

# Student Film Production: COVID Best Practices Guidelines

(10/29/20)

- While students are still responsible for reading and following regulations contained within the NU SOC RTVF film production handbook, in those instances where this document deviates or contradicts the production handbook, the COVID Best Practices Guidelines will overrule/supersede the RTVF production handbook.
- Additionally, local, state and federal guidelines supersede anything in this document.
- All guidelines in this document are subject to change.
- All students are expected to follow university expectations related to COVID 19 mitigation. Monitor Northwestern University's COVID webpage frequently, as guidance is subject to change throughout the year:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/campus-return/guidelines/index.html>

- <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/7325/index.html>

**Students will be required to take a Canvas multiple choice test, administered by RTVF course instructors during the first two weeks of classes, assessing their understanding of these guidelines. They must receive a passing grade before being allowed to either check out CAGE equipment and/or work on any Northwestern student film production. Course instructors will forward a list to the CAGE of passing students by the end of second week of classes at the latest. Students can take test multiple times if necessary.**

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## PRINCIPLES

### Student Projects

- health and safety of the general public, all production staff, crew and cast, is the highest priority
- medical expertise must always guide our decision making
- broad-based testing and screening must be put into place as part of any shooting plan
- minimize risk
- always consider ethical concerns regarding risk
- realize who assumes risk (e.g. individual vs crew vs broader university community)
- activities that CAN be done virtually, SHOULD be done virtually
- filming that CAN occur outdoors SHOULD occur outdoors if possible. (e.g. this might mean concept adaptation, script rewrites, etc.)
- filming which CAN occur on-campus SHOULD occur on campus for maximum risk management and liability protection
- do more with less (e.g. use “economy of means,” smallest crews possible, etc)
- plan for less production time (e.g. everything will take more time)
- plan alternate project in case conditions change and no crew-based filming is possible (e.g. IL Phase 4 reverts to IL Phase 3, etc.)
- Risk Management Plan (RMP) signer is considered the ultimate COVID monitor (e.g. producer), but ALL crew members should adhere to and be responsible for best practices
- withdrawing consent for participation in filming by anyone at any time is possible without consequences or fear of reprisal
- there cannot be discriminatory practices or HIPPA violations employed under the guise of safety ( e.g., ageism, sharing of medical information, etc.)
- there must be a COVID safety monitor at worksite charged with addressing issues as they arise and given the authority to have unsafe practices or conditions corrected
- visitors (non-Northwestern cast/crew) are NOT allowed on campus until directed otherwise
- proper utilization of PPE must be built into each production schedule and budget
- student film groups CAN NOT shoot projects in Fall 2020 quarter nor will they have CAGE equipment access

### Curricular Projects (additional to those mentioned above)

- all projects MUST have alternate “opt-out” assignments for those who are or feel at risk and/or if conditions change (e.g. IL Phase 4 reverts to IL Phase 3, etc.)
- all 190 projects for Fall 2020 quarter should be preferably shot exteriors only and MUST be: shot on campus (if a junior or senior), at the student filmmaker’s primary place of on-campus residence (if a junior or senior), OR at the student’s primary off-campus residence (if a freshman or sophomore).
- class labs will be limited and have reduced capacity to accommodate the universities goal of having all spaces operating at 20-30% capacity

- adhere to all student project principles as detailed above

### Extra-Curricular Projects

Because of changes in equipment check-out durations and equipment quarantine between check-outs, and also to help limit risk, we have decided to restrict equipment check-outs ONLY to curricular projects for the Fall 2020. We know this is disappointing for many student groups and MAG winners that have plans for shooting their films, and like so many things at this time, we share your disappointment. We will review this policy later in Fall and make a judgment for Winter 2021 quarter once we get closer to it. The department will still support pre- and post-production on extra-curricular projects that follow the COVID best practices guidelines, and given the unprecedented nature of this year, we are still encouraging productions to find alternate ways of creating projects whenever possible.

### Violations

Given the seriousness of the pandemic, failure to comply with these guidelines could result in:

- CAGE access barred to RTVF equipment
- Violation reported as a Northwestern University student code-of-conduct violation, receiving hearing/punishment as outlined in student handbook:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct/scope-of-the-code/index.html>

## Best Practices

(sorted by department/area of interest)

### Acting Talent

- Virtual viewing/remote monitors when possible. To limit number of people on set, use wireless or electronic transmission of sound/images to another room to get director and others off-set.
- Max 10 hour shoot days
- Protect performers. Reduce clusters of crew around performers since they won't be wearing PPE when acting.
- All sets are "closed" sets. No visitors, audience!
- Cast should be treated like crew for all on-set COVID monitoring procedures.
- Given heightened risk and difficulty of risk management, use of child actors is PROHIBITED for Fall 2020 and Winter 2021. This restriction will be revisited for Spring 2021.
- Actors should arrive, if at all possible, with hair and makeup already done by self. Have actors apply their own makeup when at all possible.
- Hair and makeup application should comply with personal care services guidelines. Face coverings should be worn by both technician and person receiving services or for services which require person receiving services to remove mask, technician should wear both a face mask and eye protection (e.g., face shield, protective glasses). For masks, preferably a tightly fitted double or triple layer cloth mask with a changeable insert filter.
- Castings should be done by self-tape. If practical, virtual auditions should be used. If not possible, auditions should be done by appointment only (no open calls) and those conducting castings should remove shared items (e.g., magazines) from waiting areas and configure any seating to be 6-ft apart to allow for social distancing. Any surfaces in waiting area (e.g. seats) should be disinfected after use. NO in-person castings are allowed on the Northwestern University campus that includes non-Northwestern University staff, faculty or student participants.
- Minimize the use of shared work materials (e.g. props) and wherever possible assign talent and crew individualized equipment, scripts, and other materials.
- NO crowd scenes and extras are limited to be included in maximum crew size limitations (see Maximum Crew Size).
- Cast and crew should stay on location during the workday, including all breaks.
- Have actors bring their own makeup brush or sponges for touch-ups.
- Have actors source costumes from own wardrobe if possible. Then, have them wash costume daily. If not, follow rules under costuming.
- Email actors forms to sign in advance.
- Use digital call sheets, especially for SAG actors, with digital signature.
- Have actors wipe down any props before and after use if possible [with bleach wipes].
- All cast and crew must wear a facial covering and must wash or sanitize hands before touching props, costumes, or set materials.
- All cast shall wash or sanitize hands when beginning the filming of a scene and not touch their face during the filming session. Any crew that must interact with the set or cast must also wash or sanitize their hands at the beginning of filming and must wear a facial covering.

