DIRECTORS UK

Working Under COVID: Advice for Factual Directors

CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has left no industry or profession untouched. The film and TV industry was itself hit particularly hard by a complete production shutdown very early on during the crisis.

As the industry now tentatively returns to work, Directors UK wants to support its members as creative leaders so they can play a central role in ensuring that the return to production is as safe and creative as possible.

To that end, we have created this detailed resource to help directors navigate their way through production during this "new normal" we now find ourselves in. We hope to equip directors with important questions and thinking points that will help inform a COVID-safe approach throughout every stage of production.

The resource will help directors to:
- identify the key safety issues and questions to ask;
- contribute to the preparation of risk assessments;
- contribute to the preparation of safety procedures;
- identify any potential failings or oversights;
- raise concerns without fear of sanction;
- escalate serious safety issues promptly;
- use their knowledge, expertise and professional discretion to determine whether the risks and risk management procedures that are in place are acceptable or not.

This resource is divided into two sections. In **Fundamentals** we cover points that are relevant throughout the entire production process. Where appropriate, we also include advice and best practice on dealing with specific issues. In **Stages of Production** we raise the relevant thinking points and questions that directors should be asking themselves at each distinct production stage.

The industry has already worked collaboratively on two pieces of high-level guidance:

1. Pact TV Production Guidance: Managing the Risk of COVID-19 in Production Making
2. British Film Commission: Working BFC Safely During COVID-19 in Film and High-end TV Drama Production

We refer to these documents throughout this resource, however both are largely focused on film and drama and we therefore recognise that factual directors are in particular need of additional support. While the following resource is relevant to directors working in all genres, we have put a specific emphasis on the framework of factual directing

Factual directors often have to take on a lot of the responsibility themselves for ensuring that their production is COVID-safe; they work in less controlled environments (which therefore have higher COVID-related risks), with non-professional contributors and with smaller production teams.

There are several key points that emerge throughout this resource, all of which adhere to existing good practice stipulations for factual directing:

- Avoid lone working
- Ensure that reasonable working hours are maintained
- Establish clear lines of responsibility throughout every stage of the project and its production

These stipulations have always been important, even in non-COVID times, but are now critical within the current circumstances. Adhering to these key practices will help decrease further risks across a production.

The document is purposefully non-prescriptive so as to encourage its use as a resource to aid the director's planning process, and to help directors to assess the support offered by existing production company protocols.

This resource has been created in collaboration with Prash Naik (Legal Counsel), First Option Safety Consultants, the Directors UK Factual Working Group and the Directors UK Pay and Working Conditions Committee. See **Contributors** *section for more information.*

This resource was produced in October 2020, but we hope that the thinking points contained within will remain relevant regardless of any changes to government COVID-19 advice and restrictions. However, the situation is changing all the time and the latest government and local advice should always be referred to before embarking on any form of production.

FUNDAMENTALS

Coronavirus safety management plan

Pages 6-9

Production company protocols

Production companies should have a set of protocols for coronavirus safety management within the production environment – which should include advice on travel, health monitoring, social distancing, and hygiene practices.

Thinking points:

- Has the production company that hired you provided you with their production protocols? (If not, request them as soon as possible as they will help you plan.)
- Does this cover statements of health, social distancing, use of face coverings and PPE, and personal hygiene requirements?
- Can you explain these protocols to others?
- Will all the team members receive COVID-19 safety training?
- In some circumstances, finer details for specific projects will need to be worked out in the real world of the shoot, but consider what information you need as a professional director to feel confident that anticipated risks have been considered and mitigated for you, your team and the contributors.

Guidance:

- Government recommendations change frequently as more is learnt about the virus. Review government recommended work protocols and check yours are in line with the latest advice.
- As a professional association, Directors UK advocates that members use their own expertise, judgement and professional discretion in deciding when and how you work, as few absolute rules govern the practice of a director and there are few employment protections in law for those working on a freelance basis. Only you can decide what level of risk is acceptable in your work, but Directors UK is here to support you by sharing current best practice for working under COVID-19 — enabling you to make informed and knowledgeable decisions.

Risk assessments

In addition to production company protocols, risk assessments are a crucial element of successful coronavirus safety management and risk mitigation.

Thinking points:

- Has a risk assessment been prepared that takes account of the specific risks posed by coronavirus?
- Has the risk assessment been written by or signed off by the director?

Guidance:

- To support risk reduction and problem solving, it is vital that directors have an influence over the substance of the risk assessment. They bring unique insight on what is expected of a shoot and how a creative vision will be realised.

Risk assessments and safety procedures

Risk assessments and safety procedures are referred to throughout this resource and other pieces of industry guidance. They are key tools in any production environment and their importance has only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Directors can make a significant contribution to the preparation of these procedures, and so it is worth breaking down exactly what the requirements are, both under ordinary circumstances and during the pandemic.

Risk assessments

- Productions generally carry out a risk assessment and then implement steps to protect crew and anyone else who could be affected by production activity.
- All employers are required under health and safety legislation to control risks in the workplace. These requirements have not changed, the only difference is that employers must now also consider the additional risks posed by COVID-19 and take reasonable steps to protect the production crew and others.
- COVID-19 is specifically categorised as a biological hazard, which is covered by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations. In order to comply with COSHH regulations, risk assessments need to consider how COVID-19 might be transmitted during production and decide whether reasonable steps have been taken to prevent that harm.

- However, the key steps that need to be undertaken as part of a COVID-19 risk assessment are fundamentally the same as for all risk assessments. The production must:
  - identify which work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus
  - think about who could be at risk
  - decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed
  - act to remove the activity or situation or, if this isn't possible, control the risk
  - record any significant findings
  - keep the risk assessment under active review

Safety procedures

- Regarding COVID-19, the key areas that need to be addressed in terms of safety procedures are:
  - Health screening and identification of vulnerable individuals or groups.
  - Distancing – working out how production can be completed whilst maintaining appropriate social distancing measures, and, when this isn't possible, working out what alternative precautions need to be put in place (which could include testing or isolating).
  - Hygiene – providing adequate facilities so that everyone can maintain their own personal hygiene as well as the hygiene of any equipment that is used and the space that production is taking place in.
  - 'Cohorts' or 'bubbles' – is it necessary to organise crews into 'cohorts' or 'bubbles' to minimise the risk of infection and the impact of any cases?
- When identifying key risks and the safety procedures needed to control those risks, reference can be made to government guidance and industry best practice. In particular, the Pact TV Production Guidance, the British Film Commission guidance and the First Option Yellow Book (you can also find links to these documents in the Useful Resources section).

