



**Photography, filming,  
sound recording, painting,  
sketching, mobile  
telephones and pagers in  
the Palace of Westminster**



This leaflet sets out the rules on filming. This includes TV, video, still photography, sound recording, painting, sketching and the use of mobile telephones and pagers within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster and its Parliamentary outbuildings. The rules have been approved by the House of Lords Administration and Works Sub-Committee and by the House of Commons Administration Committee and Catering Committee. In the House of Lords the rules are administered by Black Rod and in the House of Commons by the Serjeant at Arms.

### **What are the basic rules?**

No one should photograph, film or sketch or have their voice recorded anywhere within the Parliamentary Estate without permission. Anyone who attempts to do so, or to market, publish or transmit such material will be referred to Black Rod or the Serjeant at Arms. This could prejudice their future admission to the Houses of Parliament. The same applies to any filming to camera except as part of an interview with a Peer or Member. 'Voice-over' commentaries may be added to film where appropriate.

### **How can permission be obtained for filming, photography or interviews?**

You can apply for permits as indicated below

- House of Lords areas: Black Rod's Office  
020 7219 3099
- House of Commons areas: Serjeant at Arms' Events Team 020 7219 3090
- Clock Tower Parliamentary Works Services Directorate: 020 7219 4862
- Abingdon Green Parliamentary Estates Directorate: 020 7219 3814
- Refreshment Department, House of Lords: 020 7219 4222
- Refreshment Department, House of Commons: 020 7219 3686

### **Is there a fee?**

Applicants may be charged a facility fee. Details of any payment should be agreed before a permit is issued.

### **Can permission be granted to photograph, film or copy works of art?**

Copyright may be involved and the interested parties will have to grant special permission. Enquiries in writing should be addressed to Black Rod or the Serjeant at Arms, as appropriate.

### **What about photography and filming of Peers and Members in the Palace?**

Photography or filming, including video recording, may be arranged in the following areas:

- Peers' and Members' rooms, although external photography and filming from within rooms is not permitted; all equipment and cases must be contained within the room
- the Upper Waiting Hall during the opening ceremony of an exhibition
- Interview Rooms
- Westminster Hall
- Jubilee Room
- Portcullis House conference and meeting rooms
- Conference and meeting rooms in other Parliamentary outbuildings
- Peers' television interview room
- the Terrace and New Palace Yard for personal interviews, but, please note, subject to certain conditions (*see later section*)
- Filming within Committee Rooms is permitted, with the proviso that the chairman of the meeting is content and the material is for internal use only. Such material should not be broadcast. Permits should be obtained from the Serjeant at Arms' Events Team on x3090.

### **Can Select Committees be filmed?**

For House of Lords committees, the Chairman and Clerk can make arrangements for press conferences and filming of Select Committee business in committee rooms. Similarly, the Chairmen of House of Commons Select Committees can arrange for press conferences to launch their reports to be filmed in committee rooms 5 to 16 or in the Portcullis House committee rooms.

### **Should advance notice be given?**

If Peers want to arrange for photography or filming in the House of Lords by any media, they are asked to contact Black Rod's Office at least 48 hours in advance.

### **When is permission for filming denied?**

Permission is not normally given to photograph or film:

- Peers, Members and others in the Chambers, Peers' and Members' Lobbies, and the Division Lobbies
- anybody not accompanied by a Member
- any person addressing a camera except as part of an interview with a Peer or Member or as a piece to camera.
- along the Visitor Route during the hours when it is open
- in rooms or offices to which members of the public are not normally admitted
- on Sundays or Public Holidays
- in connection with advertising, fund raising or for commercial purposes
- in Black Rod's Garden when the House of Lords is sitting and during the 30 minutes before the House sits
- costume dramas/documentaries or theatrical pieces.

### **Are there any rules that apply only to Members of the House of Commons?**

Yes:

- interviews involving filming or video recordings can take place at the special interview points in Central Lobby, the Committee Corridor and Portcullis House courtyard and 1st floor.
- Members may arrange with the Serjeant at Arms for visiting heads of state, heads of government, presiding officers of national assemblies, UN or NATO secretaries general or European commissioners to be photographed in the Grand Committee Room and Committee Rooms 5 to 16.

### **Where are the interview points?**

They are available for interviews with Members by all major domestic broadcasters at:

- Central Lobby, from the threshold of the vestibule door to the floor tiles in line with the statue of Lord Northcott, facing out into the Lobby

- Committee Corridor, outside Committee Room 16, facing along the corridor. This location may be booked at all times except for half an hour either side of the scheduled start and finish of the meetings of each Parliamentary party
- Portcullis House first floor, outside the Macmillan Room, overlooking the courtyard and by the e-library, with shots facing either towards it or across the courtyard towards the escalators.