- ONLY during filming (aka on camera roll) may cast remove mask.
- Where feasible, cast will bring their own props (e.g. cell phone).
- Any work, including scenes, requiring cast or crew to be closer than six (6) feet must be as brief as possible and cast must be as silent as possible to avoid spreading droplets through talking.
- Scenes with direct, prolonged physical contact between cast (e.g. intimate scenes, fight scenes) are discouraged at this time.

### **Acting - Working with Minors**

NO child actors will be allowed in student film projects until COVID vaccine is available and administered to mitigate risk of spread. Policy subject to updates.

## **Camera Department**

Adhere to all On-Set Workflow, Location and Studio filming guidelines, plus:

- Cases should be wiped down before loading into vehicle.
- Only camera personnel should handle camera gear including carts, cases, tape, etc.
- Each camera crew personnel should have their own non-sharable camera kits.
- Camera prep should be isolated in individual area.
- Operators should build the camera by themselves, without the assistance of ACs. Students should build in sufficient time in their schedules for this.
- Operators and ACs should decide who moves camera. One or the other should do this, not both.
- 1<sup>st</sup> ACs should not pull focus. Camera operators must pull their own focus, OR ACs can use a remote follow focus.
- When changing lenses, ACs should be the only ones near the camera. Operators must step away while lenses are being changed.
- When swapping cards, DITs should be the only ones near the camera. Operators and ACs should step away while media is being changed.
- Directors should watch action from a video monitor, not next to camera. If a monitor is not available, Directors should stand away from camera to watch the action.

Shared Tools/Equipment:

- No sharing of equipment, tools, or expendables.
- A sufficient amount of equipment including, but not limited to, lenses, batteries and accessories must be checkedout/rented, to ensure that there is a set dedicated to each individual who may be required to utilize that gear.
- Equipment and equipment carts must be covered / cases closed when not in use.
- Equipment and equipment carts must be stored in a secure area during off hours.
- Equipment and equipment carts may not be left on stage or in a location unless access is controlled and monitored at all times.

## **Costume Dept**

- Where practical, cast should bring their own props (e.g., cell phone) and costumes to avoid sharing
- Due to inability to clean many of these objects, special care should be taken.
- As many of these items have unique cleaning requirements, those responsible for cleaning such items will do so in the customary manner.
- Hand props (other than those with unique cleaning requirements) shall be cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
- Hands shall be cleaned before and after handling props, accessories and other items.
- Wardrobe fittings should be conducted remotely via Facetime, Zoom, Skype, etc.
- Wardrobe planning should be done ahead of shopping and pulling from rental houses.
- Only the wardrobe department should touch clothing, etc. until it's decided what the actor will actually try on.
- Use gloves and mask (preferably a tightly fitted double or triple layer cloth mask with a changeable insert filter) when looking through garments in rental houses and retail stores.
- Book talent as early as possible, and get sizes as early as possible.
- Costumes and outfits should be bagged up individually, per performer.
- Seek permission from Clients to allow actors to keep purchased wardrobe.
- When possible, actors should arrive in their own wardrobe.
- Disinfect jewelry and glasses in between use.

## **COVID Monitors (On Set)**

- All student productions should have a designated COVID on-set monitor (e.g. producer)
- Any student crew member should be allowed to “opt out” at any time (e.g. self isolating, unsafe work conditions, etc). Work is provided by consent.
- All work must comply with [COVID-19 2020 Film Production Guidelines: Phase 4 Restore Illinois](#) guidelines.

### Monitoring/Testing:

- All workers (e.g. students, actors, etc) on a film set must fill out Northwestern’s Health Monitoring form before coming to a film shoot, whether on or off campus.
- When arriving, conduct in-person screening of cast/crew upon entry into workplace to verify no presence of COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a shift is greater than 5 hours, conduct mid-shift screening to verify no presence of COVID-19 symptoms.
- If symptoms detected, student needs to report via COVID reporting procedures in Return to Campus guidelines. Also, they should remain isolated at home for a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset OR until feverless and feeling well (without fever-reducing medication) for at least 72 hours OR confirmed to not have COVID-19 via 2 negative COVID-19 tests in a row, with testing done at least 24 hours apart.
- If cast/crew is identified as being COVID-19 positive by testing, CDC cleaning and disinfecting should be performed according to CDC guidelines on any equipment that they touched or used, or in spaces that they occupied.
- Where appropriate, notify cast/crew who have been exposed. COVID monitor SHOULD NOT identify a cast/crew member who tested positive by name. The COVID monitor should ask the cast/crew members to self-report for exposure via NU online portal.
- Any cast/crew who has had close contact with co-worker or any other person who is diagnosed with COVID-19 should quarantine for 14 days after the last/ most recent contact with the infectious individual and should seek a COVID-19 test at a state or local government or university testing center, healthcare center or other testing locations. All other [crew] should be on alert for symptoms of fever, cough, or shortness of breath and taking temperature if symptoms develop.
- Students who plan to participate in film shoots with other people should consider more frequent testing that matches frequency of filming (e.g. if you are working on a film shoot every weekend, consider getting tested every week).
- Cast/crew should not report to work, or be allowed to remain at work, if sick or symptomatic (e.g. with cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever of 100.4 degrees or above, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, or other CDC-identified symptoms), and sick or symptomatic employees should be encouraged to seek a COVID-19 test at a state or local government or university testing center, healthcare center or other testing locations

