

# THE WOODLANDS AREA FILM COMMISSION

c/o Visit The Woodlands  
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## COMMERCIAL FILMING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Where is The Woodlands Area Film Commission Office?**

2801 Technology Forest Blvd., The Woodlands, TX 77381

### **What are the office hours?**

Office hours are 8:00 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday, except Visit The Woodlands holidays.

### **When do I need a Film Permit?**

A Film Permit is required when:

- Filming is to be used for a commercial purpose
- Recordings will be viewed by the public
- Filming takes place on real property including public spaces
- Filming The Woodlands Fire Department facilities, equipment or personnel
- Filming the official flag, service mark, badge or other insignia of Visit The Woodlands, The Woodlands Township and/or any of their related marks, including The Woodlands Fire Department and logo/mark of The Woodlands
- Filming is determined to be needed in other filming situations, including B-Roll and student films

### **How do I apply for a Film Permit in The Woodlands Township?**

Filming Applications must be submitted on-line a minimum of 10 business days prior to filming. Filming projects requiring extensive planning or multiple locations must be submitted 30 business days in advance. Filming involving traffic interruption needs approval by Harris County or Montgomery County, based on filming location. Filming involving fireworks or pyrotechnics must be submitted 180 days in advance.

Complete all sections of the application, including submission of the Certificate of Insurance.

### **What information should I include on the application?**

The applicant must provide full disclosure of the film activity within the application and during the review process. Failure to disclose information may result in the immediate denial or subsequent revocation of the Film Permit. Applications submitted without the required information will be considered 'incomplete' and denied for processing.

### **How long will it take to get my Film Permit?**

In most cases, applications are reviewed the same day they are received. Various governmental departments and partner agencies may be required to review the application. The time needed for issuance of a Film Permit depends on the complexity of the request. The Film Commission makes every effort to process permits as quickly as possible.

### **Does The Woodlands Film Commission issue 'blanket' permits?**

No, the Film Commission reviews applications on a case-by-case, location-by-location basis. Each location must be listed on the application to include the exact time and date of filming.

### **Does filming on a sidewalk require a Film Permit?**

Filming on a sidewalk may require a permit, depending upon the location. Filming on a sidewalk does require a permit if the filming requires the sidewalk to be closed or makes the sidewalk inaccessible to the public.

### **How do I update a permit I already have or make changes to my original request?**

Currently, one application allows entries for multiple locations. If you are requesting additional locations and/or extending the date or time frame after the submission of the application, written communication via email is required to the Film Commission and an explanation of the change.

Changes to information on the Film Application must be submitted in writing and will ONLY be accepted if provided by either the applicant or the emergency contact listed on the application. No changes can be made to the application the day of the scheduled film date.

**What kind of insurance is required in order to get a permit?**

Please see the instructions on the application.

**When do I need law enforcement assistance on a set?**

You will need to hire off-duty commissioned law enforcement officers for assistance if your film shoot involves any interruption of traffic, lane or street closure, intermittent traffic control, stunts, weapons, or if your actors are wearing a uniform or other costume resembling uniformed law enforcement, fire department, or emergency medical personnel.

**How do I get law enforcement assistance?**

Contact the Film Commission and we will direct you to the appropriate law enforcement agency who can further assist you with your shoot. The applicant is responsible for direct payment to any officers at the time of filming.

**What guidelines are required when closing a city lane(s) and/or street(s)?**

Montgomery County and Harris County provide the guidelines, regulations and permits for road closures and traffic control plans. The Film Commission will provide you with the relative contact information.

**What are the guidelines for the use of Special Effects (pyrotechnics and/or explosions) or 'blank' gunfire?**

All special effects must be indicated on the film application. Any filming activity that requires the use of flammable materials, explosive devices or open flames is considered a special effect. The Film Commission will coordinate with The Woodlands Fire Department to review the types of special effects being requested before a Film Permit is issued. The Fire Marshal may assign fire department staff to be on location to monitor pyrotechnic activity. All special effects permits require a licensed special effects pyrotechnics operator. Applications must be received 180 days in advance of the filming.

**Do I need a Film Permit to film law enforcement or Fire Department personnel and/or property?**

Yes.

**Do I need a Film Permit to shoot a student film?**

Yes, if your film shoot is on public property. The student (applicant) is to submit the following:

- Filming Application – 10 business days prior to the film shoot, 30 business days if the project requires extensive planning, or multiple locations.
- Waiver Release Form – Each student (including talent) is to complete a waiver form. The applicant is then to submit the signed waiver forms to the Film Commission prior to filming.
- Letter from the school/university – Obtain and submit a letter from the teacher on school letterhead outlining the following:
  - Name of the student
  - Name of the class
  - Confirmation that the student is currently enrolled at the school/university and is in good standing
  - Confirmation that the film project is for school credit

Certificate of Insurance is not required, however the student(s) are required to sign a Waiver Release Form.

**I am interested in doing a photo shoot / filming at a few locations, how would I know if these locations require a Film Permit?**

Complete an application and the review process will determine if a permit is required for any of the locations.

**What is required if my film project involves animals?**

Township Order 019-09 provides rules governing animals. All filming events must abide by the park rules established for the location.