



**Film Permitting 101:
A Guide for
Municipalities in
British Columbia**



We gratefully acknowledge the unceded ancestral territories of over 200 distinct First Nations and 34 language and cultural groups upon whose homelands British Columbia's motion picture industry works and lives.

Film Permitting 101: A Guide for Municipalities in British Columbia

For All Production Types

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BC Film Commission and Locations Library at Creative BC

The [BC Film Commission at Creative BC](#) offers specialized screen sector services, promoting the province's capabilities as a world-class film hub to attract production, post-production, VFX work, and other investments. It supports local and international producers, facilitating collaboration with industry stakeholders in the province, across Canada, and internationally. It works with communities and all levels of government, partnering with municipalities and regions to provide policy support, and is committed to driving a sustainable and thriving motion picture industry in British Columbia.

The BC Film Commission at Creative BC offers a comprehensive digital location library of municipal and regional locations across the province, providing a valuable resource for productions. Access to the password-protected library is only available to the Film Commission team, the seven Regional Film Commissions in the province, and location managers and scouts working on a production to create location packages based on production's creative needs.

Municipalities are encouraged to provide updated location files of civic locations to the library, which can help streamline the scouting process and reduce the volume of standard preliminary scouting requests. In addition to being a resource for the industry, Regional Film Commissions, and industry professionals, the library also supports local governments, communities, and private property owners looking for opportunities to engage with the industry and attract physical production.

1. Film 101

Working with a Motion Picture Production

Prior to practicalities like hiring crew, renting equipment, and applying for film permits, a film or TV project from a major studio, production company, or streamer evolves through a development period, which might only be a few months but more typically will take years. The pitch and screenplay are developed, financing is secured, key creatives are hired, lead performers are cast, and filming jurisdictions are considered. When the main elements are in place, a project is approved by financiers and considered greenlit. This development and the entire filmmaking process are highly iterative.

Strategic alignment of the budget, scheduling talent, and creative direction then leads to the pre-production phase, when production offices are established, key management and logistics personnel are hired, and the work of translating what's on the page into reality created for the screen begins.

This production phase is when the film industry becomes visible to the general public, a veritable peak of the iceberg, and municipal film offices are valued hubs in the wheels of stakeholder support. The foundation of being film-friendly, or 'film-ready', is an awareness of the intersection of the creative and technical elements of filmmaking and understanding how it informs the practicalities and logistics of the work. The process is iterative, and a basic truism of the industry is that the only constant is change.

Film Jargon

As with most industries, motion picture has its own internal vocabulary that locations teams often use in communications. It can be useful when discussing filming activities to understand common phrases, some lingo, and equipment names. Helpful resources include:

