

*The following Filming Guidelines & Application are intended solely as a potential starting point for use by your legal counsel in crafting an appropriate final set of Filming Guidelines and Application for your municipal program. They may not be suitable for all situations and may even include guidelines which are unsuitable for your particular municipality. The Texas Film Commission does not endorse, guarantee, or warrant, either expressly or impliedly, the accuracy, completeness or timeliness of the following Filming Guidelines & Application Sample and it is provided "as is," without warranty of any kind. You are urged to consult legal counsel in the development, adoption and implementation of your Filming Guidelines and Application.*

## **Guidelines for Filming in Killeen, TX**

Revised 12-30-10

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# Guidelines for Filming in Killeen, Texas

## I. PURPOSE

The Guidelines contained in this policy are intended to create a program for promoting economic development activity within Killeen and the vicinity of the City. The following Guidelines are also intended to protect the personal and property rights of Killeen, Texas residents and businesses, and to promote the public health, safety and welfare. The City Manager reserves the right to impose additional regulations in the interest of public health, safety and welfare, or if otherwise deemed appropriate by the City Manager.

These Guidelines cover requests for commercial use of City-owned property (including but not limited to streets, rights-of-way, parks, and/or public buildings), commercial use of private property which may affect adjacent public or private property, and the use of City equipment and personnel in all types of motion picture production, including, but not limited to, feature films, television programs, commercials, music videos and corporate films.

## II. CITY CONTROL/CITY MANAGER AUTHORITY

The City Manager may authorize the use of any street, right-of-way, park, or public building, equipment or personnel for commercial uses in the filming or taping of movies, television programs, commercials, or training films and related activities. In conjunction with these uses, the City Manager may require that any or all of the conditions and/or remuneration herein and as specified on the application be met as a prerequisite to that use.

The Applicant agrees that the City of Killeen shall have exclusive authority to grant the Applicant the use of public streets, rights-of-way, parks and public buildings of the City, as well as authority to regulate the hours of production and the general location of the production. The City reserves the full and absolute right to prohibit all filming or to order cessation of filming in order to promote the public health, safety or welfare.

The Applicant shall allow City departments (e.g., Police, Fire, Building) to inspect all structures, property, devices and equipment to be used in connection with the filming and taping, as deemed appropriate by the City Manager.

## III. PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Before filing an application for filming in Killeen, the Office of the City Manager must be contacted to discuss the production's specific filming requirements and the feasibility of filming in Killeen, TX.

Any commercial producer who desires to undertake a commercial production in Killeen is required to complete and return the attached application for filming to the Office of the City Manager, within the time frames below:

- **Commercials or episodic television:** a minimum of two (2) business days prior to the commencement of filming or any substantial activity related to the project.
- **Feature films:** a minimum of five (5) business days prior to the commencement of filming or any substantial activity related to the project.

## IV. APPLICATION FEE

An application processing fee of \$25.00 should accompany each application for filming in Killeen.

The City Manager may waive this fee upon proof of an organization's non-profit status or for any other reason deemed appropriate by the City Manager.

## V. USE OF CITY EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL

The Applicant shall pay for all costs of any Police, Fire, Public Works, or other City personnel assigned to the project (whether or not specifically requested by the production). Remuneration rates for the use of any City equipment, including police cars and fire equipment, will be established on a case-by-case basis as determined by the City Manager. The Applicant shall pay all costs in full within ten (10) days after receipt of an invoice for said costs. The City Manager may, at his/her discretion, require an advance

deposit for all costs related City personnel and/or the use of City equipment.

The City Manager, in consultation with the Chief of Police and/or Fire Chief, shall have the authority to stipulate additional fire or police requirements and level of staffing for same, at any time during a film project if it is determined to be in the best interest of public health, safety and welfare, which cost shall be borne entirely by the Applicant.

Off-duty police officers and firefighters shall be paid by the production company at a rate no less than one and one-half times their hourly rate.

#### **VI. USE OF CITY-OWNED REAL ESTATE**

The City Manager may authorize the use of any street, right-of-way, park or public building, use of Killeen, Texas name, trademark or logo and/or use of City equipment and/or personnel for commercial uses in motion picture production. In conjunction with these uses, the City Manager may require that any or all of the conditions and/or remuneration as specified herein and on the application be met as a prerequisite to that use. A security or damage deposit may be required within the discretion of the City Manager.

