufficient PPE of both tiers for all crew, and should bear in mind procurement timings and supplier credibility in respect of safety standards and environmental issues, and without knowingly compromising supplies to frontline care workers.
- (d) Only remove talent's PPE when essential.
- (e) Clearly indicated and visible spacious hygiene stations for hand-washing, with plentiful supply of alcohol-based (60% min) hand sanitiser and wipes
- (f) Each individual is responsible for keeping their own area and equipment clean.

- (g) Clear health etiquette to be on posters around set (e.g: Wear appropriate PPE at all times / When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow / Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth & put down and pickup items rather than handing / Do not shake hands, nor hug & maintain 2m-distancing, etc.).

3. COVID-19 HEALTH STATEMENT TO BE READ BY, OR TO, ALL SHOOT ATTENDEES

As part of our commitment to provide a safe working environment for all on set during the unprecedented, fast-changing COVID-19 situation, we need to know that you have listened to or read, and understood the following statements as part of your agreement with the production company engaging you, in that:

1. You have no cause to believe that you have COVID-19 (an NHS symptom-checker can be found [here](#)) or may have been exposed to COVID-19.
2. You have been meeting the Government COVID-19 guidelines and 2m-distancing when not at work as defined [here](#).
3. As far as you are aware, you have not been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or anyone who is showing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
4. You have not travelled to, nor to your knowledge had any contact with any individual travelling from any high COVID-19 risk countries (as deemed by [UK FCO](#)) in the 14 days prior to the shoot.
5. You have not had a cough, or a temperature of 38 degrees centigrade or above in the last 14 days.
6. If you develop a cough or a temperature of 38 degrees centigrade or above at any point before or during or within 14 days *following* the shoot you will immediately inform the photographer/production company engaging you.
7. If you are over 70 years of age or have any pre-existing condition which would put yourself at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, as defined by the Government here, you must inform production.
8. You will notify production immediately should anything change as regards to the above confirmations.
9. You have either heard or read *and* understood and agree to abide by the COVID-19 AOP Shoot/Production Guidelines.