- If anyone feels sick (whether they think it's COVID or not) within two weeks of being on an NU film shoot, this should be reported via the Northwestern Report and Incident portal:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/risk/secure/report-an-incident.html>

### **COVID Reporting**

#### Coronavirus / COVID-19 Anonymous Reporting:

- In response to University's Coronavirus/COVID-19 Policy, all Northwestern Faculty and Staff that have a confirmed COVID-19 diagnoses must complete the Coronavirus/COVID-19 Reporting Form by clicking on the **Report an Incident** button below.
- All Faculty and Staff that plan to or are currently self-isolating must complete the Coronavirus/COVID-19 Reporting Form by clicking on the **Report an Incident** button below.

#### Report a Social Distancing Concern

- Faculty, staff, and students can report concerns about Social Distancing by clicking on the **Report an Incident** button below.

<https://www.northwestern.edu/risk/secure/report-an-incident.html>

- "Near Miss" form:

[https://researchsafety.northwestern.edu/files/2018/11/r6\\_incident-report-1n62r26.doc](https://researchsafety.northwestern.edu/files/2018/11/r6_incident-report-1n62r26.doc)

#### Hotline

- In Evanston, a hotline (847-467-8840) is available for faculty, staff and students to report concerns.
- In Chicago, a hotline (312-503-3437) is available for faculty, staff and students to report concerns.

#### Graduate Students

- Additionally, graduate students and postdoctoral trainees should report their concerns to The Graduate School by writing to [covid19compliance@northwestern.edu](mailto:covid19compliance@northwestern.edu).

Graduate students may also contact their chairs or others to discuss their concerns.

### **Crew Size (Maximum)**

Determine how many people are allowed in a space by:

- ALL can maintain 6' social distance and
- optimal ventilation (e.g. if interior windows open, etc.).

Maximum occupancy is location specific, but also need to conform to guidelines below:

#### *On Campus*

- Should conform to NU/SOC rules for capacity limits (e.g. 25-30% of max occupancy rate)
- Six feet of social distance observed at all times, regardless of percentage of max capacity

#### *Off Campus*

- 50% of max occupancy rate, as outlined by [COVID-19 2020 Film Production Guidelines: Phase 4 Restore Illinois](#)
- Six feet of social distance must be observed at all times, regardless of percentage of max capacity

#### *Maximum Limits:*

- **Hard limit of 10 crew, including cast!** Example crew configurations:
  - Fiction Crew: 5-6 person crew (e.g. camera op/DP + AC + /gaffer/grip + sound op + director/producer + assistant director/production design) + cast
  - Documentary Crew: one-person (e.g. director/DP/sound operator) OR 2 person (e.g. director/DP + sound operator/producer) OR 3 person (e.g. director/producer + sound op + camera op/DP) + subjects

## **Documentary Production**

Many of the sub-categories below repeat other areas for fiction filmmaking best practices listed in this document. But, we consider documentary practice to be different enough, and serve a separate population of mostly graduate students, to translate these repeated guidelines below:

### *Audio (Documentary)*

- Sound folks must maintain required 6-foot social distance from subjects/participants and camera people at all times.
- In lieu of mic'ing subjects with a lavalier microphone: prep the lav, set it down and disinfect, then step away so the subject can pick it up. From a safe distance, then coach them on how to place the mic on themselves. Test the audio and ask them to make any adjustments if needed.
- Rely heavily on the use of boom mics and planted lavs to supplement subject's self-placed lavs.
- Prior to the beginning of each scene, communicate with the camera person to ensure no one is caught off guard.

### *Camera (Documentary)*

- Camera operators are positioned a minimum of 6 feet from subjects/participants at all times.
- Communicate with the director prior to production on strategies for camera placement, lenses, etc. to accommodate the distancing requirement.
- Prior to the beginning of each verite scene, communicate planned movements with the Sound Person
- Prime and zoom lens that allow for 6 feet distancing should be reserved and used. Verite filming with wide lenses will not allow for correct distancing if CU or MS is desired.

### *Coughing & Sneezing Etiquette (Documentary)*

- To help stop the spread of germs, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and immediately throw tissue in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands. Immediately wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

### *Craft Service/Food/Meals (Documentary)*

- No communal or shared food allowed. All crafty will be pre-packaged, individually wrapped.
- To minimize risk, crew will be asked to bring their own drinks, snacks and meals to set.
- Any meal orders should be taken electronically by texting crew members.
- Curbside pickup and meal delivery is preferred over entering a restaurant to pick up meal orders.
- All crafty and meal containers should be disinfected prior to setting out.
- Whoever is in charge of meals, should set out all crafty, no handoffs.

### *Crew (Documentary)*

- Crew are required to wear a mask (preferably a tightly fitted double or triple layer cloth mask with a changeable insert filter) at all times, except while eating or drinking.
- All crew and subjects should complete a Northwestern assessment form at the beginning of each day to confirm whether they have experienced any symptoms or been in contact with anyone suspected to have had or who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Anyone who feels unwell should not crew or be filmed. Please immediately report status via the Northwestern COVID portal.