[A to Z Guide to Film Terms by Tim Moshansky](#) | Book

[Glossary of Select Production Terms](#) | Downloadable PDF

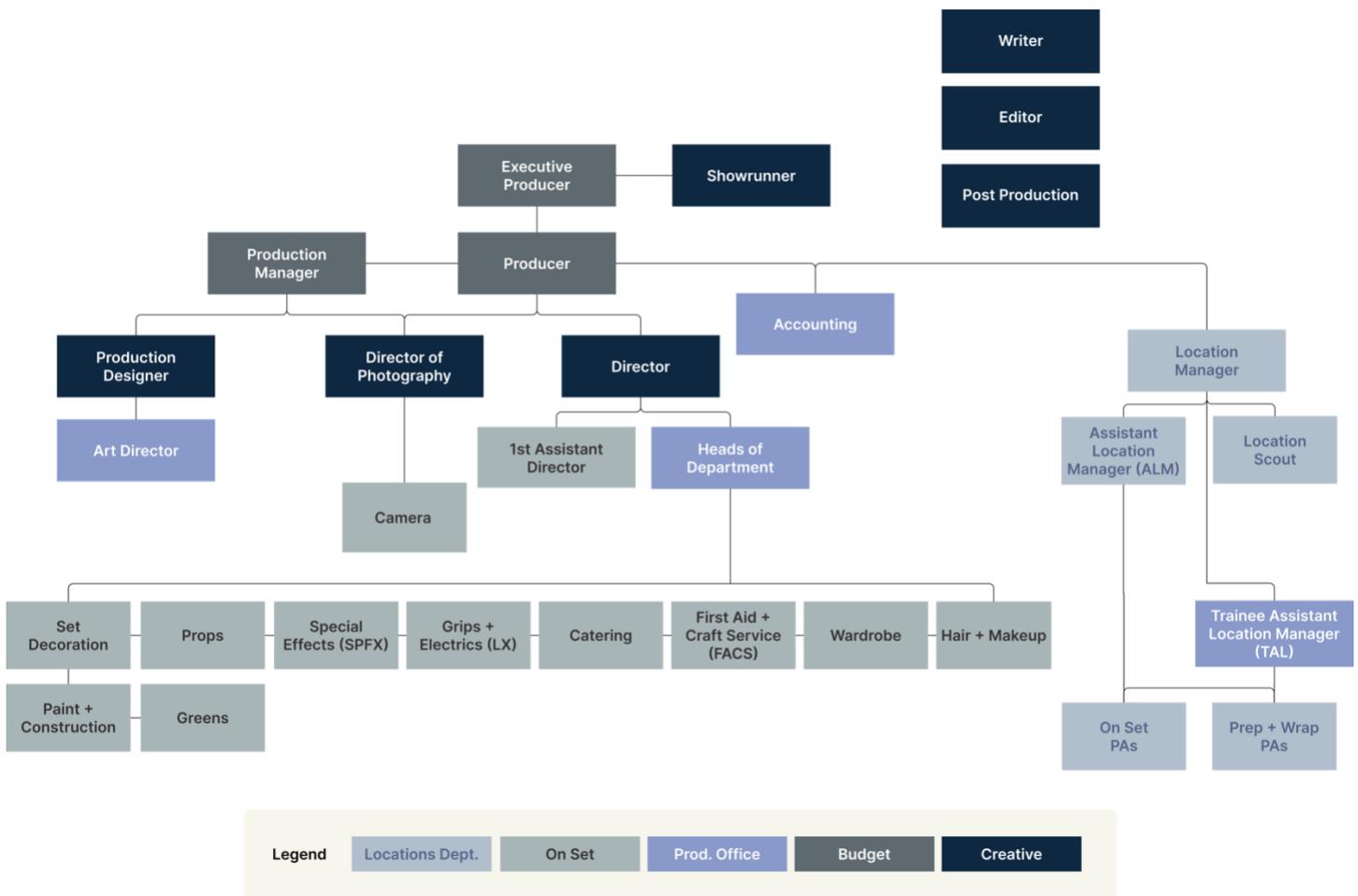
2. Production Types

Production timelines, location needs, and impact will vary depending on the production type. The following list highlights typical characteristics that can impact timeline and workflow. The very short timeline for production requires permitting authorities to regularly process requests for permits quickly and efficiently, which is why it's so important to be prepared.

<p>Feature Films</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer timeline (depending on budget) • Script well in advance of principal photography • Typically have more ambitious filming activity and requests
<p>Television Series (Scripted)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequential filming of single episodes or in twos, which is referred to as 'block shooting' • Shorter timeline - script delivered to crew approximately 7 days in advance • Combo of stage and location work • Often may require recurring locations
<p>Commercials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter timeline • Locations locked before submitting bid for project • Minimal filming days
<p>Movie of the Week (MOW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline varies with complexity • Most filming happens on location
<p>Reality TV (Unscripted), Independent Films, Music Videos, Short Films, Documentaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often domestic filmmakers • Lower budgets • Small crews - crew members usually wear multiple hats • Minimal footprint • Generally lower impact on communities

3. Departments

Production Hierarchy



4. Locations Management

Effective location management is crucial to the creative process and logistics of physical production. A robust and sustainable industry exists due to the trusting relationships our film community has built over the years with communities and stakeholders. Every crew member in a production is an ambassador of the B.C.'s motion picture industry, regardless of the production type or size. Professional film crews understand they are guests in neighbourhoods, and endeavour to uphold the adage "Leave it better than you found it" to keep locations sustainable for future productions. Acknowledging residents and businesses through transparent, streamlined communication and notification contributes to our province's reputation for talented professionals.

As the key point of contact between production and the "outside" world, this concept of ambassadorship and keeping locations sustainable is integral to the work of all members of a Locations Department.

The Locations Department

Municipalities primarily engage with the locations department for productions due to their specialized role as intermediaries between jurisdictions and productions, although low-budget and unscripted or reality productions may manage locations as part of the producer, production manager, or production coordinator roles. Typically referred to simply as "Locations", it's often one of the largest departments within a production, both in size and budget, and with the highest concentration of entry-level crew. The department sources filming locations and manages the logistics of obtaining permits, ensuring compliance with local and provincial regulations, and coordinating critical aspects of film activity in communities, such as road closures and public safety. By bridging the creative needs of the production with municipal requirements, they facilitate effective communication and community engagement. Their expertise in balancing creative demands, budgets, and the logistics of physical production make them essential partners, ensuring productions contribute positively to the community while adhering to established guidelines.

The most reliable characteristic of the film industry is change – as a creative endeavour where vision can evolve in real-time, filmmaking is necessarily an agile business that is accustomed to pivoting. Production needs may change as plans adjust and refine, prompting the locations team to change information or requests on their film permit application. Often this is due to evolving creative needs and logistical requirements, unavoidable scheduling changes, and environmental impacts such as weather.

It's important to be aware that some information will only be determined as the director's plans are conveyed and understood by department heads and may not be possible to identify at the time when an initial application is submitted.

Location Manager

Head of the Locations Department; one for feature films, commonly two for TV series.

- Collaborates with above-the-line creatives (director, production designer, director of photography) on tone, period, and look of locations for the story.
- Provides a selection of vetted location choices.
- Balances a budget encompassing location fees and related logistical needs (parking, support spaces, permit fees, traffic management), neighbourhood impact mitigation, and department labour.
- Responsible for negotiation of location fees and team management to ensure that permit requirements, communications, and logistical needs are satisfied, and oversees impact management.

Assistant Location Manager

There can be multiple ALMs on a production depending on the production's scope and budget.

- Contributes to the execution of the creative vision by managing the practicalities of on-location filming.
- Oversees safety measures, the prep and wrap of locations, and all the logistic aspects on location, including parking, traffic control, and community engagement.
- Is the lead representative of the locations department on set, serving as an information hub for all location-related information.
- Manages on-location logistical requirements of all other departments and the team of production assistants on set.
- Serves as a bridge between the production, permitting authorities, and the community.
- Addresses concerns, fosters positive relationships and ensures a harmonious filming environment.

