

This statement is intended to provide initial guidance for students planning to incorporate scenes involving stunts, visual effects, staged fights or handling prop weapons. Such scenes require detailed planning including specific health and safety risk assessment, advisory support from the supervising practice course tutor and technical staff, and an effective work method statement approved, before briefing all involved in filming and performing the scene.

Work activity general risk assessment	GRA reference	Risk rating
Studio or location filming work, generally involving direction fictional sequences	N/A	Event specific, i.e. dependant on particular location, the requirements of the scene and the nature of the stunt, effect, fight or weapon involved

**Example work tasks:**

- Performed smoking
- Staged pushes, falls and trips
- Simulated acts of physical abuse
- Theatrical smoke machines
- Practical fires (for example a camp-fire scene)
- Bearing or handling theatrical weapons
- Wearing of military, emergency service, security or similar costumes
- Filming moving vehicles from static positions or from other moving vehicles
- Simulated medical procedures

**Physical environment:**

- The operating environment must be properly risk-assessed to ensure it is suitable for the purpose. Particular considerations include emergency evacuation, the floor surface, which may need suitable cushioning to reduce the effect of staged falls, etc., lighting and visibility, ability to give and receive instructions that may be crucial to safe working, proximity of the action to props and equipment that might cause injury if struck, ability to control and clear any liquids or vapours used in the performance, and need to suspend normal operating arrangements such as traffic flow (both vehicle and pedestrian), installed systems such as temporary suspension of smoke detection alarms, etc.
- Some operating environments are intrinsically hazardous and will require specialist management, normally involving a specialist industry-recognised adviser or supervisor.

- Any staged conflicts, bearing or use of weapons, wearing of certain costumes and similar activities planned to take place in public view must be properly managed and will usually require licensing with the relevant local authority film department, police notification, and provision of clear information to members of the public about the filming work.
- Plans of any such sequences must incorporate effective arrangements for ensuring visiting participants (such as actors and extras) are effectively briefed on safety arrangements and incidental 'visitors', such as members of the public, prevented from entering the work area by physical barriers, warning notices and competent gate supervision.

#### **Sequence of tasks:**

1. During production planning, a clear decision needs to be made as to whether or not it is absolutely necessary to film the planned stunt. The decision should be made by the course tutor through a process of weighing up the estimated level of risk against the need to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.
2. If it is decided incorporation of the action sequence is justifiable, then a detailed risk assessment must be done, normally requiring a detailed work method statement.
3. When considering the control measures required in relation to such risk assessments, course tutors must offer students appropriate guidance that may help reduce the risk level through creative techniques, such as using skilful editing and sound design to tell the story without explicitly showing the action, or recording selected shots under conditions in which greater control can be exercised.
4. In instances where a relatively low exposure or low risk activity is planned, such as smoking or handling of a non-practical replica firearm, suitable operating arrangements must be agreed with the course tutor and either the Studio Manager or the Department Health & Safety Coordinator. This will include such measures as supervising the temporary deactivation of smoke detection systems, allowing smoking only during actual takes, keeping props and costumes locked away until they are required and only making them visible under strictly-controlled conditions, limiting the number of people involved to the minimum safe requirement, etc.
5. If it is decided a potentially higher risk action must be explicitly shown on screen, a request must be made by the course tutor to the Head of Department, who will consider the action, the risk assessment and the course tutor's justification for its explicit inclusion in the film.
6. If the recording of such hazardous activities has been approved by the Head of Department, then effective control measures will need to be devised and implemented in consultation with the College Health & Safety Advisor, the Departmental Health & Safety Coordinator and any specialist consultants required such as suitably qualified firearms expert, fight coordinator, animal handler, fire expert or other relevant specialist.
7. Any incidents or accidents occurring under such circumstances must be reported using the College indent or accident reporting procedure.

**Supervision:**

- All such activities must operate under the sequence of approval set out above and supervised by an appropriate person, which will be either the course tutor or Studio Manager, with the presence of a qualified specialist for high risk action.

**Written Instructions:**

- [Location filming code of practice](#)

**Correct Equipment:**

- As determined through due process of risk assessment and risk management.

**Training:**

- Training to be limited to the department's immediate resource capability and provided to students as an integral part of their practice course in the context of their production work.
- Any staff involved in supervising such activities must be appropriately qualified through recognised training and experience, the exact nature of qualification being determined by the process of specific risk assessment and consultation with the necessary specialists including recognised accrediting authorities.

After training the staff member or student will be able to demonstrate:

- The ability to make essential judgements when planning productions about what kind of performed sequence should be regarded as a stunt, visual effect, fight or an 'armed' combat for the purposes of anticipating the need to seek specialist advice.
- The ability to identify hazards associated with particular performed sequences through the department's usual location safety risk assessment process, using a Media Arts Location Safety Form.

**Other measures**

- All sequences involving such activities must be properly risk-assessed using the Department's [Production Buddy](#) on-line risk assessment system and, when required, more detailed risk assessment completed with the assistance of specialist expertise, including the College Health & Safety advisers.

**Reference material**

- HSE information Sheet No3 - Smoke and vapour effects used in entertainment (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis3.pdf>)
- HSE information Sheet No16 – Special visual effects using explosives or pyrotechnics in film and television productions (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis16.pdf>)
- HSE information Sheet No17 – Stunts fights and other potentially hazardous production activities (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis17.pdf>)
- HSE information Sheet No20 – Management of firearms and other weapons in productions (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis20.pdf>)
- HSE information Sheet No22 – Safe filming and recording involving vehicles (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis22.pdf>)

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**Written by:**

Keith Buckman  
Health & Safety Coordinator