



SANDSTORM COVID-19 STATEMENT AND PRODUCTION PROCEDURES IN LOCKDOWN:

Latest edition: 4th Sept 2020

First implemented: 11th March 2020

Latest edition notes: production has restarted officially in the UK with some caveats

OVERVIEW:

On Wednesday 11th March 2020, Sandstorm implemented a number of measures to protect our staff and the public while remaining (almost) fully operational in light of the current pandemic.

Our stringent procedures remain inline or exceed regulated government guidelines and policies.

BASICS 1/2:

Points of contact:

Most points of contact remain the same and are still available via email or phone. Our main phone lines still direct to the Studio in the UK.

Production viability:

All forms of production are now viable again, we can have talent on-set, we can allow freelance crew, wearing PPE, in the studios and on location.

Remote viewing guideline:

All our productions are available to view through live private YouTube studio feeds as well as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Hangout for interaction with the crew. If you have a preferred method (or internally approved method) we are happy to work with this also.

For larger client remote attendance (5+) we insist on a Sandstorm paid moderator / producer to handle client requests

before they reach the team on-set to reduce confusion.

BASICS 2/2:

Freelancers: In June we welcomed freelance crew back into our studio. The crew must wear face-masks, which are cycled every 4 hours (3 masks per person per day, which are billed on to the client) and we have a full-time cleaning moderator who will provide alcohol hand sanitiser for use every 30 minutes throughout the shooting day.

Clients on-set:

From 13th May we can now have clients back on-set, however we advise that you DO NOT travel to the studio unless there is no alternative. Since 11th March 2020 we have produced all work with clients logging in remotely and it has worked exceptionally well.

TYPE OF WORK BEING CARRIED OUT:

Viable production routes at Sandstorm:

- Large studio productions including complex set builds and motion control work
- All types of UK location shoot
- Packshots
- Photography
- Single person / presenters and piece to camera (with social distances observed for talent/presenters)
- Two or more talent can be on-set at once, observing the 2m distance rule only (or shot separately and composited together in post)
- Shoots including families or groups - as long as the cast group ALL live together and have done throughout lockdown in England
- B-Roll pickups
- Animations and CGI
- Sound mixing / radio / ADR / voice-over
- Re-version existing work

TRAVEL & TIME CONSIDERATIONS:

Travel restrictions:

Only travel when necessary. Avoid public transport. Our legislations are based on crew and talent travelling from England ONLY.

Production time-scales:

Productions should be carried out by a smaller crew where possible, safety remains key.

Some productions will be slower than normal, although as of June the production timescale is close to 'normal'.

CASTING:

Casting process:

All casting is carried out remotely via Zoom and is directed remotely by Sandstorm's casting agent and screen-recorded.
All scenes requiring couples or families to be filmed in close proximity MUST be cast from the same family or pod.

Talent on-stage:

We have introduced a safe approach for filming talent in the studio - evaluated on a job by job basis.
This process is carried out under stringent procedural guidelines where a studio stage is set-up and lit before the talent is allowed onto the stage.

Stand-ins:

It is currently our recommendation (carried out at the discretion of the client) to always have a stand-in booked, at cost to the client.
This stand-in will remain at home unless needed.
From mid-June we have found a number of clients are happy to waive the risk, but it remains our recommendation.

PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES:

Performance guidelines:

Only talent from one household are permitted on-set together within the 1m social distancing guidelines.

Fast moving cameras, stunts, multi person performances and special effects are permitted on a project by project basis, due to safety risks and insurance issues.

Multi-person shoot procedure:

For any group scenes, ALL the talent must have been living together for the entirety of the government enforced lockdown period, or kept 1m apart, or (as we have done on many occasions) shot separately using motion control and then composited back together in postproduction.

Multi-day shoot procedure:

As of 12th June actors and crew may travel home each night or stay in a local hotel.

Through lockdown we provided campervans and food on-site, this is no longer a requirement.

ON SET CONSIDERATIONS:

Make-up:

We have in-house, fully certified make-up artists available - who wear full PPE when on-set or working on talent. You may, of course, provide your own make-up team.

Wardrobe on-set:

Wardrobe can be purchased and fully managed by Sandstorm or freelancers to your specification.

Props and art department guide:

As with wardrobe, the supply of props and art department are all still available, but delivery can be intermittent, therefore we recommend test shoots are carried out at least two days in advance of filming and requests for props are given to us in an orderly and timely fashion to avoid disappointment.

