

Chelmsford City Council Voluntary Code for Busking

1. Overview

- 1.1 The Chelmsford City Council Voluntary Code for Busking sets out Chelmsford City Council's approach to Busking. Though buskers/performers do not require a licence to perform, we require that they adhere to the rules outlined.
- 1.2 Whilst it encourages cooperation to resolve any issues, breaches of the policy and persistent non-compliance, could result in the enforcement action including a Community Protection Notice (CPN) issued by Chelmsford City Council.
- 1.3 We appreciate that busking and street performances adds attractiveness, colour and vibrancy to the city centre and if done well can provide pleasure and entertainment to visitors and local people. This Policy aims to create a community where performers, street traders, businesses and residents, share public spaces in cooperation and harmony.

2. Locations

- 2.1 Busking is only permitted between 8am – 8pm. Buskers must set-up and pack-up within this time allocation
- 2.2 Any location can be occupied for a maximum of 1 hour. If buskers wish to continue performing, they must do so at another location situated a minimum of 50 metres away.

3. Sound

- 3.1 An amplified voice/music should not be so loud that it causes nuisance to those nearby. If asked to reduce your volume, please be considerate and do so as far as possible, by reducing amplification or playing quieter tunes.
- 3.2 Please do not repeat music in the same location. Acts with varied content are more popular.

4. Equipment

- 4.1 Street furniture (e.g. public seats, lamp posts, railings etc) cannot be used as props for a performance
- 4.2 Ensure that your equipment does not obstruct; the flow of pedestrians, trading stalls, fire exits, cashpoints or doorways.

- 4.3 Do not leave equipment unattended as it may pose a risk to pedestrians. If unattended items are deemed suspicious/dangerous they may be removed.
- 4.4 Once your performance is complete be sure to remove all equipment and waste produced by yourself or attracted crowds.

5. Money

- 5.1 Buskers are permitted to receive voluntary contributions from the public.
- 5.2 The public should never feel coerced into giving buskers money. Reports of begging could result in the issuing of a Community Protection Notice.
- 5.3 A street trading licence is needed to sell merchandise to the public. However, if items are given freely, a licence will not be required. Busking cannot include sampling, selling or giving away food or drink

6. Safety

- 6.1 It is a legal requirement that Buskers must be aged 14 or above.
- 6.2 Do not perform in a way that could pose a threat or danger to yourself or members of the public. Buskers/performers should assess the risk of their performances and consider whether it would be suitable to acquire public liability insurance (PLI) cover. Members of the Musicians' Union, Equity, should have PLI covered in their membership
- 6.3 If a performance attracts a large crowd, it is the responsibility of the busker/performer to ensure that it can be easily broken up. In the event Police or Public Officials want to share information with the crowd, the busker/performer must ensure that it is delivered
- 6.4 Do not cordon off part of the pavement (e.g. with rope) to create a performance area. An additional crowd is likely to cause an obstruction and increase the likelihood of someone getting injured.
- 6.5 Buskers/performers must not perform with animals.
- 6.6 Blades can be used in a performance however they must be blunt and handled with care. A suitable distance should be withheld between the performer and the audience
- 6.7 If fire is used in your act, we recommend that a wet towel, fire blanket or water extinguisher is easily accessible and stored close within the performance space. Ensure that the public remains a suitable distance away from the performance area

- 6.8 Any fuel used should be low flash and stored in a suitable container. Potentially dangerous props such as blades or flammable items should be stored out of reach & site to the public. When dangerous items are involved in the performance, child volunteers cannot be used

7. Behaviour Code

- 7.1 Be polite to members of the public & other users of the surrounding space
- 7.2 Buskers must not be drinking any alcohol or have any alcohol on display when busking. This includes when setting up, performing and packing down.
- 7.3 If your behaviour is deemed unreasonable and you are having a persistent detrimental effect on the quality of life of people in the area, action may be taken against you.

8. Conflict Resolution/Advice for Members of the Public

- 8.1 If a Busker proves to be a disturbance, follow the 3 steps below

1. Politely introduce yourself
2. Explain the impact of their performance
3. Ask if the performer is aware of the Busking Policy & refer them to the website

Amicably and quickly address a busker as soon as the performance becomes a nuisance. Where possible wait for a suitable break before talking to the performer(s).

- 8.2 Unless there is an imminent risk to the performer or others, the Busker should be given a chance to change their performance so that it follows the Buskers' code
- 8.3 If the nuisance continues, please contact Chelmsford City Council via www.chelmsford.gov.uk or 01245 606606.