

2020 City of Ottawa Film Guidelines

The City of Ottawa works closely with production companies to ensure the city's television and film industry has the supports available to succeed. The City of Ottawa's Event Central unit is responsible for coordinating municipal services and issuing film permits under the City's Film By-law.

Generally, throughout the course of production, production companies filming on City of Ottawa property should only need to contact Event Central. However, with more complex requests, Event Central may coordinate a meeting with key municipal business units and representatives from the production.

Application Process

Filming events that require fall under the jurisdiction of the Ottawa Film By-law are required to apply to Event Central for a Film Permit five (5) business days in advance of the filming event.

Your filming event needs a Film Permit if the activities:

- require the use of any property that is owned or managed by the City of Ottawa (including the right-of-way);
- occurs on public or private property and includes the presence of replica weapons and/or replica emergency vehicles or uniforms visible to the public; and/or
- requires the provision of any City of Ottawa resources or the Ottawa Police Service.

In addition to submitting a completed Film Permit Application, production companies are required to provide the following documents:

- Indemnification Letter ([hyperlink to template](#));
- Bilingual notice to impacted residents/businesses ([hyperlink to template](#)); and
- Certificate of Insurance (see below for requirements).

Event Central will review your application and advise you of any conflicts or concerns not later than three (3) business days after receipt of the application.

Filming events requiring City highway closures, transit detours, paid duty Police etc. may require additional time for approvals as well as documentation such as traffic plans, security plans and emergency plans. Please see the sections below for additional information.

Please note, incomplete packages will not be processed and can delay the approval process.

Fees

There is no application fee or charge for a film permit; however, depending on your request there may be costs incurred such as, but not limited to: parking fees, signage installation fees, City of Ottawa park use fees, Paid Duty Officers, Ottawa Fire Services personnel and equipment, Ottawa Paramedic Service personnel and equipment as well as a late fee for applications that do not meet the minimum five day turnaround time for the City's film application approval

Insurance

Prior to filming, production companies must provide Event Central with a certificate of comprehensive/commercial general liability insurance naming the City of Ottawa as the certificate holder as well as additional insured. The minimum requirement is two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in General Comprehensive Public Liability insurance, unless fireworks, Public Transit property, or open surface parking lots are used, then five million dollars (\$5,000,000) is required.

Please ensure the City of Ottawa's general mailing address is included on the certificate in the "certificate holder" category:

City of Ottawa 110 Laurier Ave. West Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

Notification of Filming to Residents and Businesses

Production companies are required to notify residents and businesses impacted by a film production as determined by Event Central on a case-by-case basis at least 48 hours in advance of filming. Production companies may use the "Notice to Residents and Merchants" template or they may develop their own. Notifications must be distributed in both French and English. The notification must, at a minimum, include:

- Location of the filming event;
- Date and time of the filming event;
- A description of what will take place during filming and potential impacts, such as, but not limited to street closures, detours, and alternate access routes
- The telephone number of the production company and a direct contact that will respond to resident inquiries; and
- The name and number of the Film By-law (No. #####).

Event Central may require that additional information be included. The production company must provide a copy of the notification to Event Central before distribution and must notify Event Central of any concerns identified by the noticed parties. Event Central will consult with the applicable City services and notify the Ward Councilor and local Business Improvement Area.

Restrictions on Hours/Days for Filming

The hours for filming and setup must be clearly defined within the Film Permit Application. Where deemed necessary, the City of Ottawa may limit the hours for filming and setup.

Filming in residential areas must take place between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., unless written consent is received from a majority of affected residents.

Parking

Event Central can assist with finding suitable parking for production vehicles within the municipality. Production companies requiring reserved parking spaces must complete the parking section of the Film Permit Application and submit it to Event Central at least five (5) business days in advance of filming.

Production vehicles parking on municipal streets must place a copy of the parking permit in their windshield. Production companies requesting the use of paid parking areas will be required to reimburse the City for lost revenue at a rate determined by the City of Ottawa's User Fee Policy.

Production vehicles must adhere to all applicable by-laws and not block accessible parking spaces, fire hydrants, driveways or other access/egress ramps. Vehicles must also be parked nine (9) meters or more from intersections.