The Applicant shall reimburse the City for inconveniences when using public property. Following is the rate schedule:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Cost per calendar day</u> maximum of ___ hours/day
Total or disruptive use (regular operating hours) of a public building, park, right-of-way, or public area	\$500 per day
Partial, non-disruptive use of a public building, park, right-of-way, or public area	\$250 per day
Total closure or obstruction of public street or right-of-way, including parking lots and on-street parking	\$50 per block, per day
Partial closure or obstruction of public street or right-of-way, including parking lots and on-street parking	\$25 per block, per day
Use of City parking lots, parking areas, and City streets (for the purpose of parking film trailers, buses, catering trucks, and other large vehicles)	\$50 per block or lot, per day

The Applicant acknowledges and agrees that the City of Killeen, Texas, possesses and retains exclusive authority to grant the Applicant a revocable license for the use of its name, trademark, and logo, public streets, rights-of-way, parks and buildings of the City as well as control over the hours of production and the general location of the production. The City reserves the full and absolute right to prohibit all filming or to order cessation of filming activity in order to promote the public health, safety and/or welfare.

#### **VII. VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT**

The Applicant shall provide a report listing the number of vehicles and types of equipment to be used during the filming, including proposed hours of use and proposed parking locations. Such locations will need to be specifically approved by the City Manager. On-street parking or use of public parking lots is subject to City approval.

The use of exterior lighting, power generators, or any other noise- or light-producing equipment requires on-site approval of the City Manager.

**VIII. HOURS OF FILMING**

Unless express written permission has been obtained from the City Manager in advance, and affected property owners, tenants and residents have been notified, filming will be limited to the following hours:

Monday through Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday and holidays: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**IX. NOTIFICATION OF NEIGHBORS**

The Applicant shall provide a short written description, approved by the City Manager, of the schedule for the proposed production to the owners, tenants and residents of each property in the affected neighborhood(s). The Applicant, or his or her designee, shall make a good faith effort to notify each owner, tenant and resident of all such property, and shall submit, as part of this application, a report noting owners, tenants and/or residents' comments, along with their signatures, addresses and phone numbers. Based upon this community feedback, and other appropriate factors considered by the City Manager, the City Manager may grant or deny the filming application.

**X. CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE**

The Applicant shall attach a valid certificate of insurance, issued by a company authorized to conduct business in the state of Texas, naming the City of Killeen and its agents, officers, elected officials, employees and assigns, as additional insured, in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 general liability, including bodily injury and property damage with a \$5,000,000 umbrella; and automobile liability (if applicable) in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 including bodily injury and property damage.

**XI. DAMAGE TO PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROPERTY**

The Applicant shall pay in full, within ten (10) days of receipt of an invoice, the costs of repair for any and all damage to public or private property, resulting from or in connection with, the production, and restore the property to its original condition prior to the production, or to better than original condition.

XII. HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

The Applicant shall sign the following Hold Harmless Agreement holding the City harmless from any claim that may arise from their use of designated public property, right-of-way, or equipment in conjunction with the permitted use:

*I certify that I represent the firm which will be performing the filming/taping at the locations specified on the attached permit application. I further certify that I and my firm will perform in accordance with the directions and specifications of The City of Killeen, Texas, and that I and my firm will indemnify and hold harmless the City of Killeen, Texas and its elected officials, officers, servants, employees, successors, agents, departments and assigns from any and all losses, damages, expenses, costs and/or claims of every nature and kind arising out of or in connection with the filming/taping and other related activities engaged in pursuant to this Application.*

*I further certify that the information provided on this Application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I possess the authority to sign this and other contracts and agreements with the City of Killeen, Texas on behalf of the firm.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

THE CITY OF KILLEEN, TX

**Application for Commercial Filming**

Title of project

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Type of production (feature film, television production, commercial, corporate, music video, etc.)

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Proposed Filming Locations (attach additional pages if necessary)

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Date(s) of prep/filming

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Primary Contact

Name

Cell phone

Email

Location Manager (if different from Primary Contact)

Name

Cell phone

Email

Production Company Information

Name of Production Company

Address

City/State/Zip

Web Site

Primary Contact's Name

Primary Contact's Phone

Primary Contact's Email

Is this production already in contact with the Texas Film Commission? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, who is your contact at the Texas Film Commission?

Name

Phone

Email

**PRODUCTION** (*Attach additional sheets if necessary.*)

1. Production schedule and activities, including stunts, pyrotechnics, special effects, aerial photography, amplified sound or use of animals: (Give dates and times and rain dates. Hours should include set-up, holding of sets and restoration.)