For live transmission, lines must be booked with the BBC.

### **What conditions are attached to their use?**

Interviews should be with specified Members, or represent an introduction to or commentary on a Parliamentary subject. Requests for interviews in Central Lobby and the Committee Corridor need to be booked through the Admission Order Office on x3700 during working hours or the Central Lobby Reception Desk on x1661 when the House is sitting outside working hours. Requests for interviews in Portcullis House are booked through the reception desk there on x4141 or the Admission Order Office x3700 until 20.00 or the main entrance on x1017 until the Rise of the House. Please also remember the 15-minute time limit for each interview and the limit of no more than three in a film crew who must be photo-identity pass holders.

### **Can other locations be used?**

Interviews must not happen in any other area even as a fallback when filming at these interview points is not possible.

### **What happens if these rules are breached?**

The Serjeant at Arms can remove the right to film from broadcasters for 12 sitting weeks. Serious breaches will be reported to the Administration Committee.

### **Which entrances should be used?**

St Stephen's Entrance to Central Lobby and the Committee Corridor and the main entrance to Portcullis House from the Victoria Embankment.

### **Are there rules covering the Terrace?**

Filming or photography cannot take place on the Terrace while either House is sitting. Otherwise on sitting days, a Peer or Member can give filmed interviews, provided that hand-held equipment is used, without cables or special lighting, and the interview is over by 12 noon. These regulations do not apply on non-sitting days, but filming should be completed by 17.30. Visitors accompanied by a Peer or Member can take photographs on the Terrace within these timings. A permit is not required. Photography should be restricted to the Peer or Member concerned and their immediate guests.

### **What about New Palace Yard?**

Members can be photographed or filmed outside the garden but subject to a few conditions. Requests for interviews with specified Members must be booked through the Serjeant at Arms' Events Team on x3090 and no more than two should be scheduled for the same time. The maximum time is 15 minutes each. Film crews are limited to three people who must hold Palace of Westminster photo-identity passes.

### **What are the rules on using Abingdon Green?**

Subject to the advice of Black Rod and the Serjeant at Arms, Peers and Members can be interviewed by the BBC, ITN and Sky News. Permanent power cables with lockable sockets are provided. Other organisations can conduct filming and photography providing no more than 10 people are involved and no props are used. These two conditions do not apply to the annual Lords versus Commons tug of war.

### **What about painting and sketching?**

The conditions are the same as those for filming and photography.

### **When can sound recording equipment be used?**

For interviews or meetings involving Peers and Members **except** in the Chambers, the Peers' and Members' Lobbies, Princes Chamber, the Royal Gallery, the Robing Room, the Division Lobbies, the Ways and Means Corridor, the Library Corridor, the

Centre Curtain Corridor or any outlet operated by the Refreshment Departments of either House. Sound recording equipment can also be used by journalists in the Press Galleries during sittings of either House and Westminster Hall; by journalists and others in meetings of standing or select committees to assist with note taking, but **not** for broadcast use.

**When is use of sound recording equipment not allowed?**

Sound recordings cannot be made along the Visitor Route when it is open to sponsored parties and visitors.

**What are the general rules about mobile telephones and pagers?**

Peers and Members may use mobile telephones discreetly to avoid being overheard. Their use is banned in Refreshment Department areas of both Houses and the Terrace. Non-Members may only use mobile telephone in the areas detailed below. Provided they are silent, there is no ban on pagers, although they should not be used in the Chamber and Committees to transmit messages to Peers or Members for use in proceedings.

**Which are the areas the in House of Lords where mobile telephones can be used?**

Mobile telephones can be used in offices or where conventional telephones are located, but not while moving around the House. They should be silent in all public areas including the Chamber.

**And in the House of Commons?**

Mobile telephones can be used in the Committee Corridor, the Centre Curtain Corridor and St Stephen's Hall where public pay telephones are installed. They should be switched off in all other areas where there is unrestricted public access, in the Chamber, in meetings of Committees of the House or Library areas. They should not be used while moving around the House. The rules on using pagers are similar to those that apply in the House of Lords.

### **Serjeant at Arms Information Leaflets**

The following leaflets can be obtained from the Serjeant at Arms' Office and from reception desks in the Palace and the outbuildings.

Access and security

Accommodation and facilities for  
Members and their staff

Babycare facilities

Car parking

Committee Rooms, Conference,  
Meeting and Interview Rooms

Exhibitions in the Upper Waiting Hall

Facilities for Members' spouses or partners

Facilities for visitors with disabilities

Fire precautions and fire safety measures

Gallery tickets

Mass lobbies

Parliamentary Mail Service

**Photography, filming, sound recording, painting,  
sketching, mobile telephones and pagers**

Stationery, post paid envelopes and use of the  
crowned portcullis

Visitors to Parliament