### *Equipment (Documentary)*

- Rental house equipment should be kept to a minimum and all rental houses must guarantee sanitation of the equipment.
- Camera and audio equipment should only ever be cleaned in the field as instructed by the CAGE.

### *Hand Hygiene (Documentary)*

NOTE: see proper restroom etiquette at end of document

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

When unable to wash your hands, follow these CDC guidelines for use of hand sanitizer:

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

### *Location Limitations (Documentary)*

- Exterior locations are preferred over interiors.
- During any interior filming, it is vital to minimize crew footprint. In small spaces, only camera operators and sound recordists are allowed. 6’ of social distancing must be maintained at all times.
- For interior filming, open as many doors and windows as possible to increase ventilation during set-up, shooting and wrap out.
- If open windows and doors impede on audio quality too much, they may be closed only during camera roll and opened immediately after cutting.

### *Lodging (Documentary)*

- If overnight lodging is necessary, students shall lodge crew in locations where social distancing is possible and with a guarantee for sanitization or down days between occupancy.
- Crew staying in the room are asked to use sanitizing wipes on all high-touch surfaces upon entry.

### *On-Set Workflow (Documentary)*

- 6-foot social distancing is required by every crew person and subjects at all times.
- All sets are closed, no visitors allowed.
- Personnel numbers on set are to be minimized.
- Time needs to be built into the daily filming schedules to allow for sanitizing and proper distancing from one another.
- No hand offs, please set an item down then step away to allow the other person to pick it up.
- No printing, all schedules, start paperwork, releases, etc. will be distributed digitally.

### *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (Documentary)*

- Director/producer will supply face masks (preferably a tightly fitted double or triple layer cloth mask with a changeable insert filter), hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, gloves (for cleaning) and tissues.
- On the first production day, the director/producer/field producer will provide each crew member with a Ziploc plastic bag, labeled with their name, containing their PPE. It is the crew member's responsibility to keep the material for the duration of production.
- At the beginning of each day hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes will be placed at entry to set.

### *Pre-Production (Documentary)*

Conversations between the Producers/Director, DP and technical team must address the following issues below, before production. Documentary can be fluid and is often dictated by the unfolding situation, which requires quick pivoting to gather content. Safety should never be pivoted in our Covid-19 era. Pre-production planning and discussions about the following ensure all crew and documentary participants can adhere to safety guidelines, even if "in the moment". A recommendation is to have the following in an agreed upon Production Plan (or RMP) that all crew sign off on prior to production, which is then approved by the professor for the class, with a signature or by NU Risk Management

- Number of active crew members on set and how it will affect production values and safety
- How to maintain safe 6 feet distancing if an unexpected documentary participant or participants become part of an unfolding scene being filmed.
- Zoom/Skype guidelines if Director needs to conduct off site interviews
- Interior locations with generous square footage for social distance practices
- Follow Northwestern guidelines for traveling, hotel and transportation. All non-local (outside of Illinois) travel must file an RMP with Risk Management to be covered under liability and equipment insurance.
- Plan in place for on-location meals and snacks

### *Post-Production (Documentary)*

- All post-production and finishing will be handled remotely.
- Post-production is encouraged to share media digitally whenever possible.
- When digital file sharing isn't possible for out-of-state transfers, Assistant Editor and Editor are encouraged to schedule FedEx pickups.
- When digital file sharing isn't possible for in-city transfers, Assistant Editor will do contactless drop-off/pick-up with all finishing vendors.
- When receiving a drive in the mail, post-production should disinfect the package and immediately wash hands after handling it.

### *Releases (Documentary)*

- Production will attempt to secure all appearance, location and materials releases via DocuSign or an online equivalent.
- In cases where that is not possible, the director, producer, field producer or PA will set down the clipboard and step away before the subject/participant steps forward to sign it. A sanitized pen will be provided and the person signing will keep the pen. After signing, the director/producer/field producer or PA will file it away in the release binder and immediately wash or sanitize their hands.

### *Shipping (Documentary)*

- Where possible, film footage uploaded directly to the post-production team.
- When shipping drives are required, field teams are encouraged to schedule FedEx pickups.
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### *Shopping (Documentary)*

- Shopping trips and destinations should be reduced as much as possible.
- Crew members must wear a mask (preferably a tightly fitted double or triple layer cloth mask with a changeable insert filter) for the duration of a shopping trip.

### *Subjects/Participants (Documentary)*

- Subjects/participants are required to wear a mask (preferably a tightly fitted double or triple layer cloth mask with a changeable insert filter) at all times, except during camera roll.
- The only exception to the mandatory 6-foot social distance rule is for members of the subject's own family who may be included in a scene.

### *Transportation (Documentary)*

- Since social distancing isn't possible in shared vehicles, crew and subjects will be asked to self-drive.

### *Working Remotely (Documentary)*

- Remote working will be the default practice in all cases where practical.

### **Equipment - Checkout (CAGE)**

- Circulation will be for longer periods of time; 8 days on average.
- Pickup and return will be contactless; no “a la carte” selections.
- Pickup and return time windows will be throughout the day, and strictly enforced.
- More extensive phone or Zoom-based consultations may take place to ensure students put the correct equipment in their reservation
- Smaller total amounts of equipment will be encouraged at a minimum; may be required by class and project type
- Large (physical size) equipment may be restricted, such as HMI lights, dolly/track, etc.
- Students expected to bring the required equipment to class/lab; delivery to on-campus locations may be an option

### **Equipment - load in/load out (CAGE)**

In our efforts to mitigate risk within our community, our equipment check-outs have changed. This involve longer check-out times (8 days) for classes, limits on the amount of equipment that can be checked out, and strict check-out and return times that will be staggered to help with social distancing. This will mean classes will have clusters of assignments to complete during their checkout period.