2. Approximate number of persons involved with the production, including cast and crew:

3. Anticipated need of City personnel, equipment or property:

4. Public areas in which public access will be restricted during production:

5. Describe alterations to public property:

6. Number and type of production vehicles to be used and location(s) where vehicles will be parked:

7. Location where crew will be fed, if not at filming location:

8. Location where extras will be held, if not at filming location:

9. Please attach map of anticipated street closure(s) or other public area use.

Applicant (production company representative):

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Title

Application approved by Killeen representative:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*The "Guidelines for Filming in Killeen, Texas" apply to all motion picture production in Killeen.*

*The Office of the City Manager may require the applicant to acknowledge receipt of the Guidelines prior to approving this application.*

# *PRODUCTION COMPANY LETTERHEAD*

## *SAMPLE #1: MERCHANTS AND BUSINESS DISTRICT*

June 14, 2006

Dear Neighbor:

My name is Joe Smith and I am a Location Scout for the upcoming movie, "THE MOVIE". Shooting will be taking place in Providence beginning in August 2006 and continuing through November 2006.

Some of our locations are in your building's area, and we wanted to inform you of our upcoming presence beginning Friday, August 11<sup>th</sup>. On this day as well as Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> we will be filming outside the Turks Head Building. Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, August 17<sup>th</sup> we will be filming on Washington Street between. We are going to need to down many of the surrounding streets, as well as posting "No Parking" signs with the help of the City of Providence. We are going to have multiple Providence Police Detail Officers on hand to help direct traffic and ensure public safety.

We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause, but thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me on my cell phone at 401-555-1234, or my colleague Emily Jones at 401-555-6789.

Thank you,

Joe Smith  
Location Scout

# *PRODUCTION COMPANY LETTERHEAD*

## *SAMPLE #2: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD*

September 1, 2006

Dear Waterman Street Neighbor:

We are presently filming the television show "TeeVee Show" in Providence. One of our recurring locations is in your neighborhood and we wanted to inform you of our upcoming presence.

On Thursday, October 19, 2006 we will be filming a few scenes on Waterman Street that will require us to clear the street, as well as intermittently close the street down throughout the day. We are currently working on alternative parking nearby for those we will be affecting the most and thank you in advance for your patience with that.

We understand that this may be an inconvenience to your everyday activities, but ask for your cooperation during filming. Without the support of the residents of Providence, it would not be possible for us to shoot locally. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 401-555-4321 or send an e-mail to [emailaddress@tv.com](mailto:emailaddress@tv.com).

Thank you,

The Locations Department  
TeeVee Show Productions

# *PRODUCTION COMPANY LETTERHEAD*

## *SAMPLE #3: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD, PRODUCTION TRUCK PARKING*

September 1, 2006

Dear Hope Street Neighbor:

We are presently filming the television show "TeeVee Show" in Providence. One of our recurring locations is in your neighborhood and we wanted to inform you of our upcoming presence.

On Tuesday, November 13, 2006 we will be filming a few scenes on nearby Governor Street that will require us to clear that street, as well as intermittently close it down throughout the day. We will also need to park some of our production trucks and vehicles on Hope Street. We are currently working on alternative parking nearby for those we will be affecting the most and thank you in advance for your patience with that.

We understand that this may be an inconvenience to your everyday activities, but ask for your cooperation during filming. Without the support of the residents of Providence, it would not be possible for us to shoot locally. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 401-555-4321 or send an e-mail to [emailaddress@tv.com](mailto:emailaddress@tv.com).

Thank you,

The Locations Department  
TeeVee Show Productions

**KILLEEN, TX — PROPOSED FILMING PERMIT  
NOTIFICATION AND SIGNOFF REQUEST**

Killeen, TX requires that all property owners / residents whose property is adjacent to the area sought to be closed must be notified and provided with a map of the area, which indicates all obstructions to be placed in the closure area. The notification must indicate by signature, whether the property owner / resident approves or disapproves of the proposed closure.

For additional information concerning the actual filming at this location, please contact:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Film Company's Contact Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Phone Number)

\_\_\_\_\_ is applying for a FILMING PERMIT for the following film:  
(Company Name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Film)

The filming is scheduled for the following dates and times: \_\_\_\_\_

The filming will close or partially close the following streets: \_\_\_\_\_

The filming will consist of the following: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PROPERTY OWNER / RESIDENT</b> Please fill out the this section completely as this information is used by Killeen, TX to determine whether or not the filming activities indicated above will be approved or denied.	
<input type="radio"/> APPROVE	<input type="radio"/> DISAPPROVE
RECEIVED MAP:	<input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
_____ (Print Name and Title)	_____ (Signature)
_____ (Print Address)	_____ (Phone Number)
<input type="radio"/> RESIDENCE <input type="radio"/> BUSINESS (Choose One)	
Comments: _____	
_____	
_____	