Bus stop zones are considered no parking zones and must be adhered to. Requests for relocation of bus stops must be submitted to Event Central at least ten (10) business days in advance of filming and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by OC Transpo. Bus stop zones are 34m on approach and 18m on egress.

It is the responsibility of the production company to make alternate arrangements for residents in possession of a valid street-parking permit whose vehicles are displaced by filming activity. Relocating vehicles by towing to accommodate filming or parking is not permitted.

Traffic

Filming on a street or sidewalk in the city requires approval and the associated permit, particularly if there is a need for street closures or intermittent traffic stoppages. Production companies proposing to close lanes of a roadway, or a complete closure of a roadway, are required to complete the use of right-of-way section of the Film Application, and submit it to Event Central at least ten (10) business days in advance. Event Central will direct these requests to Traffic Services for approval and determine if additional requirements are needed. The use of barricades, traffic control plans, (based on Book 7 of the Highway Traffic Manual), or Ottawa Police Services Paid Duty Officers may be necessary.

Lane closures are not normally permitted on major collector and arterial roads during the peak periods of 6:00 – 9:00 a.m. and 15:00 – 18:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Complete closures are not normally permitted on arterial roads from 7:00 a.m. – 18:00 p.m, Monday to Friday. Lane and road closures on non-arterial roadways are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Transportation Services, in conjunction with Ottawa Police services, will review all requests.

User fees are applicable for costs related to transit detours as well as covering, altering, removing and/or reinstalling traffic or street signs.

Where a moving vehicle is involved, the applicant shall adhere to the posted speed limits and to the Ontario Highway Traffic Act, unless a road is closed for filming.

Please note, filming on controlled access highways, the Transitway, light rail, arterial roadways, and major collector streets requires special consideration. The Transitway and O-Train are private roadway/property and require approval by the General Manager or designated authority of Transportation Services.

[Municipal Parks](#)

The City of Ottawa has a wide range of park and outdoor event sites available for filming. Production companies are required to complete a Film Application, at least five (5) days in advance of filming in order to confirm availability and confirm the rental agreement. Extra fees may apply depending on the space(s) being sought.

[Municipal Owned/Operated Buildings](#)

The City of Ottawa has many unique indoor facilities ranging from City Hall to libraries and recreation centres available for filming. Extra fees may apply depending on time of entry and security requirements. Event Central can provide a full list of municipal sites available for filming.

[Private Property](#)

A filming event may still fall under the jurisdiction of the Film By-law even if the film event takes place on private property. As an example, if a filming event takes place on private property and requires on-street parking, the production will need to apply to Event Central for a film permit.

[Firearms, Gunfire and replica weapons](#)

Any filming events involving gunfire audible to the public, or firearms or replica weapons of any kind (including prop guns) visible to the public (whether fired or not), are required to submit a Film Permit Application and may be required to have an Ottawa Police Paid Duty Officer onsite. The City of Ottawa requires a minimum of ten (10) business days notice for the use of firearms, replica weapons and gunfire. This use of replica fire arms or weapons should be indicated under the Additional Elements section of the Film Permit Application. The production company shall observe and comply with all applicable Federal, Provincial and local laws pertaining in any way to the use of firearms or replica weapons and is responsible for obtaining all required approvals and permits related to the use of firearms or replica weapons.

Stunts, Special Effects and Pyrotechnics

All staged violent scenes, stunts and special effects, including large crowd scenes, which could result in crowd crushing injuries, require the approval of the relevant emergency services to ensure that public safety issues are addressed, and adequate resources are secured. This includes the use of large stunts (requiring pyrotechnics), physical and performing stunts that require the presence of emergency personnel, or picture vehicles for chase and/or crash scenes. When deemed necessary, Paid Duty Officers and/or Paramedics may also be required.

Production companies proposing the use of pyrotechnics and or discharged fireworks are required to indicate the use of pyrotechnics under the Additional Elements section of the Film Permit Application and submit it to Event Central at least thirty (30) business days in advance of filming. The production company shall observe and comply with all applicable Federal, Provincial and local laws pertaining in any way to the use of pyrotechnics and or discharged fireworks and is responsible for obtaining all required approvals and permits related to the use of pyrotechnics and or discharged fireworks.