Location Scout (Scout)

- Captures up-to-date photos to help the creative team (directors, producers, production designers, cinematographers) assess a location's suitability for the project.
- Finds film locations using their personal library, BC Film Commission at Creative BC's library, and scouting new locations.

- Updates location files in personal library by re-scouting the location.
- Responsible for preliminary vetting of locations with permitting authorities to determine any potential conflicts (e.g., municipal road/utilities work, restrictions on filming frequency, other productions also scouting neighbourhoods for similar time frames).

Trainee Assistant Location Manager (TAL)

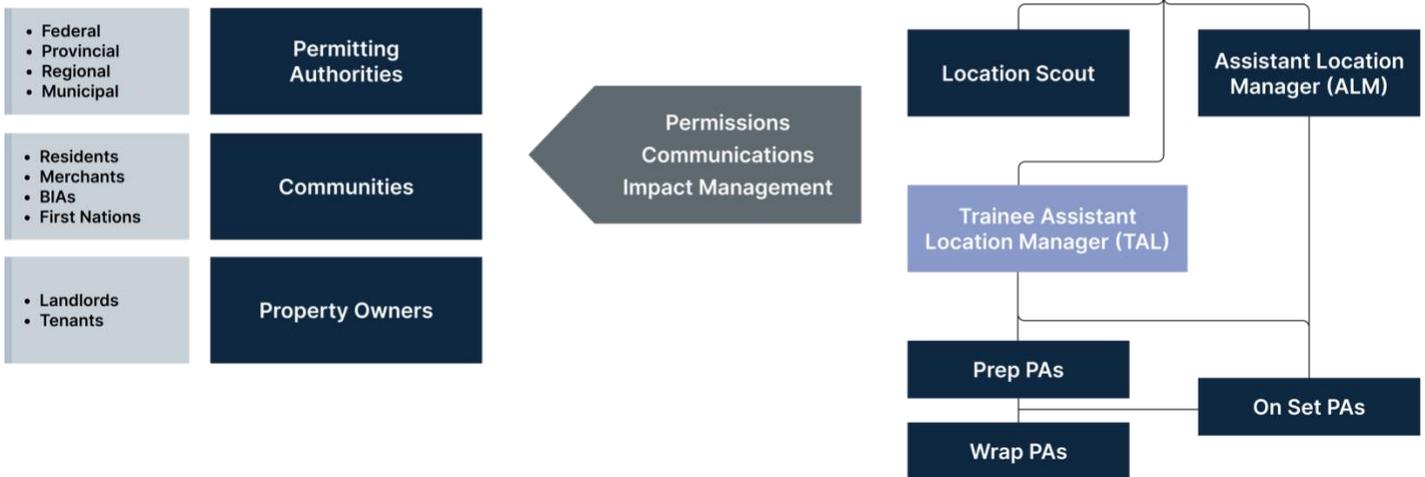
- Generally based in the locations department office, assists with paperwork (contracts, insurance, payments, permit application packages).
- Can oversee location prep and wrap, and organize requests from other departments at the direction of the LM.
- Often serves as the department's point of contact for the Accounting and Production office.

Production Assistant (PA)

Handles various responsibilities on set and/or during prep and wrap.

- Preps a neighbourhood/location.
- Conducts polling.
- Delivers film notification letters.
- Communicates with neighbouring residents/businesses and relays concerns to ALM/LM.
- Supports other departments while prepping and wrapping a location.
- Supports the Assistant Directing team and shooting crew on set.
- Communicates with the public when maintaining a set perimeter for filming in public locations.
- The number of PAs on set is determined by scope of film activity and location.
- Maintains watch in production-occupied areas (work truck, generator, crew parking, circus) for public safety and production security.

Locations Department Relations



5. Life of a Location

Within municipalities, there are often civic buildings and spaces such as parks and public plazas that are attractive as film locations. The process of viewing and choosing a civic location and then securing permission to film will be considered by production as separate and in addition to the film permit, and more in alignment with the scouting process.

- **Preliminary Scout:** Expression of interest by scout on behalf of production accompanied by request for exterior and interior access to photograph a location file for creatives to review.
- **Director Scout:** The creative team visit to location for a more detailed assessment of suitability/creative match.
- **Confirmation of Filming:** Location agreement signed, details such as owner/resident relocation and any special instructions finalized, filming dates confirmed, and insurance issued. Payment and damage deposit delivered prior to film crew arrival for prep.
- **Technical Survey:** Key creatives, production management, department heads and seconds, and locations management team tour all locations in one day, to finalize director's plan and identify subsequent technical and creative needs and requirements before going to camera. It may only be 1-3 days before filming begins.
- **Final Department Visits:** Some departments may request return visits for additional details, for example, confirming measurements.

Details collected during department visits and tech survey stages of the location selection process will inform production activity on site, typically in three stages.

Prep Day(s)

- Location walk-through by both parties to document existing condition and prior damage
- Preparations to create “the set” for filming – e.g., replacing contents with set dec, painting, rigging (grip/lighting prep), set installation/construction, greens, relocating occupants, picture vehicles, etc.

