

## Safety Protocols for Production in Finland During COVID-19

### **Productions are up and running in Finland and we are open for international productions!**

Finland has shown itself to be one of the best places to be and shoot productions during a global pandemic. Both the country's infection rate of the coronavirus and the death rate are the lowest in Europe, and the nation hasn't had to undergo a full lockdown at all. Since late-August of 2020, Finland has also been open to international productions, since we are able to offer a safe environment to shoot in, have clear health and safety guidelines in place, and our highly skilled professionals are able to smoothly adapt international guidelines to work with the ones in place in Finland. *So how does it work?*

#### **Entry permits for arriving cast and crew**

*The short version:*

The entry permits for each production are processed individually and confirmation with local authorities takes no more than a few days. Plus, we're here to help you.

*The long version:*

The Finnish Border Guard (Raja) sorts countries into three different categories, which determine the restrictions and measures to be followed when entering Finland:

- Border traffic returned to normal
- Restriction category 1
- Restriction category 2 (most strict, includes those coming from the UK and USA)

The current country classifications can be found [here](#), and are updated every Monday.

#### **1. Border Traffic Turned to Normal**

If you are entering Finland from a country classified under 'border traffic turned to normal', there are currently no special restrictions or health measures to be followed when crossing the border.

#### **2. Restriction Category 1**

If you are entering Finland from a country classified under 'restriction category 1', you can cross the border if your travel is work-related. At the border check, you may be asked to present a certificate or document to verify that the entry requirements are fulfilled. Such documents may relate to information on the employment relationship and assignment. It's good to have a Finnish contact as an inviting party for your travel to Finland.

#### **3. Restriction Category 2**

If you are entering Finland from a country classified under 'restriction category 2', you need a local partner, (e.g. a production company or production service company) that will handle the communications with the Finnish officials. Every production crew's entry into the country will be processed individually, in advance by the Finnish Border Guard. Then the given crew's arrival plan is presented to the Ministry of Employment and the Economy of Finland and the local hospital district for approval.

## **Crossing the Finnish Border and quarantine**

International film professionals arriving in Finland are permitted to enter the country to work on a production, provided they arrive in the country with a negative COVID-19 test that is max. 72h old. They must also adhere to the local current guidelines for production under COVID-19 (*see next section*) as well as any extra health security measure which may be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

In Finland, full quarantine is 14 days, but film professionals are permitted to a **modified quarantine** wherein they may travel only between their accommodation and set, but no public places. Quarantine may also be shortened by taking a second COVID-19 test a few days after arriving in Finland, depending on the specifics agreed for your production's safety protocols.

## **Health and safety guidelines to be followed by audiovisual productions during the coronavirus pandemic**

The following guidelines have been written by Audiovisual Producers Finland – APFI, the Union of Journalists in Finland, the Finnish Actors' Union, and the Trade Union for Theatre and Media Finland and are **valid until further notice**:

1. For each production, the production company shall clearly designate a point person responsible for safety at work, whom the cast and crew members may contact and who is responsible for providing information and guidelines as well as making decisions regarding occupational safety and the health and well-being of all members of the production.
2. Occupational health and safety measures that relate to general occupational safety – at the very least those in accordance with these guidelines – as well as the team responsible for organizing these measures, must be communicated to all those involved in the production in accordance with these guidelines.
3. Specific occupational safety measures for each given day of filming must be communicated in advance (at least one day prior) to all cast and crew members involved. Cast and crew must also have the opportunity to contact the appointed occupational health and safety officer ahead of filming.
4. The production company shall identify all cast and crew members who are at risk or whose household includes a person at risk. If a cast or crew member indicates that he or she may be a person at risk, there should be a low threshold for him or her to contact healthcare professionals and are recommended to do so. After this, any changes to work arrangements or methods are to be assessed together with the person in charge at the production company.
5. The entire cast and crew shall be informed of the rules regarding sick leave and possible illness during the workday. Anyone displaying flu-like symptoms must remain at home until all symptoms have subsided. In principle, calling in sick without a doctor's note is sufficient. Coronavirus testing is possible given the consent of the tested individual.