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Block Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by Killeen, TX Management Division on: \_\_\_\_\_



## FILM FRIENDLY TEXAS

Source: Texas Film Commission  
[www.texasfilmcommission.com](http://www.texasfilmcommission.com)

### OPENING THE DOOR TO ON-LOCATION FILMING

The purpose of the Texas Film Commission's new Film Friendly Texas program is to provide information to communities on how to effectively handle on-location filming, for film projects large or small. We want you to know what's involved, from the first phone call all the way through to the wrap. And whenever Hollywood comes calling, the Texas Film Commission wants to be your partner in the process, and your primary resource for support and information. We're always ready to help you through all the various stages of production request and the realities of filmmaking.

In this document, we'll use "film" or "production" to refer to any kind of motion picture production: feature films, television programs, television commercials, music videos...they're all production, and they're all good news. On-location filming is good business for your community, and for Texas overall. Locally, a film spends money on a wide range of things, from lumber to groceries to gas to hotel rooms to furniture rentals. While there's never any guarantee that tourism will increase as the result of a popular movie, it certainly has happened. Statewide, every film made in Texas makes it better for the ones to follow, by increasing our state's capacity for production, creating more jobs, and making it easier for companies to invest in the infrastructure keeps us competitive with other states.

Via the Film Friendly Texas program, we ask you, as a community representative, to participate with us in a process to raise the likelihood of filmmakers choosing your community, and to prepare you for how to best handle it when they do. For every community, there's value in having a realistic view of what's involved in working with filmmakers. And part of being ready is having film guidelines already in place, recognizing the needs of the production industry while protecting the interests of your hometown.

Your Film Friendly Texas certification helps the Texas Film Commission promote your community, by informing potential productions that you're ready to do business. From the Texas Film Commission's website, filmmakers will have immediate access to a list of communities that have already taken the time to learn about production, streamline the application process and welcome the industry in a meaningful way. In an industry that's always looking for ways to save time, that's saying a lot.

In attracting film business to Texas, the Texas Film Commission promotes statewide locations; trained technical crews; specialized film vendors and support services; the Texas Motion Picture Industry Incentive Program, offering cash-back incentives to filmmakers; and, certainly not least, Texas hospitality. It's all about bringing jobs and spending to Texas. That's the big picture; the actual experience happens in the neighborhoods and streets of Texas communities.

Texas' larger cities already have long-standing, full-time film commissions carrying the flag, and we want every community in Texas to also have immediate access to information and support. It's important to us to include you in sharing what we've learned in 36 years of location research and filming. Above all, we want every community to have a positive experience during filming, and to look forward to the next film.

Rather than trying to cover every possibility in an exhaustive film policy, it's better for a community to set up guidelines and then consider each request on a case-by-case basis. With your participation, we hope to create an environment in which the filmmakers and the municipality have a good experience. The mantra should be, Be Flexible. Every film has a different set of needs than every other film, and off-the-wall requests can be the norm, not the exception.

You might hear a filming request that seems unreasonable. It might indeed *be* unreasonable. The answer doesn't always have to be an unqualified yes; there's almost always room for negotiation. Liken this to dealing with a teenager: they want everything, but with a bit of structure already in place, they can see that they can make accommodations to let you feel comfortable about saying yes. And that's the answer we all want.

On the other hand, are they asking to shut down Main Street with 30 minutes' notice? Or to torch the courthouse? Sometimes the answer is just no.

The Film Friendly Texas program is designed to give every community the tools to work with on-location filming. With this training, you'll be ready for the easy requests, and ready to find solutions to the more complicated ones. All parties will know what they need from each other to get the work started. Meanwhile, on our part, we'll be working to make it easy for filmmakers to find you.

## **THE SCOUTING PROCESS: WHERE IT ALL STARTS**

Typically, a film project hires a freelance location scout to research locations in different communities. (The word "scout" can refer to the person doing the scouting, or to the location scouting trip itself, as in, "We saw that on last week's scout.") Usually, that scout comes into your community and takes photos of whatever spots are likely matches for what they need. It's not always the beauty spots, either; the job might call for high-end homes or it might call for shabby motels. Generally speaking, a scout doesn't contact City representatives; they look around, shoot a ton of photos, and move on.

