

COVID-19 Production Guide

Updated: 4 June, 2020

Hey babe,

Look, right now we are all wondering whether or not it's actually possible to film, produce or record safely given the infectious nature of COVID-19. Regardless of views around the virus, it brings up significant ethical and safety issues around the responsibilities we owe not only to ourselves, our colleagues and our clients, but also all of our families, friends and wider communities.

This is a rapidly changing situation, and we'll endeavour to stay as up-to-date with health and safety information, as well as state and federal government restrictions and suggestions.

This may indeed be a long term reality. Beyond the initial lock down phase, other spikes, lock downs and waves may occur, and we'll be constantly monitoring the situation and updating our risk assessments and safety procedures accordingly.

With that in mind, this is how we are currently working within the confines of Aunty Rona:

1) Should we even film or record you at all?

This is a question that should always be asked, regardless of COVID-19. There's an amount of risk in any situation, whether it's a question of someone having a cold, dealing with mental health issues, or working in a physically risky space like a raft in the middle of the ocean or during a riot.

When we are giving a project, we'll always ask the questions:

- **Is there a sufficient public interest to justify producing this project?**
- **And having assessed the risks and safety measures, is that risk proportionate to that of the public interest?**

If in doubt, we'll err on the side of caution.

The additional challenge of COVID-19 is that:

- **Right now almost every location outside your own house can feel like a High Risk Location**
- **The circle of those we have a responsibility to to act safely is much wider. It includes not only our clients and team members, but our family, friends and community.**

The result is that the bar to justifying recording in the public interest is currently much higher than usual, and we need to take an ethical responsibility for our decisions beyond complying with the law.

2) Risk Assessment

This is living framework we're currently working with when assessing any potential projects.

Laws: What is the government advice? Country-wide, state-wide, locally? What is the current advice on travel restriction, PPE, limitations on group numbers, social distancing rules?

Press rights: Do journalists have different rights in this situation? How can we assert our right to them?

Legal advice: Have we sought legal advice for this project? Are we aware of any legal implications?

Handing police: Have we reviewed how local police are enforcing local restrictions?

Travel: Are we aware of the latest travel restrictions? Are we aware of how quickly and easily we could return home if needed?

Fact checking: It's crucial we don't spread misinformation. Are we putting forward information or opinion around COVID-19? If so, how can we ensure we are being accurate and balanced?

Protecting sources: If we've identified we are working with sources who need protecting, how are we committed to doing so (esp. regarding COVID tracking apps, etc)?

Production insurance: Do we have production insurance?

Health insurance: Do we have health insurance?

Life insurance + last wills and testaments: Do we have life insurance and have we checked to see whether our policies include restrictions for undertaking high risk activities? Have our wills etc been discussed with our next of kin?

COVID-19 information: Do we have access to up-to-date information on COVID-19 symptoms, testing, self-isolation and self-distancing requirements? Do we have up-to-date information on the infection and mortality rates in the area we intend to do production?

Local medical systems: Is the public medical system in the area already under significant pressure? Are there alternative medical services available should we require them?

Access to PPE: Do we have access? Do we have enough? Do we know how to use it safely?

Emotional support: How is everyone? This is a stressful time and producing content can add extra strain. How are we giving sufficient consideration to the psychological and emotional effect of this production and how it relates to the current situation? What can be put into place to support the mental wellbeing of the team and our clients?

Lockdown: Assuming an immediate lockdown was put in place, do we have access to accommodation, food, basic communication, transport and medical assistance if required?

Contact tracing: Do we have a system in place to allow contact tracing if required? Who do we anticipate interacting with and how can this be minimised or done in a safe way?

Informed consent: How are we making everyone aware of the risks and safeguards to enable them to make an informed decision about participating? How are we encouraging them to speak up if they are uncomfortable?

Alternatives to production right now:

Can we move physical travel to the filming location (high risk) to remote filming (medium risk) to content generated by the client (low risk)?

3) Our COVID-19 Protocols

Our protocols are about risk minimisation and harm reduction, but they cannot remove all risk.

Our protocols are being kept under regular review to ensure they reflect the most up-to-date developments and best practices. If you think we could improve anything, please get in touch: zoe@pickfordmedia.com

Staying on top of advice: We are dedicated to monitoring evolving external developments on how production can take place as safely as possible.

Previous potential exposure to COVID: We're keeping track of any potential exposure by our team to the virus for the previous 14 days before production and will ask our clients to do the same.

Distancing: We'll be maintaining appropriate social distancing between any crew and clients, and using as small a crew as possible.

Spaces: We'll be shooting outdoors wherever possible and avoiding any spaces that are too small, crowded, or lack ventilation. We'll also be taking into consideration the ease of entry and exit, and the location of the nearest hand washing facilities.

Travel: We're taking into consideration the need to disinfect our travel spaces, production equipment, and vehicles. We'll be using gloves where appropriate, particularly at fuel stations, and follow social distancing rules when stopping for food or fuel.

Food: We'll be using extra vigilance around sanitisation and asking everyone to bring self-prepared food to set.

Self-care: We'll be taking extra breaks and being mindful of energy levels for everyone involved.

Obtaining filming consents: We'll be using electronic papers and release forms wherever possible.

Equipment: We'll be disinfecting equipment (camera, audio, memory cards, microphones, etc) before and after filming. Hand sanitiser and wipes will be available on site at all times.

After production: We're ensuring everyone involved monitors their health for 14 days and reports to us if any symptoms occur.