6. Transfers to and from set shall be handled wherever possible by everyone's private means of transport.
7. Work is to be planned and carried out in stages, so that there are as few people on set as possible when shooting scenes and also during other times in the general work area, as well as in such a way that a safe distance (2 meters, recommended) to other members of the cast and crew can be maintained.
8. Each department must organize their work in such a way that it is hygienic and safe. When working on set, different departments and groups are to work separately from each other. Everyone must also wash their hands regularly. Hand sanitizer is to be nearby and available on set at all times.
9. The hygiene of workspaces and break rooms as well as equipment is to be constantly maintained throughout the day. Equipment that must be cleaned includes the following: microphones, headphones, filming equipment. Everyone is to take care of his or her own work equipment, and touching others' tools or equipment should be avoided.
10. Actors must dress themselves and set up their own microphones according to the wardrobe and sound departments' instructions, respectively. Wardrobe hygiene must also be considered when costumes are in storage.
11. The makeup and hair departments are responsible for ensuring the actor and makeup designer/hairdresser have the necessary protective wear, and that the tools and material used are not at risk of contamination.
12. Shooting intimate scenes should be avoided. The actor has the right to refuse close contact with other cast members, e.g. kissing.
13. Working and breaks are to be scheduled so that unnecessary proximity between people can be avoided. On set catering should be provided in individual containers whenever possible. There shall be no queue or congestion when distributing food.
14. Changing rooms, breakrooms and dining areas are to be spacious enough to allow the recommended safety distance of 2 meters between all cast and crew members. If it is impossible to obey social distancing protocols indoors, the use of face masks is recommended.

**In addition to the above guidelines for all members of productions, the following special guidelines for production personnel arriving in Finland from abroad must also be adhered to by all productions:**

15. All those who come to Finland for work or on the basis of a work assignment must have travel or health insurance in case of COVID-19 illness or a delay in their return journey caused by quarantine.
16. Persons displaying any symptoms that may be compatible with COVID-19 infection are not to travel to Finland.

17. Persons arriving in Finland must have documentation of a negative COVID-19 test result performed no more than 72 hours prior to arrival. The results must be issued by a licensed physician or an accredited testing laboratory. After arriving in the country, the entrant is to enter voluntary quarantine for a period of 14 days, during which they are to work remotely if possible. The production company must provide and pay for the entrant's COVID-19 test within 5-7 days of arriving in Finland.
18. The production company in Finland is responsible for arranging the virus test, providing the foreign individual with all instructions and supervising the voluntary quarantine.
19. If an individual develops symptoms while in Finland that are compatible with a COVID-19 infection, he or she must immediately contact the designated point person responsible for safety at work by telephone, and self-isolate from all other individuals. The production company must ensure the individual in question is immediately and safely taken to be tested. The individual is to remain in isolation at their accommodation until the test results arrive. The production company will arrange for a doctor to be consulted regarding any treatment. Potential exposures will be identified immediately by the occupational health and safety point person and reported to the Producer, who is responsible for dissemination of information and isolation measures as they pertain to normal working operations.
20. If an individual tests positive for a COVID-19 infection, they or a representative of their choosing must immediately contact the Infections Unit of their local hospital district. From this point on, the entire production staff must do as instructed by their local hospital district's Infections Unit.
21. Whenever possible, travel to Finland should be arranged via direct flights or with as few transfers as possible. Those travelling should protect themselves (face masks, hand sanitizer, etc.) and maintain safe distances as much as they can.
22. Transportation between the airport, accommodation site, COVID-19 test site, and the workplace are to be arranged via private transport until the quarantine period is over. Persons shall not visit public premises or use public means of transport until the end of the quarantine period.
23. Face masks are to be used whenever possible while working. Otherwise, workplaces are to strictly follow these guidelines for maintaining a safe production environment. This is the responsibility of the appointed occupational health and safety officer.
24. Persons must comply with all current official recommendations and guidelines in place in Finland to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus and pandemic throughout their stay in Finland. The Finnish production company is responsible for adhering to these guidelines and for providing information to individuals entering the country.