



# Getting Started with Eapproval: Film Permits Information for Producers

## Definitions

Except as provided in Section 492.04 of Chapter 492 of the Pittsburgh City Code, it is unlawful to conduct a filming activity on City property or on a public way without first obtaining a film permit from the City of Pittsburgh Office of Film & Event Management. Once issued, a film permit must be in the possession of the named permittee at all times while on location(s) in the City. An applicant must separately obtain a private property owner's permission, consent, and/or lease for use of non-City property and/or other property that is not owned or controlled by the City.

Chapter 492 of the Pittsburgh City Code defines "Filming Activity" as the staging, shooting, filming, videotaping, photographing, or other similar process conducted for the making of still photographs, motion pictures, television programs, commercials, videos, and nontheatrical film productions.

## Permit Fees and Site Costs

The cost to conduct various filming activities on public property and rights of way is determined by whether or not the production is a commercial project or student film, the type of property being used, and the length of time it is being used. Different property type requests require different lengths and means of review and have varying impacts on public use, which require various fees.

Application fees for projects submitted Eapproval Pittsburgh follow the following cost structure:

	Student Film	Commercial
<b>2024 Film Permit Costs</b>		
Film Permit Base Fee	\$ 100.00	\$ 525.00
Revision Fee	\$ 25.00	\$ 50.00

The initial application fee will be billed following application submission. If a credit card cannot be used, an option exists to request an invoice. The application will not be considered received until the non-refundable application fee has been received. Fees can be paid by credit card online by following the link in the emailed invoice, or by check or money order when mailed or hand delivered with a copy of the invoice. The remaining fees, if applicable, will be invoiced via email for payment after the application is reviewed.

## **Additional Costs & Fees**

The below table shows the fees for both student films and commercial film projects. The cost are determined based on the roadway, park, or City property requested in the film permit application. Due to varying degrees of review and impacts to traffic and public space, different costs are incurred:

<b>City Property Location Fees</b>	<b>Student Film</b>	<b>Commercial</b>
Public Park - Regional - per day	\$ 115.00	\$ 450.00
Public Park - per day	\$ 75.00	\$ 300.00
General Property - undefined	\$ 25.00	\$ 100.00
Right of Way Closure - Arterial - per day	\$ 300.00	\$ 1,250.00
Right of Way Closure - Collector - per day	\$ 250.00	\$ 1,250.00
Right of Way Closure - Local - per day	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,000.00
Right of Way Closure - Park Road - per day	\$ 175.00	\$ 900.00
Right of Way Closure - Alley - per day	\$ 150.00	\$ 750.00
Right of Way Closure - Sidewalk - per day	\$ 18.00	\$ 75.00
Additional Block Closure - per day	10% of base	10% of base
Intermittent Traffic Control - Arterial - Per block	\$ 150.00	\$ 625.00
Intermittent Traffic Control - Collector - per block	\$ 125.00	\$ 625.00
Intermittent Traffic Control - Local - per block	\$ 100.00	\$ 600.00
Intermittent Traffic Control - Park Road - per block	\$ 87.50	\$ 500.00
Intermittent Traffic Control - Alley - per block	\$ 75.00	\$ 500.00
Intermittent Traffic Control - Sidewalk - per block	\$ 10.00	\$ 37.50
City Owned Building or Facility Use - per day	\$ 250.00	\$ 2,000.00
City County Building (City Hall) - per day	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,500.00
Drone Filming Permit (per shoot)	\$ 25.00	\$ 75.00
Still Photography Permit	\$ 20.00	\$ 50.00

As stated above, there are different fee structures for student films and commercial film projects. Producers and locations staff should use the above information to get a rough idea of costs that will be associated with each location they would like to use. Rights of way are classified as sidewalks, alleys, park roads, locals, collectors, or arterials based on the Federal Highway Classification System, with Arterials being the largest of right of ways (highways are considered Principal Arterials).

The Office of Film & Event Management utilizes a classification map, located [here](#), to determine cost. Locations staff are encouraged to visit the previous link to determine the classification of their proposed location. To find a specific street or address, click the magnifying glass “search” icon in the bottom right to open the search box. The box will appear at the top left of the map where an address can be entered and searched. As of January 2023, the City cannot write permits to close Principal Arterials or Private Roads for filming activities. Principal Arterials are highways operated by PennDot, and private roads would require permissions from the owner.