Shoot Day(s)

- Arrival of film crew (work trucks, lifts, generators, cabling, lighting, video village, background performers) and off-site support (circus/base camp trailers, catering, lunchroom)
- Some equipment and vehicles may land the evening before, as needed for schedule and curfew restrictions.

Wrap Day(s)

- Restoration of location and auxiliary spaces to original or better condition
- Location walkthrough to ensure both parties agree on location condition and determine any missed damage and repairs, or arrangements for repair as may be the case.

6. Being Film Friendly

Filming Policy and Guidelines

Distinct from bylaws, municipal film policy and guidelines ensure clarity about expectations and processes, and that productions adhere to safety and community standards. These should be general enough that the film office has flexibility and authority, but specific enough that location departments and communities understand permissions and responsibilities.

To cover most filming activity and requests, consider including:

- Recommended communications with Film Office to pre-qualify locations during scouting phase
- Film permit application process, timelines, and required paperwork
- Community and stakeholder notification, including engagement such as polling for noise curfew or other consultation and signage requirements.

Additional permissions that filming activity requires:

- Use of public parking – on streets, in municipal lots, parking restrictions and requirements
- Road use – including traffic control, police, and public transit coordination
- Electrical operating permit
- Consultation/coordination for Special Effects
- Noise or curfew bylaw exemptions
- Fire department and police services
- Municipal work requests or location modifications (e.g., traffic signal control, temporary infrastructure changes like bike rack removal, temporary set construction).
- Environmental considerations:
 - Waste management
 - Special Effects (SPFX) products use
 - Animal use
- Unique environmental considerations (e.g., watercourses, sensitive ecosystems, and habitats)
- Additional administration, special processes or considerations (e.g., student filming, donations/honorariums, interdepartmental communications, bylaw infraction consequences).

Example: [Filming Policy – Maple Ridge](#)

7. Information For Productions

The filming page on a municipal website is a vital reference for productions, location departments, and film offices. It should be a reliable 24/7 resource with fundamental information, can help alleviate the volume of general inquiries, and is a passive support during production hours, which are more expansive than standard business hours. Visit the municipal film office websites hyperlinked below for reference:



Required Documentation

- Include links to forms, templates, and any documentation required for the film application
- Can include (but isn't limited to) business license application, street use, notification letter, polling letter and form, etc.
- See details in Municipal Paperwork section below, and Appendix 1 for templates.

Additional Permissions

- Certain production requests may require approval from other municipal departments, such as hydrant use, street closures, special effects, etc.
- Outline the approval process and if appropriate, provide relevant contact information and links.

Certificate of Insurance

- Productions of all sizes should be able to provide a Certificate of Insurance naming the municipality, location, or other entities as Additionally Insured.
- List the minimum amount, legal name of Additional Insured, and other proof of insurance for certain activity (e.g., aviation liability for drones).

Fee Schedules

- Fee transparency is very important to Producers and Location Managers for accurate budgeting.
- Note that any security deposit requirements should be detailed as well.
- Outline acceptable payment methods and specific payment details, such as to which entity cheques should be made out, any pertinent timelines, and if EFTs are accepted.

Resources

- Include Film Guidelines and Policy
- Links to GIS, police or law enforcement, BIAs, key civic locations frequently filmed at, and local film commission.

Application Checklist

The BC Film Commission at Creative BC encourages jurisdictions to align standard practices where possible; however, a checklist specific to the jurisdiction is useful so productions can ensure minimum requirements for initial applications are met. A straightforward step-by-step description can also be helpful, either within the checklist or on the municipality's film page.

8. Municipal Paperwork

Business/Operating License

Requirements for a business license for filming can vary. In the Lower Mainland, some jurisdictions (Coquitlam, Maple Ridge, Mission) require a business license for filming on location regardless of where the production film office and/or stage space is located. Others require a license if the production offices and/or stage space are located within the municipality (e.g., Burnaby), but not for filming on location. The City of Vancouver requires out of town production companies to have a [temporary filming business licence](#) to apply for a film permit.

Filming Agreement

Varies amongst established municipal film offices, often either:

- A stand-alone agreement independent of a permit application e.g., [Burnaby](#), Vancouver
- As part of the permit application – e.g., [District of North Vancouver](#), [Township of Langley](#), and [Richmond](#) (Richmond guidelines are part of one form along with application and agreement)

It is helpful for both productions and the film office to have a master agreement template that is consistent. It's common for studio legal departments to review master agreements and contracts and may have requests for amendments. If changes cannot be made to the master agreement, consider the option of a Rider to the agreement. Try to share the document with production as early as possible to allow sufficient time for potential back and forth.

Insurance

Productions typically carry an insurance policy with a specialized entertainment insurance provider. It's commonplace to request a certificate with the legal name of the municipality as an Additionally Insured on the Applicant's liability policy. Work with watercraft, drones, and other aircraft also necessitates specific liability insurance, proof of which can be included in production paperwork.

Film Permit Application Package

Productions often don't have all the small details of the filming activity worked out when submitting a film permit application. The process of figuring out how to achieve specific parts of the story is iterative and evolves over discussions between the director, cinematographer, and heads of departments such as Lighting/Camera, SPFX, Stunts, Art

Department, and in collaboration with Locations. Additional requests for the filming will come to the municipality when they are known, but often after the initial application is submitted.

