

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR



**2026 FILM
PLANNING GUIDE**

Introduction

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 Department (CRPD) 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 in advance for any filming with street closures or additional permitting requirements. (ex. Temporary structure permit, Pyrotechnic permit, Right of Way permit, etc.)
 - Application submission does not guarantee a permit will be issued.
- To obtain a Film Permit, the city requires a completed Film Application that includes the following:
 - A completed safety form or comprehensive emergency plan.
 - 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)

After reviewing the following information, applicants may begin the Film Application process. City of Columbus staff will assist with coordination and approvals through the online application. Continue to refer to this document throughout the process of applying. The information provided in this document directly corresponds with the requirements of the application. After you submit your application, you will be notified if additional information is needed.

The film permit serves as a location agreement.

General Film/Photography Guidelines

- 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 review.
 - Filming locations must have signage around the perimeter stating that weapons are part of the filming process and state that they are fake/loaded with blanks.
- Crime scene in public view
 - Production that includes 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 cables, 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 to produce 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.

Applying for a Film Permit

When you first apply for a film permit, you will need to create an account and verify your email. Once that has been completed you may start the film permit application. The application is considered complete when all details and supplemental documents are included and the application has been submitted. Listing information as "TBD" or uploading blank or not applicable documents as a placeholder will not be considered submitted and cannot be processed. The application can be found at <https://specialeventapplication.columbus.gov/>.

City Fees and Costs

The permit fee will be based on the date the film application is submitted. Additional fees are applied to downtown event parks. Permit and expediting fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. Permitting fees can be found in our [fee schedule](#).

Cancellations

All cancellations must be made in writing to the CRPD Office of Special Events. This can be done by commenting in your application or by emailing our office at specialevents@columbus.gov. Application fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. The City reserves the right to cancel or relocate a filming due to poor weather conditions and/or turf conditions prior to, or on the day of the filming if it is deemed that the filming may cause excessive damage to City property. Refunds will not be granted for inclement weather or City emergencies.

Primary and Onsite Contact Information

The Primary contact is the individual who oversees all aspects of the production planning and details of the production's execution. This is the primary contact for City representatives during the permitting process.

The Onsite contact is the individual who is the primary point of contact during production. The phone number for the onsite contact will be listed on the Film Permit, so City of Columbus representatives can make contact as needed. The onsite contact must be available during set-up through tear-down of production.

Production Information

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

Non-commercial, still and/or personal photographers will require a permit when:

- It 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.
- Includes weapons (fake or real). Columbus Police may be required onsite.

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 economic gain (Including but not limited to promotional ads, 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.

Additional commercial filming information:

- Child Entertainment Law
 - Ohio's employment of minors' laws can be found in the [Ohio Revised Code 4109](#).
 - Parental consent must be obtained.
- 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.
- Model releases are the responsibility of the permittee.

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 on weekdays and Sundays, and by midnight on Friday and Saturday. Overnight filming will require additional oversight/approval.
- 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.

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. If 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.

Drone Use for Filming

Anyone planning to fly a drone for filming is required to meet all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements. Flying drones directly over any person(s) is prohibited.

Film Date(s) and Time(s)

All filming coordination, equipment delivery, and post event clean-up must take place during the proposed dates listed in the application. If the set-up or tear-down dates are needed solely for contractors to deliver and install equipment, the times listed may be the best estimate of when work will take place.

Applications may be submitted up to one year in advance.

Rain dates are subject to availability and may require additional park use fees.

Film Location

Your permit is for the time and specific location stated in your application. If you are unsure if you will need multiple locations, please list all possibilities in the application. In this section you will list your main filming location. There will be space to add additional locations later in the application.

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](#).

Film Details

Applicants will need to share the scope of the filming by answering a series of "yes or no" questions. Additional details will be required for any "yes" responses. The applicant may change any "yes or no" response up to the submission of the application.

Additional Location(s)

Please list any additional locations in this section of the application. Parks should be added individually using the green "add city park" button. Descriptions should be added for any other location type.