As an example, a theoretical shoot is to take place at the old police station at 2626 Penn Avenue. This shoot will require the closure of Penn Avenue from 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, and intermittent traffic control on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> from Mulberry Way to Spring Way, on one business day. The cost of this shoot would be calculated as: Penn Ave (collector, one block): \$1,250. ITC on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> (locals, two blocks each): \$600 for the first block, 10% of \$600 for each additional block (\$60) of each street. 26<sup>th</sup> Street: \$600 + \$60 = \$660. Same cost for 27<sup>th</sup> Street (\$660). Final Cost for Example: \$1,250 + \$660 + \$660 = \$2,570.

## **Fines and Penalties**

The Office of Film & Event Management is authorized to issue a series of fines that could be charged to film productions for violations of permit conditions. Permit holders will be given opportunities to rectify any shortcomings that could result in fines before any fines are actually imposed. A chart outlining possible fines is below. The Permit Coordinator assigned to your application can explain possible fines in further detail.

<b>Permit Violations - Fines</b>	
Overextension of stay (per day)	\$ 1,000.00
Unauthorized vehicles on grass (per vehicle and / or cost of repair)	\$ 20.00
Signage left on-site after 48 hours (per unit per day)	\$ 25.00
Portable toilets left on-site after 48 hours (per unit per day)	\$ 25.00
Equipment left on-site after 48 hours (per piece per day)	\$ 25.00
Damage to city property	<i>Cost of repair determined by DPW</i>
Deviation from permitted activity* <i>* such as setting up before permitted set up time (hours or days); having event elements not cleared by permit; etc.</i>	\$ 250.00 <i>And / or denial of future request</i>
Unpermitted event/film activity, upcharge applied to summation of all fees	25.00%

The hope of the Office of Film & Event Management is to never have to charge these fines. However the office needs to protect the interest of the public properties used in film production. If the office is alerted to activities that violate permit terms and are finable per the table above, the Location Manager or Assistant Location Manager will be notified of the violations and given a chance to rectify the situation. If the problem is not resolved, the fines may be imposed and will be billed via the Eproval system.

A primary point of emphasis will be signage and equipment left behind from shoots, as well as 'overextension of stay'. When the City and productions agree on start and end times for shoots, especially those that close city property and detour public transit, those timelines must be adhered to. If there is provable evidence that a production began early or was not clear of a street or park by the agreed upon times, the \$1,000.00 fine may be charged.

## **Application Deadlines**

Any person desiring a film permit under the provisions of Chapter 492 shall complete an application via [Eproval Pittsburgh](#) for submission to the Office of Film & Event Management. The Application must be completed and accompanied by all required exhibits and application fees before it will be deemed to be an "accepted application" and processed. Note: Unlike event permits, film permits are not a two-phase application and do not require a Reservation of Space application.

Applications for a film permit must be filed with the Office of Film & Event Management according to the following schedule:

1. A minimum of two (2) business days in advance of the date the filming activity is to begin for a shoot requesting to use park space or sidewalks, alleys, or local roadway;
2. A minimum of three (3) business days in advance of the date filming activity is to begin for a shoot requesting to implement intermittent traffic control or to close a collector or arterial roadway;
3. A minimum of seven (7) business days in advance of the date filming activity is to begin for a shoot using any property type (park or right of way) if there are stunts or pyrotechnics involved.

No late applications will be processed by the City. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications at the earliest advance date possible in order to facilitate coordination between City departments.

The City will have final determination on submittal deadlines and costs.

Upon reasonable notice by the permittee in advance of the filming activity, the Office of Film & Event Management is authorized to change the date for which the film permit has been issued without requiring a new application or permit so long as the requirements of Chapter 492 are still met.

**IMPORTANT:** Any applications or documents submitted past close of business (4:45PM EST) on any given day will not be counted as RECEIVED until the next business day. Example: an application submitted on a Tuesday at 5:15PM EST will be counted as “received” on Wednesday. Applications submitted after 4:45PM EST on a Friday will be considered received the next business day.

