



The University of Texas at Austin
Radio-Television-Film
Moody College of Communication

'21

COVID-19 SAFETY GUIDELINES

Spring Safety Guidelines for Production in a Pandemic

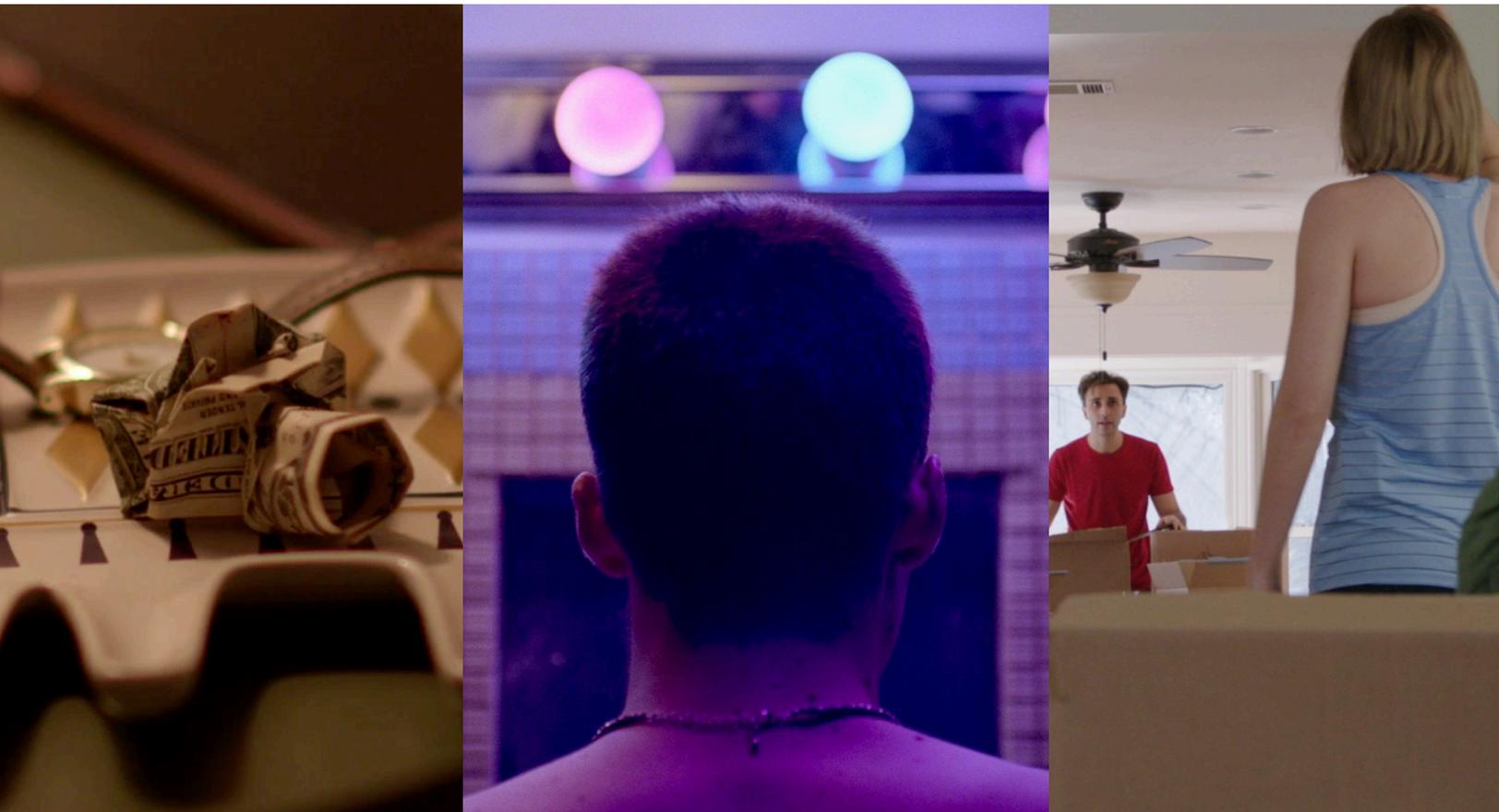


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THE DEPARTMENT OF RADIO-TV-FILM

**COVID-19 SAFETY
GUIDELINES
INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Radio-Television-Film is committed to the health and safety of all its students. During the current COVID outbreak, RTF is expanding its safety guidelines for all its facilities, including classrooms, studios and labs.

Additionally, the following protocols cover every aspect of student filmmaking, including pre-production, production, and post-production. An essential part of safe student production during COVID is creating smaller, more controlled sets to limit physical contact between cast and crew.

It is important to have universal procedures and protocols for production that all students follow. To keep the RTF community safe, students must be confident that everyone around them is operating under the same health & safety guidelines.

GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

While it's not possible to eliminate the spread of COVID-19, it is crucial to minimize the spread as much as possible. To ensure student and faculty safety, all classes, labs and productions must adhere to the following Four Basic Safety Practices, which have proven to effectively reduce the chances of transmitting COVID-19.

Testing

- Students and faculty will be required to stay home if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and encouraged to get tested.
- UT will provide free testing to all members of cast & crew—both students and non-students—prior to production.
- Reference: <https://protect.utexas.edu/health-and-wellness/>

Social Distancing

- A minimum of six feet must be kept from others at all times. This includes cast and crew on-set, as well as inside classrooms, studios and labs.
- UT recommends 125 sq. feet per person to allow for proper social distancing.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- A mask must be worn at all times inside buildings or on set. Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use, may not be shared and should be properly stored or discarded.
- Reference: https://healthyhorns.utexas.edu/images/pdf/Social_Distancing_Cloth_Masks_8.5x11_V2.pdf

Hygiene & Disinfecting

- Hand sanitizing stations will be available at all building entrances, classrooms, studios, labs and sets.
- Equipment and facilities must be disinfected frequently according to protocols.
- Reference: <https://besafe.utexas.edu/coronavirus>

All violations of the RTF COVID Safety Guidelines will be reported to RTF leadership for immediate review. Possible outcomes include termination of production, suspension of equipment access, and a failing grade in the class.

NARRATIVE PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

Because smaller sets will minimize contact between cast and crew, while allowing for better hygiene and cleaning practices, the following set limits will be in place:

Intro classes are allowed a maximum of **10** people on set, cast and crew combined.

Advanced classes are allowed a maximum of **15** people on set, cast and crew combined.

Course Key:

Introductory Courses: RTF 318, 366K

Advanced Courses: RTF 340, 343, 344, 367, 368S, Grad Classes

PRE-PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

Story and Script

Scripts should be written to minimize physical proximity between performers and crew as much as possible, including:

- No intimacy scenes such as kissing, laying in bed, etc.
- No crowd or party scenes.
- No fighting/action scenes or stunts which entail physical contact between actors.
- During pre-viz, consider alternate shot set-ups, camera angles, lenses, etc. to allow for greater distance between actors and crew.

Casting

For Introduction Courses, all roles must be cast with direct contacts: UT students, roommates, or quarantined family members.

For Advanced Courses, roles may be cast outside the immediate UT community, with the following guidelines:

- Initial casting must be done remotely or via self-tapes.
- If in-person casting is essential for final round auditions or chemistry reads, an outdoor location is recommended. Social distancing and PPE guidelines must be followed at all times, aside from when performers may temporarily remove their masks during their scene.
- For final round auditions, assign scheduled times to arrive.
- All scripts, sides and call-sheets must be digital.
- Extras should be played by existing cast/crew, when possible.



PRE-PRODUCTION GUIDELINES CONT'D

Meetings and Rehearsals

- When possible, crew meetings and rehearsals should be conducted virtually. If in-person rehearsals are necessary, social distancing and PPE guidelines must be followed, along with set guidelines.
- Performers may temporarily remove their face covering at rehearsals during scenes.

Locations

- Minimize the number of locations to facilitate social-distancing and hygiene protocols.
- Use outdoor locations whenever possible.
- Company moves will be much slower and therefore should be avoided when scheduling, if possible.

Interior Locations

- As much as possible, productions should use interior locations to which the student has direct access (i.e.: an apartment, house or CMB Studio).
- Other locations will need to observe local restrictions and follow strict cleaning protocols before and after each shoot day.
- Social distancing & PPE guidelines must be followed at all times.

Exterior Locations

- Exterior locations must be secured completely from the general public.
- Social distancing, PPE guidelines, and local restrictions must be followed at all times.
- Students filming in a public place must follow the "Open Texas Checklist" or face possible fines:
<https://open.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/open texas/OpenTexas-Checklist-Media-Production.pdf>

PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

General

- Crew must wear PPE at all times, and appropriate social distancing should be maintained whenever possible.
- Productions will need more set space than normal to accommodate social distancing and cleaning protocols.

Safety Supervisor

- A Moody-appointed Safety Supervisor will oversee each production to ensure compliance to these guidelines.
- Directors and producers must have their production plans approved by a Safety Supervisor prior to first day of shooting.
- Safety Supervisors will be on-set the first day of shooting, and periodically on-set during subsequent days.
- Safety check-lists will be completed by the Safety Supervisor in coordination with the director.
- All productions should maintain a contact list of everyone on set, including name, phone number and email.
- If the Safety Supervisor finds these guidelines are not being followed, production will immediately be shut down and will not resume until corrections are made.