Sidewalk/Lane Closure

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. If the limited access/lane closure falls during a permit for the park or street, the Right of Way office will review during the application process.

If you are limiting access/closing a lane without the use of the park or street you can obtain information on an occupancy permit [here](#), or you may contact the Right-of-Way office at ColsPermits@columbus.gov.

All filming closing a street or lane of traffic for set-up, filming or tear-down days must complete the [Closed Lanes or Steel Plate Events \(CLOSE\) form](#). You will need your Film Permit ID number when completing this form. This number can be found in the details tab at the top of your permit.

Street Closure

Film applications requesting a street closure are due at least 30 days before the filming occurs. A street closure petition page is required to be completed and uploaded to the application with the required 80% signatures of all adjoining properties. Requested street closures should be from intersection to intersection (Example Alpha St from Bravo St to Charlie St). Alleys are not considered an intersection. Filming on major

thoroughfares during rush hour traffic (Monday-Friday, 6:00 am to 9:00 am and 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm) is generally not permitted.

Traffic control devices are required for each intersection and are required to be shown on the site map. The City of Columbus does not provide traffic control devices or placement services. Production coordinators may be required to hire special duty police for traffic control.

Emergency No Stopping signs must be posted 72 hours prior to closing streets that do not have metered parking.

The Columbus Division of Fire requires a continuous twenty (20) foot wide fire lane on every closed street.

Impacted businesses, places of worship, schools, and residents that are directly adjacent to the filming should be notified of event plans and timeline. Issues that are usually resolved in advance include coordination of deliveries, timing of sound checks, and establishing a way to allow those affected to access their buildings, homes and parking areas.

All filming closing a street or lane of traffic for set-up, filming or tear-down days must complete the [Closed Lanes or Steel Plate Events \(CLOSE\) form](#). You will need your Film Permit ID number when completing this form.

Parking Closure

When closing public streets for filming, the applicant is responsible for temporary removal of both paid and free on-street parking locations in all closure areas. Temporary removal of paid parking requests identifying the location of all paid parking areas to be removed from service within the filming footprint must be submitted in the online application. Paid parking requests will be automatically routed to the Division of Mobility and Parking Services once the Film Application is submitted for review. Please note, paid parking includes parking meters, multi-space parking kiosks and "Mobile Payment Only" zones. A [map of parking meters and kiosk locations](#) is available online. To gather mobile payment zone information, production coordinators will need to verify the [mobile pay zone](#) numbers online or by visiting each impacted street.

Filming shall pay four dollars (\$4.00) for each paid parking space removed from service up to one hundred (100) parking spaces. Filming that requires the removal of more than one hundred (100) parking spaces from service shall be charged a flat rate of four hundred dollars (\$400.00)

When filming is held on a Sunday or a City recognized holiday when parking is free, the filming is required to pay an Administrative Fee of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) to cover the cost of removing parking from service.

Parking fees will be included in your film permit invoice.

Production coordinators must place temporary "Emergency No Stopping" signs reflecting the date(s) and time of day the parking will be removed from service 24 hours in advance of the event. The sign must also include the permit number, where applicable, or the event name. Temporary signs shall be placed in the following manner:

- Attached to a wooden stake and placed every fifty (50) feet in the street lawn area between the curb and sidewalk.
- Attached to street signs posts. The temporary signs shall not block posted street signs.
- Attached to a forty-two (42) inch tall traffic cone and placed between the curb and the sidewalk as to not block off the parking spot or impede pedestrian traffic. On the day the permit is valid, the cones may be placed in the parking spaces in an effort to keep motorists from parking in the spaces.
- Production coordinators are responsible for the replacement of damaged or missing temporary signs before and during the dates and times listed on the permit.

The cost for any necessary posted signage and/or maintenance of traffic items shall be paid by the applicant.

It is the responsibility of the permit holder to remove all temporary signage upon the expiration of the permit or at the conclusion of a filming. If a permit holder fails to remove all the temporary signage, there will be a two-hundred fifty-dollar (\$250) fee assessed to the permit holder. No future permits will be approved until the temporary sign removal fee is paid.