### **Public Safety Services**

Any additional City of Pittsburgh services that a producer wishes to contract are at an additional cost and are **not** covered by the permit fees. Please see the charts below for available services, and their associated costs for 2024:

#### **Bureau of Police: Officer Costs & Fees\***

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Holiday Rate</b>	<b>Administrative Fee</b>
Crossing Guard	\$30.00	\$45.00	\$6.37
PO1 – PO4	\$63.69	\$106.16	\$6.37
MPO/Detective	\$72.61	\$121.02	\$6.37
Sergeant	\$82.78	\$137.96	\$6.37
Lieutenant	\$94.37	\$157.28	\$6.37
Incident Commander	\$105.82	\$183.03	\$6.37

*\*Services for the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police are billed separately by Roll Kall, Inc and not via Eproval Pittsburgh, and are subject to change.*

On the ten 2024 holidays identified in the CBA\*, the pay rate will be the Holiday Rate for an officer working any detail:

1. New Year's Day January 1, 2024
2. Martin Luther King Jr. Day January 15, 2024
3. President's Day February 19, 2024
4. Police Memorial Day May 15, 2024
5. Memorial Day May 27, 2024
6. Independence Day July 4, 2024
7. Labor Day September 2, 2024
8. Veteran's Day November 11, 2024
9. Thanksgiving Day November 28, 2024
10. Christmas Day December 25, 2024

Holiday rate (2024) will be paid to Officers and Supervisors for shifts that start on December 31, 2024 and extend into New Year's Day (January 1, 2025).

*\*Rates and holidays are subject to change.*

### Bureau of Fire: Permit Costs & Fees

Service	Price	Additional Information
Pyrotechnics/Fireworks Permit	\$73.13	Fire Inspector Required: \$49.44/hr
Tent permit	\$32.96	Per tent; over 400 sq.ft. along with flammability certificate
Open Flame Permit	\$20.60	Fire Inspector Required: \$49.44/hr
Bon Fire Permit	\$73.13	Fire Inspector Required: \$49.44/hr

*Rates may change due to union contract negotiations.*

### Emergency Medical Services

Service	Cost	Additional Info
Paramedic	\$63.54 / hr	Minimum 4 hours
Paramedic OT (x1.5 after 8 hrs.)	\$95.31 / hr	
Paramedic (Holiday)	\$105.90 / hr	Minimum 4 hours
FICA taxes	\$4.86	per paramedic hour
Ambulance	\$260.00	Per unit per day
Medic Motorcycle	\$120.00	Per unit per day
Medic Bicycle	\$85.00	Per unit per day
Medic Cart	\$125.00	Per unit per day
River Rescue Boat	\$650.00	Per unit per day
Equipment Fee (1 person post)	\$75.00	Per unit per day
Administrative Fee	10%	% of Total Invoice

*Rates may change due to union contract negotiations.*

### **Public Safety Coverage Requirements**

Per the City of Pittsburgh Film Regulations, Pittsburgh Police are required to be on set for any of the following instances, but not limited to:

- Any Filming Activity in which cast impersonate uniformed law enforcement officers or members of the military;
- Any Filming Activity in which weapons are brandished or otherwise exposed, including but not limited to firearms (real or fake), knives, blades, or explosives;
- Any Filming Activity involving the recreation or depiction of a criminal act, including but not limited to assault, theft, robbery, or any depiction of illegal activity that could be interpreted by the public as real.

Additionally, the presence of Emergency Medical Services is required for any of the following instances, but not limited to:

- Any Filming Activity involving stunts such as vehicle chases and/or crashes, jumps or falls from heights, explosions, and/or any other stunt or activity in which the need for the services of the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services may become reasonably expected.

Lastly, the Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire requires a presence on set when any of the following take place in a scene, including but not limited to:

- Any Filming Activity involving pyrotechnics, explosions, open flame, or any other activity in which the need for the services of the Bureau of Fire may become reasonably expected.
- Any Filming Activity that utilizes helicopter(s).

In regards to all scenes all Police, Fire, and EMS requirements are at the discretion of the Chiefs of those bureaus or their assigns. All costs associated with requested or required services will be provided via a price quote. It is at this time that producers should work with the Office of Film & Event Management to rectify any concerns over potential charges.

An invoice for all agreed upon City services will be provided once all services are scheduled. All invoices must be paid in full at least thirty (30) days after the invoice is issued. In the event that a producer overpays for services, a refund will be issued within ninety (90) days post-shoot. If a production is undercharged or additional unplanned services are needed, an additional invoice may be issued to cover additional costs.

**IMPORTANT:** Any producers or productions with outstanding debts to the City of Pittsburgh for any services provided to a previous project will be restricted from receiving any future film permits until all debts are rectified.