To help explain why scouts act like stealth photographers, it helps to understand their process. They're hired on a day-to-day basis, always specific to a single production. They're given a long laundry list of things to find as quickly as possible, and the industry measure for a successful job is to provide the producer with plenty of choices. (Not two farmhouses; ten. Not one Main Street; seven.) So a scout has to move quickly, stay on course, and allow time to package the photos for presentation on a daily basis. Every phone call or meeting keeps them from providing more choices. If your community is chosen, you'll hear from them, but until it's chosen, stopping to visit isn't a good use of their time, or yours.

That scout may have contacted the Texas Film Commission for guidance on likely spots, and with proper credentials, we may provide them with an official letter of introduction to carry with them. But, especially if the scout is someone with a lot of local knowledge, they don't contact us – their priority is to photograph as many locations as they can, and to get a wide variety of choices into the hands of the producers. So don't take offense if you don't hear about the scout until after the fact. It's unrealistic to require – or even to expect – that location scouts make themselves known to city representatives. That would be time-consuming and impossible to enforce. Please don't take offense; just understand that that's how the business works, and hope they find something that will call for a closer look, with producers in tow.

A business or homeowner that has been contacted by a location scout might call you at the city to learn more about the project. If you don't know anything about it, there's a quick way to find out. You – or the

property owner – can give the Film Commission a call to check up on the project. On most legitimate projects, we'll have a quick answer.

## **HOW THE DECISION GETS MADE**

So, the producers review the scout's photos. Some communities won't make the first cut. For others, though, the producers will want to learn more, to see if that site will work for the film. Now they'll contact the city, perhaps asking for your help to access building interiors, recommend similar sites and so forth. But remember, at this point it's still research, and your town is not their only choice, so keep it quiet and low-key. There's nothing to be gained by stirring up local expectations at this point.

The next step is an in-person visit from the production company, usually by the production designer and/or art director (responsible for the overall visual look of the film; the location scout or location manager; the producer(s); and/or the director. At this point, they're considering the scene they need to shoot at that location, and what they're going to need to make it happen.

They'll research several locations, but please remember this: most locations that are scouted are not used. Even so, those that aren't used for this film may prove valuable to the next production, even years later. Scouting provides good information for filmmakers and for the Texas Film Commission. (And asking a scout to share the photos with you is reasonable, and a great way to enhance your own photo library for future use.)

If they like what they see, the next time you see them may be on the "tech scout." This is when some of the department heads (camera department, art department, location department) come for an in-person look at how the logistics will be handled at that location. Hosting a tech scout is great news, because that means they're very close to choosing your community.

Even a simple scene – a person raking leaves in a yard with a picket fence – can require swarms of crew members, lots of trucks, traffic control, huge lights, etc. And sometimes a scene is far from simple – stunts, explosions, crowds – so it's going to take considerably more time, planning and city involvement.

This is another of the circumstances in which having your Film Friendly Texas certification can help put your community out front. Producers can see that you're working with an understanding of their business, and that your town is offering a filming application process without surprises. They appreciate being able to quickly determine whether your town can effectively work with them to make the night shoots happen, or to close a road. Almost anything is possible, given a reasonable timeline and the right application process.

## **PREP**

They've chosen your town. Once that decision has been made, that's when plans are made, sets are built, and so begins the process of working out the details. You already know the benefits of working with film, but you need to also be ready for the many, many details that come with it. We hope our Film Friendly Texas partners will view all that activity as a good thing. Cooperation can't be legislated, but we hope to encourage you to look at film requests with a can-do, problem-solving attitude. On some very tricky production problems in the past, the solutions have come not from the filmmakers, but from local expertise. Next time, it might be you that saves the day.

Don't be afraid to ask obvious questions. If they're planning on 200 extras, it's okay to ask where those 200 people are eating and where they're going to the bathroom. And where's all that trash going?

Internal production demands such as budget and schedule force the production team to make constant revisions, so you'll see plans evolve, grow, shrink, or disappear completely. Though it may seem that these guys have no clue what they're doing or when they're doing it, that's not (usually!) the case. Every single day of filming involves 75 or a hundred variables, plus a Plan B. Is the permit in place? Can the filmmakers work around the hours of a busy restaurant? Did the Scottish actor's visa arrive in time? Is that a thunderstorm headed this way? These variables are a part of every working day, so it helps if the city representatives understand what the production company is up against.

## **DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRODUCTIONS**

To know what to expect from film requests, it helps to know a bit about the most common types of film and television projects, and the impacts of each. Depending on which type of production you're dealing with, you'll see some very different timelines and requirements. But here come those variables again! Any project, regardless of budget or schedule, could require extra care in dealing with stunts, special effects, aerial photography, crowd scenes or exotic animals. As you'll see in the section about writing film guidelines, we encourage you to consider setting your permit fees on a sliding scale based on impact.