Geo-fencing allows for scooters to be stopped at a given location. Filming may request information on limiting scooters to the perimeter of the event through the online film application. Please keep in mind when requesting the "stop" point that the scooters will be left at that location in various positions.

Tents

The installation of tents, canopies and any other temporary structures must occur during the time permitted for production. Tents **must** be anchored. No tent stakes may be driven into any asphalt, brick, concrete or any other hard surfaces on City property.

IRRIGATED PARKS

Tents less than 400 square feet must be anchored by water barrels or concrete ballasts capable of anchoring the tents during high winds. The water required for filling water ballast(s) must be provided by the tent supplier or arranged through the Division of Water via a fire hydrant. The Division of Fire will not fill water barrels to anchor tents. Tents over 400 square feet may be staked after irrigation lines are marked. The permit holder is responsible for any damage to irrigation lines.

NON-IRRIGATED PARKS

Tents may be anchored by water barrels, concrete ballasts, or stakes capable of anchoring tents during high winds.

Temporary use of tents greater than 400 square feet in total area may require a Department of Building and Zoning Services (BZS) [Temporary Structure Permit](#). Please refer to the [CIC#29](#) for further information.

Temporary Structure

Temporary structures are multi-purpose and portable such as scaffolds, sunshade structures or air supported structures. A [Building and Zoning Services \(BZS\) permit](#) may be required. Please refer to [CIC#29](#) for more information.

All temporary structures must be indicated on the site plan.

Installation and removal of temporary structures must occur during set-up or tear-down of the production.

Electricity/Generators/Power

Limited electricity is available within some parks. Permission to access park electricity is contingent upon the approval of proposed electrical connections, available amperage, payment of application fees, and the presence of qualified event personnel. Access to electric distribution panels is not guaranteed.

An electrical permit is required when lighting and power is directly wired into existing electrical services or panels, lighting and power are being supplied by vehicle or trailer mounted generator, or if any distribution of power will occur. Electrical permits must be issued to an electrical contractor that is registered with the City of Columbus Department of Building and Zoning Services and is required to perform the electrical work.

The Division of Power (DOP) must be contacted a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to production if electrical connection to the City power grid is needed. The DOP does not provide electrical distribution services. Please complete the [Electrical Service Application](#) to request a new connection.

Temporary Lighting

Temporary lighting cannot be affixed to any City of Columbus property such as streetlights, traffic lights, street signs and trees. Please note all temporary lighting locations on the site plan. Installation and removal of temporary lighting must be done during set-up and tear down of the production.

Amplified Sound

A noise permit is not needed when approved for a film permit, provided the applicant fully completes the amplified sound portion of the application.

Onsite Food

All food preparation, vending, and giveaway locations must be indicated on site plan. Please provide a list of foods being prepared/given away onsite. Glass containers are prohibited.

When a catering food service operation is serving at a production, the licensing fee is determined on a per function or per event basis. The caterer must have a food service license even if the food is donated.

Alcohol, tobacco and cannabis sales and consumption are prohibited on park property.

Vehicles

All vehicles used by the film company will be subject to applicable rules, regulations and length/size limitations, unless specifically authorized in the film permit. 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. Vehicles may not be driven or parked in park green spaces.

Special Effects

Permission to incorporate fireworks, pyrotechnics, or flame effects into a production is contingent upon meeting the requirements set forth by the Columbus Division of Fire. Production Coordinators must submit a completed [Firework, Pyrotechnic, and Flame Effect Exhibition Permit Application](#) and a detailed exhibition plan.

Filming locations with weapons must have signage around the perimeter stating that weapons are being utilized during filming and that they are either fake, using blanks or not loaded. Columbus Police may be required onsite on a case-by-case basis, and additional fees for their presence will be assessed.

Other Activities/Information

Please address any filming activities, equipment or production items that were not specifically asked about previously in the application process that may impact the requested location or citizens of the area.