Coronavirus safety management

Production company protocols should identify who is responsible for coronavirus safety management during the shoot.

Thinking points:

- Is your team large enough to ensure that coronavirus safety can be maintained while also managing the practicalities and logistics of the shoot?
- Has your production been assigned an individual for coronavirus management and has that individual received coronavirus safety training?
- Is there a clear process in place for the reporting and addressing of any issues that arise?

Guidance:

- The person with responsibility for overall coronavirus safety management will need to make sure that protocols and risk assessments are adhered to. They must also have the authority to call out breaches and make corrective decisions related to safety during production. You will need to work closely with this individual.
- On a very small shoot, it may be that the director has to be the person responsible for coronavirus safety management (although it would always be advisable to share this responsibility with someone else if at all possible). In this instance, the director should ask their production company for suitable coronavirus safety training.

Risk mitigation actions

Pages 10-13

Health screening

It is important to establish the coronavirus status of all team members and contributors, as well as any clinical vulnerabilities that may place individuals at heightened risk.

Thinking points:

- Have you and your team been asked to complete statements of health at the start of production?
- Is there a process in place for regular status updates?
- Is there a process for obtaining statements of health from on-screen talent and contributors?
- Is there a policy for routine temperature checks?
- What happens if a contributor or someone on the team refuses to comply with screening, social distancing, hygiene protocols or use of PPE/face coverings?

Guidance:

- A sample statement of health form can be downloaded here.
- Daily temperature checks for all personnel are recommended, and for contributors and crew on arrival at location. The NHS website identifies 38°C as an elevated temperature and recommends that action should be taken. As well as helping to identify potential risks, daily temperature checks offer reassurance to contributors that safety is a primary consideration.
- If a contributor or someone on the team is refusing to comply, ask why they are declining to follow the protocols and ask them to do so for the safety of all. If they still refuse, notify the production company so they can address the issue.
- Risk assessments and safety procedures will identify which measures are required for everyone to be able to work safely. If those measures can't be adhered to, then production will need to be paused until they can. Communication with the production company will be necessary to resolve these kinds of issues.

Social distancing

Adequate social distancing is a key factor in reducing the possibility of contracting or spreading coronavirus.

Thinking points:

- What steps are being taken to promote appropriate social distancing?

Guidance:

- A distance of 2 metres should be maintained between all individuals. Filming locations should be selected with social distancing as a primary consideration.
- According to the HSE, if it isn't possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres, it is acceptable to keep 1 metre+ apart whilst also taking some steps to mitigate risks. Mitigations should include:
    - using PPE/face coverings
    - enhanced cleaning and sanitising
    - limited contact between individuals
    - good ventilation
- And, where possible, it is also advised to:
    - work side by side/back to back rather than face to face
    - limit movement of people
    - use floor tape to mark work areas
    - use screens to create a physical barrier between people
- Keep a record of all personnel who come into close contact with each other.

Handwashing and disinfecting

Good personal hygiene and handwashing is a key factor in reducing the possibility of contracting and spreading coronavirus. As is the disinfecting of handled objects and high touch point areas.

Thinking points:

- Is there adequate access to soap and water for handwashing?
- Does your filming kit contain adequate supplies of items that will help mitigate the risk of coming into contact with coronavirus? E.g. wipes, sprays, sanitisers and face coverings.

Guidance:

- Hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds using soap and water (or if not available, hand sanitiser with 70% alcohol content) at every one of the following stages:
    - arrival at a new location
    - after using the toilet
    - before eating
    - after blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing into your hands
    - whenever you come into contact with 'high touch points', i.e. areas or items that may have been touched by many other people, such as door handles
    - also consider washing hands between set ups
- When washing, pay particular attention to your thumbs, fingertips and between your fingers.
- Always include hand sanitiser in your filming kit. Disposable gloves are also recommended for situations where handwashing and sanitising may not be possible (see next section on PPE).
- You may find it reassuring to bring more PPE, sanitising supplies and face coverings than you think you need as it may be difficult to obtain these on location.
- At a minimum, all objects that have been handled should be wiped down at least once a day.
- Frequency of cleaning should be increased if items have been delivered through 'unknown' hands or if handled by several people.

<u>Personal protective equipment (PPE) and face coverings</u>

Physical barriers protect the wearer from the risk of exposure to coronavirus posed by saliva droplets.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered what PPE may be beneficial for the safe management of your production?
- Do you have adequate supplies for all team members and contributors?
- Is it possible to source additional supplies of PPE on location?
- Have you considered options for the safe disposal of PPE and antibacterial wipes?

Guidance:

- Face coverings should be worn:
    - in crowded areas, indoors and outdoors
    - when working at less than a 2-metre distance from any individual
    - when it is possible you may come into close contact with others
    - when travelling with another person in a car or other small vehicle (even on a short journey), or on a plane
- If using reusable face coverings such as a scarf, these should be replaced daily and washed before reuse.
- All used single-use PPE should be disposed of as soon as possible. They can be placed in a sealed bag – such as a sealable sandwich bag – and disposed of.
- If prolonged close contact work is a possibility (within 1 metre of each other or more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of each other), protective visors and aprons are recommended.
- Gloves are only recommended for situations in which handwashing or sanitising is not possible.

Coronavirus symptoms response

Pages 14-18

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature, but a temperature of 38°C or over is considered high)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least one of these symptoms. Check the latest set of symptoms officially recognised by the NHS.

Any contributors or crew with at least one of these symptoms should self-isolate and book a test as per government guidance.