ON SET HYGIENE:

Safety brief in:

All productions have a morning safety brief in to explain what we expect from every member of the crew in order to stay safe. We also insist on 30 minute hand sanitisation for all crew on set and the use of a fresh face mask every 4 hours.

Sanitiser:

We provide small bottles of Hand Sanitiser in EVERY ROOM in the building, as well as surface spray. We expect all shoot attendees to regularly wash their hands and to spray down surfaces once they have used them. Regardless of who they are, it is their responsibility to do this.

Food on-set:

All food (breakfast, lunch and dinner) is provided by our chef and is charged on at the standard ratecard.

All food is served in recyclable sealed containers with disposable cutlery on set or on plates in our restaurants and cafe.

Toilets on-set:

Talent are provided with their own toilet and are prohibited from using any other toilets or restrooms.

All toilets and rest areas contain WHO guideline sanitiser spray which MUST BE USED after each visit by ANY crew or cast - regardless.

We also have paid restroom attendants who will clean down the toilets after each use.

All toilets are cleaned a minimum of twice a day as a matter of course and are cleaned between every member of talent appearing on stage

OPERATIONAL SAFETY & HYGIENE

Team:

Our team are safe and split into sections - either working from their homes or isolated in different buildings at Sandstorm HQ. Our chef is preparing daily meals and dropping them to a number of staff too to reduce their need to travel or go to shops.

Hygiene and cleanliness:

Our studios are cleaned down twice a day regardless without using external contractors. Surface anti-bacterial spray as well as separate alcohol hand sanitiser are available to all staff on-site and are used regularly. All staff on site are only permitted to use specific toilets and restrooms to avoid all unnecessary contact.

VIEWING AND APPROVAL:

Remote viewing and approval:

All clients, agencies and external contractors can log-in to remote view our work through our private YouTube studio and Hangout facilities - this is available for all production and postproduction.

This is a service we have offered for over ten years, it is not experimental technology, it works! And clients are incredibly complimentary of the results.

Charges for using this service:

There are NO charges, it is a complementary service.

For large groups logging on to the system at once we insist on a producer or moderator controlling the remote feedback in order to allow the operators and crew to work in a safe and controlled and considered manner - without being bombarded with requests.

POST-PRODUCTION AND DATA MANAGEMENT:

Post-Production:

Is still fully operational, this includes editing (offline and online), visual effects, animation, CGI, colour grading and sound mixing. You can even attend grading sessions and sound mixes while adhering to the social distancing rules. We can still also offer a fast and affordable versioning service.

FTP:

Our secure FTP is still fully operational and you are able to use this service free of charge.

Backup:

All media is still dual backed up - one version is kept on site and one off-site. We also have an on-site archivist, all work is also archived, for free, on completion of all projects and can be restored at any time.

Power:

We have two on-site generators, so all of our buildings remain functional regardless of disruptions to the grid.

INSURANCE & PAYMENTS:

Cover:

As you may be aware, insurance companies will not cover against incidents arising from Covid-19. Therefore to mitigate risks we follow the government guidelines closely and require stand-ins for all key roles.

Most noticeable considerations are focused on talent and stand-ins. As our crew are based on site we do not charge on for additional 'stand-in' crew if using a solely Sandstorm crew.

We still have valid and comprehensive insurance to cover all other operations and disruptions.

Payments:

We require a minimum of 50% upfront payment on all productions regardless of whether you have a trading history with Sandstorm or not. New clients will be required to pay 100% upfront.

ALL projects must have final 50% paid ahead of delivery.

These are not procedures we have implemented lightly, but we are aware that all risks must be mitigated in order to remain safe and fully operational at this time.



CANCELLATIONS:

Refunds:

Any productions that are unable to proceed due to global or local procedural changes are fully entitled to full refunds, minus any incurred costs (as detailed below).

Cancellations:

We live in uncertain times, to that effect, any cancellations or postponements are void of our standard terms and conditions - presently the only monies that become due if cancellations are made prior to production, are unavoidable charges. For example props, set build materials, time rendered (example producer time or casting time). We will not charge on any services yet to be fully rendered.

Storage:

We are providing free storage of props, wardrobe and sets in case shoots have to be rescheduled.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Every production is unique.

We are in a privileged position to be one of the only production companies in the world who have remained fully operational throughout lockdown due to our exemplary procedural safeguards.

Our insight is unique and we are happy to discuss your needs in detail before proceeding with any projects.

We thank you for your continued support and it is important you know we are here to support you; our clients, freelancers and the community as a whole in any way we can.

For all enquiries please contact Jenny Chapman or Tom Ward - 01672 642042

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