Film Notification

The Production Company should notify all businesses and residents affected by the filming. Notification should take place following the City's review and approval of the Filming Permit Application. Notifications should include the following information:

- Contact information for the onsite contact
- Location
- Duration of the filming
- Temporary lighting location(s) and timing
- Amplified sound locations(s) and timing
- Special effect's location(s) and timing

AFFECTED BUSINESSES

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.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

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. Earlier notification may be required in cases where the planned filming has a significant duration or impact on the residences.

Security

The production coordinator is responsible for providing all production security needs. Columbus Police may be required depending on filming scope and props used. If not required, you may request Columbus Police via the film application.

Emergency Plan

Production Coordinators should consider the possibilities of natural disasters and unplanned emergencies. A basic emergency response plan or safety plan should be adopted and communicated with production staff, police and security personnel and on-site first aid providers. City departments will require each production to submit an event safety plan before approving any permit requests. You are welcome to use the [Event Safety Form](#) as a template.

Restrooms

Restroom facility access is required. The applicant is responsible for arranging for adequate restroom and hand washing facilities available for performers, staff and volunteers. Some park locations have seasonal portable restrooms available for use. Portable restroom providers can assist you with determining the quantity that will be needed to meet the needs of your production. Applicants should plan accordingly for ADA accessibility to portable restrooms.

Waste Management

The applicant is responsible for obtaining adequate trash containers for production, as well as providing all labor and materials necessary to maintain a clean, orderly production site during and after the filming.

Removal of all production-related trash from the area used must include ground litter, food waste and debris. All permanent park or sidewalk trash receptacles must be emptied and replaced with new can liners.

All production signage, related supplies and equipment must be removed, and hard surfaces must be clean of stains from spills.

Parking

The City of Columbus does not allow parking on park green spaces. All vehicles should be parked legally and not block site lines, intersections, or driveways. Large productions should have an intensive parking plan for rigs, trailers and any other large production vehicles.

Site Plan

A list or map of the planned film location is required. Small productions can provide a general description of the area. A detailed map should be included when you have any of the following:

- Tents (all)
- Stages (platform and/or mobile stages)
- Other temporary structures
- Portable restrooms
- Dumpsters
- Cooking areas
- Street closures (traffic control locations are required to be noted)
- Amplified sound location
- Electrical distribution
- Fencing or Barriers
- Medical stations (evacuation routes/shelter in place areas)
- Security posts
- Parking areas
- Special effects locations

Insurance

The City requires each commercial filming to carry comprehensive general liability insurance (CGL) naming the City of Columbus as an additional insured. The policy must provide a minimum of \$1,000,000 in CGL insurance for general aggregate liability losses, personal injury, property damage, product liability, and cover all operations of the filming including but not limited to participants, contractors, subcontractors, vendors, exhibitors, staff, volunteers, etc. The coverage should be written on a "per occurrence" basis and should include filming "set-up" and "tear down" dates. The insurance coverage must be written by a company licensed to do business in the State of Ohio.

A minimum of \$2,000,000 in CGL for general aggregate is required for fireworks/pyrotechnics per occurrence.

The certificate holder address is City of Columbus, CRPD Office of Special Events, 1111 East Broad Street, Suite 103, Columbus, Ohio 43205.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

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

Contacts

[CRPD - Office of Special Events](#): Special Events, Block Party, Film and Park permitting.

1111 East Broad St., Suite 103, Columbus, OH 43205

614-645-3800

specialevents@columbus.gov

[Right-of-Way Permits Office](#): Occupancy permits and fee collection for division services.

111 N Front St, 1st Floor, Columbus, OH 43215

Jarrod Elfrink: 614-645-5997

ColsPermits@columbus.gov

[Division of Police – Special Events](#): Special Duty Officers, event security and street closure approvals.

120 Marconi Blvd., Columbus, OH 43215

614-645-4375

specialevents@columbuspolice.org

[Division of Fire – Public Assembly Inspections Office](#): Public assembly, event inspections and fireworks.

3639 Parsons Ave., Columbus, OH 43207

614-645-7641

CFDEvents@columbus.gov

[Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\)](#): Drone regulations

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



FILM COLUMBUS

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614-221-8648

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