



# DUNNOTTAR CASTLE

## A Guide to Filming & Photography at Dunnottar Castle

### 1. Introduction

Dunnottar Castle welcomes filming and photography enquiries. However, as a scheduled monument we must ensure that the Castle is protected throughout the process and respect is shown to the surrounding environment.

It is important to us that visitors to the Castle are able to enjoy a high standard of experience of the site. However, with sufficient planning and lead in time exclusive use of the whole or parts of the Castle may be possible.

We may be able to facilitate early opening or late closing times and can explore options to meet your production needs, while fulfilling our obligation to safeguard the Castle.

### 2. Permission and Timeframes

Filming or photography must not take place at the Castle unless express, prior written consent has been issued by Dunecht Estates or Dunnottar Castle staff. Consent must be agreed at least two weeks in advance.

The length of time required to plan a piece of filming and issue permissions will vary based on the details and complexity of your proposal. For example, we may be able to accommodate a very small crew with only handheld equipment in two weeks. More involved requests are likely to take considerably longer and consent for these types of filming should be sought well before the planned shoot dates.

Requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis taking into account factors such as the nature and content of the filming/photoshoot (see Section 7), likely visitor numbers, existing scheduled events, planned maintenance work and site-specific sensitivities such as access, masonry, or wildlife habitats.

### 3. Fees

Fees will apply to all filming. Exceptions may be made for Promotional Filming or filming associated with student coursework. For details on how we define Promotional Filming or Student Filming, see Appendix 1 and 2.

Filming fees are set with regards to the nature of your filming, crew size, staffing requirements, exclusive use requests and times and dates.

Once filming arrangements have been confirmed and the letter of agreement signed, cancellation may incur a charge of half the agreed fee. Cancellation with less than 48 hours' notice will be charged the full agreed fee.

### 4. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (Drones)

Requests to use UAVs at the Castle will be considered on a case-by-case basis. UAV filming will only be permitted subject to the following requirements:

- The flying is carried out by a CAA accredited operator, copies of CAA certificates will be required to be exhibited prior to filming
- Provision of a Risk Assessment and method statement including flight paths and area control, submitted by the UAV operator, which must be approved by our insurers

- The operator must abide by all CAA guidelines for UAV usage
- UAV filming must take place out with Castle opening hours to ensure flyover areas are unoccupied by visitors.

Further information may be obtained from the Civil Aviation Authority website [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk). Please note that all other filming guidelines in this document, or subsequently provided, also apply to UAV filming.

## **5. Crew**

We may ask you to reduce your numbers depending on the nature and details of your production to minimise the disruption on site. Film crew size may also impact the fee charged.

Vehicle parking requirements must also be discussed at point of enquiry and will be agreed as part of your filming agreement. Parking requirements will be reflected in the fee charged.

## **6. Equipment, Props and Effects**

Equipment cannot be attached to any part of the Castle or the cliffs upon which the Castle sits due to the site be a Scheduled Ancient Monument. All lighting, tripods and any other structures must be freestanding and have rubber footing to avoid any damage to the site. For example, freestanding counterweighted rigs may be used for overhead camera shots.

Digging the ground within and immediately out with the Castle is not permitted in accordance with the Scheduled Ancient Monument status of the site.

Proposed equipment requirements should be included in your enquiry and will also be discussed in further detail as part of your application.

### **6.1. Physical and Special Effects**

All applications that include the use of smoke or other effects must state:

- the effect you wish to use/achieve
- where within the site you intend to use the effect
- the chemical composition of the materials involved in the effect

It may be possible to use certain effects in some areas (e.g. on grass) and not others (e.g. on or near stone). Each effect will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be included in the Risk Assessment. Consultation may be required with Historic Environment Scotland's Scheduled Ancient Monument team regarding physical and special effects and we would note that such consultations can take time and as such if you hope to use effects, you contact us well in advance of your proposed filming date as otherwise we may not be able to accommodate your request.

### **6.2. Replica Weapons**

Prop weapons such as swords and other bladed weapons can be brought on site as long as they are blunted and risk assessed. We must see certification for any replica guns before such props are brought on site.

