

COVID-19 PRODUCTION GUIDELINES



COVID-19 PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

As per the **National Media Council's (NMC)** Circular No **(10)** regarding filming of movies, TV series and programs in the United Arab Emirates, production companies, including media free zones, are **legally obliged** to abide by the following set of COVID-19 health and safety guidelines:

1. Visitors and non-essential personnel shall not be permitted entry to set.
2. Entry to set shall be limited to essential personnel only and numbers should be kept at a minimum.
3. All workers shall conduct a COVID-19 medical test, at an authorized medical facility.
4. Production companies shall adhere to general COVID-19 health and safety rules and regulations issued by the relevant UAE health authorities.
5. Production companies shall launch health awareness campaigns in different languages, to highlight preventative and control measures against COVID-19.
6. Social distancing practices must be adhered to whilst filming.
7. If possible, it is encouraged to postpone filming activities for projects that have not yet started, until the current situation changes.

Production companies are requested to implement the measures stipulated above with immediate effect to ensure the health and safety of all individuals involved in film production.

COVID-19 PRODUCTION BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

To ensure the health and safety of all personnel involved in the production process (hereinafter shall be referred to as cast and crew), the following set of best practice guidelines, which are derived from government rules and regulations and global industry resources, have been prepared. Please note that the following guidelines are advisory in nature and production companies are encouraged to use these guidelines as a base for determining which set of best practices should be followed for their production.

Please note that the producer is ultimately responsible at all times for the health and safety of the cast and crew.

These guidelines should be followed on a case-to-case basis, depending on the type, nature, and size of the production. The guidelines are not intended to constitute legal or other professional advice and shall not be relied upon or treated as a substitute for specific advice relevant to current circumstances. As COVID-19 conditions, rules and regulations evolve, these guidelines will continue to be updated.



1. General Health & Safety

1.1 General

- ✓ Productions shall:
 - abide by the NMC Circular No (10), as set out above.
 - review relevant local and/or state regulatory agency policies and orders with regards to COVID-19 health and safety rules and preventive measures; and
 - consult with the relevant local health officials with regards to the recommended COVID-19 testing policies.
- ✓ Productions should check with their studio facility or shooting locations in advance with regards to specific site requirements (e.g. COVID-19 testing necessity and test validity periods).
- ✓ Limit entry on set to essential personnel only. Cast and crew under the age of 21 shall not be permitted entry to the set.
- ✓ Unless the conditions outlined below are met, the following members of the cast and crew shall not be permitted entry to the set:
 - individuals exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms;
 - individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19; and
 - individuals who have come in contact with others who have exhibited COVID-19 symptoms or are suspected or confirmed to have tested positive for COVID-19.
- ✓ Members of the cast and crew who fall under the above categories will only be permitted entry to the set once they test negative for COVID-19 and have permission from the relevant UAE authorities to resume work.
- ✓ Extra care and precautionary measures should be taken to ensure the health and safety of high-risk cast and crew members, including those who are over the age of 60. The suggested measures are as follows:
 - Crew members should be provided with additional levels of protection and support (i.e. given surgical masks and face shields, given separate equipment, items and supplies).



1. General Health & Safety

1.1 General

- Cast members should limit their time on set; be provided with separate facilities during breaks; practice additional social distancing requirements.
- ✓ Ensure that signage and/or posters, which promote maintenance of personal hygiene, encourage social distancing, and present vital health and safety precautionary measures and information are visible across all common areas and entry points.
- ✓ Ensure that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks, gloves, and disinfectant wipes are distributed and used by all members of the cast and crew.
- ✓ Used masks and gloves should not be left unattended and should be disposed of appropriately, in designated bins, immediately after use.
- ✓ Ensure that hand-washing stations (running water, soap, and paper towels) are available at points of entry and common areas.
- ✓ Encourage the cast and crew to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Specifically, upon entering and leaving the set, before and after eating, after using toilets and after handling equipment. If the cast and crew do not have access to soap and water, encourage the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers instead.
- ✓ Encourage the cast and crew to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible.
- ✓ Frequently touched objects including, but not limited to, tables, doorknobs, handles, printers, props, common equipment, costumes and set materials must be disinfected prior to their first use on set and after each use by cast and crew. Furthermore, use disposable wipes to wipe down frequently touched objects before use by the cast and crew.



