

Filming in Public Spaces and on Pavements

When filming on the pavement or in public spaces, there are many elements to consider beforehand.

Local Authorities manage and maintain most public spaces and pavements and should be informed of any planned production shooting in as much time as possible. Timescales generally increase for bigger productions, but even smaller ones (that might be doing vox pops, GVs etc) should aim to give 48-72 hours' notice as a minimum but longer wherever possible.

When shooting on the pavement or in a public space, the public must always have access unless you have closed the area. Whilst you can politely ask the public to wait as you shoot, they are within their rights to carry on.

Any filming equipment that obstructs the highway – such as cables – must be covered or organised as such to minimise the obstruction, and the local authority should be informed of this beforehand (and be covered in your Risk Assessment and Method Statement). Depending on where you are filming, certain Local Authorities may either; issue a Notice of No Objection, charge you for placing filming equipment on public areas or the adopted highway, or charge an admin processing fee for your application.

Ensure the Local Authority have been informed and are satisfied with the plans and content (and have given permission where necessary); depending on what you are filming, the local police force should also be consulted.

There is no law against shooting private property from a public spot (this happens regularly in news broadcasts) but ensure the land you shoot from is public before going ahead.

If you are wanting to have complete control of the pavement, it is likely that you will require a road closure; depending on where it is, a lead-in time of up to 12 weeks may be required.

Tips to Shooting in Public Spaces and the Pavement

- Choose a safe place to shoot and avoid busy vehicle driveways, public car parks, loading areas, or pedestrianised areas with service vehicle access.
- Shoot in areas where there is plenty of space for the public to get around you, not including having to walk on a road.
- In public areas, try to avoid filming on the move for the safety of the public. If it's essential, contact the Local Authority as a closure may be required so you can control the environment.
- If filming in a public space near the road, try to avoid using anything that could distract drivers such as bright lights (and of course only film near roads if it is safe and ideally if quiet).
- All crew should be made visible – perhaps through the aid of high visibility clothing.
- See our guide on filming the public for further info.

