

Central Film School

2025-26

Central Film School

Weapons, Police Representation, and Public Safety Protocols

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Applies to all student productions involving guns, knives, imitation or replica weapons, police uniforms, insignia, vehicles, or scenes implying law enforcement presence.
- 1.2. These protocols exist to ensure the safety of students, crew, cast, and the public, and to keep all productions within UK law and Central Film School (CFS) insurance and risk management requirements.

2. First Point of Contact

- 2.1. Before taking any steps involving weapons, police representation, or related props, you must contact the Production Manager - b.hampton@centralfilmschool.com
- 2.2. No discussions with suppliers, prop rentals, or public filming involving these elements may take place before you have received written approval.
- 2.3. Alternatively, contact resourceteam@centralfilmschool.com

3. Why This Matters

- 3.1. Film sets involving imitation weapons or uniformed actors can easily cause alarm to the public, attract police attention, or breach UK firearms law. Students are personally responsible for following these procedures to prevent:
 - Police intervention or arrest

- Confiscation of props or equipment
- Expulsion from location or cancellation of filming
- Breach of CFS insurance cover

4. Key UK Legal Context

- 4.1. **Firearms Act 1968 (as amended)** – regulates the use and possession of firearms and realistic imitation firearms (RIFs).
- 4.2. **Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006** – restricts the manufacture, sale, and use of realistic imitation firearms without proper justification (e.g., film, TV, or theatrical production).
- 4.3. **Police Act 1996 & Police Uniforms Act 1894** – prohibit impersonating a police officer or wearing uniforms, insignia, or carrying equipment that could mislead the public into believing you are police.
- 4.4. **Public Order Act 1986** – covers actions likely to cause fear or distress to the public, relevant when filming in public spaces with weapons or uniforms.
- 4.5. **Even replica or toy weapons can trigger armed police response if seen in public.**

5. Step-by-Step Protocol

5.1. Step 1 – Initial Enquiry

- Email the Production Manager (b.hampton@centralfilmschool.com) outlining your proposal. Include:
 - Scene description and context (e.g., “armed robbery scene”, “police arrest scene”)
 - Type of weapon or uniform required
 - Filming location and whether it’s public or private property
 - Dates and times of filming

5.2. Step 2 – Risk Assessment & Script Review

- You will be required to submit:
 - A risk assessment highlighting weapon use or uniformed characters
 - The relevant script pages or shot list
 - Confirmation of supervision (e.g., tutor, armourer, or location manager)

5.3. Step 3 – Approval from Production Manager

- You must receive written approval before sourcing or rehearsing with any weapon or imitation. This may include additional conditions such as:
 - Supervision by trained personnel
 - Limiting weapon use to controlled indoor spaces
 - Police notification or location owner consent

5.4. Step 4 – Weapon Source & Handling

- Use only approved prop or replica suppliers. Never bring personal items that resemble real weapons.
- Keep weapons securely stored when not in use.
- Weapons must never be carried in public view when travelling to/from set.
- Only the designated props handler or armourer may handle or distribute them on set.
- Never point a weapon at anyone unless explicitly required and rehearsed for the scene under supervision.

5.5. Step 5 – Police and Local Authority Notification

- If filming in any public or outdoor space:
 - You must inform the local police via the Metropolitan Police Film Unit (if filming in London):
 - Metropolitan Police Film Unit – Filming Guidelines - filmunit@met.police.uk
 - Include confirmation of police notification in your production paperwork.
 - Public signage (“Filming in Progress – Prop Weapons in Use”) must be displayed where relevant.

5.6. Step 6 – On Set Protocols

- Brief all cast and crew on weapon safety before filming begins.
- Keep weapons out of sight between takes.
- Ensure no member of the public can mistake the activity for a real incident.
- Have the Production Manager’s contact details and local police non-emergency number (101) available on set.
- In an emergency, call 999 immediately.

5.7. Step 7 – Wrap and Return

- Account for all props and ensure they are returned to their approved supplier.
- Do not retain or reuse imitation firearms outside of authorised production.

6. Police Representation and Vehicles

6.1. Uniforms & Insignia

- Only costume suppliers licensed for film/theatre use may provide police or emergency service uniforms.
- No real police badges, ID cards, or insignia may be used.
- Do not wear police costume off set or in transit — change on location only.

6.2. Vehicles

- Marked police vehicles require special permissions.
- Unmarked cars with visible blue lights, sirens, or decals must not be driven on public roads.
- All police vehicle use must be pre-approved by the Production Manager and, where applicable, registered with the local authority and police film office.

7. Prohibited Items and Practices

7.1. The following are strictly prohibited without prior approval:



- Real or deactivated firearms not from an approved film armourer
- Home-made or modified replicas
- Bladed weapons (unless rubber/fake and risk assessed)
- Discharging blank rounds without a qualified armourer present
- Wearing police uniform or carrying imitation weapons in public areas without official notice

8. On-Set Supervision and Safety

- 8.1. A Safety Supervisor (e.g. 1st AD or tutor) must be present whenever weapons are used.
- 8.2. A Safety Briefing must be conducted before each scene involving weapons.
- 8.3. Cast and crew must follow all safe distances, marks, and cue calls agreed during rehearsal.
- 8.4. Never “play around” with prop weapons — disciplinary action may follow.

9. Emergency and Support Contacts

Contact	Role	Details
Ben Hampton	Production Manager (Primary Contact)	✉ b.hampton@centralfilmschool.com

Central Film School Office	General Support	 020 7247 6677
Metropolitan Police Film Unit	Police Notification	 filmunit@met.police.uk 07880338596 / 07770177655
Police Non-Emergency	Report concerns / confirm filming notice	 101
Emergency Services	Police, Fire, Ambulance	 999

10. Further Guidance & Resources

- 10.1. Metropolitan Police Film Office – Weapons & Uniforms Guidance - <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/f/af/filming/guidelines-for-filming/>
- 10.2. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/theatre-tv/>
- 10.3. [Firearms Act 1968 \(Legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- 10.4. [Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 \(Legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- 10.5. [British Film Commission – Working Safely with Firearms & Weapons](#)

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