Coronavirus symptoms response plan

All production companies should have processes in place for responding to coronavirus symptoms and infection during production.

Thinking points:

- Has your employer provided you with their protocols for responding to coronavirus symptoms or infection? Request these as early as possible, as it is helpful to be familiar with these in advance so you can brief your team and plan.
- Do you understand the guidance/protocols and your responsibility within them? Are they sufficiently clear? Can you explain them to others? Is there a clear process for keeping up to date with any changes to these protocols?
- What if the production company doesn't have a procedure in place?

Guidance:

- If an individual develops coronavirus symptoms, the director should notify the production company and enact the production's infection protocols and 'track and trace' processes.

- If the director determines that the protocols are insufficient or unclear, they should raise this urgently with the production company.
- If the production company does not have protocols for dealing with an infection during production (or hasn't provided you with them), there are some basic steps you should take in the event of someone developing coronavirus symptoms:
    - The director should:
        - notify the producer/production company
    - The affected individual should:
        - go home and self-isolate in line with government guidance
        - travel by private transport or taxi, taking all possible precautions including wearing face coverings, touching as little as possible and ensuring good ventilation
        - book a test via NHS 111 or online
    - Personnel who have been working with this symptomatic individual should:
        - follow the same advice as above for symptomatic individuals
        - ensure that all equipment used by the symptomatic individual is cleaned

Preventing the spread of infection

What can you do to help prevent the spread of the infection? Given many cases of coronavirus are asymptomatic, always assume there is a risk to mitigate against.

A thorough understanding of the most effective ways to mitigate against the spread of coronavirus is key.

Thinking points:

- Follow any protocols that are provided.
- Is there a robust system of health declarations in place?
- Are daily temperature checks being incorporated?
- Is a robust approach to social distancing being followed?
- Is everyone equipped with – and using – all relevant PPE, face coverings and sanitising supplies?
- Is there a robust approach to personal hygiene and disinfection?
- Is there an adequate cleaning process in place for spaces and equipment?
- What can you personally do to set a positive example? (e.g. handwashing, social distancing, face coverings)

Guidance:

- Decisions on responses and action should take government recommendations as a minimum requirement for safe action. See **Coronavirus symptoms response plan** for details.

Track and trace

Productions should have their own 'track and trace' process to inform everyone if a risk of infection exists.

Thinking points:

- Are you familiar with the production company's 'track and trace' system?

Guidance:

- There is a law governing how personal data (such as your health status) can be used, stored and processed; this is called the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – find out more. Ask to see the production company's GDPR policy to ensure your data is stored and handled in a legally compliant way.
- If the production company has no in-house 'track and trace' system in place, a director can refer to the government guidance on track and trace for businesses to ensure that close contacts are recorded appropriately.
- In England, a production company is required to notify their local health protection team if multiple cases of coronavirus occur on a production.

Working without a production company

If you are working independently, without a partner production company, you must create your own protocols.

Thinking points:

- Even with limited resources, what can you do to plan for a worst-case scenario?

Guidance:

- The guidance provided in the **Coronavirus safety management** and **Coronavirus symptoms response** sections will inform your own protocols. In addition, these resources contain scalable elements that you can adapt:
    - Pact TV Production Guidance: Managing the Risk of COVID-19 in Production Making
    - British Film Commission: Working BFC Safely During COVID-19 in Film and High-end TV Drama Production
    - Independent Documentary Filming in the Time of Corona
    - Government guidance on safe arts workplaces

STAGES OF PRODUCTION

Throughout production

Pages 19-30

The following sections should be factored into your thinking across ALL stages of production, to create an environment of good practice and ongoing risk mitigation. The sections after this (p.31-47) present thinking points that are specific to individual stages of production.

Locations

Judicious selection of locations can protect crew and contributors.

Thinking points:

- Has the suitability of all locations been fully considered from the perspective of coronavirus safety management? Think about locations for team meetings, castings, filming, editing etc.

Guidance:

- The choice of locations should be strongly influenced by social distancing protocols.
- Outdoor locations present a lower risk of infection.
- Reduce risk by operating at times of the day that have a lower footfall.
- Indoor locations should be well ventilated.

Cohort/team size

To reduce the risk of infection, personnel should be kept to a minimum at every stage of production. However, this should not come at the expense of the safe management of the shoot and, as such, the unit should be comprised of at least two people.

Thinking points:

- Are you satisfied that you have enough personnel to work safely?
- Are you satisfied that all team members are essential?
- Have you considered the implications that the size of your team will have on social distancing?
- Do special arrangements need to be made with locations or contributors to ensure that safe working space is not an issue?
- Whenever people are not needed 'on set', can they be comfortably located elsewhere?

<u>Lone working</u>

Working alone is to be avoided. No director or individual should be alone on location without additional production support.

Guidance:

- Practical safety considerations, as well as the need for robust coronavirus management, mean that a filming unit should consist of a minimum of two people. Paired crews can look after each other, better manage the safety of contributors and work in tandem to identify and minimise risks in a way that a lone worker cannot – especially if this lone worker is a self-shooting director whose attention is focused on many different things. Teams can also help manage safe equipment handling and share production and safeguarding tasks so as to reduce the amount of time needed at a location.

Additional personal safety considerations

As the creative leader, remind everyone in your briefing that safety management is a shared responsibility. Everyone should follow protocols, maintain good hygiene and practise social distancing.

Remote working

Interactions that can take place remotely are safer.

Thinking points:

- What aspects of production can be done remotely?

Guidance:

- Video conferencing provides the safest way to interact.

Physical health and welfare

A healthy diet and adequate rest aid the immune system and improve your defenses against coronavirus.

Guidance:

- Take care of your physical health and welfare.
- Reduce the risk of fatigue by ensuring that the length of the working day is reasonable and that the stresses of production are mitigated by the presence of adequate support on location.

Mental health

Living and working in a pandemic environment can cause high levels of anxiety that impact mental health. Checking in with your crew and contributors to see how they're doing will create a positive and supportive environment.

