

A GUIDE TO BUSKING & STREET PERFORMANCE IN PORTSMOUTH

WELCOME

In Portsmouth, we warmly welcome buskers and street performers who can add life and character to our streets. Busking and street entertainment have long been integral to the city's personality, creating a vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere for locals and visitors alike. Buskers and street entertainers are therefore free to perform in Portsmouth.

There are, however, locations and occasions when certain performances can become disruptive and intrusive to the daily lives of our residents, visitors, and workers. To address these concerns, to promote mutual respect and to protect sensitive locations Portsmouth City Council have developed these guidelines.

The aim of these is to foster a harmonious environment ensuring that all can benefit and enjoy a suitable balance of peacefulness and pleasure from street entertainers. Maintaining positive relationships with all users of public spaces is a shared priority, and these guidelines serve to support this objective.

PORTSMOUTH STREET PERFORMANCE CODE

This code provides a set of guidelines that applies to buskers and all types of street performers.

This Code only applies to public land. Performances on private land or shopping centres such as on South Parade Pier and within Gunwharf Quays cannot take place without the permission of the owner.

**PERFORMANCES ON
PRIVATE LAND CANNOT
TAKE PLACE WITHOUT THE
PERMISSION OF THE OWNER.**



PERFORMERS CODE

KEEP THE NOISE DOWN

Music or voices should not be amplified to a level that can be heard beyond a distance of 25 metres.

BE RESPECTFUL

If requested to lower the volume of your music or change your performance, please do so. Performers should always be respectful of the wishes of the local community.

RESPECT THE HOURS

Performances should not commence before 9am and should finish by 8pm. Please note that using loudspeakers on a street between 9pm and 8am is an offence.

FLEXIBILITY

Be willing to be flexible and adjust if your performance is negatively impacting others. This could involve moving to a different location, playing at a lower volume, or changing the direction you're facing.

KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT

Be aware of how your equipment sounds and how it may impact others. Some instruments, such as brass, bagpipes, and percussion, can carry more and be more intrusive than others. Consider taking breaks and moving locations more often if using these instruments.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

A photograph of a street performer, seen from behind, wearing a brown hat and suspenders, playing a large hula hoop. The performer is in the foreground, and a large, diverse crowd of people is gathered in the background, watching the performance. The scene is outdoors with trees and buildings visible in the distance. The entire image has an orange tint and is overlaid with a white and orange checkered pattern on the left and right sides.

**RETURNING TO
THE SAME PITCH
IS DISCOURAGED**

**SOLICITING
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
PASSERS-BY IS PROHIBITED**

A photograph of a person in a light-colored shirt and dark pants, kneeling on a sidewalk and adjusting a portable amplifier. A guitar is visible in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter and a white and orange checkered pattern on the right side.

**IF REQUESTED, PLEASE LOWER
THE VOLUME OF YOUR MUSIC OR
CHANGE YOUR PERFORMANCE**

**BE MINDFUL THAT
PORTSMOUTH IS A
FAMILY-FRIENDLY CITY**

PERFORMERS CODE CONTINUED...

DON'T HOG THE SPOTLIGHT

Buskers should not occupy a single pitch for more than one hour at a time. After performing, you are encouraged to move to a different location at least 50 meters away. Returning to the same pitch on the same day is discouraged.

GIVE YOUR FELLOW PERFORMERS SOME SPACE

You should avoid setting up performances within 50 metres of another performer. If you can hear each other, please move or turn your amplification down.

DON'T BLOCK THE WAY

You should not obstruct the passage of pedestrians along the street. It is important to steer clear of areas nearby fire exits, cashpoints, or doorways, and to refrain from performing directly in front of businesses.

NO SELLING

Offering merchandise, such as CDs or posters, for sale is not allowed during performances, as consent is required to sell goods in the street.

NO BEGGING

Soliciting contributions from passers-by, which can be interpreted as begging, is prohibited and may result in arrest and legal consequences.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

PERFORMERS CODE CONTINUED...

KEEP IT VARIED

Repetitive performances can be highly annoying and disruptive to people who are working or living nearby. Take breaks every 20-30 minutes to give people a chance to rest their ears.

NO ANIMALS

Animals should not be part of performances.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

Be mindful that Portsmouth is a family-friendly city. Consider your audience when choosing songs and activities.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Be mindful of events and times when performances may not be welcome. To see the annual programme of events go to **Welcome to Portsmouth - Visit Portsmouth.**

**IT MUST BE HIGHLIGHTED THAT
ANY DONATIONS ARE MADE ON
A VOLUNTARY BASIS**



THE TECHNICAL BITS...

STREET ENTERTAINMENT AND STREET TRADING

Performances do not involve a formal sales transaction. Donations are given to performers by members of the public on a voluntary basis.

If the provision of goods or services is part of your performance, they must be offered on a voluntary basis, and this must be made clear to members of the public. It must also be a secondary aspect of your act, which means that people should be able to engage with your act / performance without any obligation to donate.

It must be highlighted that any donations made are on a voluntary basis so that the product or service is an extension of the act itself, and people are not obliged to make any contribution.

For example, in some circumstances a member of the public may request a CD without donating. This should be made clear with an appropriate sign.