Please pay attention in Louis building to:

- Flow, traffic patterns, specific check-in times
- Dedicated time and space will be needed at the front doors for loading and unloading; circulation path may include the rear door for primary entrance

### **Grip/Lighting Dept**

- More gear may be required to ensure people don't pass gear.
- Grip gear should only be handled by the grip department (apple boxes and stands often support other departments).
- Consider ordering additional gear and assign apple boxes and stands to other departments.
- When possible, one crew member should be assigned to specific gear to avoid multiple people touching the same equipment

### **Hair/Makeup Dept**

- Consider having actors arrive having done their own make-up/hair-- avoid touch ups unless necessary.
- Avoid providing hair and make-up for background actors if possible.
- PPE should be worn for the duration of person-to-person contact.
- Make-up or hair stations should be spaced at least 6 feet apart.
- Talent and make-up artists should wash their hands before and after each session.
- Use disposable make-up kits and brushes when possible. Products should be sealed and disinfected with appropriate disinfecting solutions when not in use.

<https://www.pact.co.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/bafea386-4e38-4bfe-b77a98e804384e9b.pdf?userDownload=true>

- Consider purchasing make up and sending directly to an individual and it remains with the individual – instruction on application online prior to arrival on set / location or utilising social distancing if on set.

Add'l (source unknown)

- Whenever possible, subjects/participants should do their own makeup, hair and minor touch-ups throughout shooting.
- Individually wrapped facial blotting tissues and matting powder will be provided for each subject.

## **Location Filming**

All work must comply with [COVID-19 2020 Film Production Guidelines: Phase 4 Restore Illinois](#) guidelines:

### Disinfecting/Cleaning of locations-

- Cleaning and disinfecting of non-Northwestern campus premises should be conducted in compliance with CDC protocols on a daily basis and / or at the wrap of shooting. Student productions should budget adequate time and supplies to allow for thorough cleaning as they exit a location.
- Clean and disinfect common areas (e.g., restrooms) and surfaces which are touched by multiple people (e.g., entry/exit doorknobs, stair railings) frequently; every two hours recommended for high-traffic areas.
- [Producers] should provide hand washing or sanitization stations that are easily accessible from anywhere on the stage or location and have a plan in place for ensuring all stations are adequately stocked at all times
- All equipment (e.g., props, tools), shared clothing, wigs or other shared prosthetics, and set materials should be sanitized before and after each use. Shared props should be minimized as much as possible.
- All individuals should wash or sanitize hands before and after handling shared equipment
- Stages and locations should be cleaned every night after wrap KH NOTE: How will this be possible? If according to CDC guidelines, then EVERY night that Louis 106 is used it should be cleaned, by whom? Students, custodial staff? (Brandon) Students are responsible for wiping down surfaces before use; custodial staff will disinfect (not clean) classrooms daily.
- Cast and crew should frequently wash hands (e.g., upon arrival; after blowing nose, coughing or sneezing; after using the restroom; before and after eating or drinking; after contact with animals or pets; after handling shared equipment; after cleaning or disinfecting equipment or workspaces)
- Provide cast and crew with portable hand sanitizer.

### General prep for shooting locations -

- Small, closed indoor locations without controllable ventilation (ideally, windows and doors to outside) should not be used, and spaces where shooting will take place should accommodate 6' social distancing between cast, camera operator, and boom operator.
- "If practical, modify traffic flow to minimize contact (one-way traffic, designated entrance and exit)"
- "...should design a plan to allow for social distancing within the workplace and if needed, designate employee(s) to monitor capacity limits and social distancing..."
- "Work locations should be separated into zones with designated working groups. Each working group should have limited in-person interaction with others on stage or location."
- "Display visual markers 6-ft. apart at any queue points or points of congregation"

- “...display signage at entry with face covering requirements, social distancing guidelines, cleaning protocols, and any reduced capacity limit, in multiple languages as needed.”
- Ensure all of the following are readily available to crew at all times and plentiful on your location: soap, paper towels, toilet paper, disposable gloves, and cleaning supplies.
- “Employers should provide adequate trash receptacles for cast and crew to discard any used PPE.”
- “... limit the occupancy of common areas/break rooms to allow for social distancing of 6-ft. or greater by removing/decommissioning furniture or staggering break times...”
- Wash all linens used on set between days of shooting at the highest heat setting recommended by the manufacturer (all blankets, sheets, bedding, towels).
- Because they cannot be controlled to meet university disinfection standards, off-campus locations should ideally be ventilated upon arrival for up to an hour before full crew loads in (opening outside doors and windows and using fans to increase air circulation).
- Designate a crew member to disinfect all frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, light switches, faucets, counter and table tops) throughout the location, first before the beginning of the shoot, and then at the end of each day of shooting, after all cast and crew have left, wearing PPE and using EPA approved disinfectants. CDC recommends disposable gloves when cleaning and masks (preferably a tightly fitted double or triple layer cloth mask with a changeable insert filter).

