

CU Boulder Cinema Studies and Moving Image Arts – Set Safety & Etiquette Guidelines

Introduction

Every filmmaker in Cinema Studies and Moving Image Arts holds both a creative responsibility and a duty of care. Safe working conditions protect cast, crew, equipment, and the reputation of the department and university. Safety must always come before creative ambition.

Failure to follow safety protocols may result in:

- Removal from the set or crew
- Loss of access to CINE equipment and facilities

All CINE sets are considered extensions of the classroom. University conduct [rules](#) apply on and off campus.

Safety Expectations

Prohibited without prior approval:

- Activities risking physical harm or property damage
- Scenarios that may prompt emergency responders

Hazardous scenarios requiring special precautions include but are not limited to:

- Simulated violence, crime, intimacy, nudity, trauma, or self-harm
- Use of prop weapons (real weapons are prohibited)
- Simulated moving car film using a tow (filming dialogue in moving vehicles is prohibited)
- Filming at heights or involving stunts
- Filming in/around water
 - If filming in water, there must be someone trained in CPR on set.
 - All water sources (e.g., river, lake, bathtub) must be positioned far enough from powered equipment to prevent equipment from falling into the water.
 - Cast and crew must not enter any body of water without prior permission from the owner (if private).
- All stunts must be approved in advance
- No public activities that might cause panic or police response or undue disruption
- Working with animals
- Working with minors

Prohibited set activities

- Real weapons, filming dialogue in cars, use of fire or pyrotechnics, or environmental hazards (e.g. extreme weather, wildfire, areas of known pollution hazards, etc)

Approval Process:

- Submit a detailed written safety plan at least 10 days before equipment reservation to:
 - Course instructor or thesis advisor
 - Office of Risk Management
 - If working with a third-party vendor, you need to fill out a Rider Provisions for University of Colorado. Please contact the [Procurement Service Center](#) for this document

Professional Expectations:

Student film sets will follow professional set etiquette protocols

- Communication and leadership: giving notes respectfully, understanding the cast and crew workflow/chain of command for reporting, and using clear conflict-resolution protocols
- On-set culture: the unspoken rules around cell phones, quiet on set, and gracious interactions and behavior
- Ethical understanding: using image and likeness responsibly, crediting properly, gaining consent for behind-the-scenes posting or promotional use, and showing sensitivity around trauma or representation
- Inclusion and accessibility: clarity about pronoun use, access needs, and inclusive collaboration

Course Tiers & Safety Planning

Tier 1 – CINE 2000, CINE electives: No safety concerns expected

Tier 2 – CINE 2500, CINE 3515: Moderate safety concerns possible, nothing formally submitted, but production plans must be shared with professor

Tier 3 – CINE 3400: Safety plan required

Tier 4 – CINE 4500, Honors Thesis: Safety plan required; highest level of oversight

Work with your instructor to determine your project's tier and required safety measures. If your film involves any of the aforementioned risk precautions, a Risk Assessment

Form needs to be filled out and submitted to the department before your shoot. Please find this form on our department's resources [page](#).

Permissions/Permits

Students are responsible for securing the appropriate permissions (releases, permits, licenses etc.) needed for their films well in advance to avoid any disruptions. If liability insurance is requested reach out to Risk Management for assistance. Please refer to the Department's [Film Permits, Releases and Forms](#) page on our website for guidance.

Intimacy, Trauma, and Self-Harm

Scenes involving intimacy or trauma must be handled with care and consent. Please refer to the Department's Intimacy Policy found on the Department's [Film Permits, Releases and Forms](#) page on our website for guidance.

Inclusive and wellbeing practices

There is no room for bullying, harassment or discrimination of any kind in any CINE productions. This includes any work hours such as pre-production, production or post-production, on-site or off site, delivered in person, by phone, email, text or social media.

None of the following behavior is tolerated on at CINE production -

- Homophobic, racist, or sexist remarks or gestures
- Intentional or unintentional harassment directed at individuals or groups
- Targeted or non-targeted discrimination that contributes to a negative work environment.
- Verbal abuse, shouting, swearing, intimidating, threatening, or throwing objects
- Unfounded threats about job security

If someone experiences any of these behaviors in any stage of a production, the director must ask offenders to leave the production.

Call for emergency if the following occurs on set

- Unconsciousness
- Breathing difficulties
- Chest pain or pressure
- Severe bleeding
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Vomiting or passing blood
- Seizures, severe headache, or slurred speech
- Suspected poisoning

- Head, neck, or back injury
- Possible broken bones

Standard Set Practices

Workday Limits

- Max: 12 hours (union shoots: 10 hours)
- Includes all pre-production and production time

Meals & Breaks

- Meals within 6 hours of crew call
- Nutritious meals and 30-minute seated break
- Drinking water must be available
- Craft services must consider allergies

Holding Areas

- Safe, comfortable space near set
- Protection from weather

Weather Contingency

- Monitor weather starting one week prior
- Prepare a “Cover Set”
- Share severe weather action plan during safety meeting

Substance Use

- No alcohol, drugs, or impairing medications allowed
- Impaired individuals may be removed from set
- Only non-alcoholic and non-toxic props allowed for scenes involving substance use

Special Circumstances

Overnight & Late-Night Shoots

- Shoots between 1:00 AM–6:00 AM require prior approval
- Overnight stays discouraged; must include rest and safety plan

Out-of-Town Shoots

- Must be disclosed and approved
- Submit travel, lodging, and emergency plans
- Airbnb rentals require proof of owner consent

Summer Productions

Not permitted unless under extraordinary circumstances. Must be approved before end of Spring semester.

CINE-Sponsored Projects

Must have a faculty advisor. Follow all Cinema Studies and Moving Image Arts protocols.

Project Approval Process

- Submit Safety/Intimacy Plan to Production Coordinator 10 days before shoot
- Reviewed by instructor/advisor, Associate Director, and Director
- Must be marked “Approved” by all reviewers
- No gear access until plan is approved
- Assistant Director/Safety Coordinator must review plan daily with cast and crew

Shoots With Minors

- Submit Safety Plan to Production Coordinator 20 days before shoot
- Minor’s shoot requirements must be clearly communicated with guardian
- Guardian must be present during the shoot
- No paying for child actors
- Have child’s guardians sign film release