### **Commercials and Music Videos**

Generally the lifespan of the production of a commercial or music video is two weeks. Within one week, they scout, choose locations and handle all the prep: location agreements, city permits and all the rest. The shoot and wrap take up the second week. Some have hefty budgets, even higher than that of a low-budget feature film. Low-budget commercials and music videos, even if they're filming entirely on private property, are still likely to have some impact on parking, streets and sidewalks.

Commercial production is by far the most active part of Texas' motion picture business. In fact, you're much more likely to get inquiries from commercials than from any other segment of the industry.

### **Episodic Television**

An episodic television series, such as FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS, operates under a very specialized schedule. Typically, they're producing 22 episodes (a full season) over about nine months. Each weekly episode requires two weeks of prep, followed by one week of shooting. So there's always one crew shooting the episode, while the other crew is prepping for the following episodes.

Episodic scripts are being written as the season progresses, so the production team often hasn't seen the script (and its list of locations) until very shortly before prep. There's very little time for location scouting; further, the script might call for them to go back to a location they've used before (a "recurring location").

Both of these short formats operate on very fast timelines. Though they can sometimes arrange for a bit more prep time for a complicated scene, their biggest hurdle is always lack of time. If you'd like to make your welcome clear, consider instituting a process to handle permit requests within a 48-hour turnaround. Every episodic producer will be awed by your foresight.

Episodic production can be well worth a community's efforts, especially with recurring locations bringing the production team to town again and again. However, recurring locations can present problems too, as the production team uses the same location intermittently, perhaps for months. The production-to-community dynamic changes after a production has been there repeatedly, bringing more work for the film liaison. Special efforts must be made to keep the neighborhood happy.

### **Feature Films**

A general rule for feature production is two weeks of prep for every week of production. So a six-week shoot should mean three months of prep, all to be completed before filming begins. All too often, though, the prep period gets condensed into a matter of a few days per week.

Features are generally more complicated than the other types of production, with higher impact on the community, both economic (lots of spending) and in terms of disruption (lots of activity). A feature brings more equipment and more people, works longer hours, needs more streets and parking, and overall has a bigger footprint than any other type of production. For community representatives, dealing with features simply takes more time than with smaller, faster projects. It's an intense but fascinating process, and the Texas Film Commission is always ready to help.

## **THE SHOOT**

Up until this point, it's all been "preproduction." Now it's "production," that is, cameras are rolling. With possibly hundreds of people on the payroll, this is the most intense period in filmmaking, when even one day's delay can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. There's always a Plan B, but even so, you're likely to be fielding more than a few last-minute requests as production continues. Some of those requests will be reasonable and easily handled; others, less so. All any filmmaker can expect is that you'll give it your best shot.

We're not trying to scare communities away from on-location filming, but we want you to have a clear-eyed view of what to expect. Especially on big-budget films, the company operates with an almost military precision. Even so, things do go wrong, and when there's a problem, you're the production company's first contact. Your skillfully crafted film guidelines and application form have helped lay everything out in advance, but let's face it: these folks can drive you crazy! Remind yourself that it's temporary, remember all those film dollars pouring into town, and keep your eyes on the prize: the wrap.

## **THE WRAP**

After filming is completed, big productions always keep people on payroll for a few weeks, to make sure that bills are paid, locations are restored, and rentals are returned. Their goal is to put everything back the way it was, or better still, better than it was. Here's a tremendously important role for any film liaison: before the production company wraps and leaves town, make sure you know how to reach them after their local office has closed.

An unpaid bill – which might have been simply overlooked – can be the last impression that a movie leaves with a community, and those unresolved issues can make it very hard for future productions to get an unreserved welcome. A local business might write off not getting compensated for loss of business or an unpaid bill, but they won't forget. Everything went great, but someone didn't get paid as promised... then when the next production comes into town, wham! They're paying for the sins of the last project.

Communication is your most important tool in solving problems that come up after the fact. Your community should know that you're the point person to contacts about any snags. Requests needs to come promptly; if you don't hear about a problem until months after the fact, it can take months more to find a person who can issue a check. Having one local go-to person on the case will go a long way in making sure that everything is left tidy.

## **FILM FRIENDLY TEXAS: WHERE TO START**

You're here at a training session, so the first step has already been taken towards your town's Film Friendly Texas certification. Should you still need to convince anyone back home of the benefits of this program, here's a list:

- guidance on establishing effective guidelines and application processes
- recognition of certified Film Friendly Texas communities on Texas Film Commission's website

- email alerts about specific location needs of films considering Texas
- the only charge is for the training session; Texas Film Commission support is always free.