1. General Health & Safety

1.1 General

- ✓ Personal cast items including, but not limited to, equipment, props, costumes, make-up and hair appliances must be kept in individually labelled bags, which will include the name of each cast member.
- ✓ When possible, discourage cast and crew from using their colleagues' phones, desks, offices, other tools, and equipment.
- ✓ Consider positioning additional security at all sites during prep and shooting to ensure that all precautionary measures are enforced including:
 - direct and manage designated entry and exit points – taking into account emergency evacuation requirements;
 - check permitted access to areas;
 - open/close doors; and
 - ensure specific areas on set are dressed and secured when not in use.
- ✓ Stagger arrival and departure times to set to prevent congestion and ensure that social distancing practices are maintained and followed.
- ✓ Allocate sufficient time to enable a separation distance of 2m to be observed, while indoors and outdoors. If not possible, breach of distance shall be for the shortest amount of time possible (ideally less than 15 minutes) and proper hygiene and COVID-19 prevention practices shall be followed. while indoors and outdoors. If not possible, breach of distance shall be for the shortest amount of time possible (ideally less than 15 minutes) and proper hygiene and COVID-19 prevention practices shall be followed.
- ✓ Floor markings are encouraged to be used to mark the 2m separation distance and one-way routes to prevent congestion.
- ✓ Throughout production, physically maintaining a 2m (6 feet) separation distance between individuals implies 4m² per person in a clear space or 6m² in a space with furniture or equipment.



1. General Health & Safety

1.1 General

- ✓ Factoring the time required for sterilization.
- ✓ Ventilate interior spaces by opening windows or through mechanical ventilation with fresh air.
- ✓ Add extra toilet facilities to reduce queuing.
- ✓ Provide adequate quantities of paper towels or tissue paper and trash receptacles.
- ✓ Dispose of waste safely and regularly.
- ✓ All deliveries, including equipment, must be disinfected using disinfectants, which are approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), prior to being brought on set.
- ✓ Allocate a specific isolated zone for any items/materials that are to be delivered by external suppliers, to ensure all items are tracked and sterilized before general use by all cast and crew.

1.2 COVID-19 Safety Department

- ✓ Creation of a COVID-19 safety department that is responsible for:
 - COVID-19 awareness and communications;
 - briefing department heads on their responsibilities to ensure that their departments are compliant with health and safety measures and rules on set.
 - monitoring local health and safety rules and regulations and health and safety rules on set.
 - setting up an effective system that will allow individuals who feel unwell on set to report to their head of department.
 - employing appropriate cleaning personnel who have been provided with necessary awareness and knowledge on COVID-19 cleaning practices by an appropriate occupational health and safety practitioner.



1. General Health & Safety

1.2 COVID-19 Safety Department

- setting out the penalties for non-compliance with health and safety rules and regulations on set; and
 - setting up a system that allows the cast and crew to report non-compliance with health and safety rules on set; ask questions and suggest solutions, which will enhance their safety and productivity while on set.
- ✓ Department to be staffed with appropriate personnel, who are capable of monitoring general health and safety, including:
 - an on-set Health and Safety Supervisor (HSS).
 - personnel responsible for monitoring communal areas; and
 - professional set and equipment cleaners.
 - ✓ The HSS role shall either be designated to an appropriate health and safety individual (dedicated role) or an appropriately trained crew member (dual role).
 - ✓ The safety department shall ensure that COVID-19 safer working induction training, to be provided by specialized and competent health and safety practitioners, is undertaken remotely by all cast and crew prior to the commencement of their work. Face-to-face training sessions shall be avoided.
 - ✓ HSS shall be responsible for supervising and enforcing social distancing practices and disinfecting protocols on set.
 - ✓ HSS shall always be available on set during working hours. All cast and crew shall be provided with the HSS' contact information and details.
 - ✓ HSS may appoint and monitor personal assistants (PA) from each department, to assist with monitoring compliance of health and safety rules by all departments on set.
 - ✓ Prior to each shooting day, the appropriate personnel should prepare a daily list, of cast and crew that are to be given access to the set. This list should be provided to the HSS for recording and monitoring purposes.



