

Violence to workers in broadcast and filming

HSE information sheet

Entertainment Information Sheet No 2

Introduction

This information sheet is one of a series produced by the Joint Advisory Committee for Entertainments (JACE). It gives specific guidance about violence in the broadcast and film industries.

It is aimed at production organisations, their employees and freelancers who may be exposed to a risk of violence during broadcast or filming. More guidance is available on many of the topics (see Further reading).

In this information sheet, 'must' is used only where there is an explicit legal requirement to take a certain action, 'should' is used to indicate what to do to comply with the law – although dutyholders are free to take other action if that would result in compliance.

What the law says

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (the HSW Act) requires employers to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of all employees and anyone who may be affected by their work. This will include affected freelance staff and members of the public.

Other legislation may apply depending on the details of the work being carried out. For instance, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 build upon the requirements in the HSW Act and require dutyholders to assess and control risks.

Roles and responsibilities

The legal duties for health and safety rest with the employer. This normally means the production company. On a day-to-day basis, the overall responsibility for ensuring that the appropriate standards of health and safety are achieved and maintained throughout the production process normally rests with the producer.

In this information sheet, the term producer is used to represent the person in overall control of the production activity.

The producer is responsible for ensuring appropriate communication, coordination and control of the overall event, taking into account any risk assessments from others, including any specialist contractors involved in the production.

Hazards

Violence can arise in many scenarios faced by those involved in broadcast or filming. Circumstances where this is more likely would be during:

- public disorder or civil disturbance;
- action by hostile authorities/forces;
- times when people may be acting under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
- situations where people do not wish to be recorded.

Risk assessment

The producer must ensure risks arising from the work are controlled. To do this they must think about what things in the workplace might cause harm to people and take such steps as are necessary to eliminate or reduce the risk to acceptable levels.

This process is known as risk assessment and it is something required by law. If there are fewer than five employees it does not have to be written down.

The risk of violence must be assessed and controlled in the same way as any other risk to the health and safety of those involved in film and broadcasting.

The producer must as part of the risk assessment process include the risk of violence. They must review it as necessary in light of new information and as the situation changes. This assessment will inform

discussions about whether to proceed with the production, what controls must be put in place and what circumstances would cause the production to be halted. Most violent incidents can be avoided or their effects reduced with pre-planning and a thorough knowledge of any situations that may be encountered. This should, wherever possible, include a 'recce' of the location and detailed research of groups and individuals that may be involved.

Risk management

For general information on managing the risk of violence to staff consult HSE's webpages (see Further reading).

Employees and others working in potentially violent environments must continually assess the effectiveness of any controls in place and make changes as necessary to ensure their safety and the safety of others, or withdraw from the situation. This process is sometimes called dynamic risk assessment.

Public disorder/civil disturbance

Those involved in film and broadcasting are at particular risk of exposure to violence when working in areas where public disorder or civil disobedience is expected or is ongoing. During the risk assessment process consider:

- alternative methods of gathering footage, eg using helicopters, UAV, remote cameras or obtaining footage from others such as the police or fire authority;
- use of a safe vantage point with a safe evacuation route;
- using the minimum number of people required to ensure the necessary mix of skills, knowledge and experience;
- ensuring safe routes in and out and transportation;
- advantages or disadvantages of unmarked vehicles and concealed equipment;
- obtaining the services of a local person with knowledge of the area;
- methods of communication with the crew, especially if they become separated;
- personal protective equipment or PPE, eg head protection, safety shoes, body armour;

- cooperation with other broadcasters on site;
- use of security agencies, bodyguards etc;
- briefing the crew as to the likelihood and expected level of violence and circumstances when they should withdraw, ie if their presence is inflaming the situation;
- emergency arrangements in case of injury etc.

Training

Employees who may be exposed to a risk of violence in the course of their work should receive appropriate training and instruction from a competent person. The content of this will be dependent on the scenarios they may foreseeably encounter. Training may cover a range of situations from simple de-escalation techniques to specialised instruction concerning work in conflict zones.

Reporting incidents of violence

Injuries (physical or psychological) arising from violence and/or 'near-miss' incidents involving violence should always be reported to the employer or the person in charge of the production.

The police should be informed if it is suspected that a crime has taken place.

RIDDOR 2013

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) require that a report be made to the relevant enforcing authority where people are harmed as a result of work. This would include:

- death (of an employee or member of the public);
- major injury;
- the person being incapacitated for the work they would normally be expected to do for a period more than seven days.

Reports must not be suppressed because injuries were deliberately caused.

Further reading

Reporting accidents and incidents at work: A brief guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) INDG453(rev1) HSE 2013 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg453.htm

Risk assessment: A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace Leaflet INDG163(rev4) HSE 2014
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.htm

Work-related violence www.hse.gov.uk/violence

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

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