Our long-term goal is for Texas to be known as the most proactive community network in the nation. We want to be known as the easiest place for filmmakers to do business, and as a place that requires filmmakers' respect of our people and communities; it's only fair. The attached Warner Bros. Code of Conduct shows how a reputable production group expects their own crews to behave when they come to town.

**First: Determine who will be the film liaison for a community.**

Every community should assess its own capacities to determine the most effective way to deal with filming requests. In some places, the best choice will be the Mayor or City Manager; in others, it could be your economic development liaison in the Chamber of Commerce or the Convention & Visitors Bureau. In every case, it should be a person that can act as a conduit to the rest of the community. That person doesn't have to be employed directly by the municipality, but they need to have a relationship with the entity within the municipality that can give approvals for the requests.

It's a great idea to get the following list ready for those making film inquiries, and keep it up-to-date:

- Local Film Liaison
- City Manager/Mayor
- Director of Parks/Recreation (arranging use of parks)
- Director of Public Works (arranging special use of street lights, water, etc.)
- Local/County Law Enforcement Contacts
- Local/County Highway Contacts
- Chamber of Commerce
- County Judge (for arranging permission to use County properties)
- Business, Historic and Neighborhood groups
- Theater groups (for arranging local talent and extras)
- Barricade companies (for traffic control)
- Rental companies (tents, chairs, tables, etc.)
- Hotels, Motels and Bed-and-Breakfasts

**Second, Do the Paperwork.**

Adopt written guidelines, which should include an application form.

Notice the word "guidelines," not "policy." That's an important distinction. "Policy" suggests an immovable object. Production needs are incredibly varied, and there's no way that a hard-and-fast film policy, even if it's 30 pages long, can predict every possibility. You want to keep the door open for requests of every kind, so you're better off with simple and flexible guidelines that allow you to respond to requests on a case-by-case basis. And be aware of the benefit of using the word "may" rather than "will." "The City *may* deny a request based on..." allows much more leeway than "The City *will* deny..."

In the application process, a production company's greatest fear is an overly long turnaround time for city approval. The one consistent characteristic for all types of production is that *time is always short*. Whether it's an eleventh-hour location change, or a commercial with only one day to choose a location, last-minute requests are going to come up. A good film guideline reflects the town's understanding of this reality.

Part of the certification process is the Texas Film Commission's approval of your film guidelines. Of course, we recognize and respect the right of every city to enact what works best for them. We'll review

your guidelines for pitfalls, and work with you to revise problematic clauses. When it comes to the final product, as long as you're not actively driving films away, you'll be on the fast track to approval.

## **THE APPLICATION FORM**

Your application form should be designed to gather all of the relevant information from the production company. Knowing the when, where, who and how of a proposed production can go a long way as to how your community embraces and supports the activity. The completed application form is of value to the producers too, spelling out exactly what your city needs. The attached filming guideline template has been used many times, with many different kinds of production. In just six pages, it includes all the guidelines you're likely to need, and a two-page application form. This document lets the production company know what standard restrictions apply, and addresses film-related topics including:

- insurance coverage
- approval processes and timelines
- street closures
- pyrotechnics, special effects, dangerous animals, stunts, aerial photography
- types of production for which permits are required [generally, permits are not required for news and sports programming]
- parking restrictions
- required notifications of neighbors and businesses
- curfews
- noise restrictions
- security/damage deposits for use of city-owned property and equipment
- use of police, fire department, and city employees
- use of city trademarks or logo

# *PRODUCTION COMPANY LETTERHEAD*

## *SAMPLE #1: MERCHANTS AND BUSINESS DISTRICT*

June 14, 2006

Dear Neighbor:

My name is Joe Smith and I am a Location Scout for the upcoming movie, "THE MOVIE". Shooting will be taking place in Providence beginning in August 2006 and continuing through November 2006.

Some of our locations are in your building's area, and we wanted to inform you of our upcoming presence beginning Friday, August 11<sup>th</sup>. On this day as well as Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> we will be filming outside the Turks Head Building. Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, August 17<sup>th</sup> we will be filming on Washington Street between. We are going to need to down many of the surrounding streets, as well as posting "No Parking" signs with the help of the City of Providence. We are going to have multiple Providence Police Detail Officers on hand to help direct traffic and ensure public safety.

We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause, but thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me on my cell phone at 401-555-1234, or my colleague Emily Jones at 401-555-6789.