1. General Health & Safety

1.2 COVID-19 Safety Department

- ✓ Before entry to the set HSS shall:
 - require cast and crew to read, understand and sign health and safety guidelines;
 - check the temperatures of everyone entering the set or set-up thermal scanners at points of entry. If not possible, position trained staff at entry point to carry out COVID-19 symptom checks including temperature checks;
 - only allow entry to cast and crew whose names are on the aforementioned pre-prepared list (i.e. daily call sheet), which is provided by the appropriate personnel;
 - maintain a record of cast and crew that enter and leave throughout the day; and
 - require cast and crew to sign a health statement to confirm that they do not have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in contact with anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms.

- ✓ While on set, if a member of the cast and crew appears to have COVID-19 symptoms, the HSS shall:
 - isolate the member from the rest of the cast and crew and send them home;
 - instruct the individual to seek appropriate medical advice;
 - inform individuals who came in close contact with said member, and ask them to take the necessary precautions;
 - report their findings to the relevant local authorities and ensure the proper implementation of the instructions and recommendations provided.
 - if possible, halt the production; conduct COVID-19 testing on cast and crew, and disinfect the set before returning to work.



1. General Health & Safety

1.3 Risk Assessment

- ✓ A risk assessment must be conducted by a competent health and safety individual prior to every shoot.
- ✓ Productions must communicate and brief its cast and crew on the risk assessment results conducted.
- ✓ The risk assessment shall:
 - Highlight and list in detail:
 - hazards that can cause harm;
 - how harm can be caused and to whom;
 - measures required to limit the transmission of COVID-19; and
 - if required, any extra precautions to be taken to limit COVID-19 transmission.
 - Be detailed and specific to each production, keeping in mind: (non-exhaustive)
 - the location;
 - the script;
 - the technology/equipment/props being used
 - the cast and crew (elderly, high risk); and
 - the technicality and nature of the production.

1.4 Holding and Common Areas

- ✓ If possible, common areas are to be set up outdoors.
- ✓ Seating shall be arranged in a manner that promotes social distancing, for instance by: (non-exhaustive list)
 - physically moving tables/chairs so they are 2m apart; and
 - alternating break times so individuals are not using break rooms, canteens, rest areas or changing facilities at the same time.
- ✓ If possible, divide the common areas into sections that assign seats for specific departments.
- ✓ Individuals from different departments should have access to common areas at different times, to limit contact between different departments.

2. On-Set/ Filming Guidelines



2.1 General

- ✓ Where applicable, filming should be scheduled to avoid sterilization periods or other curfews imposed by the relevant UAE authorities. Furthermore, alternatively appropriate permissions should be obtained.
- ✓ Locations and sets should be covered, dressed, or sealed for a period of time and disinfected before use.
- ✓ Each department should be given access to the set at different times.
- ✓ Departments should coordinate work schedules so that a minimum number of people are given access to a single space at one time.
- ✓ Utilize all available studio space to reduce the turn-around of studios to avoid unnecessarily moving kits/scenery etc.
- ✓ Review and modify the set design to reduce the requirement for close working and time to the rig the studio.
- ✓ Close off and obstruct no-go zones.
- ✓ Entry and exit points to set should be established at an early stage and monitored to ensure that no unauthorized personnel gain access to the set.
- ✓ All essential personnel shall be pre-registered in advance to speed up access to the set and limit interaction time. If not possible, incorporate additional time into the production schedule to prepare the set and safely admit the cast and crew.
- ✓ A socially distanced queuing procedure shall be set up to sign in/sign out the cast and crew at entry and exit points.
- ✓ Shoot days are to be limited to a certain number of hours per day

2. On-Set/ Filming Guidelines



2.1 General

- ✓ No unnecessary physical contact between cast and crew.
- ✓ Cast to practice social distancing measures (a 2m separation distance) as much as possible - manipulate the camera to make the cast look closer together.
- ✓ Disinfect and deep clean sets before and after each day of shooting and close the set entirely when not in use.
- ✓ When applicable, (i.e. filming a documentary) all interviews should be conducted remotely.