Thinking points:

- What policies do the production company have in place for crew and contributor welfare?
- What kinds of support can be practically accessed in the environment you're working in? Perhaps a production psychologist or the Film and TV Charity's 24/7 Support Line (0800 054 0000).

Guidance:

- Take an interest in your team and your contributors and ask how they're doing. The simple act of talking can help allay anxieties and put issues in perspective. You can always signpost professional support by sharing the number for the Film and TV Charity 24/7 Support Line (0800 054 0000) or details of MIND's online coronavirus support.
- Be mindful of your own mental health. If you are feeling anxious or worried, share your feelings with someone you trust or call the Film and TV Charity 24/7 Support Line (0800 054 0000).

Sharing equipment

Sharing objects such as laptops, calls sheets, release forms, pens and phones can increase the risk of infection.

Thinking points:

- What steps are being taken to reduce or remove the need to share items?

Guidance:

- Plan ahead.
- Ask everyone to bring the equipment they'll need with them.
- Share data digitally where possible.
- Keep antibacterial wipes on hand in case items do have to be shared.
- Keep social distancing in mind when transferring items between people.
- If you do need to send out equipment, it should be disinfected prior to dispatch and sent in sealed, tamper-proof packaging.

Controlled environments

If working in a controlled environment (such as a studio), cleaning and zoning protocols are likely to be in place.

Guidance:

- Adhere to the studio's rules on access and zoning.

Outside suppliers

Working with suppliers introduces elements that are outside of your control, such as interactions with people and equipment whose infection status is unknown.

Thinking points:

- If supplier protocols are not provided to you by your employer, check the supplier website.

Guidance:

- Check that supplier protocols include health screening of staff, distancing measures and/or PPE, good hygiene practices and cleaning of premises/equipment.
- Use antibacterial cleaning products to wipe down all items that pass through 'unknown' hands.

Transport

Ideally, travel to location should be by private transport. If public transport must be used, peak times should be avoided, face coverings worn, and distancing and hygiene measures observed.

Avoiding travel

Avoid travelling if you can.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered remote working or using local personnel to avoid/reduce the need for travel?

Guidance:

- Video conferencing can enable you to work at a safe location.

Public transport

Where possible, public transport should be avoided as it is difficult to guarantee social distancing.

Thinking points:

- If public transport cannot be avoided, are you able to travel outside of peak hours (for both outbound and return journeys)?

Guidance:

- Face coverings are mandatory on public transport, at stations and at terminals.
- Antibacterial wipes should be used to wipe down handrails.
- Avoid peak travel times. Check these with the stations in question. In London, TFL designates peak time as 6.30-9.30am and 4-7pm.

Sharing vehicles

Team members should not share private vehicles that do not allow social distancing. If this can't be avoided, people should wear face coverings, sit as far apart as possible and open windows to create good ventilation. Travelling in the same car with someone constitutes 'close contact' and presents a level of risk.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered how to refuel safely?

- If rental cars are used, has consideration been given to disinfecting door handles, gear sticks, seat belts etc.?
- How would a vehicle breakdown be managed safely?
- If team members are driving alone at the beginning or end of the day, are there processes in place to ensure that days aren't so long that they compromise safety?
- If team members must share a vehicle, what risk mitigation factors are in place?

Guidance:

- Restrictions on household mixing vary across the UK nations and regions; you should therefore check local conditions (both where your journey begins and where it ends) before sharing vehicles with other people, particularly people from different areas.
- Antibacterial wipes should be used on petrol pumps. Gloves may also be appropriate and should be disposed of safely in the bins provided. Ensure your kit contains antibacterial wipes.
- Ask the rental company for their cleaning and sanitising policy.
- Fatigue carries risks and compromises the immune system, making a person susceptible to infection. Avoid long working days and have adequate overnight breaks to rest.

Private hire

Large private hire taxis may allow for social distancing.

Thinking points:

- Has a large vehicle been booked to enable social distancing?
- Have the taxi company's safety protocols been established?

Guidance:

- Check the firm's website or call them to find out details.

<u>International travel</u>

Where possible, international travel should be avoided.

Thinking points:

- Are you familiar with coronavirus travel protocols at your destination?
- Is quarantine/self-isolation required there?
- Are you familiar with the protocols of your chosen airline?
- What is your plan for safe transit from the airport to your destination?
- Have you taken account of any local restrictions and government guidelines in the planning of your shoot?

Guidance:

- At international locations, access to accommodation, food, drink and washrooms may be different to the UK, so plan carefully.
- Keep in mind that different countries will have different guidelines for social distancing and PPE (but you should always default to the more stringent measures).

<u>Accommodation</u>

You will need safe places to stay. If you must stay overnight, check the safeguards that are in place at your hotel or digs.

Thinking points:

- Consider whether you really need accommodation. Is it safer to travel in each day or to limit crew movements by renting accommodation?
- Have you spoken to your accommodation provider or checked their website to get details about their coronavirus protocols? Are they compliant with government advice?

Guidance:

- Government advice to providers of guest accommodation can be found <u>here</u>.

Food and drink

To mitigate against the risk of infection, good hygiene and responsible sourcing is essential when dealing with food and drink.

Thinking points:

- What plan is there for ensuring the safety of food and drink?
- If using outside caterers, have you checked their cleaning, delivery and serving protocols?
- What measures can be taken to ensure the virus cannot be transmitted via cups, cutlery etc.?

Guidance:

- Crew might choose to bring their own refreshments. If not, a single member of the team should be responsible for sourcing food for meetings or locations. Pre-packed food is to be preferred and hands should be washed with soap for 20 seconds before handling items.
- Crew might choose to bring their own cups, plates and cutlery, or use disposable items. Disposable items should be thrown away or recycled as soon as possible.

<u>Toilet facilities</u>

Toilets are an unhygienic environment and often poorly ventilated. They may recently have been used by individuals whose coronavirus status is unknown.

Thinking points:

- Are suitable toilet and handwashing facilities available?

Guidance:

- Maintain a distance from other users.
- Avoid direct contact with high-touch points (areas that many people will have touched). Use antibacterial wipes to sanitise door handles, taps and toilet seats.
- Put the lid down before flushing.
- Dispose of wipes in bins provided.
- Always wash your hands.

