



**Health and safety
facts for freelancers
in BBC programme making**

This booklet contains information also published in the HSE's Facts for freelancers

This guidance booklet aims to provide an understanding of the arrangements we have in the BBC to make sure that you and the people with whom you work are kept healthy and safe. It explains the roles and health and safety responsibilities involved in programme making. For example the commissioner, the producer, contractors, designers, suppliers, resources managers and other individuals all have particular responsibilities. In addition, there should be good planning, communication, co-operation and co-ordination by and between all parties involved throughout a production.

Policy

The BBC's health and safety policy is based on our commitment to provide a safe and healthy place to work. It aims to provide individuals, including staff and freelancers, with the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their jobs safely and prevent accidents and ill health.

We want you to be actively involved in helping to establish a culture that will promote health and safety. This, combined with good management, will help us achieve our aims to reduce risk and improve our health and safety performance.

General health and safety responsibilities

Responsibility for health and safety starts at the top of the BBC with the Director-General and cascades down the organisation to each individual. Health and safety responsibilities are allocated on the principle that you are responsible for the work under your control, for those working under your control, for the people who are affected by your work and for yourself. This principle applies equally to freelancers and staff.

In programme making the responsibility also cascades, so the commissioner is responsible for allocating a commission to the right department (or independent company). The head of that department is responsible for the work of their department, and the executive producer or editor is responsible for the series under their control. On a day-to-day basis, the responsibility for ensuring that appropriate standards of health and safety are achieved and maintained throughout the making of a programme rests with its producer.



Frequently asked questions

I'm freelance – do I have health and safety responsibilities?

Yes, you do. In the BBC the responsibilities are based on the role that you are carrying out, eg as manager, producer, individual. The responsibilities are no less than those held by staff.

Who will make arrangements for health and safety on a production?

The producer is the most likely person to act in this role. However, depending on your role in the programme you may be asked to take on some duties, such as carrying out risk assessments or co-ordinating work. Make sure that you are clear for each programme who is to carry out what task.

Do I have to report accidents?

Yes. If you are hurt at work, or see an incident where someone was lucky not to be hurt, please report it to your BBC contact. If the incident is serious then you should report it immediately by telephone to your Safety adviser because serious accidents have to be reported to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

Everyone talks about risk assessment – who needs to do it?

The person in control of work is asked to assess the risks. If that is you then you will be asked to provide the assessment in writing; if that is not you, you will be asked to contribute to the assessment. Assessment need not be a difficult task. It is simply about identifying what problems might arise and deciding what should be done to control the risks. It is important to check the results and review arrangements, particularly when any changes are made.

Should I discuss my own views on risk with anyone?

Yes. Your advice and co-operation is important. Health and safety should be discussed at production meetings, and if you join the work during the course of the production, make yourself known to the person in charge and find out about the arrangements for health and safety.

Do I need to have insurance?

Yes. The type of insurance you need depends on the services you provide and should be set out in your contract. Speak to your BBC contact if you are unclear. Insurance arrangements should be made before work begins.

I'm experienced – do I need training?

You might. You need information about the work you are to do, particularly if it is to be carried out in unfamiliar surroundings or using someone else's equipment. You will also need some degree of instruction and training if you are to use new equipment.

The BBC is part of the Production Safety Passport so make it known if you are part of that..

What should I do if I think something is unsafe?

Let the person in charge know of your concerns immediately if it is something serious.



Making programmes safely

We all know there are risks in life and in work. The trick is to use your creativity, experience and knowledge to reduce health and safety risks and know where to draw the line. To help everyone involved in the programme know what steps they need to take, the planning of each programme includes assessing the hazards and putting arrangements in place so that the risks are controlled. The BBC has health and safety requirements that lay down basic common standards. The requirements aim to provide you with the information you need to comply with the law and to follow best practice. You must be familiar with the requirements that are relevant to the work that you do, control, contract or commission. You must observe these requirements because they are part of the system for ensuring that you are safe at work and that people affected by what you do (or do not do) are also safe.

The arrangements should address every stage of the production:

- recces
- design
- setting up rig, set, lighting
- rehearsal
- recording
- de-rigging
- post production

The essential requirement is that at any of these stages during a production, the producer is able to show a written risk assessment for the work. The programme risk assessment form is used as a planning tool and to record the action proposed to eliminate or minimise the risks identified. If there is any change, the assessment must be reviewed, amended and the changes communicated to everyone affected.

For certain high-risk programme activities we use contractors who have been vetted through BBC Safety when working in the UK.

The high-risk activities are: filming and recording in some aircraft, diving, explosives, pyrotechnics and fire effects, flying ballet, use of hydraulic platforms (eg cherry-pickers), lasers, location lighting, scaffolding, specialised rigging and wiremen, smoke effects, stunts, and the use of weapons.

What the BBC will do

Each freelancer is engaged by a BBC manager (usually the producer). The person who engages you is responsible for selecting a competent team to make the programme. They will assess the risks associated with the work, decide what needs to be done to control them and ensure everyone understands their role and the tasks being asked of them. This will include ensuring that you are competent and have the training, experience and information to do the work we ask you to do safely.