We suggest the following wording:

"Due to Portsmouth City Council's street trading legislation, I am not allowed to sell these CDs (balloons, portraits, etc.). However, you are welcome to make a voluntary contribution if you would like to support my work."

Any suggestion of a price will be considered as offering goods for sale, which is against local legislation.

Where the above guidance is observed, and the provision of goods / services is clearly a secondary aspect of the performance, enforcement action under street trading legislation will not be taken. However, random audits will be carried out by council officers to ensure compliance.

Any performances in aid of a charity will require a separate street collection permit: **Street collection permits - Portsmouth City Council**



**BUSKING ACTIVITIES ARE ONLY
ALLOWED BETWEEN 9AM – 8PM**

A photograph of a person playing a saxophone on a street. The person is wearing a dark jacket and light-colored trousers. A white collection tin filled with coins is on the ground next to them. The background shows a paved street and the legs of other people. The image has an orange tint and a white border around the text.

BUSKERS MUST HAVE A PERFORMING RIGHTS SOCIETY (PRS) MUSIC LICENCE

THE TECHNICAL BITS...

MUSIC LICENCES

Performers must have a Performing Rights Society (PRS) music licence to play copyrighted music in public.

This licence gives you the legal right to play copyrighted music for extended periods of time.

Failure to obtain a PRS licence may result in the copyright owner taking legal action for copyright infringement.

It is the responsibility of each performer to comply with the regulations. More information can be found on the PRS website: www.prsformusic.com/

licences

CHILDREN IN EMPLOYMENT AND PERFORMANCE

If children wish to perform in the streets, such as busking, the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (Section 37) may apply to restrict licensing.

Children who are paid, absent from school, being broadcast, being directed, or have performed more than four times in six months will need a child performance licence and a busking licence.

Any performances involving children, please check with Portsmouth City Council regarding legal requirements. Further information can be found at:

www.portsmouth.gov.uk/children-in-entertainment/

Children under 14 are not allowed to perform. For more information and if you think you may need a child performance licence, please visit: **[Apply for a child performance licence - GOV.UK](#)**

THE TECHNICAL BITS...

HEALTH & SAFETY

Everyone who performs in public spaces in Portsmouth has a responsibility to do so safely. This means taking steps to avoid accidents and injuries, both to yourself and to others.

Here are three tips for staying safe while performing:

- Be aware of your surroundings. Pay attention to traffic, cycle paths, pedestrians, and other potential hazards.
- Use caution when setting up and taking down your equipment. Be sure to secure any loose items and avoid tripping hazards.
- Performers are responsible for their actions. The city council is not liable for any injuries, damages, or losses that occur because of their performance. In addition to taking these precautions, it is also a good idea to have public liability insurance. This covers you in case someone is injured because of your activities. It is an inexpensive way to protect yourself from financial liability in the event of an accident.



**DON'T PLAY YOUR
MUSIC SO LOUD THAT
IT DISTURBS OTHERS**

**IT IS A GOOD IDEA
TO HAVE PUBLIC
LIABILITY INSURANCE**

RECOMMENDED PERFORMANCE AREAS

HIGHSTREET LOCATIONS

In Portsmouth, there are 12 high-street locations recommended for performances. These have been highlighted for performances due to footfall in the locality and also are least likely to give rise to noise complaints. Please see the maps for the recommended spots and below for “what3words” precise location finder:

- London Road, North End (LR01) - [///single.keen.ranges](#)
- Cosham High Street (CS01) - [///homes.aims.item](#)
- Cosham High Street (CS02) - [///sheets.kicked.note](#)
- Commercial Road (CR04) - [///tens.casual.skill](#)
- Commercial Road (CR03B) - [///makes.plans.sands](#)
- Commercial Road (CR03A) - [///orbit.regime.insist](#)
- Commercial Road (CR02B) - [///sock.armed.lost](#)
- Commercial Road (CR02A) - [///giving.loving.blank](#)
- Commercial Road (CR01) - [///vines.bleat.windy](#)
- Arundel Street (AS01) - [///mimic.leader.deep](#)
- Arundel Street (AS02) - [///fled.level.salsa](#)
- Palmerston Road (PR01) - [///fade.urban.milky](#)

SOUTHSEA SEAFRONT SENSITIVITIES

Whilst performing along the seafront is not formally prohibited, this area is considered to be sensitive as local byelaws are in place to protect these areas particularly with respect to creating annoyance and/or creating obstructions. We therefore ask that you consider these particularly sensitive locations when performing. To assist we have recommended areas to avoid along Southsea seafront which are highlighted on the map.

Please be mindful of the cumulative effect of sound/music when other events are taking place along the seafront. It may not be possible for you to busk as your sound, combined with that from the event maybe too much for local residents.

AREAS IDENTIFIED:

- In close proximity to historical monuments - such as the Portsmouth Naval Memorial
- 100m either side of South Parade Pier
- Theatre Of The Sea - immediately south of Southsea Castle
- Hotwalls, Portsmouth City Wall - Old Portsmouth



THANK YOU

Thank you for reading this guide and for following our advice, we are glad to have you and for adding to the vibrant culture life of our city.



You can request this information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 023 9283 4092 or email cityhelpdesk@portsmouthcc.gov.uk