Pre-production

All possible steps should be taken to allow pre-production work to take place remotely. In-person meetings should only take place after a rigorous risk assessment and mitigation process.

Production meetings

Remote pre-production is the safest option. Face-to-face meetings should be avoided wherever possible. If in-person meetings are unavoidable, the ability to enforce social distancing protocols should strongly influence the choice of meeting location.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered all the ways in which work can be undertaken remotely?
- If face-to-face meetings are unavoidable, have you ensured the number of personnel is kept to a minimum?
- Have you considered the safety of the proposed meeting location? What protective provisions do you need to take?
- Face coverings are to be used in indoor spaces where social distancing may not be possible.
- It is highly likely that crew and contributors will have to complete or sign paperwork such as release forms and health declarations throughout the shoot. Can you share digital forms via email instead of using pen and paper?
- If team members are driving alone at the beginning or end of the day, are you confident that the length of the working day does not compromise their safety?

Casting

Pages 32-35

Casting meetings

The safest way to cast is remotely. Face-to-face casting should only take place after a rigorous risk assessment and mitigation process. Social distancing and good hygiene should always be maintained.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered all the ways in which face-to-face meetings with potential contributors can be avoided?
- Can video calls be recorded for sharing digitally with execs and commissioners?
- If in-person casting is unavoidable, what are the protocols for casting in your employer's coronavirus safety management plan?
- Does the production budget accommodate the extra expenditure that you may need to work safely?
- Have team members involved in any location work been made aware of the content of the risk assessment?
- Are there enough people in the team to work safely?
- Do you have more people than you need? You should only use the number of people required to get the job done safely.
- Have all production team members and contributors completed statements of health?
- Have you considered the safety of everyone's travel to and from location?
- Have you packed face coverings and hand sanitiser in your kit?
- Have you considered safe access to refreshments and washrooms?
- Are adequate rest and meal breaks factored in to reduce fatigue?

Casting 'tapes'

Where possible, the production of casting 'tapes' should be carried out remotely.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered all the ways in which footage can be acquired without needing to send production personnel to location?
- Can contributors use their own equipment to film? Can a member of their family shoot the footage? Do you need to help a contributor download software or an app to ensure a compatible file type is delivered?
- If equipment must be sent to contributors, have adequate measures been taken to ensure the risk of infection is minimised?
- Can footage be sent to the production team digitally? If not, how can memory cards or equipment be safely returned to the team?
- Have you considered all options for the remote editing of casting tapes?

Casting locations

The ability to enforce social distancing protocols should strongly influence the choice of casting location.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered the suitability of the location, and its entry and exit routes, for maintaining social distancing?
- If working in a public space, what measures will ensure that the safety of the public is not compromised by casting activities, or by the public themselves breaching social distancing guidelines?
- If you are visiting a domestic environment, have you considered social distancing implications? Have you read the government guidance on working in other people's homes?
- Restrictions may vary across the UK nations and regions. Have you checked the latest status of the location and does your work comply with the local restrictions in place?
- Are you aware of the age and health status of all members of the household? Check in advance. The presence of elderly or shielding individuals may mean a different approach is needed.
- If you are entering a contributor's workplace, have you seen the organisation's own COVID protocols? Are you satisfied that the organisation's COVID protocols are robust and that nothing about your activities will compromise them?
- If meeting inside, a face covering is advised. If PPE is to be used, have provisions been made for its safe disposal?
- Have you considered how to store unused equipment safely so that it is not accessible to anyone who may pose a contamination risk?

<u>Filming logistics</u>

Coronavirus safety measures may have an impact on creative and technical choices.

Thinking points:

- Have you reviewed your employer's coronavirus safety management plan and considered how it may be delivered at the location?
- Have you considered the impact of social distancing on creative choices, such as two-camera filming, or appropriate lens selection?
- Have you considered the logistics of recording audio?
- How will you ensure the use of radio microphones will not compromise social distancing? Can the contributor be told how to affix the equipment themselves? What systems have you devised for the safe transfer of radio transmitters and microphones from production team members to contributors?
- Exposed microphones may be contaminated by droplets of saliva, so attaching radio microphones under clothing and holding boom microphones overhead would also reduce risk. Disposable microphone covers may also be an option.
- How will the team be situated in relation to each other during filming to maintain social distancing? What PPE would be beneficial?
- Have you considered how to maintain a COVID-safe shoot given the changeable and unpredictable nature of many filming situations?
- Do you need a back-up plan?
- Are you following the coronavirus safety management plan?

Recces

Pages 36-39

All possible steps should be taken to conduct recces remotely. As well as assessing the suitability of a location for filming, the recce should also assess the practicalities of running a COVID-safe shoot. The shoot should only be authorised in this location if safety can be managed. Where advance recces are not possible, a full site assessment must be carried out on the day of filming by the lead production team member before recording. If it is determined that filming cannot take place safely, an alternative must be sought.

Remote and in-person recces

The safest recces take place remotely. In-person recces should only take place after a rigorous risk assessment and mitigation process.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered all options to avoid in-person recces? What information can you secure via research? E.g. photographs.
- Are you able to assess the location from a COVID-safe perspective, as well as from the point of view of your creative vision? Does the location allow you to be creative whilst also being careful?
- Can local personnel or contributors be directed to provide the information usually acquired via a recce?
- If an in-person recce is unavoidable, have you ensured the number of personnel is kept to a minimum?
- Are you following your employer's coronavirus safety management plan and does the production budget accommodate the extra expenditure you may need in order to recce safely? E.g. additional spending on PPE and taxis rather than public transport.
- Have team members involved in the recce been made aware of the content of the risk assessment so they can mitigate risks as directed?
- Have all production team members and points of contact completed statements of health?
- Have you considered the safety of everyone's travel to and from location? Can everyone avoid travelling at peak times on public transport?
- If team members are driving alone at the beginning or end of the day, are you confident that the length of the working day does not compromise their safety?
- Have you considered safe access to refreshments and washrooms?
- Are adequate rest and meal breaks factored in to reduce fatigue?