### **Insurance Requirements**

The production shall maintain insurance in the amount specified below to cover the entire duration of the production. The applicant shall upload a certificate of insurance duly executed by the officers or authorized representatives of a responsible and non-assessable insurance company, evidencing

the following minimum coverage(s) and specifically identifying CITY as an additional insured, which insurance shall be non-cancelable, except upon thirty (30) days prior written notice to CITY:

<b>General Liability</b>	<b>Individual Occurrence</b>	<b>Aggregate</b>
Bodily injury, including death	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00
Property damage	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 100,000.00

All policies must be made on an occurrence basis. Claims-made policies are not acceptable.

A permittee must procure and maintain insurance in the forms, types, and amounts prescribed by the Office of Film & Event Management for the duration of the filming activity. Specific insurance requirements will be set forth in the regulations. In no event will the amount of coverage required for any filming activity that requires a permit be less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) (per occurrence) and one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) (aggregate) in order to protect the City against claims of third persons for personal injury, wrongful death and property damage and to indemnify the City for damage to City property arising out of the permittee's activities.

Applicant shall also submit verification that adequate worker's compensation insurance coverage is maintained throughout filming activities, as applicable. For currently enrolled film students, proof of insurance through their school and the student's current attendance shall satisfy this requirement.

### **Notifications**

It is the responsibility of the producer to notify all surrounding residents and businesses of their upcoming shoots and any impacts it may have on them. A letter or flyer delivered to residents and businesses is recommended. Please make sure to upload a copy of any outreach materials with your application submission. Applicants are required by the Film Regulations to notify all business and residents within a three (3) block radius of a permitted Filming Activity as to the work that is to be done and how it will impact them.

Additionally, productions are required to notify the City Council member's office for the district in which their Filming Activity will take place. This is to allow open communication between producers, council, and constituents who may be impacted by filming activities. Contact information as well as lists of which neighborhoods fall in which districts can be found in the Film Permit Regulations.

### **Permit Issuance or Denial**

The Office of Film & Event Management shall approve or deny an accepted application for a shoot requesting to use park space or sidewalks, alleys, or local roadways within three (3) business days of receipt of such application unless the proposed filming activity requires extensive review by the Special Events Committee or other City departments due to public safety or transit concerns.

The Office of Film & Event Management shall approve or deny an accepted application for a shoot requesting to implement intermittent traffic control or to close a collector or arterial roadway, or one involving stunts and/or pyrotechnics, within five (5) business days of receipt of such application.

When the grounds for a film permit denial can be corrected by imposing reasonable permit conditions, the Office of Film & Event Management may recommend such conditions rather than denying the permit. If applicant accepts such conditions, they will be made a requirement of the film permit.

The Office of Film & Event Management may also condition the issuance of a film permit by imposing reasonable requirements concerning the time, place, manner and duration of filming activities as further set forth in the regulations. Any applicable "terms and conditions" will be incorporated into the film permit.

If applicable, the Office of Film & Event Management may coordinate with the Department of Public Works and also issue a short-term encroachment permit for a street closure in conjunction with a film permit.

### **Indemnification**

Each permit will include an indemnification requirement pursuant to which the applicant agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City, its officers, agents, or employees from all claims and liability arising from the filming activity or issuance of the film permit.

### **Bridge Closures & Third Party Venues**

If a production is utilizing a venue or property owned and/or operated by a third party, approval must be sought, received, and provided to the Office of Film & Event Management prior to a final film permit being written. For example, any projects utilizing Point State Park, South Shore Riverfront Park, Schenley Plaza, etc would require approvals from the operators of those locations.

For productions seeking to close and utilize any County-owned bridge, approval must be sought from Allegheny County, received, and provided to the Office of Film & Event Management prior to a final film permit being written. Bridge closures must be approved by County Council who meet once per month, so early coordination with Allegheny County regarding bridge closures is essential.

For productions seeking to close State (PennDot) owned roadways, approval must be sought from PennDot, received, and provided to the Office of Film & Event Management prior to a final film permit being written. Please click [here](#) to see which roads in the City of Pittsburgh are State-owned.



## **Parking Restrictions / Use of Parking Spaces**

Productions that require spaces immediately adjacent to the location, and/or require loading, drop-off or other accommodations, must complete the Parking Plan section of the permit application. The placement of all vehicles and No Parking signage must be included on the Location Diagram/Overhead submitted with the application.

When evaluating requests for No Parking signage, the City strives to balance the needs of the businesses, residents, schools, medical facilities, and other needs of general public in determining the number of spaces that will be authorized for No Parking. In general, the City will authorize No Parking signage to support the filming needs of a specific film location. Examples include to provide for a clear camera shot or to place required equipment near a set location, or production trucks. Parking signs must be posted at minimum 48 hours in advance of the parking restriction starting in order for them to be enforceable.

