RTF Safety Policy - Film Productions

Special safety precautions for your crew, actors and others in the area are required if you are undertaking any hazardous activities while filming, including but not limited to ANY driving or horseback/livestock shots, shooting in or around water or heights, or if you are using stunts, flames, pyrotechnics, squibs or simulated weapons. Please note that unlicensed handguns and other real weapons are never permitted in RTF studios or on location shoots. In addition, you must follow all federal, state and local laws and the rules of any venue or location at which you are filming regarding hazardous activities, including University of Texas at Austin rules if filming is done on campus.

Student filmmakers must submit a detailed safety plan to their course instructor and the Assistant Director of Production Services (Keefe Boerner Keefe.Boerner@austin.utexas.edu) if a script or project involves driving or horseback/livestock shots, shooting in or around water or heights, stunts, flames, pyrotechnics, squibs, weapons or any other hazardous activities (this requirement applies to all shoots, including documentary projects, but please see the special guidelines for documentary driving shots below). It is the responsibility of the student to hire experts in the field and budget at least $600/day for expert consultation and on-set supervision if, in the judgment of the class instructor and the Technical Facilities Manager, such expert consultation or supervision is necessary. In addition, any utilization of pyrotechnics on the University of Texas at Austin campus requires prior review and approval through the Fire Prevention Services office by the University Fire Marshal or their designee.

Students should understand that driving while filming will be permitted only in strictly limited circumstances, such as on a private road or drive. In most circumstances, students who wish to undertake driving shots will be required to arrange for a police escort and a city permit. Monitors inside the vehicle will NOT be allowed while filming in a vehicle. Filming from the back of trucks is not considered safe and is not permitted under any circumstances.

Documentary filming of an interview while the interview subject is driving is only permitted if the cameraperson is secured in a seat belt and is not directing the driver of the car in any way, besides engaging in a conversation in which the driver/interviewee has been informed not to look at the camera or the interviewer at all during the interview. In addition, any filming from a vehicle, for drive-by B-roll, must be done by a cameraperson secured in a seat belt, where the driver is not being directed in any way by the director, so that they are driving as they normally would. As noted above, any documentary student planning on filming in any vehicle must submit a safety plan to their course instructor and the RTF Technical Facilities Manager.

If Police, Fire, or EMS are called to your shoot, or any injuries on your shoot require medical attention, this must be reported to your instructor and the Assistant Director of Production Services, (Keefe Boerner Keefe.Boerner@austin.utexas.edu), within 24 hours of the incident. There is a form in checkout and on the RTF website that must be filled out and returned within three business days.

Students who fail to comply with this policy will receive a failing grade in this class and will be barred from future access to RTF production and post-production equipment and facilities.