<u>Recce 'tapes'</u>

Where possible, the production of recce 'tapes' should be carried out remotely.

Thinking points:

- If contributors/local personnel are providing recce tapes, can they use their own equipment to film?
- If equipment must be sent to them, have adequate measures been taken to ensure risk of infection is minimised?
- Equipment should be disinfected prior to dispatch and sent in sealed, tamper-proof packaging.
- Can footage be sent to the team digitally? If not, have adequate arrangements been made for cards/equipment to be safely returned?
- Have you considered all the options for the remote editing of recce tapes?

Recce considerations

As well as assessing the suitability of a location for filming, the recce should also assess the practicalities of running a COVID-safe shoot.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered the suitability of the location, including its entry and exit routes, for maintaining social distancing?
- If the location is indoors, is it well ventilated?
- If the location is a public space, what measures could be taken to ensure the safety of the public is not compromised by filming activities, or by the public themselves breaching social distancing guidelines?
- If social distancing cannot be guaranteed, what steps will be put in place?
- If filming indoors, are you satisfied that you will be able to maintain a COVID-safe environment (e.g. social distancing from household members/employees)?
- If you are entering a workplace, have you seen the organisation's own COVID protocols? Are you satisfied that nothing about your activities or the proposed filming will compromise those protocols?
- Have you considered how to safely store unused equipment so that it is not accessible to anyone who may pose a contamination risk?
- Have you considered the impact of social distancing on creative choices, such as two-camera filming or appropriate lens selection?
- How will the team be situated in relation to each other during filming to maintain social distancing?
- Have you considered whether PPE or a face covering is necessary? If single-use PPE is to be used, have provisions been made for its safe disposal?
- Are you following the coronavirus safety management plan?

Last-minute recces

It may not be possible to recce ahead of filming. Where this is the case, a full recce should be conducted on the day.

Thinking points:

- Have you scheduled sufficient time for an on-site recce on the day of filming?
- Have you lined up contingency locations in case unforeseen issues make your favoured location unsuitable?
- Are you satisfied that all the points in the **Recce considerations** section above are adequately met?

Shoot planning

Pages 40-45

A rigorous approach to shoot planning will ensure that foreseeable challenges to safety are overcome ahead of time, and unforeseen challenges can be more easily mitigated.

Remote filming

Where possible, steps should be taken to allow for the remote management of shoots.

Thinking points:

- Have you considered the viability of using remote cameras, or a camera rig? Placing and retrieval in a COVID-safe manner should be covered in the risk assessment.
- Could you use footage shot by contributors to reduce the need for physical contact between crew and contributors?
- Have you considered using local crew working to a brief from the principal director, or being directed remotely by the principal director?

Production team filming

Filming by production team members should only take place after a rigorous risk assessment and mitigation process.

Thinking points:

- Do you have enough people to run a safe shoot?
- Is the team large enough to ensure that all equipment can be safely carried, stored, and managed?
- Has a team member been assigned to coronavirus safety management, to ensure the director is adequately supported? And has this team member received coronavirus safety training?
- Have all team members, contributors and points of contact completed up-to-date statements of health?
- Have you factored in adequate time to allow for daily temperature checks and the maintenance of good hygiene and disinfection protocols?
- If you have a crew member doing hair and make-up who has prolonged physical contact with presenters or contributors, have provisions been made for masks, visors and aprons?
- If you are visiting a domestic environment, have you considered social distancing implications? Have you read the government guidance on working in other people's homes?
- Restrictions may vary across the UK nations and regions. Have you checked the latest status of the location and does your work comply with the local restrictions in place?
- If team members are driving alone at the beginning or end of the day, are you confident that the length of the working day does not compromise their safety?
- Have you considered safe access to refreshments and washrooms?
- Are adequate rest and meal breaks factored in to reduce fatigue?
- Are you following the coronavirus safety management plan?

Call sheets

It is vital that coronavirus safety management prioritises the welfare of production personnel and contributors. This may have an impact on the scheduling of a filming day.

In conjunction with production management and senior producers, it is the director's responsibility to make sure that the ambitions of the shoot do not present undue risk to safety for team members, contributors and members of the public.

Thinking points:

- Has a realistic call sheet been produced?
- Has the risk assessment been used to develop the call sheets and has the director signed this off?
- Have you included data wrangling, edit note preparation and phone calls to base as part of the working day? These should not be extras.
- Have contributors been notified of relevant call sheet details?
- What procedures are in place to ensure contributors do not have to wait around 'on set' when not needed?
- In the event of an overrun, what steps will be taken to ensure that production personnel and contributors do not become unduly fatigued?

Equipment

Rented equipment

Thinking points:

- Are the protocols surrounding equipment cleaning and despatch from your chosen facility acceptable?
- When equipment is delivered to a production company or team member, will it need to be quarantined away from people on arrival?
- What protocols are in place for disinfecting kit before and after use?

In-house/owned equipment

Thinking points:

- What systems are in place to ensure kit does not come into contact with office personnel?
- What protocols are in place for disinfecting kit before and after use?

On-the-day recces

See **Recces** section above.

Thinking points:

- Has a plan been made and has time been allowed for a full site assessment by a senior production team member on the day of filming?

Shoot logistics

Over-ambitious filming schedules, under-resourced shoots and an editorial approach that is not COVID-minded can all lead to unsafe practices.

Thinking points:

- Have you adapted your creative vision to ensure social distancing can be maintained both in front of and behind the camera throughout filming?
- Have you considered the implications of maintaining social distancing on your camera positions?
- If social distancing cannot be guaranteed, what measures have you put in place to reduce the risk of infection?
- How will you ensure that use of radio microphones does not compromise social distancing? Can the contributor be told how to affix the equipment themselves? What systems have you devised for the safe transfer of radio transmitters and microphones from production team members to contributors?
- Exposed microphones may be contaminated by droplets of saliva, so attaching radio microphones under clothing and holding boom microphones overhead would also reduce risk. Disposable microphone covers may also be an option.

Filming

Page 46

Read this section in conjunction with the Shoot planning section above.

