



# 2023 FILM PLANNING GUIDE

## Film Planning Guide

The City of Columbus is a film friendly location. The City desires to make it easier to film in the City as it brings employment opportunities, tourism, hotel occupancy, and general economic development to the Community. You are required to obtain a Film Permit from Columbus Recreation and Parks when filming in a city park or when closing a street for filming.

- Film Applications should be submitted at least:
  - 5 days in advance for any filming without a street closure.
  - 30 days for any filming with street closures or additional permitting requirements.
  - Additional permits or City resources may be required prior to approval and may require additional time for permitting.
  - Application submission does not guarantee a permit will be issued.
  - Late fees will be assessed for applications submitted after the deadlines.
  - Application and late fees are non-refundable. Please review the [Event Fee Schedule](#) for associated costs.
- To obtain a Film Permit, the City requires a completed Film Application that includes the following:
  - A completed safety form;
  - A list or map of the area(s) proposed for filming;
  - A certificate of insurance that names the City as an additional insured. (commercial filming only)

An occupancy permit will be required when limiting pedestrian access while filming on a sidewalk or when closing a single lane of traffic for filming. You can obtain information on occupancy permits [here](#) or you may contact the Right-of-Way office at [ColsPermits@columbus.gov](mailto:ColsPermits@columbus.gov).

The film permit serves as a location agreement.

### General Film/Photography Guidelines

- A noise permit is not needed when approved for a film permit, provided the applicant fully completes the amplified sound portion of the application.
- Filming may be permitted within the designated times of 8:00am-11:00pm. Overnight filming will require additional oversight/approvals.
- Any identifiable City equipment, uniforms, signs, buildings or insignia may not be portrayed in commercial advertising and/or filming in any way that would imply City endorsement of the product.
- Permitted groups may not remove, cut, trim or otherwise alter vegetation without permission from the property owner. Requests to tie, drape, or attach rope, props, or equipment to trees, shrubs, fences, or benches will be declined, as will requests to tie or attach anything to any architectural features, statues, sculptures, or fountains.
- Gunfire & Weapons
  - Production including gunfire, or other special weapon props, such as but not limited to knives, swords, tasers, and explosive devices will require Columbus Police and/or Columbus Fire involvement.
  - Filming locations must have signage around the perimeter stating that weapons are part of the filming process and state that they are fake.
- Crime scene in public view
  - Production including any actions in public view that would cause a reasonable citizen to call 9-1-1 or think that a crime is being committed. (Ex. robbery, chase, abduction, etc.) require Columbus Police and/or Columbus Fire involvement.
- Pyrotechnics, Special Effects or Open Flame
  - Production including elements that require Pyrotechnics; Special Effects; Open Flame will require Columbus Fire involvement and additional permitting.
- Compliance with laws
  - Production Companies and their agents must comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, and regulations.

- Production Companies and their agents must also obtain and keep all permits and licenses required to conduct the requested activities on location.
- ADA Compliance: Any alterations created by the laying of cabling, placement of equipment or ancillary items related to the production of any filming on any sidewalks, curb ramps or other sloped surfaces in the City where ADA access is provided shall be properly cleared of such obstructions. Where such obstructions are necessary for the production of filming, suitable temporary ramps to sidewalks or ADA ramps shall be placed to allow for the uninterrupted flow of all ADA traffic.
- Clean up: The permittee shall conduct operations in an orderly fashion with continuous attention to the storage of equipment not in use and the cleanup of trash and debris. The area used shall be cleaned of trash and debris upon completion of filming and the scene restored to the original condition before leaving the site.

### **Non-Commercial or Personal Filming/Photography**

Non-commercial shall mean and include, but is not limited to philanthropic, political, patriotic, recreational, student filming and/or charitable purposes. Personal photography includes wedding, family, anniversary and senior portraits.

- Non-commercial, still and/or personal photographers will require a permit when:
  - Takes place at location(s) or time(s) when members of the public are generally not allowed;
  - Utilizes professional actors or models, specialized or large motorized equipment or set(s) and prop(s) that are not a part of the location's natural or cultural resources or administrative facilities;
  - Will include 50 or more people, or have the potential to impact the park for other users;
  - Uses pyrotechnics or flame effects;
  - The Recreation and Parks Department would incur administrative costs to support the activity;
  - Includes weapons (fake or real). Columbus Police may be required onsite.

### **Commercial Purpose Filming/Photography**

Commercial purpose filming is when an individual or organization wants to film and/or take still photography with the intent to sell, distribute or otherwise use the products for an economic gain (Including but not limited to television, streaming services, online platforms, catalog or other advertising).