#### Organization of cast and crew on location:

- “... meal times, breaks, shift start/end and other large group activities should be staggered to limit congregation...”
- “All individuals should maintain 6-ft. of social distancing unless job duty cannot be performed without proximity (e.g. actors performing, hair, make-up, costumes)”
- “When social distancing is not possible (e.g. performer and make-up artist), proximity or contact should be kept to the shortest amount of time possible and face coverings should be worn by the other cast or crew members.”
- “Minimize the use of shared work materials (e.g., props) and wherever possible assign talent and crew individualized equipment, scripts, and other materials.”
- “Limit elevator capacity to allow for 6-ft. of social distancing and USE STAIRS if at all possible.
- All location filming should ideally occur between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m., whenever possible
- All cast and crew must stay on location for duration of a day’s shooting, even during breaks. (from LA County Regulations)
- INTERIORS: crew must wear masks, maintain social distancing standards (6’ distance) to the largest degree possible. Reduce crew for interior scenes to camera and sound technicians only, with camera feed run to a video village ideally outside or socially distanced to another room.
- EXTERIORS: recommend crew wear masks, maintain social distancing standards (6’ distance), use video village to help maintain distancing.

#### Recommendations for selecting and securing off-campus locations:

- Choose on-campus locations to the largest degree possible and as appropriate to the story.

- Only secure locations that can accommodate the above guidelines—appropriate ventilation; ability to clean/disinfect; adequate space for social distancing; sufficient number of unobstructed doors to set one-way traffic for entrances and exits, etc. as stipulated above.
- Recommend renting domestic, off-campus shooting locations through AirBNB that conform to their Enhanced Cleaning Protocols , standardized cleaning/disinfection guidelines for its vendors based on CDC recommended standards for spaces in which people have slept. If not an AirBNB space, request property owners/managers or family/friends who are donating that space to adhere to AirBNB guidelines to prep the location using EPA-approved disinfectants. For a property not rented through AirBNB, understand that this may result in additional cleaning costs—whether hiring cleaners or incurring cleaning fees in addition to location rental.
- Recommend shooting in rental locations that have been unoccupied for 3 days previous to start of shoot, as suggested by New England Journal of Medicine Study of Aerosol and Surface stability of the virus.

When working/filming on location:

- Virtual viewing/remote monitors when possible. To limit number of people on set, use wireless or electronic transmission of sound/images to another room to get director and others off-set.
- Protect performers. Reduce clusters of crew around performers since they won't be wearing PPE when acting.
- All sets are "closed" sets

### **Location Filming - NU Campus**

All campus filming must conform to all university guidelines, plus location guidelines.

### **Location Filming - NU SOC studio/black box spaces (Wirtz, Louis 106, et al)**

Must conform to ALL rules for location filming above, plus these additional rules:

NU/SOC Policy:

- Room capacity limited at 25-30%.
- Look for signs on campus locations for capacity limits.

### **Location Agreement Contract Modifications**

A COVID19 safety rider is currently being developed by RTVF and Northwestern's Office of General Counsel. It should stipulate basic standards and procedures (cleaning, disinfection, ventilation, length of time unoccupied before shoot) for vendors as applicable for off-campus locations. This rider will be available TBD, please inquire as necessary.

## **Meals**

### Craft services and catering

- Catering to the stage or location should comply with Restaurant and Bar guidelines
- Meals and snacks should be bought/served in individually packaged or wrapped portions
- Eating utensils should be disposable and individually wrapped
- Use of shared food items, such as menus or condiments, should be eliminated. Items should be disposable and single serve
- Areas for meal service should be configured to allow for 6-ft. of social distancing between cast and crew
- Everyone must wash their hands before entering the craft services area.
- Craft services table should include hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes.
- Reduce and streamline variety of beverages.
- Community drink dispensers should not be used.
- Eliminate any self-service snacks or fruit bowls.

## “On-Set” Work Flow

Applies to both fiction and documentary filmmaking:

- 6-foot social distancing is required by every crew person and subjects at all times.
- All sets are closed, no visitors allowed.
- Personnel numbers on set are to be minimized.
- Time needs to be built into the daily filming schedules to allow for sanitizing and proper distancing from one another.
- No hand offs, please set an item down then step away to allow the other person to pick it up.
- No printing, all schedules, start paperwork, releases, etc. will be distributed digitally.
- Departments should sequester on-set in departments
- Limit crossing department contact as much as possible
- Each department should individually set up the filming area and leave sequentially, so as not to cross contaminate personnel crew
- If practical, modify traffic flow to minimize contact (e.g. one-way traffic, designated entrance/exit, etc.)
- Work locations should be separated into zones with designated working groups. Each working group should have limited in-person interaction with others on stage or location
- A workflow and COVID-19 safety protocol must be written before filming occurs and shared with all cast and crew on location. This should also be included in the student Risk Management Plan (RMP). For example, think of how:
  - Traffic directions are used in grocery stores (i.e. aisle 9 is only for traveling in a northward direction, while aisle 10 is only for traveling in a southward direction, etc.)
  - Even with small crews, these guidelines still apply in the sense that each “department” would just become one person. (I.e. if you are not the boom operator, you do not touch sound equipment; if you are not the camera operator you do not touch camera equipment, etc.)
- Minimize ANY cross-departmental contact
  - All equipment to be handled only by designated department members responsible for that equipment to avoid any potential cross-contamination.
  - Departments must be sufficiently crewed to be able to handle their equipment without the need of help.
  - If urgent and unanticipated temporary help is required, the relevant department head must ensure that PPE (e.g. masks) and hand sanitizer are available and used.
  - Crew must not touch, move, lean against, pick up or otherwise disturb any piece of equipment which is not directly under their purview.
  - Strictly one department at a time working within the physical constraints of a set at any one time. (e.g. Art department completes construction, painting, dressing before grip and electrical department light a set. Still Photographer allowed access and enough time to work unhampered by other departments.)
  - Whenever a department finishes its tasks on set, any shared areas to be wiped/cleaned before next department starts work.
  - Once camera is safely in position, camera crew to return to safe area off set while other departments work to adjust lighting/dressing as required.