With good planning, many of the potential issues presented by coronavirus will have been removed or substantially reduced ahead of filming. However, the changeable and unpredictable nature of many shoots means that teams should always remain alert to the potential for risk.

Coronavirus safety management

Once filming is underway, it falls to the team member with the responsibility for coronavirus safety to monitor risks. However, the senior production figure on location has overall responsibility for the safe running of the shoot.

Thinking points:

- Has a member of the production team been assigned to coronavirus safety management and has this person received coronavirus safety training?
- Has a system been established through which this person can highlight potential risks?
- Are planned measures to ensure social distancing (both in front of and behind the camera) proving effective? If not, are adequate steps being taken to reduce the risk of infection?
- Is there a responsible approach to hygiene and disinfection? Consider the number of people using a given object. The frequency of cleaning should consider the number of people handling an item. Daily cleaning is a minimum.
- Are all non-essential production team members and contributors 'off set'?
- Is social distancing being factored in to the way that you use radio microphones and give them to contributors?
- Is the transfer of items between personnel being managed with social distancing and hygiene in mind?
- If the day is running behind, what can be done to bring things back on track?
- If the schedule cannot be brought back on track, what steps will be taken to ensure personnel and contributors do not become unduly fatigued?

Post-production

Page 47

It would be safest to carry out post-production preparation and onward workflow remotely. If the team has to come together, social distancing and hygiene protocols must be maintained. Given the amount of time that individuals may spend working closely together over the course of an edit, the potential consequences of lapses in safety are particularly pronounced at this stage.

Working in enclosed spaces

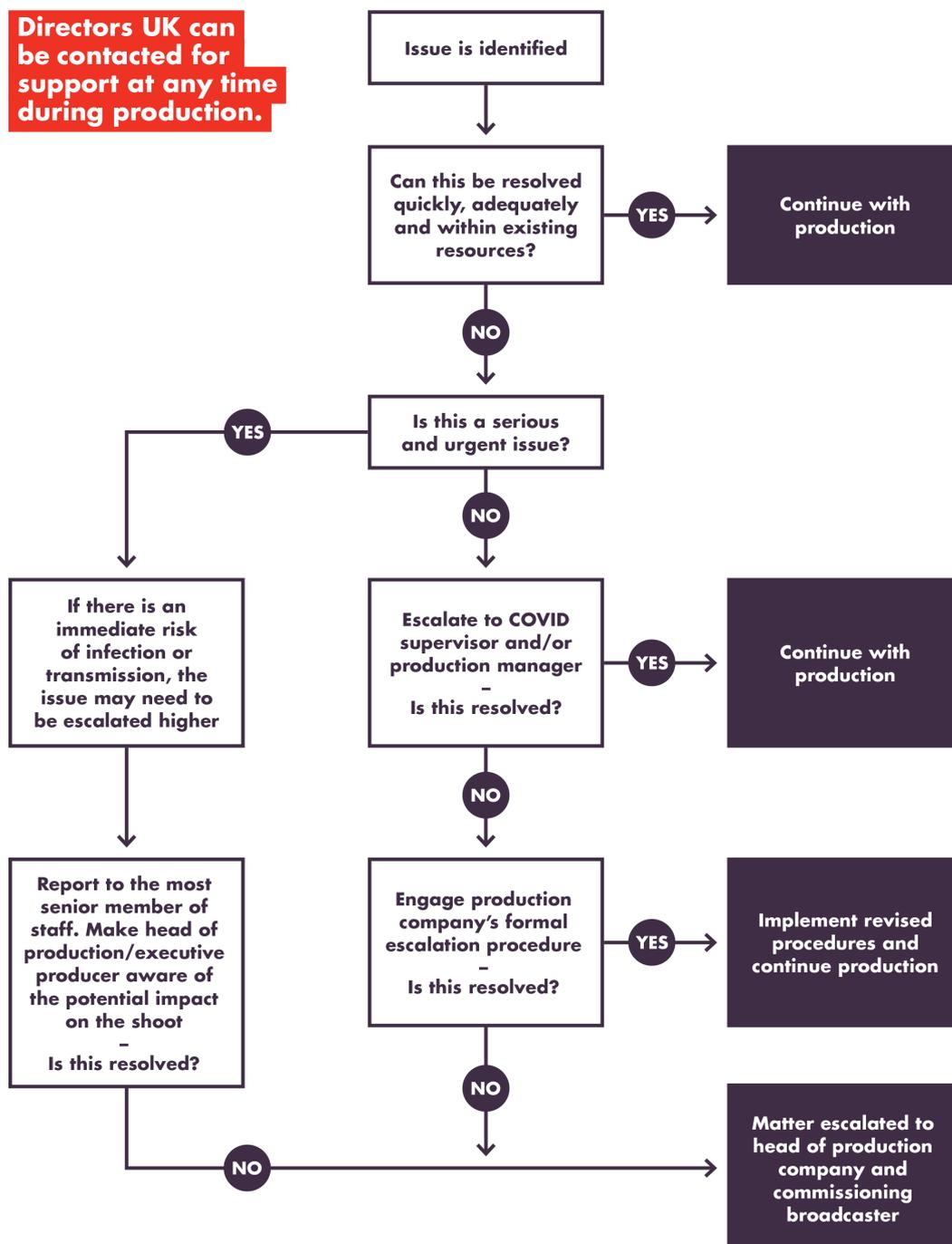Infection risks exist when working in enclosed spaces.

Thinking points:

- Have all possible steps been taken to allow for remote working at all stages of the post-production process?
- Can your post-production facility/editor/audio mixer/grading provider offer remote oversight and sign-off?
- If work cannot be done remotely, what COVID protocols do the facility have in place?
- Many post-production suites are small, below ground and without windows. Are you satisfied that your working environment is well ventilated (with non-recycled air), and large enough to maintain social distancing?
- Do you have access to face masks in case social distancing becomes temporarily impractical?
- Is it possible to introduce screens between individuals?
- Have you planned for the safe provision of food and drink?
- If voiceovers are being recorded remotely, what provisions have been made for the safe delivery and installation of any recording equipment?