2.2 Filming Outdoors

- ✓ Ensure the safety of the public by maintaining a 2m separation distance between cast/crew and the public.
- ✓ Choose a public location that will provide enough space for all required production activities while keeping in mind social distancing practices.
- ✓ Choose a public location where access/working areas can be isolated and secured from the public.
- ✓ Provide hygienic facilities to cast and crew.
- ✓ Cordon off the location with suitable and noticeable barriers. If possible, post signage and posters where appropriate.

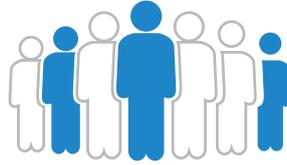
2. On-Set/ Filming Guidelines



2.3 Filming with an Audience

- ✓ Reduce audience count by a certain percentage - to be decided on a case by case basis depending on what is appropriate for the production itself, as well as keeping in mind the general COVID-19 health and safety guidelines issued by the relevant UAE authorities.
- ✓ Arrange seats for audience members while keeping in mind social distancing practices.
- ✓ A physical separation of 2m must be maintained between the cast/crew and the audience members at all times.
- ✓ Audience member shall be required to wear face masks at all times.
- ✓ If applicable, access to individuals from outside of the jurisdiction shall not be permitted

3. Cast & Crew



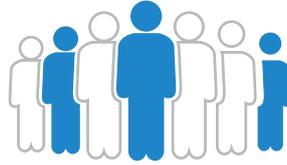
3.1 General

- ✓ Cast and crew to be in placed in quarantine for 14 days before production begins.
- ✓ Cast and crew are to be tested for COVID-19 after the quarantine period ends.
- ✓ Cast and crew are required to disclose any underlying health conditions.
- ✓ If the crew are required to work in pairs, buddy them together and ensure the same pairs work together to avoid contact with multiple individuals.
- ✓ Split crew members into small teams and ensure the same individuals are always allocated to the same team to avoid contact with multiple individuals. When different groups of the small crew teams meet, ensure that a separation distance of 2m (6 feet) is always maintained.
- ✓ Crew members must always wear masks and gloves on set. Gloves are to be changed and disposed of frequently.
- ✓ Crew members who are already on set should be used as extras. Accordingly, factor in back-up crew and cast.

3.2 Casting

- ✓ Casting should be conducted remotely. If this is not possible, ensure that the audition is held in a large open space to accommodate social distancing practices. Installation of physical see-through barriers is recommended.
- ✓ When possible, cast real families if the characters are required to physically interact on screen.
- ✓ Scripts should be distributed electronically. If this is not possible, dispose of hard copies after each reading.