If the proposed No Parking locations impact special needs access such as ADA/blue curb parking, loading/unloading zones, Zipcar Parking, metered parking or transit stops, the production may be required to replace these locations and provide information in a variety of formats regarding the changes.

If production is taking parking meters out of service the Pittsburgh Parking Authority (PPA) **MUST** be contacted and the Out of Service Meter (OSM) form must be filled out and submitted to [osm@pittsburghparking.com](mailto:osm@pittsburghparking.com). [Click here to access the OSM form](#). The Office of Film & Event Management can only authorize parking and issue no parking signs for non-metered, legal spaces. All requests for metered parking must go through the PPA **unless the entire restriction occurs during non-enforcement hours**.

If productions are taking parking in residential sticker permit parking zones, OFEM can issue no parking signs for these areas **however**, production staff must contact the PPA at [variances@pittsburghparking.com](mailto:variances@pittsburghparking.com) in order to alert the PPA of the use and vehicles that will be present. If production staff fail to notify the PPA in these cases, production vehicles may be ticketed at the production's expense.

## **Filming in City Parks**

Film projects taking place in City of Pittsburgh parks or greenspace must adhere to the Citiparks Park Rules and Policies, unless specific permissions are sought and received from the Director of Parks & Recreation and/or Director of Public Works. These rules can be found under the Supporting Documents section.

## **Alteration, Cleanup, and Restoration**

If any alterations to City property are required for a shoot, including but not limited to painting, pruning, removing benches, removing/covering street signs, etc. the request must be made as part of the shoot application and must be brought to the attention of the Office of Film & Event Management. OFEM will work with the applicant to seek specific approvals for all alterations to City property. No alterations are to be made without specific permission.

The permittee shall conduct operations in an orderly fashion with continuous attention to the storage of equipment not in use, maintenance of the area, and the cleanup of trash and debris. The area used shall be cleaned of trash and debris within two (2) hours of the completion of the activity or within such other time established in the permit to the city's satisfaction. The permittee shall be responsible for restoring any area damaged or disrupted before leaving the site. If the site is not repaired or restored to the City's satisfaction, the Mayor or his/her designee shall have the necessary restoration and/or repairs performed and the permittee shall reimburse the City for such work within ten (10) business days of being invoiced for the cost of the repairs.

To ensure cleanup and restoration of the filming location and any City property or public way involved in the filming activity, the regulations may specify under what conditions a permittee may be required to post a refundable faithful performance bond, cash surety or other comparable form of security guarantee in an amount to be determined by the Office of Film & Event Management at the time an application is submitted. Upon completion of filming, cleanup, and restoration of the filming location and any City property or public way involved in the filming to the satisfaction of the Office of Film & Event Management, the guarantee or security will be returned to the permittee. The amount of the bond shall in no way limit the permittee's liability or responsibility for the costs of repairs or restoration in the event these costs exceed the bond amount.

## **Use of Drones or other Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)**

Any Filming Activity that will include the use of UAS (commonly called Drones) for the purpose of gathering aerial footage will be required to provide the following information to the Office of Film & Event Management. The completed application will require but not be limited to the following information:

- UAS FAA-issued registration number
- Pilot's UAS operator's license
- Launch location
- Flight plan including launch times and flight durations

All approved UAS operators must follow the protocols of flying under the FAA "Small UAS Rule" (14 CFR Part 107) including but not limited to the following requirements:

- Operate in Class G airspace only

- Must keep the UAS in sight at all times (visual line of sight)
- Must fly under 400 feet
- Must fly during the day
- Must fly at or below 100 mph
- Must yield right-of-way to manned aircraft
- Must NOT fly over people
- Must NOT fly from a moving vehicle

All UAS operations must also comply with Sporting Event Temporary Flight Restriction FDC NOTAM 4/3621 "NOTAM." This NOTAM states that all aircraft operations including unmanned aircraft and remote controlled aircraft are prohibited within a three (3) nautical mile radius up to and including 3,000ft above ground level of any stadium with a seating capacity greater than 30,000 commencing one (1) hour before the scheduled start time of an event until one (1) hour after the end of the event. This NOTAM would include Acrisure Stadium and PNC Park. Any violations of this NOTAM are subject to criminal charges.

Any and all questions can be directed to the Office of Film & Event Management by phone at 412-255-2641 or by email to [ofem@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:ofem@pittsburghpa.gov).

**GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PRODUCTION!**