- If dressing/lighting to camera, time will be allowed to set camera, and for camera team to move away to a safe distance before next department moves in.
- Wireless monitoring to be set up for all necessary departments required to be able to individually monitor the set and any playback on their own devices (e.g., iPads, iPhones and android devices). A sufficient number of monitors must be utilized to ensure social distancing will be practiced at, on, and near set monitoring stations. Wireless technologies should be employed when practicable, with individual handheld monitoring when possible; individual recording disabled, and playback (if any) centralized and controlled by the appropriate personnel. A Frequency Coordinator may be required to reduce RF conflicts.
- When not working on the set, crew from other departments to move back to their demarcated areas until required.
- Whenever possible, any member of the crew should stay away from the working environment of the stage
- Production department to remain off set at all times. Contact with shooting crew by radio only.
- Wardrobe, Hair and Makeup to allocate dedicated on-set standby artists who remain on set in order to limit movements of crew between off-set areas and the stage.
- Sufficient working space to be allocated for any off-set prep work to be carried out safely and in accordance with any distancing measures. No physical cross-departmental interaction in these areas.
- Communal work areas to be limited to single department use at any time and topically cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Remote monitoring and video conferencing technologies should be used to their fullest to support social distancing on-set.
- Make use of available technology to allow remote working (e.g. writers encouraged not to travel to set, directors monitor camera set-up in another room, etc.)
- Where it is necessary to be physically present, but it is possible to operate from a vehicle away from the location, such arrangements shall be made (e.g. Sound, DIT, Wardrobe, Hair and Makeup, etc.)

### **Post-Production**

Should conform to all NU SOC rules regarding use of Louis, Fisk Lab and Annie May Swift Spaces for any on location editing. This includes:

- work solo in small spaces, otherwise keep 6' of social distance
- collaborate remotely
- sanitize keyboard/external hard drive before/after use (all NU spaces will be cleaned by Facilities once a day)
- wear masks (preferably a tightly fitted double or triple layer cloth mask with a changeable insert filter)
- circulate air if possible
- only one student can use a Louis edit room space per day

## **PPE requirements**

Every student and crew member working on a film production must have PPE as outlined below.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, enters through the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, and eyes. Accordingly, these surfaces must be protected by preferably a tightly fitted double or triple layer cloth mask with a changeable insert filter. Disinfectant wipes are also recommended for surfaces (not equipment). A reminder: a proper testing program shows you're not spreading the virus; it doesn't mean you can't get the virus.

- PPE (including disposable gloves, face shield and mask) must be made available to all persons at all times, in adequate quantities to safely change throughout the shooting day.
- All crew must be provided with and required to wear PPE whenever interacting with others.
- Cleaning materials (wipes/antibacterial spray) must be made available for any crew member to clean surfaces on demand.
- Hand Sanitizer must be made available to each department/crew member/employee at all times, as well as hand washing facilities for all crew or at designated stations for regular hand-cleaning.
- All crew should be encouraged to wash hands regularly.

A note on gloves: the industry-wide labor-management safety committee task force recommends AGAINST universal glove use by all cast and crew. Gloves may lead to a false sense of security and may actually increase risk, particularly due to self-contamination while donning and doffing. Instead, effective and frequent hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub is imperative, along with avoidance of touching the eyes, nose or mouth. Although, Gloves may be worn as infection prevention PPE when touching potentially contaminated shared equipment is unavoidable and equipment cannot feasibly be disinfected. Also, glove use when clean and disinfecting equipment is encouraged.

## **Prop Dept**

- Where practical, cast should bring their own props (e.g., cell phone) and costumes to avoid sharing
- Consider limiting daily hours worked to allow for crew rest and time for proper sanitation of work spaces, equipment, costumes, props, and set decoration
- Remove all unnecessary items from set, limit personnel congregating, and do not store equipment in common areas. Consider quarantining costumes, props, and set decoration until needed
- Sanitize props and set dressing prior to filming use, during breaks, and upon completion and storage

## **Restrooms**

- Do not enter if there are lots of people
- Keep at least six-foot distance
- Wear a mask
- Always put the lid down before flushing if possible
- Do not use hot-air dryers
- Dry hands with paper towels
- Use paper towel to turn off faucets and touch door handles
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and hot water. Hand sanitizer works too, but soap is better.
- Get in and out quickly—no leisurely reading as bathrooms are usually enclosed spaces with minimal ventilation

## **Risk Management Plan Modifications**

Per ongoing discussions with Northwestern University's department of Risk Management, no modifications have yet been made to student film specific RMP forms or procedures, but modifications will be considered and added in response to review of this document and additional consultations on an ongoing basis.

## **Set Design/Construction**

- Encourage location owners to reduce personal items until after wrap.
- Consider reducing the number of prep and strike days or try to combine these days with location cleaning times.
- Art department crew should be allowed additional time to sanitize props, furniture, and set dressings that come into contact with cast and crew.
- The handling of key props should be limited to the relevant actors
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment and tools before and after each use.
- Store clean and disinfected tools and materials separate from soiled tools and materials.
- Where possible, tools and fixed machinery should be used by a single person only - if equipment must be shared, it must be regularly disinfected and always before it is used by a different operator.
- Pre-fabricate as much as possible off site, only assembling and painting on site

### **Shoot/Film Durations (Maximum)**

Film shoots should be limited to 10 hours a day maximum. Additionally:

- All on location filming must adhere to operating hours between 7am and 10pm whenever feasible.
- If employee shift is greater than 5 hours, employer should also conduct mid-shift screening to verify no presence of COVID-19 symptoms (in person preferred, though virtually is permitted)
- Limit the duration of workdays and excessive consecutive workdays whenever possible.
- Stagger cast and crew call and wrap times to limit the number of individuals arriving to and departing from work simultaneously.