Thank you,

Joe Smith  
Location Scout

# *PRODUCTION COMPANY LETTERHEAD*

## *SAMPLE #2: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD*

September 1, 2006

Dear Waterman Street Neighbor:

We are presently filming the television show "TeeVee Show" in Providence. One of our recurring locations is in your neighborhood and we wanted to inform you of our upcoming presence.

On Thursday, October 19, 2006 we will be filming a few scenes on Waterman Street that will require us to clear the street, as well as intermittently close the street down throughout the day. We are currently working on alternative parking nearby for those we will be affecting the most and thank you in advance for your patience with that.

We understand that this may be an inconvenience to your everyday activities, but ask for your cooperation during filming. Without the support of the residents of Providence, it would not be possible for us to shoot locally. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 401-555-4321 or send an e-mail to [emailaddress@tv.com](mailto:emailaddress@tv.com).

Thank you,

The Locations Department  
TeeVee Show Productions

# *PRODUCTION COMPANY LETTERHEAD*

*SAMPLE #3: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD, PRODUCTION TRUCK PARKING*

September 1, 2006

Dear Hope Street Neighbor:

We are presently filming the television show "TeeVee Show" in Providence. One of our recurring locations is in your neighborhood and we wanted to inform you of our upcoming presence.

On Tuesday, November 13, 2006 we will be filming a few scenes on nearby Governor Street that will require us to clear that street, as well as intermittently close it down throughout the day. We will also need to park some of our production trucks and vehicles on Hope Street. We are currently working on alternative parking nearby for those we will be affecting the most and thank you in advance for your patience with that.

We understand that this may be an inconvenience to your everyday activities, but ask for your cooperation during filming. Without the support of the residents of Providence, it would not be possible for us to shoot locally. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 401-555-4321 or send an e-mail to [emailaddress@tv.com](mailto:emailaddress@tv.com).

Thank you,

The Locations Department  
TeeVee Show Productions

## Glossary of Terms

There are many job descriptions on any film project. As a community representative, you're most likely to come into contact with the ones listed below. For a comprehensive list, see the [Internet Movie Database Glossary](#)

**Buyer** - Works for the Art Department; responsible for buying/renting props, costumes, furniture and other items that appear on camera.

**Casting Director** - Responsible for hiring the actors and extras for the film.

**Craft Services** - On-set snacks and beverages for the cast and crew. Separate from catering, which provides full meals.

**Construction Coordinator** - Responsible for coordinating construction and details of the set, including furniture, working props, models and miniatures.

**Director** - Responsible for the overall cinematic vision of the film; orchestrating the performance by the actors; and managing all creative elements of the production.

**Director of Photography / Cinematographer (D.P.)** - Head of the Camera Department. Responsible for the look of the film; working with Director, Producer, Production Designer, and Visual Effects Supervisor to create visual representation of script; selecting camera, film stock, lenses, lighting style and color scheme; and setting composition of each shot.

**Line Producer** - See Production Manager for a very similar job description.

**Location Manager** - Responsible for managing the filming locations; acting as the representative of the Production Company for the filming locations; negotiating with property owners on price and type of activity; and securing necessary permits.

**Location Scout** - Responsible for finding locations for the film during pre-production; and prepares photographs of possible locations for review by the Director and Production Designer

**Producer** - Responsible for overseeing all phases of production for financial and managerial control; working with the Production Company throughout the filmmaking process to ensure that production is completed on time and on budget; and providing the Director with the needed production personnel.

**Production Assistant (P.A.)** - The entry-level position on the crew. PAs handle an assortment of odd jobs and errands in the office and on the set.

**Production Designer** - The "architect" of the physical appearance of the set. Responsible for planning and overseeing the creation of the sets, scenery, costumes, and other items that appear in front of the camera. The Art Director reports to the Production Designer.

**Production Manager / Unit Production Manager (U.P.M)** - Head of the Production Office. Responsible for keeping track of the budget; approving schedules and call sheets; and hiring and firing crew.

**Property Master** - Responsible for the procurement, placement and maintenance of set props, hand props and action props. Props are items that are used by an actor; set dressing are items that appear on camera but are not used by an actor.

**Set Decorator** - Head of the Set Dressing Department. Responsible for working with the Production Designer on set design and decoration; overseeing the dressing of the set with appropriate items; and managing the acquisition of set items.

**Transportation Coordinator** - Head of the Transportation Department. Responsible for being liaison between other departments and the Transportation Department; and scheduling and coordinating drivers for actors and crew, to and from set.

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Texas Film Commission•Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism

P.O. Box 12428•Austin, Texas 78711•(512) 463-9200•(512) 463-4114 fax