What the BBC asks you to do

We expect everyone to work safely, comply with health and safety requirements and cooperate with their BBC contact. You are expected to know how to identify hazards and the controls that need to be in place relevant to your work and take part in training to help you do that. You will also be required to provide information to help inform your colleagues, such as a risk assessment.

We also ask that if you see a problem (eg a deficiency in health and safety arrangements, an incident, a fault in equipment or in your working environment) you tell the BBC manager in charge of the work, or the BBC manager who engaged you, as soon as possible so that action can be taken.

If you wish to bring any person or any item into work, you must ask permission of the person in charge of the work so that a risk assessment



Managers and supervisors

Managers, supervisors, heads of departments and senior crew members are responsible for ensuring that:

- the arrangements for health and safety are implemented
- the duties delegated to them are carried out their staff are adequately trained competent and supervised as necessary
- they carry out risk assessments for the work under their control, and these are recorded and provided to the production team
 - work is carried out in accordance with legal requirements
 - they communicate and co-operate with the production team
 - any subcontractors are competent and adequately briefed

Seven things you should do

1. Check who is in charge – of your work and overall. In the BBC, the person in overall charge of a programme is the producer. If this is you, or if you are in control of a discrete area of work, you are responsible for points 2–7 below. Our work needs to be co-ordinated so responsibilities need to be agreed before we start to work. We ask that you co-operate with others so that your work does not adversely affect the work of others.
 2. Confirm competence: make sure you know what you are doing. You should know the risks associated with your work and how to deal with them. You should also make sure that anyone who works for you knows what they are doing. If you (or they) do not, speak to your BBC contact to find out how to obtain the advice, information, training or supervision that is needed. Don't take on work beyond your capabilities. You need the right knowledge and experience.
 3. Check special arrangements: find out if your engagement needs special arrangements, qualifications or skills.
 4. Assess your risks: risk assessment is the essential first step. This is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people which enables you to weigh up whether you have taken adequate precautions. You will be asked to provide the assessment to the producer and to agree how your work fits in with the overall programme risk assessment.
- If you are the producer, you will need to make sure that the assessment is carried out, meets the BBC requirements of suitability and sufficiency (myRisks Info) and is provided to all those involved in the programme and your BBC contact. If the risks are significant talk to your manager.
5. Plan for health and safety: include health and safety as plans for the project are developed. Who will have the key responsibilities? Where necessary, obtain information and advice from specialists. Do this as early as possible.
 6. Pass information on: who needs to know what? Have the health and safety arrangements been properly explained, especially to those who are to implement them? Is there someone working for you who needs information about health and safety? Do you have specialist information or expertise that you should share with the person in charge? Have you spotted something you are not sure about? Are you going to make any changes that could affect safety?
 7. Think again. Work in this industry is constantly changing – someone does not turn up, equipment fails, the weather changes, the director has a flash of inspiration. Some of these factors may affect the safety arrangements. Whenever there is a change, consider its effects on safety and tell others who need to know.
- ...and rethink health and safety as the work progresses**



Where you will find information

Health and safety information – including requirements and guidance – can be found on myRisks Information site on Gateway (the BBC intranet). You will be directed to the site as part of your induction into the BBC. During your local induction you will also be given information about the emergency arrangements in place in your area, such as what you need to do at that site in the event of a fire or if you need first aid. If you do not have access to Gateway the information you need will be given to you.

Where you can go for help

If you need advice or have concerns about health and safety arrangements your first contact should be the person in charge of your work. If you need further help, BBC Safety provides professional advice to programme makers on health and safety issues, including how the law applies and practical guidance on how to work safely.

Producer

The producer, whether freelance or staff, carries overall responsibility for health and safety on the production. This responsibility covers all those involved, including staff, freelancers, artists, contributors, contractors, invited audiences and any other person who might be affected by the production activity.

The producer is able to delegate duties to other people, such as a journalist, first assistant director, engineering manager, researcher, director, floor manager or sound supervisor, but cannot delegate their responsibilities (although other people will have their own responsibilities). The producer retains responsibility and, when delegating duties, must be sure that it is safe to do so – does the other person have sufficient experience, knowledge and status?

The producer must ensure that for the programme:

- a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the production has been made, recorded and is reviewed if there is any proposed change.

The risk assessment should ensure that:

- a) there are the right people to carry out the tasks needed
 - b) there is the right equipment for the tasks and environment
 - c) there are the right methods of work for all aspects of the programme
 - d) there is appropriate exchange of information and records are kept
- the controls identified are put in place and communicated to the various parties involved in the production, eg BBC requirements, exchange of information with contractors
 - lines of responsibility and communication are established
 - everyone involved in the production is sure of their individual responsibility
 - everyone involved in the production is competent
 - there is co-ordination between the parties involved
 - all accidents and incidents are reported and investigated
 - health and safety performance is monitored

Services and resources

All those who provide services and resources are responsible for the safety of their work and must provide the producer with:

- details of the hazards/risks of the work they are to carry out and how these will be controlled
- competent staff to undertake the work
- resources, eg facilities and equipment that are safe and fit for their purpose