### **SOC General Rules**

Subject to change.

- All in-person meetings in campus rooms limited at 20-30% of normal capacity (e.g. 5 people in Louis 106, etc). See posted signs on room doors for limits.
- Students must communicate with Facilities to ensure Aramark knows what spaces are being utilized so they can coordinate cleaning efforts. All SOC/RTVF controlled spaces will be cleaned by Facilities once a day.
- Labs have capacity between 2 (e.g. AMS documentary lab) and 3-4 (e.g. Fisk lab) people.
- No equipment shipping allowed to campus by undergraduates.
- Virtual computer labs remain in place for Fall 2020 quarter (e.g. Aporto)

### **Sound Department**

- If practical, use equipment that is most compliant with social distancing and hygiene (e.g. use boom mics instead of lav mics)
- Maintain 6ft distance standards
- Minimize use of shared work materials (e.g. headphones, mics, xlr cables, recording devices. Consider that material is brought to set by individual operators and labeled with colored tape to keep track of whose equipment is whose.
- Any activities than can be done virtually, should be done virtually (e.g. audio dumps/distribution done at one person's home and then sent through file transfer services to relevant people, etc)
- Label mics with the name of the user
- Disinfect mics and transmitters before and after each use if possible, but ONLY as instructed by the CAGE
- Replace mounting components that cannot be thoroughly cleaned
- PPE should be worn for the duration of person-to-person contact
- Utilize boom-only audio when possible
- Some multi-talent scripts may require a second boom operator

## **Transportation (to/from filming)/Vehicles**

Stage or location vehicle:

- Interior of vehicle should be sanitized before and after use by cast and crew
- [Producers] should provide hand sanitizer at the entrance of the vehicle
- All passengers should wash or sanitizer hands prior to boarding the vehicle
- Cast and crew should wear masks when in the vehicle
- Vehicles should operate at a maximum of 50% of vehicle capacity
- If a rider in the vehicle is identified as being COVID-19 positive by testing, CDC cleaning and disinfecting should be performed according to CDC guidelines.

## **Visitor Tracking**

- Visitors are not allowed on campus until further notice. For actors for RTVF 190 or any other projects on campus, we would recommend use SOC Theater Dept students who will have access campus.

## **Bibliography of Consulted Sources**

### *Primary Sources:*

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Northwestern Return to Campus

<https://nuinfo-proto12.northwestern.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/campus-return/policy/index.html>

### *Secondary Sources:*

AirBNB (cleaning and disinfection recommendations and Enhanced Cleaning Protocol):

<https://www.airbnb.com/resources/hosting-homes/a/cleaning-guidelines-to-help-prevent-the-spread-of-covid-19-163>

<https://www.airbnb.com/d/enhancedclean>

Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers:

Working with the guilds and studios, the AMPTP convened an Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Task Force and produced this white paper on pandemic set best practices:

[https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/austin/IWLMSC\\_Task\\_Force\\_COVID\\_Production\\_White\\_Paper\\_6\\_1\\_20\\_46a3ebdd-072c-4954-b382-955fc695daab.pdf](https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/austin/IWLMSC_Task_Force_COVID_Production_White_Paper_6_1_20_46a3ebdd-072c-4954-b382-955fc695daab.pdf)

Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP)

<https://www.aicp.com/business-resources/business-affairs-information/aicp-guidlines/covid-19-workplace-guidelines/production-specific-considerations>

Austin (Texas) Film Commission

<https://www.austintexas.org/film-commission/covid19/>

BEA Pop-up: Rethinking Lab and Equipment Room Safety

Zoom recording with slides:

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British Film Commission

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Chicago Be Safe: Film & TV Production Guidelines

<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/reopening-business-portal/business-guidelines.html>

City of Chicago Permits

[https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp\\_info/permits.html](https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/permits.html)

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

*Cleaning/Disinfecting Guidelines:*

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

Doc Society/Sundance/Field of Vision

Ongoing update of documentary production best practices:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/13t1eGGfcXAWwrgt6\\_PTWGr3hPzsEbVlv1SKYwLu3hPk/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13t1eGGfcXAWwrgt6_PTWGr3hPzsEbVlv1SKYwLu3hPk/mobilebasic)

EPA (list of approved disinfectants):

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

Georgia Film Commission

Best practices and state rules, but default to RTVF Best Practices:

[https://www.georgia.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/covid-19\\_georgia\\_film.tv\\_best\\_practices.pdf](https://www.georgia.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/covid-19_georgia_film.tv_best_practices.pdf)

International Documentary Association

Carrie Lozano “The Ethics of Documentary Production in a Pandemic” article:

<https://www.documentary.org/online-feature/ethics-documentary-production-pandemic>

International Cinematographers Guild Local 600 Guidelines

<https://www.icg600.com/Portals/0/COVID-19%20Page/Local%20600%20Recommendations%20for%20Returning%20to%20Work%20060920%20V2.pdf>

Los Angeles Dept of Public Safety – Film Reopening Protocols

Good list of simple best practices, but default to RTVF Best Practices:

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6941686-HOO-Appendix-J-Reopening-Protocol-for-Music.html>

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<https://safeandsecure.film/>

A pre-COVID initiative to “increase awareness about the risks to which documentary filmmakers expose themselves - and their crews, subjects and sources - in order to bring important stories to the world.”

Screen Actors Guild (SAG) – Safety Tips

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