Typically, supporting documents for the application include:

- Film Permit Application Form
- Film Notification Letter (when final details are unknown)
- Street Use/Parking Application
- Map(s) – Street Use and Parking
- Noise + Curfew Relaxation Package (if applicable)
- Polling Letter
- Polling Form
- Poll Results Map

Fees And Security Deposits

Standard process for most large, scripted productions is to deliver cheques in person, for both fee payments and security deposits, although many productions transfer payment by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

Some municipalities provide the production with an estimate to be paid before filming commences and request a commensurate deposit from which to draw filming fees. If municipal property is used as a filming location, an additional damage deposit specific to the location may be deemed appropriate.

9. Street Use Requests

Production requests for street occupation generally fall into two categories:

Road Work – Filming Activity Involving City Streets

- **Intermittent Pedestrian Control (IPC):** When cameras are rolling, production may need to temporarily hold pedestrian traffic for picture and safety of the public and crew. Intermittent pedestrian control allows a production to hold foot traffic on the sidewalk, building exits, or at street crossings, usually for two to three minutes at a time.
- **Intermittent Traffic Control (ITC):** Production may need to temporarily hold vehicular traffic to keep the street clear for picture, for safety, and to control noise. The best practice standard for intermittent traffic control is usually up to three minutes at a time. Productions may request longer holds if SPFX or stunts are involved.
- **Parking for Picture:** Determined by what the camera will see, production may request the use of street parking for picture vehicles to ensure only continuity vehicles appear in the scene.
- **Parking for Work Trucks:** Productions may request the use of street parking for their essential work trucks and equipment.
- **Street and Lane Closures:** High-impact filming activity (stunts, special effects such as simulated explosives and collisions, fire effects, and exposed weapons) may require traffic pattern changes. Information (particularly timelines) related to closing streets, lanes, bridges, etc. can assist the production in planning, communications, and preparation of required documents.

Traffic Management

A [Traffic Management Plan](#) may be required for complex closures or filming activity on city streets. Discussions with production about TMPs might require site meetings and include specific requirements. Detailed information about the process can help the production/location team understand the jurisdiction's standard.

Police Assistance: Police presence for road closures, traffic control and safety and sensitivity varies amongst jurisdictions. Some only require a police presence when the film activity itself necessitates it, such as exposed weapons. If law enforcement is

needed, an understood protocol and contact for arranging the booking and process for billing is useful.

Parking

Proper planning for parking is key when coordinating film permits with municipalities, and planning adequate parking is an essential part of the Locations Department's work. The type, amount, and duration of parking needed depend on the purpose, which large productions categorize in four ways:

- **Circus (aka Base Camp):** Central area where cast trailers, makeup, wardrobe, the Assistant Director team's office trailer, dressing room trailers, restroom trailer (aka the honey wagon), catering services, and other essential supports are stationed. It serves as the main off-set location for crew, cast, and background performers to prepare while filming takes place nearby. When the number of background performers is significant, additional tents, makeup stations, and dressing rooms to accommodate them are also at the circus. Typically, this space has ample room for all trailers, with easy access for cast and crew and close to the film set. Parking lots, gravel fields, or open spaces near the location often work well.
- **Work Trucks:** Specialized vehicles that transport essential equipment for departments like grip, electric, camera, and props, stocked with everything needed for the day's shoot. It's crucial to park work trucks as close as possible to the set, as quick and easy access to the equipment is necessary for efficiency and to avoid delays, and proper positioning streamlines the setup, adjustments, and breakdown during filming. Work truck parking often includes generators to power equipment like lights, cameras, and various electrical needs on set. While some trucks may be equipped with built-in power, larger productions typically use towable generators to provide sufficient and reliable power, particularly in remote locations where electrical infrastructure is unavailable.
- **Picture Vehicles:** Vehicles that appear on camera as part of the story, including cars, trucks, motorcycles, or specialized vehicles. Often modified to fit the story, and are handled by the Transportation Department to ensure they're camera-ready and safely operated. Designated parking for picture vehicles should be close to the filming location and easily accessible. Parking for picture is typically the same paperwork as other street parking.
- **Crew Park:** Designated area for crew members to park their personal vehicles, ideally located with the circus and catering. It should be large enough to accommodate the entire crew and within a reasonable distance from the set,

although production will have transportation shuttles if the crew park is further away.

Note that:

- Decisions about generator placement are multi-faceted, balancing production needs, residential impact (noise, exhaust), and traffic safety.
- Where some neighbourhoods already experience a lack of street parking to meet resident needs, productions may provide alternative parking for residents/businesses.