- All commercial purpose filming activities taking place in a park or closing a street will require a permit.
  - Filming on major thoroughfares during rush hour traffic (Monday-Friday, 6:00am to 9:00am and 4:00pm to 6:00pm) is generally not permitted.
  - Closure of a street for filming will require the street closure petition page to be completed and uploaded to the application with the required 80% signatures of all adjoining properties. The application for filming with a street closure has a deadline of 30 days before the filming.
  - Fireworks/pyrotechnics will require additional permitting.
- Insurance required
  - Must provide \$1 million Commercial General Liability (CGL) insurance
  - Minimum \$2 million CGL required for fireworks/pyrotechnics
- Child Entertainment Law
  - Ohio does not actively regulate Child Entertainment Law. Performers need parental consent.
  - Work Permits: There are no work permits necessary per Ohio Revised Code [4109.06](#) (A,3).
- Filming activities should not conflict unduly with visitors' experiences in the park.
- Permits issued for commercial photography (advertising) specifically prohibit implied or stated endorsement by the City of Columbus. Identifiable City equipment, uniforms, signs, buildings or insignia may not be portrayed in commercial advertising and/or filming in any way that would imply City endorsement of the product.
- All vehicles used by the film company will be subject to applicable rules and regulations and length/size limitations, unless specifically authorized in the filming permit.

- Model releases are the responsibility of the permittee.
- Notification of Affected Business
  - The Production Company will notify all businesses and residents affected by the activity
  - Notification should take place following the City's review and approval of the Filming Permit Application. Notification should occur no less than 24 hours prior to the planned activity. Earlier notification may be required in cases where planned activities may have a significant impact on normal activities of the area.
  - Contracts for businesses compensated during filming are strictly between individual businesses and the Production Company.

Special considerations for commercial filming in residential neighborhoods:

- In residential areas, film activities will not begin prior to 8:00am, and will end by 11:00pm weekdays and Sundays, and by midnight on Friday and Saturday. Overnight filming will require additional oversight/approvals.
- Affected residents in the residential area must be notified by letter/flyer or in person not less than five (5) days in advance of filming. Notification should include information concerning the location and duration of the filming activity in question, as specifics regarding lights, noise, or any special effects. Notification must also include contact information for the key location assistants and location manager.
- All equipment and support vehicles not in immediate use shall be parked so as not to cause any interference to pedestrians or vehicular traffic.
- Production vehicles must not block fire lanes, fire hydrants, driveways, or other access ramps unless authorized by the City or property owner.
- Production vehicles must be parked in such a way as to not impede safe lines of vision at intersections
- Lighting for filming, both during the day and night, should be oriented away from neighboring residences wherever possible, and should not interfere with the safe movement of traffic.
- Wherever possible, base camps and dressing room trailers should be parked away from neighboring residences, and/or take steps to control noise from generators, slamming doors, engines, etc., in the early morning before 8:00am and after 11:00pm.
- A production location manager or key assistant manager should be present at any location being filmed as the primary contact for the City unless prior arrangements have been made.

## News Coverage

A film permit is not required when the filming activity involves reporting by members of the media for the purpose of a live news program. As long as news reporting does not adversely impact public property, it is exempt from the requirement of a film permit. News media should contact the [Office of Special Events](#) prior to filming on public property for availability.

Broadcast reporting that includes any set up and a duration of longer than 4 hours will require a film permit.

## Private Property Filming

Filming on private property requires permission of the property owner but does not require a permit from the City unless certain activities are included which may impact public health, safety, and welfare. These activities include but are not limited to guns in display of the public; public nudity; special effects such as fire, explosives, or pyrotechnics; nondomestic animals; building of temporary structures; closing streets and/or paid parking locations to the general public; or filming outside the hours permitted by the City's Noise Ordinance.

- Production liability insurance to name the owner as additional insured is recommended even for productions filmed on private property. Most businesses will require the insurance and it is advised that all property owners request proof of it.

## **Drone Use for Filming**

Anyone planning to fly a drone for filming is required to meet all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements.

## **Contacts**

### **CRPD – Office of Special Events:** Film permitting

1111 East Broad St., Suite 101, Columbus Ohio 43205

Application & Planning Guide: [www.columbus.gov/eventplanningguide](http://www.columbus.gov/eventplanningguide)

Email: [specialevents@columbus.gov](mailto:specialevents@columbus.gov)

### **City of Columbus- Right of Way Office:** Occupancy permits

111 N. Front St, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Columbus Ohio 43215

Online information & Application Portal: [www.columbus.gov/publicservice/permits/](http://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/permits/)

Email: [ColsPermits@columbus.gov](mailto:ColsPermits@columbus.gov)

### **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA):** Drone regulations

<https://www.faa.gov/uas/>



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