### **6.3. Use of Animals**

You may be able to use animals on site in certain circumstances as long as:

- they are controlled properly
- their use is risk assessed and their welfare appropriately safeguarded
- you hold the relevant paperwork for the movement of any livestock

## **7. Filming Not Considered**

Not all themes for filming will be considered by Dunnottar Castle:

- Political filming – Dunnottar Castle is strictly politically neutral at all times. For this reason, we do not allow any filming of a political nature whatsoever.

- Paranormal filming – Dunnottar Castle does not promote the use of the Castle for the investigation of alleged paranormal activity and we do not allow activities that might damage the integrity of the site. Filming requests of this nature will need special consideration.
- Inappropriate filming – We will not permit requests for filming that are deemed unsuitable insofar as they do not align with our organisation’s objectives or are considered to be blasphemous, salacious or derogatory in nature.

## 7. The Application Process

Filming requests are processed through discussion and negotiation, but the key steps are as follows:

- Receipt of *Filming & Photography Request form*, downloadable from the website.
- Discussions with a senior member of staff from Dunnottar Castle and/or Dunecht Estates.
- Site meeting held if appropriate.
- Submission of Risk Assessments, Public Liability Insurance certificate and any other documentation required.
- Further discussions of plans and revision of proposal and Risk Assessment if necessary.
- Fees agreed if applicable.
- Letter of agreement signed by both parties.
- Payment made, if applicable.

Please provide as much detail as possible when completing the initial form: proposed dates and times, potential locations, content and nature of the script, detailed description of any equipment to be brought on site, set dressing, number of vehicles, cast, crew and extras. Your request will be circulated internally to relevant teams within Dunecht Estates for comments.

Straightforward requests may not require a site meeting and the process can continue through telephone and e-mail correspondence with your filming liaison contact. For more complicated requests a site meeting may be necessary. This may involve colleagues from various departments, to cover practical aspects such as impact on visitor operations or site conservation and infrastructural concerns.

Any questions, concerns or issues are discussed at this stage to determine whether your request can be accommodated at the Castle. At this point we will be able to confirm whether or not we can take your request forward. All being well an informal agreement will then be reached.

For all requests a comprehensive Risk Assessment is required before the letter of agreement can be issued. This will be reviewed by our Health and Safety Consultants and our Insurers. Any issues or inadequacies must be resolved to our satisfaction prior to your letter of agreement being issued and consequently filming being permitted. If you are unsure of how to write a Risk Assessment, seek guidance and further information from the Health and Safety Executive at [www.hse.gov.uk/risk](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk).

It is a requirement of our Insurers that all persons carrying out activities on Dunecht Estates/Dunnottar Castle hold a minimum of £10 million public liability insurance. Filming will not be permitted without prior evidence that such insurance cover is held.

Once all required documents have been received and approved a letter of agreement will be issued which details the terms & conditions of any filming. This must be signed and returned before filming can take place. No changes to the agreement as issued, of any nature, will be accepted and the document must be signed as presented in order to proceed.

As per the terms of the agreement an invoice will be issued to you in advance of the date of filming. This must be paid in full prior to filming commencing.

## **Appendix 1. Promotional Filming**

Dunnottar Castle defines filming as Promotional where the Castle is being directly promoted as a place to visit, as opposed to media exposure only but this is at our discretion and can be discussed further with us.

Filming commissioned by Scottish tourism partners in receipt of Scottish Government funding may be considered as Promotional, depending on content.

## **Appendix 2. Student Filming Requests for Educational Projects**

Dunnottar Castle recognises the educational benefit of accommodating filming projects for students of media and other subjects. We will consider student requests, applying many of the same processes as for other clients, but with some modifications. Your project will need to meet the following requirements:

- A thorough Risk Assessment
- Public Liability Insurance to the value of £10 million
- A letter from your lecturer, course organiser or equivalent, confirming that the project forms a required part of an accredited course of study
- A maximum of 5 people (cast and crew) on-site for the filming
- A maximum of 2 hours on-site
- Equipment and set to be kept to a minimum
- Students aged 16 or under must be accompanied by a teacher or group leader
- Student filming is not permitted inside the Castle during May-September due to operational challenges

A nominal administrative fee of £100 will be charged for facilitating your project. If additional staffing is required either to provide access to the site outside normal opening hours or to specifically supervise the filming, there will be an additional charge for this.

Fees can be invoiced to the educational institution and must be paid before commencement of the filming.

As with all filming requests, submitting your request as far in advance as possible is strongly advised for the best chance of obtaining permission.