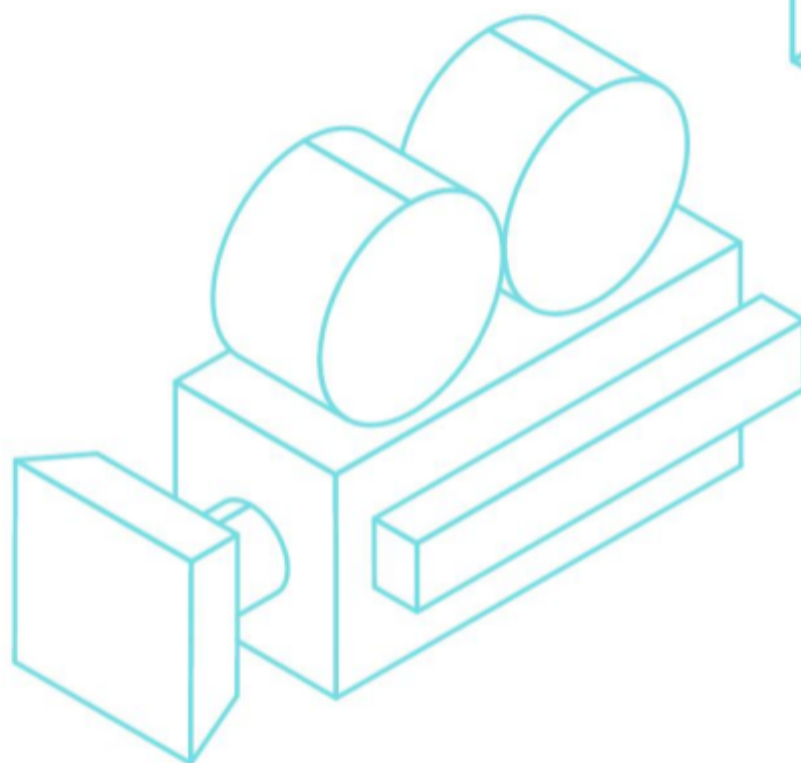


RiskBox Media



[Blog Posts](#)

How to Shoot Safely in a Post-COVID World

30th October 2020



Setting the scene

The world has changed significantly in recent months. But we're now beginning to see some semblance of normality for businesses – and this includes the video and film production sectors.

Although we're moving in the right direction and starting to lift restrictions, there are certain nuances to this new world that production companies need to bear in mind. Some insurers are applying COVID-19 exclusions or new terms and conditions, for example, so checking how your policy responds is crucial.

Additional considerations should also be made regarding safe operating procedures. Almost every production company will have an existing portfolio of risk assessments, yet this now needs to be expanded slightly to include COVID-19 risks.

Thankfully, managing these risks is not dissimilar to how you would normally ensure safety. We've detailed a few considerations for your production company below, including how they might apply to your insurance policy.

Analyse risks

The first step of any risk management strategy is to identify risks. To do that, you need a deep understanding of your business and all the work that it undertakes. From there, you can analyse the risks (paying close attention to your responsibilities, including to any vulnerable individuals), the potential likelihood of them occurring, and the impact that they would have.

You should complete suitable and sufficient risk assessments for all key risks, and that includes a specific reference to coronavirus or COVID-19.

COVID-19 needs to be considered not just in relation to the on-set production itself, but all other activities – whether you are simply scouting locations, carrying out post-production, or arranging the travel of the crew and kit, even when remote working.

Fortunately, those within the production industry have pooled their expertise and produced practical guidance for the sector. This [guide](#) has been created by broadcasters, leading production companies, risk management providers and industry associations. We would recommend that anyone filming content reads this thoroughly.

Mitigate risks

Once you've identified and evaluated the risks, you can look at the best ways to mitigate them.

Some of this relates directly to insurance, as you can transfer certain risks to them. For COVID-19, we are primarily considering your legal liability for employees, freelance crew members, cast, or members of the public catching COVID-19 due to your negligence.

This ability to transfer risk varies, and it will continue to do so as the latent impact of the pandemic changes the availability of insurance. Aside from issues of legal liability, we have already seen how things such as abandoned or cancelled productions due to COVID-19 have become currently uninsurable, leading the government [to step in and fill the gap](#).

Production companies should also be looking to reduce risk wherever possible. This might be explicitly enforced by insurers, but it is worth doing anyway. Reducing risk has numerous benefits, including:

- [Enhancing claim defensibility](#)
- [Saving time spent dealing with outbreaks](#)
- [Reducing the expense of lost production time](#)
- [Giving confidence to the production crew, as well as commissioners and funders](#)

Risk mitigation can involve simple measures, such as ensuring the right personal protective equipment is both available and a mandatory requirement in certain situations. It can also mean enforcing social distancing, keeping crews lean (only bringing in those required for the specific shoot itself), or enforcing a clear cleaning programme for all kit used.

Sometimes, however, the actions might need to be more specific – such as putting the right practices in place to provide a canteen for a location shoot. There might be ways that the actual shoot can be adapted too, for example:

- [Opting for locations that allow for easier social distancing](#)
- [Rewriting certain scenes so that they can be filmed more safely](#)
- [Building flexibility into the timescales](#)

Often, it's simply a case of relieving the time pressure on the production company to remove the temptation to cut corners in order to hit deadlines.

Manage risks

Here are our three simple tips to an effective risk management process.

1. Document

It is crucial to keep comprehensive records on how you are managing coronavirus or COVID-19 risks. From simple risk assessments through to keeping a log of any on-set crew for tracing purposes, these need to be accurate, up to date and accessible. Doing this can be the difference between being able to successfully defend against a spurious claim or not.

You will need to consider the implications of GDPR for some of this information, and be able to set processes in place so that personal data is only kept as long as is necessary.

2. Communicate

These are uncomfortable times for everyone, and that should be remembered when dealing with those involved in your production.

Be sure to proactively engage with your workforce. Let them know:

- [What measures you are taking to ensure they're safe – contact them in advance of the shoot to allow them time to raise any questions or concerns](#)
- [What's expected of them when they are on location – using signs, clear markings and displaying information around the set will help to reinforce this](#)
- [Why you are asking them to do these things](#)

Communicate clearly and regularly with all other stakeholders too, such as trade unions, employee representatives, investors and contractors. They all need to be comfortable that the workplace will be safe for everyone involved.

Never forget that you may not be aware of who is the most vulnerable in these testing times, particularly regarding mental health.

3. Stay informed

Be sure to keep up to date with all the [latest government advice](#), whether that's on a general national level, relating to a single locale, or specific to your industry.

For any overseas work, make sure to follow [the communications from the FCDO](#) and avoid unnecessary travel against their advice.

Speak to RiskBox for advice

We may be living in a confusing world, and it is impossible to prepare for every eventuality. However, we certainly have an obligation to do all that we can to keep each other safe. That is as true in society as it is during production.

Following the key tips above, and more specifically the industry-published guidelines, is an effective way to reduce the most common COVID-19 risks. It is also a way to comply with almost any terms that may be applied to your production liability insurance.

For more information about insurance during the coronavirus pandemic, please get in touch with a member of our team. You can reach us on 0161 533 0411, info@riskboxuk.com or through our [contact form](#).