What to do if safety procedures aren't being followed

At the heart of this resource is the overriding principle that every member of a production has the right to raise concerns about safety (especially where risk assessments are inadequate or where safety procedures are lax) and for prompt and appropriate action to be taken to address those concerns without fear of sanction.

We have therefore created the flowchart below which gives an overview of how to escalate these kind of concerns. You will see that there are multiple opportunities at which issues can be addressed and risk levels reduced.

Directors UK can be contacted for support at any time during production.

Issue is identified

Can this be resolved quickly, adequately and within existing resources? — YES → **Continue with production**

NO

Is this a serious and urgent issue? — YES

NO

If there is an immediate risk of infection or transmission, the issue may need to be escalated higher

Escalate to COVID supervisor and/or production manager
–
Is this resolved? — YES → **Continue with production**

NO

Report to the most senior member of staff. Make head of production/executive producer aware of the potential impact on the shoot
–
Is this resolved?

Engage production company's formal escalation procedure
–
Is this resolved? — YES → **Implement revised procedures and continue production**

NO

NO → **Matter escalated to head of production company and commissioning broadcaster**

Notes

- It is essential to work with the production team and production company on these matters. The overwhelming majority of production companies do not want to place their staff, freelancers or contributors at risk of harm and they will want to take appropriate action to address these issues.

- Production companies have a legal obligation to take health and safety concerns seriously and in speaking up you are protecting not only yourself, but other members of the production and contributors from harm.

- All production companies should already have a company policy in place that enables individuals to raise health and safety concerns either formally or informally. These may be referred to as "reference-up" or "escalation procedures" and it is entirely appropriate and responsible for freelancers to raise legitimate concerns through these procedures. Large production companies may have a formal escalation procedure that goes through a human resources department, whereas small and medium size companies may require you to go directly to the head of the company.

- If the matter is urgent then speak to the most senior staff member on the shoot, your line manager or the head of production, as appropriate, in person or on the phone. It may be necessary to set out your concerns in writing, especially if no apparent action has been taken. It is important that any note is factual and fair. Do not jump to conclusions if you do not have all the facts to hand and be careful to avoid assigning blame.

- Decide how serious the issue is. For example, on a shoot in which crew and contributors have been satisfactorily pre-screened for the virus, the occasional failure to maintain social distancing may carry relatively little risk. In a case like this you should refer the issue to the most immediate senior member of staff on the shoot. It can also be helpful to offer practical solutions to address the issue. In the previous example, you could suggest the use of floor markings and a written reminder to all crew about the importance of social distancing.

- If there is an immediate risk of infection or transmission, then the issue may need to be escalated higher. For example, a senior crew member has told you that they have a symptom of coronavirus but they are refusing to stop working. If you're able to refer up to the most senior member of staff on the production, then this should be done first, but it may be necessary to escalate to the head of production because of the potential impact on the entire team.

- If you believe you are at an immediate risk of infection, you are entitled to remove yourself from that situation until appropriate procedures have been put in place to safeguard your safety and the safety of other people.

- Risk assessments and safety procedures will identify which measures are required for everyone to be able to work safely. If those measures can't be adhered to, then production will need to be paused until they can. Communication with the production company will be necessary to resolve these kinds of issues.

- Where safety procedures are being deliberately flouted, or members of the team are acting recklessly, or the production company has taken no action or refuses to address the issue, you should escalate the matter to the head of the company to take action.

- If you have followed the escalation procedures and you remain concerned that the production company is ignoring you or refusing to take action, you can speak in confidence to Directors UK and we can take up the issue on your behalf.

- In the most serious cases, it may be appropriate (as a means of last resort) to raise the matter confidentially with the commissioning broadcaster. Some broadcasters have confidential "speak up" procedures while others allow matters to be escalated to senior executives. Directors UK can advise you in confidence should this become necessary.

- If you have doubts about the safety procedures that are in place and whether they're being followed, then it is essential to make yourself heard. We know that no-one wants to be labelled a troublemaker and that raising your voice is more difficult the closer you are to the beginning of your career, but it is never acceptable for an individual who raises genuine safety concerns to be reprimanded, sanctioned or dismissed. If you are concerned this may be an issue, you can always speak in confidence to Directors UK.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Pact TV Production Guidance: Managing the Risk of COVID-19 in Production Making

British Film Commission: Working BFC Safely During COVID-19 in Film and High-end TV Drama Production

First Option: COVID-19 Production Manual – The Yellow Book

Directors UK: Intimacy in the Time of COVID-19 – Directing Nudity and Simulated Sex – A Quick Guide for Screen Directors

NHS: The latest NHS information and advice about coronavirus (COVID-19)

NHS: Who's at higher risk from coronavirus?

NHS: High temperature (fever) in adults

BBC: Close Contact Cohorts and increased screening for COVID-19 – protocol for TV production

ScreenSkills: Coronavirus basic awareness on production training

Doc Society: Independent Documentary Filming in the Time of Corona

Wiggin: Returning to Production Employment and Data Protection FAQs

World Health Organization: COVID-19 quick links

World Health Organization: Map of confirmed COVID-19 cases

World Health Organization: Mythbusters

GOV.UK: Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation

Mental health support:

The Film and TV Charity: 24hr Support Line: 0800 054 0000

MIND: Coronavirus: we're here for you

CONTRIBUTORS

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Prash Naik is the former General Counsel for Channel 4.

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 based in London and New York that supports independent documentary filmmakers globally.

First Option Safety Consultants

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.

Directors UK Pay and Working Conditions Committee

Directors UK Factual Working Group

The Directors UK Pay and Working Conditions committee explores practical issues relating to the daily working lives of directors and helps to identify ways to create positive change. The committee is made up of Directors UK members, and contributors work in all genres of TV production. They have an interest in health and safety, working conditions, contracts, pay and remuneration, and working hours. The committee reports directly to the Directors UK Board.

The Directors UK Factual Working Group is a subgroup of the Pay and Working Conditions Committee that focuses on the unique challenges of factual production.

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.

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