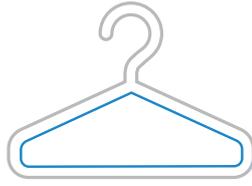
3. Cast & Crew



3.3 Cast & Crew from Outside the UAE

- ✓ Upon arrival to the UAE, ensure that cast and crew adhere to the UAE's health and safety guidance on self-quarantine and undertake all recommended health tests and/or checks. Furthermore, continuously monitor updates, as the issued UAE health and safety guidance is updated from time to time.
- ✓ All calls, conferences and meetings are to be held remotely.
- ✓ Ensure cast and crew sign a health declaration stating that:
 - they do not have COVID-19 symptoms or were near anyone who appeared to have said symptoms;
 - they do not have underlying health conditions;
 - they shall immediately declare if they begin to show or were in contact with anyone showing COVID-19 symptoms;
 - they will abide by the UAE health and safety guidance set in place (as updated from time to time); and
 - they will remain isolated or will limit their contact with individuals for a certain period of time.
- ✓ Provide appropriately authorized, sanitized, and isolated accommodation for the required quarantine period set out by the relevant UAE authorities.
- ✓ Ensure transportation (between the accommodation and set) is monitored and controlled by appropriate individuals.
- ✓ Budget in additional accommodation (trailers, rooms, bed space), which may be required, as sharing should not be permitted.
- ✓ Accommodation provided should adhere to social distancing practices.

4. Wardrobe



- ✓ Costumes, props, and sets should be dressed and disinfected before production begins.
- ✓ Wardrobe fittings are to be conducted remotely.
- ✓ Key props are to be handled by a limited number of cast members, and only if necessary.
- ✓ Label and store each cast's clothing in separate bags.
- ✓ Clothes and props are not to be shared by cast members without prior disinfection.
- ✓ If necessary, assisted styling is to be permitted for featured cast only.
- ✓ Encourage extras to wear their own clothes from home.
- ✓ Provide separate dressing/fitting areas.

5. Hair & Make-Up



- ✓ Application tools and supplies are to be purchased for and shall be used on an individual cast member and shall be labelled and stored appropriately. If possible, use single-use applicators.
- ✓ Before and after each session, both cast and crew are required to wash and sanitize their hands.
- ✓ Workstations are to be distanced apart, cleaned and disinfected before and after each use.
- ✓ Only if necessary, apply hair and makeup on featured cast only.
- ✓ Encourage cast to do their own makeup and hair.
- ✓ Cast shall touch-up and remove their own makeup.

6. Catering



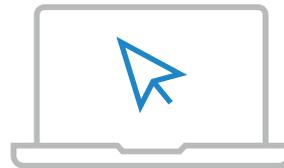
- ✓ Alternate meal and break times, or run a continuous day system, to avoid congestion in eating areas. If possible, use a one-way system to navigate the eating area.
- ✓ Meals and drinks shall be served and packaged as single serving portions.
- ✓ Require the use of individually wrapped disposable cutlery, cups, utensils, dishes, and plates, which are to be used by individual cast and crew.
- ✓ Appoint a trusted individual and restaurant for delivery of meals.
- ✓ If meals are to be delivered, ensure the meals are disinfected efficiently before brought on set.
- ✓ After each meal, all contact surfaces must be sanitized and all used containers, cutlery and papers must be discarded.
- ✓ Designated PA from each department should collect meals and return meals to their said department. PA shall wear PPE and follow health and safety rules when interacting with the food supplier.
- ✓ Encourage cast and crew to bring their own food from home and to eat in their cars.
- ✓ Cast and crew shall not be permitted to leave the set to obtain their own food during working hours.
- ✓ Do not permit
 - Buffets;
 - Coffee/water/drinks stations;
 - Shared snack bowls; and
 - Unpackaged foods.

7. Transport



- ✓ Avoid public transportation.
- ✓ Limit the number of individuals seated in cars used for production to three people in every car.
- ✓ While in the vehicle, ensure that social distancing practices are observed, and all cast and crew are wearing masks and gloves at all times.
- ✓ Advise cast and crew to use their own vehicles.
- ✓ Ensure that cars used for production are regularly disinfected and cleaned.

8. Other Useful Resources



- ✓ Awareness materials are available at Coronavirus (COVID-19) Awareness Center, from MOHAP. If you require further information, please click the following link:
<https://www.mohap.gov.ae/en/AwarenessCenter/Pages/COVID19-EAMA.aspx>
- ✓ Health and safety support, training and professional specialist advice can be obtained from the following recommended safety consultant companies:
 - First Option Safety Group Ltd
<https://www.firstoption.group/contact>
 - 4See Ltd
<http://www.4see.ae>

9. Contact



If you require further information or if you have any questions with regards to the above please send an email to: covidguidance@film.gov.ae