In some instances, production companies may be asked to submit a copy of their emergency and site plan(s) that include items such as, but not restricted to; temporary structures, fencing, incendiary devices, their strategy for responding to injuries and medical emergencies and the identification of any first aid or medical response provider(s) contracted to support the production. The need for additional documentation will be determined by Event Central on a case-by-case basis.

Use of Police, Fire and Paramedic Equipment, Vehicles and Personnel

Event Central will assist production companies in verifying paid duty requirements with the applicable services. Event Central will also assist in obtaining approvals for companies wishing to film emergency service equipment, vehicles and/or personnel. Requests for such approvals are required to contact Event Central at least ten (10) business days before the filming event.

Use and Filming of OC Transpo Equipment, Vehicles and Personnel

Approval is required prior to filming and/or using any OC Transpo logos, equipment, vehicles, personnel and/or property. Event Central is available to assist production companies in obtaining approvals from the required departments.

Disruption to Residents and Businesses

The production company must ensure there is minimum disruption to residents and businesses. The safe movement of traffic must be ensured. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Minimizing negative effects from lighting, noise, pollution etc.;
- Ensuring residents, business owners, customers, and visitors have access to premises; and

- Ensuring that production staff conduct themselves in a safe, professional and respectful manner.

Clean-Up

Production crews must clean the location at the end of each filming day and ensure that the area is returned to its original condition.

Approval from Event Central is required for any exceptions and the applicable fees will apply.

Materials and debris are not to be washed into catch basins. Grey water must be collected and must be disposed of in a sanitary sewer. Grey water must not be disposed of in a storm sewer.

The production company is responsible for any damage to City property or infrastructure that is beyond normal wear and tear.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)

Transport Canada requests a minimum of 20 days' notice prior to filming using unmanned air vehicles.

Transport Canada approves the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for filming purposes through the issuance of a Special Flight Operations Certificate (SFOC).

The UAV operator applies to Transport Canada – Special Flight Operations to obtain the certificate.

For more information on the process of applying for an SFOC please visit the Transport Canada website ([hyperlink](#)).

Remotely Piloted Aircraft Liability Insurance with respect to owned or non-owned aircraft used directly or indirectly in the performance of their operations, including use of additional premises, shall have limits of not less than \$5,000,000 inclusive per occurrence for bodily injury, death and damage to property including loss of use.

Once the production company informs Event Central that a UAV will be used in a film shoot, it will be determined if a road closure is required. Site meetings with the appropriate internal and external stakeholders may be required.

The production company must notify area residents and businesses in its notification letter that filming will involve the use of a UAV.

City By-Laws, Policies and Procedures

The following list provides a summary of the most commonly referenced By-laws with respect to filming activities. This list is not intended to be a complete listing of all applicable City By-laws. Production companies are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of and comply with all relevant By-laws and all applicable provincial and/or federal legislation.

Animal Care and Control (By-law No. 2003-77)
Discharge of Firearms (By-law No. 2002-344)
Encroachments on City Highways (By-law No. 2003-446)
Fireworks (By-law No. 2003-237)
Idling Control (By-law No. 2007-266)
Noise (By-law No.2017-255)
Over-dimensional Vehicles on City Highways (By-law No. 2003-497)
Parking (By-law No. 2003-530)
Property Standards (By-law No. 2013 - 416)
Road Activity (By-law No. 2003-445)
Smoke-free – Public Places (By-law No. 2001-148)
Special Events on City Streets (By-law No. 2001-260)
Special Events on Public and Private Property (By-law No. 2013-232)
Temporary All-Terrain Vehicles & Other Vehicles (By-law No. 2013-199)
Temporary Signs on Private Property (By-law No. 2004-239)
Transit (By-law No. 2007-268)
Use and Care of Roads (By-law No. 2003-498)
Zoning (By-law No. 2008-250)

City of Ottawa By-Laws can be accessed through the City's website at
<https://ottawa.ca/en/residents/laws-licenses-and-permits/laws/law-z>