Covid-19 Testing

- Directors must be transparent about testing policies on their set. Some crew will not feel comfortable on-set where testing isn't required, and may opt out of that production.
- Cast and crew should use the Campus Pass feature on the "Protect Texas Together" app to gain access to set each day.

Positive Tests

- If a student tests positive for COVID,

they are urged to immediately self-report to BCCAL (#512-232-5050), who will coordinate student care and quarantining with UHS, and initiate contact tracing.

- If a positive test occurs during production, that production must immediately be suspended and BCCAL notified. With faculty permission, productions may resume later in the semester, after affected students have finished quarantine and been cleared by UHS, or alternative assignments may be given.

Set Hygiene and Cleaning

- Productions must provide hand hygiene stations throughout the location, as well as hand sanitizer where handwashing is not feasible.
- Crew should be given time throughout the day to periodically clean and disinfect equipment and frequently-touched surfaces according to protocols. In general, the set should be cleaned whenever there is downtime.
- Props should be sanitized before and after each use.

Paperless Set

- Eliminate the use of paper on set. Utilize digital call sheets, scripts, and shot lists.
- Adopt cashless payment for petty cash transactions.

Departments

- Tape-off studio spaces and location areas into separate sections to help isolate different production teams from each other and restrict movement between areas.
- Departments should touch only their own equipment. Sharing equipment between departments should be kept to a minimum.



PRODUCTION GUIDELINES CONT'D

Sound

- Lavalier mics should be labeled with the name of each user and only used for that person for the entirety of that day, then cleaned and prepped for use the next day. Lavs should always be assigned to the same person for shoots over multiple days.
- Allow talent to affix their own lavalier mic, or one designated sound person should wear PPE when assisting talent with mic.

Art

- Properly disinfect props prior to set and disinfect periodically, especially if props are being handled by multiple cast members.

Hair, Makeup and Wardrobe

- Whenever possible, the cast should come to set “camera ready”: dressed in wardrobe, hair set, and makeup done.
- If on-set makeup is required, personnel must wear PPE, face shields, eye protection and practice proper hand-washing hygiene.
- All makeup supplies must be single-use and never shared.
- Cast may temporarily remove their PPE if it interferes with a core activity, such as hair, makeup, or wardrobe.

PRODUCTION GUIDELINES CONT'D

Catering

- Buffet-style meals are prohibited.
- Food and beverages must be individually packaged.
- Cast and crew are encouraged to bring their own reusable bottle for beverages.
- Space must be made for cast and crew to observe distancing while eating meals.
- Dining outdoors is preferable to indoors.

Transportation

- Encourage individuals to drive alone to-and-from set.
- If individual private transportation is not possible, ensure that all occupants wear face coverings. No more than 2 passengers should be in a single vehicle at one time.



POST-PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

All rtf post-production labs and editing suites will be reconfigured to allow for social distancing. Work stations will be sanitized at the start and end of each day by staff. Students are expected to clean their own station before they begin work with available cleaning supplies.

Editing

- If possible, post-production work should be completed remotely to reduce peer-to-peer contact.
- Footage can be exchanged via a cloud service or contactless delivery of a sanitized hard drive.

Editing Lab Guidelines

- Students must work individually at their station and avoid congregating in the hallway or entrance of the lab.
- Spray sanitizer and wipes will be available so students can wipe down keyboards, mice and desks between uses.
- Every student must supply their own headphones or earbuds. Headphones will not be provided.



DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

Documentary Production will largely follow Narrative Production guidelines, based on the four basic safety practices: Testing, Social Distancing, PPE, and Hygiene & Disinfecting.

However, because the nature of documentary filmmaking does not always allow for controlled production environments, documentary students should follow these additional guidelines.

Story and Research

- If possible, focus the story around a limited number of subjects (preferably one).
- Focus on stories that can be captured with organized, contained, and planned shoots instead of improvised or impromptu shoots.

Locations

- Film interviews outside whenever possible.
- Large scale events (eg. a rally, protest or festival) would require students to observe from a greater distance, including use of a long lens and a social distancing plan to be approved by faculty.

Filming

- Minimal crews are optimal to maintain safety protocols.
- Subjects are treated similarly to cast in a narrative production. Masks are not required for subjects during filming if proper social distancing protocols are in place.

Sound Equipment

- If conducting interviews with multiple subjects in the same day, shotgun microphone windscreens should be changed between interviews.



SAFETY GUIDELINES CONCLUSION

RTF is proud of the original, creative work of its many talented students. We consider these new guidelines absolutely necessary, not only to maintain the safety and health of our community, but also to maintain the high-level of production that our students are known for. With these new protocols in place, RTF remains committed to supporting student production, along with the health and safety of our students, staff and faculty during the 2020-2021 school year.



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