



PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 29 October 2020

Directors UK releases Working Under COVID: Advice for Factual Directors

Today, Directors UK releases [Working Under COVID: Advice for Factual Directors](#), a framework designed to support safe working on factual productions under COVID-19 conditions.

Compiled by Directors UK in collaboration with Directors UK Board Member and factual director **Nic Guttridge**, legal counsel **Prash Naik** and safety consultants **First Option**, the advice was developed in consultation with working factual directors and members of the Directors UK Pay and Working Conditions Committee.

The advice offers factual directors a structured approach to decision making to help ensure their own safety and that of their crew and contributors during the pandemic. The advice takes government health and safety advice and top-level industry guidance and fills in the gaps for factual directors who often have a range of responsibilities beyond those encountered in drama or scripted production.

The nature of a factual director's working environment leaves them particularly exposed to the risks of COVID-19. Unpredictable 'real world' environments, and contributors who aren't paid professionals used to the requirements of filming, make proper planning and preparation more vital than ever.

Speaking today, Nic Guttridge said: *"Even under ordinary conditions, stories about excessive hours, painful schedules, and a lack of adequate support on location make it clear that safety standards have not always been met within factual production. But this pandemic gives us an opportunity to reset the dial and build a better industry – one in which our 'new normal' is kinder, more inclusive, and more human-focused. And in which safety for all is unquestionably the highest of priorities."*

Working Under COVID: Advice for Factual Directors aims to provide a solid base and standardise practice for factual directors to enable them to work safely throughout the pandemic and beyond.

The advice equips directors with the right questions to ask in order to interrogate their editorial vision, production planning and the practicalities of filming through the filter of COVID-19. As COVID-19 advice and restrictions are changing all the time, government and local advice should be read and adhered to before making any decisions.

Working Under COVID: Advice for Factual Directors can be downloaded from the Directors UK website: directors.uk.com/working-under-covid

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Notes to Editors

[Download Working Under COVID: Advice for Factual Directors here](#)

[Read more about Working Under COVID: Advice for Factual Directors here](#)

About Directors UK

Directors UK is the professional association of UK screen directors. It is a membership organisation representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 7,500 members – the majority of working TV and film directors in the UK. Directors UK collects and distributes royalty payments and provides a range of services to members including campaigning, commercial negotiations, legal advice, events, training and career development. Directors UK works closely with fellow organisations around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns, promotes excellence in the craft of direction and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.

About Prash Naik

Prash Naik is the former General Counsel for Channel 4 Television in the UK. He now lives in Sydney providing pre-publication advice to TV, film and digital producers internationally. He advises through the London media law practice Reviewed & Cleared, his Sydney based law practice Prash Naik Consulting and as General Counsel to the Doc Society a non-profit foundation (London and New York) supporting independent documentary filmmakers globally.

About First Option

As the leading health and safety provider in the film and entertainment industry, First Option have been at the forefront of supporting production to restart in the face of COVID-19.

First Option were part of the BFC's production subgroup and the UK broadcasters' development of COVID-19 production protocols, and they have worked with many of the US studios and SVoDs to create UK versions of their COVID procedures. They have also created their own COVID-19 Production Manual, The Yellow Book, which is currently being used across the sector.

They partnered with ScreenSkills to create the COVID-19 awareness e-learning course, and their own Managing COVID-19 Risks on Productions and COVID-19 Supervisors online courses have trained over 7,000 production staff to date. They produce a weekly COVID-19 dashboard briefing for clients and regular technical notes on various COVID matters, from testing to hygiene.

The First Option Stores Team have supplied PPE and sanitising products (including 100,000 masks) since the pandemic began, and their in-house and associate team of safety consultants have been supporting productions onsite to develop and implement COVID protection measures, ensuring cast and crew members are kept safe on set.