

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR FILMING IN MIDLOTHIAN



To support the efforts of Midlothian Council and Film Edinburgh in facilitating services to the film and television industries, the following procedures and principles have been adopted.

Film Edinburgh promotes Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian, and the Scottish Borders as filming locations, facilitates the production process, and monitors the economic impact of filming.

All initial filming enquiries should be directed to Film Edinburgh, who will assess production requirements and refer details to relevant Midlothian Council services and relevant stakeholders.

This Code applies to all film, television and commercial productions working within Midlothian. For smaller productions or student projects, the same general principles of good practice, cooperation, and courtesy apply.

Midlothian Council must be informed of all filming activity taking place on public property. The first point of contact for any filming enquiry is Film Edinburgh.

This Code should be read alongside the Midlothian Film Charter, to which Midlothian Council and Film Edinburgh are jointly committed.

Responsibility and Professional Oversight

All filming activities and any resulting liabilities are the sole responsibility of the production company and its personnel.

It is strongly recommended that production companies engage a professional Location Manager who is familiar with this Code of Practice. This ensures the interests of both the production company and the location owner are properly safeguarded.

1. Applying to Film in Midlothian

No filming activity should begin until permission has been granted by all relevant parties. The production company must ensure that everyone affected by filming has been consulted and informed.

When applying to Film Edinburgh, the following details will be required:

- a) Production company name, type of production, and key contact details.
- b) Scale of production (number of personnel and vehicles).
- c) Intended use of public land, Council property, or roads (including closures or street furniture alterations).
- d) Use of cranes, drones, cherry pickers, or other hazardous equipment.
- e) Parking of production vehicles on restricted or residential areas.
- f) Use of special effects, simulated accidents, firearms, or stunt work.
- g) Filming involving children or animals.
- h) Productions depicting potentially controversial subjects.

Use of drones must comply with Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulations.

Permission must be obtained from the landowner for any take-off or landing activity. The Council will require submission of a flight plan and confirmation that all CAA regulations are being met. In assessing proposals, the Council will consider proximity to residents, highways, and sensitive wildlife areas, as well as any potential impacts arising from the activity.

2. Access and Oversight

Midlothian Council requires that Film Edinburgh representatives be given reasonable access to all filming activities.

If breaches of this Code occur, the representative will raise the matter with the production company and, if unresolved, refer it to the relevant statutory body.

3. Police and Emergency Services

Police Scotland must be notified of all filming activity. Film Edinburgh will liaise with the police initially, but large-scale productions should follow up directly.

Special guidance must be sought where:

- Crimes, accidents, or the use of weapons are being staged.
- Performers are dressed as police or emergency service staff.

Where Police Scotland deems it necessary for there to be a Police presence for public safety purposes, filmmakers will be advised to apply for Police services. Police Scotland will charge a fee to the Production Company for these resources. Where management of traffic is involved, a TTRN/O will be required.

All Emergency Services must be informed where filming could affect access routes, road use, or involve fire effects or explosions.

4. Locations

Filmmakers must ensure that all location owners:

- Are fully informed about the production's intentions.
- Receive a reasonable rental fee appropriate to the production scale.
- Are issued with a clear written contract covering all agreed terms.
- Approve any dressing, alterations or construction work.

Proof of Public Liability Insurance (minimum £10 million) must be provided upon request.

Filmmakers must notify Film Edinburgh of any activity within Midlothian for coordination with relevant Council services.

5. Fees and Charges

Midlothian Council applies a Charging Policy consistent with its approach to discretionary services and community wealth building.

Fees for the use of Council property or services will be charged at an appropriate rate, ensuring full cost recovery where relevant.

Charges may include:

- Location fees for public land or property.
- Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) or occupation permits.
- Staff time for site supervision, access, or reinstatement works.

Guidance on fees can be obtained from Midlothian Council's Economic Development Service.

6. Roads and Traffic Management

No road closures, parking suspensions or traffic controls may occur without prior authorisation.

Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders or Notices must be obtained within required timescales.

Street furniture or signage removal will only be allowed with notice and must be reinstated at the filmmaker's expense.

All roads and public areas must be restored to their original condition once filming is complete.

7. Care of Locations

Filmmakers are guests on site and must treat public and private property with respect.

Locations must be kept clean and free of litter.

All waste, spillages, and protective materials must be properly managed.

Any damage must be made good immediately and reported to all affected parties.

Crew should check and restore sites before departure.

Environmental and heritage sites must be protected. Early consultation with Greenspace, Countryside and Environmental Health Services is essential for sensitive locations.

8. Health and Safety

Production companies are fully responsible for ensuring compliance with Health and Safety legislation.

A full risk assessment must be carried out for each location.

Qualified first-aid personnel must be on site.

The Council's Health and Safety Team must be consulted when filming on Council property.

9. Children and Performances

Filmmakers must comply with the Children (Performance and Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2014 and obtain any required performance licences for children under school leaving age.

10. Respect for Residents and Communities

Filmmakers are visitors and must act with courtesy and consideration toward local residents and businesses.

All affected neighbours must receive written notice of filming activity no later than one week prior to filming.

This notice should provide details of any potential impacts on the community. Where appropriate, this should follow an initial letter to residents outlining the intended activity and inviting feedback on potential impacts.

Filming should cause minimal disturbance, with noise kept within acceptable limits under the Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004.

Crew should maintain clear pedestrian access, adhere to no smoking rules, and avoid inappropriate behaviour or language.

Lighting, cabling and equipment must be installed safely without obstructing public routes.

Night filming in residential areas requires prior consultation at least three weeks in advance.

11. Observing Designated Areas

Production activity must be confined to authorised areas and times.

Vehicles must park only in agreed locations with engines off.

Meals and breaks must take place in designated areas.

Crew must not trespass or enter restricted zones.

12. Community Wealth and Economic Impact

In line with the Single Midlothian Plan and the Council's Community Wealth Building objectives, productions are encouraged to:

- Source goods and services locally wherever possible.
- Provide work experience, training and volunteering opportunities.
- Demonstrate fair work principles and environmental responsibility.
- Complete a Regional Production Expenditure Form for Film Edinburgh to record local economic impact.

By filming responsibly, production companies help strengthen Midlothian's economy and reputation as a film-friendly, sustainable location.

Contact

Film Edinburgh

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Midlothian Council

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