Municipal Property Parking:

- Municipally controlled/operated parking lots.
- Parks
- School parking and gravel field access

Additional Municipal Permissions and Work Requests

- **Polling for Filming Exemptions:** When a noise curfew extension is required or when filming activities may significantly impact a neighborhood, such as road closures, loud stunts, or special effects (SPFX), polling is used to gauge support for these specific requests. This process does not seek public permission but rather measures support or opposition to the proposed variations from standard bylaws. Productions may conduct door-to-door polling, collecting direct feedback from residents and businesses, or use a reverse poll when the impact is lesser, where only those with concerns need to respond. Polling also helps identify individuals or businesses that may require special attention due to unique circumstances, allowing for better planning, targeted mitigation efforts, and improved communication with those directly affected.
- **Parking Signage:** The production is responsible for providing details on the window of time, location, and amount of street parking required. The film office will then assist with securing the necessary permits and arranging temporary "No Parking" signs or other signage to provide advance notification to the public. To avoid disrupting local traffic or residents, it's important to install the signs in advance and adhere to municipal guidelines (three business days is a good rule of thumb). Some municipalities require productions to post their own signage.
- **Fire Hydrant Access:** Productions may request the use of a municipal fire hydrant for wet-down (not recommended for temperatures below three degrees), fire suppression, or special effects using water. A fire hydrant use permit may be required. Generally, the production would apply through the municipality's

designated channels in coordination with the film office, detailing the specific hydrant location and the duration of use. The permit ensures that the hydrant is operated safely by authorized staff or, in some cases, the production's Special Effects (SPFX) department will be allowed to operate it safely.

- **Special Requests:** Other examples of municipal services a production might request for picture are:
 - Banner/hanging basket removal/exchange
 - Parking meter removal
 - Bike rack or other street furniture removal
 - Streetlamp control
 - Traffic signal control

SPFX Activity

When productions use special effects (SPFX) and related products, municipalities consider various factors to ensure public safety and reduce community impact. Common SPFX and considerations include:

- **Atmospheric Smoke:** The use of smoke or fog machines is common practice. Depending on the specifics of the filming, municipalities may require advance notice and ensure that the production communicates with local residents and businesses, particularly if the smoke could be mistaken for a fire. In enclosed spaces, the production will adhere to established safety protocols and ventilation requirements.
- **Artificial snow:** Widely accepted artificial snow products used by productions include snow blankets and fish ice in exterior and natural environments. Municipalities may ask to be informed by these products during the permitting process.
- **Pyrotechnics:** Pyrotechnic effects, such as simulated explosions or fire, may require coordination with the fire department. Municipalities should ensure that the production has safety and fire protection plans, and fire permits. Public notifications are critical, and productions will establish secure perimeters to keep bystanders at a safe distance

Fire Department

Municipal fire departments should be notified when staging any stunts or special effects related to fire or explosions. The permitting authority may request a Special Effects Plan or Letter of Intent, often addressed directly to the Fire Chief or designated official.

A letter of intent is usually satisfactory for film and television productions and should include:

- Locations and dates for filming effects
- General description of the scene
- Effects to be used and their fabrication (technical details)
- Anticipated result
- Safety measures that will be in place
- Fire suppression plan, including the presence of fire or water trucks
- Method of determining safety distances

Evidence of special effects (SPFX) Event Permit should always be readily available by the production.

- **Police Assistance:** Productions often use controlled weapons as props or part of costumes that may be real or convincing replicas which may or may not be fired. Police assistance becomes crucial to ensure public safety and prevent alarm among residents and bystanders that can result in an unintended police response. Police officers can help secure the area, inform the public, and monitor the handling of weapons on set.
- **Stunts:** Filming stunts require coordination with the municipal film office to ensure public safety. Productions should submit a plan outlining the nature of the stunt, including potential risks, safety protocols, and any road closures or public space impact. Local law enforcement, fire department, and emergency medical services may be required depending on the complexity of the stunt. Additionally, productions will always have certified stunt coordinators to plan and then manage the execution of the stunts. Strict adherence to safety guidelines and regulations is essential to protect both the public and the production crew. Gear used by stunts may include:
 - Rigging systems – Harnesses, wires, and pulleys for aerial stunts
 - Protective equipment – Helmets, body armour, and knee/elbow pads
 - Telehandlers, boom lifts
 - Crash mats and padding to protect performers during falls

10. Additional Municipal Resources and Property

City Property Use as a Film Location

Productions often scout and request to film at city-owned properties (distinct from city streets in general) such as parks, public buildings, plazas, and parking areas. When access to these spaces is requested, the process may require collaboration with multiple municipal departments to address user considerations. This coordination helps maintain public safety, minimizes disruption, and ensures that production and city operations can proceed smoothly.

Municipal Authority/Department: After a production has submitted a film proposal, the film office determines the relevant municipal departments to engage with based on the project details. Each department provides feedback on the request outlining any conditions, permits, adjustments or approvals needed. For instance, Facilities will determine if any temporary or permanent changes to the building are possible, or it may be necessary to re-route staff from regular entrances/exits. The fire department may need to inspect sets if pyrotechnics are used, or the police department may need to be involved if the script calls for exposed weapons. Successful filming at city property often involves finding creative solutions in collaboration with municipal departments to balance the needs of the production with the interests of the local community.

Filming Agreement: Depending on the municipality, an agreement (or license agreement), a temporary film permit, and in some cases, both may be required for filming (see example below). Before an agreement or permit is issued, the production should submit a comprehensive plan detailing the proposed use of city property as part of their application.

The production plan could include the following components:

- Filming Schedule
- Use of Space
- Parking Plan
- Lunch/Background Holding Plan
- Traffic/Pedestrian Lockups
- Special Safety Considerations
- Noise Management/Noise Bylaw Extensions

Example: [City of Burnaby Filming Agreement](#)

Other aspects to consider: Using civic property as a film location may require the production to provide a damage deposit, which should align with the level of risk.

- Productions often request a city staff member familiar with the facility (referred to as a “Liaison”) to be present during filming activities at civic locations, typically at production’s expense.
- When filming in civic buildings, the municipal office, in collaboration with building management, can work with production to accommodate the needs of staff, the public, and special interest groups to maintain regular operations during filming.

Special Cases – Municipal Parks: The application process for filming in municipal parks typically involves submitting a detailed plan that specifies the exact areas of the park to be used, filming dates, crew size, placement of equipment and any plans for set build/set decoration or greens. The plan should address potential impacts on the park, such as noise, foot traffic, or temporary closures, and where relevant provide solutions for maintaining public safety and environmental preservation. Additionally, productions are typically required to cover the costs of any additional services like staff supervision.

Park conditions or environmental considerations, such as wildlife protection or conservation efforts, may require special attention. When first scouting and qualifying these spaces, productions should be made aware of any seasonal variations that affect filming so they can consult with the film office to determine whether and how filming can proceed, with adjustments in their work or mitigation plans.

- Waste management/toilets
- Public consideration and safety
- Vehicle use, access, and control
- Resident wildlife
- Vegetation
- Special effects (SPFX)
- Artificial snow
- Drones/UAV
- Simulated fire effects/pyrotechnics

A good example of clear and essential filming information is the [BC Parks Commercial Filming Guidelines](#) and the [Park Board Film and Special Events Office Guidelines](#) for filming in Vancouver Parks.

11. Additional Permits and Considerations

In addition to municipal permission, productions may be required to liaise with other entities based on their location and/or type of activity. It is helpful to be aware of these overlaps and where they might be relevant in your municipality so you can remind productions to engage with the appropriate entities if necessary.

Electrical Temporary Operating Permits

[Technical Safety BC](#) is the regulatory body responsible for issuing [electrical operating permits](#) for most of the province, and a production that is electrifying a set, circus, and work trucks should have the appropriate electrical permit for operating generators in the jurisdiction.

Transport Canada – Remotely Piloted Aircraft

The use of drones for filming is commonplace throughout the province. Productions are required to follow all federal regulations issued by Transport Canada, and details such as a flight path and proof of aviation liability insurance may be required as part of an application submission to the permitting authority (i.e., city or park). Because of the federal rules and regulations, seasonal or geographic considerations protecting wildlife are generally the key considerations in approvals by municipal, regional, provincial, and federal park authorities.

- [Transport Canada: Flying Your Drone Safely and Legally](#)
- [Transport Canada: Know Your Drone Category and Operation Level](#)

Fisheries And Oceans Canada

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans regulates ocean resources and fish habitats. Consultation may be required for activity in oceans, streams, etc.

Provincial Partners + Considerations

- [Agricultural Land Commission](#)
- [BC Ferries](#)
- [BC Highways](#)
- [BC Housing](#)
- [BC Hydro](#)
- [BC Parks](#)
- [BC Transit](#)
- [Crown Land](#)
- [TransLink](#)
- [WorkSafe BC](#)

First Nations Relationships

The BC Film Commission at Creative BC is committed to following the guidance of First Nations unceded communities and the Indigenous Screen Office resources in observing and adhering to proper protocols and engagement when conducting business on their lands.

If requesting to film on First Nations community land, production must contact the community prior to entering the community or scouting. To determine the geographical location and First Nations land, filmmakers can visit the British Columbia First Nations Assembly's [First Nations in BC Interactive Map](#).

Permitting in First Nations Communities

When applying to film on provincially managed land, including BC Parks, productions are encouraged to engage with First Nations as early as possible in the planning stages to build relationships and for information-sharing purposes. The Province of BC is responsible for ensuring adequate and appropriate consultation and accommodation, and may involve the proponent in the procedural aspects of consultation.

Within municipalities, relationships with First Nation communities may inform permissions and processes for requests, for example, grounding generators by digging within a park. Productions may look to a municipal film office to understand where First Nations community or treaty land is and whether there is an established protocol to approach the community.

Helpful Links:

- [ImagineNATIVE Publications](#)
- [Indigenous Screen Office – On-Screen Protocols and Pathways](#)
- [Consulting with First Nations](#)
- [Relationships with First Nations](#)

12. Community Engagement

The Industry and Community Affairs team within the BC Film Commission at Creative BC is a vital partner and resource for municipal film offices, with a focus on the South Coast region where the largest volume of production takes place. They collaborate closely with productions and municipalities in supporting community engagement and keeping film locations sustainable. By addressing inquiries and concerns from property owners, businesses, and residents, the team helps facilitate coordination between communities, productions, and municipalities. Their support is useful in navigating potential community challenges and managing filming activity.

The I+CA team has developed and contributed to a range of resources that can help you respond to community inquiries and concerns. These tools not only assist in resolving issues but also serve as educational materials for residents, property owners, and businesses, helping them better understand the complexities of film production and its impact on their communities.

- [BC Motion Picture Industry Code of Conduct](#)
- [Filming on Your Property](#)
- [Filming Toolkit for Residents](#)
- [Filming in Business Areas](#)
- [Filming Toolkit for Businesses](#)
- [Filming 101](#)
- [Protocols and Resources](#)

13.Resources and Support

Ecosystem of B.C.'s Film Industry

- [Screen BC](#)
- [Actsafe Safety Association](#)
- [Commercial Producers Association of Western Canada \(CPAWC\)](#)
- [Motion Picture Association Canada \(MPA Canada\)](#)
- [Animation & Visual Effects Alliance of BC](#)
- [Vancouver Post Alliance](#)
- [Provincial Film Policy](#)

Established Municipal Film Offices (Lower Mainland)

As a result of most production activity centering in the Lower Mainland, many municipal governments in the regional districts of Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Sunshine Coast, and Squamish-Lillooet have dedicated film offices to support production through permitting. The remainder typically have an established permitting process at a minimum and nest a Film Coordinator or clerk role in another department (Events, Engineering, Ec. Dev.) as works best to manage requests. Collectively, in collaboration with the BC Film Commission, these film offices and coordinators uphold similar best practices, standards, and processes to facilitate production across the region.

Film office staff bring a wealth of experience, and many of their websites provide informative examples of working with production. For reference, see a list of [Greater Vancouver](#) municipal contacts and website links on Creative BC's website.

Regional Film Commissions

Integral to motion picture in our province are the seven Regional Film Commissions, which support productions by offering industry expertise, local knowledge, and on-the-ground assistance in their regions. Like the BC Film Commission, regional film commissions maintain a broad network of relationships to facilitate support of incoming productions and assist local governments or communities as needed when working with the industry.

- [Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association](#)
- [Kootenay Regional Film Commission](#)
- [Film Northern BC](#)
- [Okanagan Film Commission](#)

- [Thompson Nicola Film Commission](#)
- [Vancouver Island North Film Commission](#)
- [Vancouver Island South Film & Media Commission](#)

Training

[Motion Picture Industry Orientation Course](#): Foundational course for entering the motion picture industry, and a requirement for labour union or guild membership.

[Film Liaison Course](#): Offered by [AFCI University](#), this course aims to provide context for film liaisons, entities, and individuals seeking an understanding of the basics of film production and the work of the film commissions with which they collaborate.

[Location Management 101](#): Offered by AFCI University and developed collaboratively by the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) and the Location Managers Guild International (LMGI). It introduces the art of Location Management for feature films, television, commercials, and other creative projects. This course will give the participant an overview of the work typically performed by professional location scouts, location managers, and members of their teams

BC Film Commission Initiatives

[Reel Green™ at Creative BC](#): An industry initiative and resource center with best practices to help productions reduce their environmental impacts and improve their overall sustainability.

The main goal of the Reel Green™ initiative is to empower and inspire productions to innovate and implement sustainable practices while encouraging industry stakeholders to collectively support this effort. It prioritizes education, engagement, communications, and resources to develop a platform for the reduction of environmental impacts and stakeholder engagement at the local level to set an example for other jurisdictions globally. Key Resources:

- [Sustainable Production Training](#)
- [Carbon Calculator Training](#)
- [Resources](#)

[Creative Pathways™ at Creative BC](#): An industry initiative focused on the growth of an equitable, diverse, and inclusive motion picture workforce in B.C. with pathways for everyone. Creative Pathways™ builds on the efforts of individuals, committees, organizations, and companies. These efforts include listening, collaboration, programs, cultural safety training, and supportive policies. They also encompass practices for safer workplaces and, importantly, greater representation and participation of Indigenous people, Black people, People of Colour, those who identify as LGBTQ2SAI+, People Living with a Disability, and Women—on screen, on set, and in leadership. Valuable resources include:

- [Programs](#)
- [Work Opportunities](#)
- [About #BCFilm](#)
- [Departments and Roles](#)
- [Resources](#)

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Film Permit Applications

- [Film Permit Application](#)
- [Filming Notification Letter – City](#)
- [Filming Notification Letter – District](#)
- [Curfew Extension Notification Letter \(No polling\) – City](#)
- [Curfew Extension Notification Letter \(Polling\) – City](#)
- [Curfew Extension Notification Letter \(No Polling\) – District](#)
- [Curfew Extension Notification Letter \(Polling\) – District](#)
- [Noise + Curfew Relaxation Application](#)
- [Hydrant Use Application](#)
- [Parking Application](#)
- [Special Effects \(SPFX\) Application](#)
- [Street Use Application](#)
- [Wrap Survey](#)
- [Sample Map – Main Unit](#)
- [Sample Map – 2nd Unit](#)

Appendix 2: Templates Cont'd. Sample Checklist for Productions

Checklists may also include links to PDFs for any documentation required. Some of the points will be at the direction of the permitting authority, determined according to the production activity

- Read film and special events guidelines
- Apply for a business licence (if required)
- Qualify the locations being scouted and verify whether any special conditions apply
- Submit insurance certificate and signed film agreement
- Complete the film permit application package:
 - Film Permit Application form
 - DRAFT Film Notification Letter
 - Street Use Application
 - Parking Application
 - Map(s) – should indicate locations for vehicles and equipment, mark areas for public access, closures and safety measures
 - Street Use and Parking
 - Location site (insert) map
 - Noise + Curfew Relaxation Package (if applicable)
 - Polling letter
 - Polling form
 - Poll map
- Address environmental or noise concerns
- (Consider including clean energy incentives created by the municipality)
- Submit additional information or requests
- Additional street use and parking
- Fire-hydrant use permit
- Police department
- Stunts
- Special Effects (SPFX)
- Exposed weapons
- Burning and explosives
- Drone use requirements
- Pay application fees and/or security deposit

