

**Lights, Camera, Action:  
Filming FAQ's to Support New Westminster Merchants**

**Why is New Westminster Popular with Filming?**

Location filming creates the realism of film storytelling and New Westminster provides great options for filming 'anyplace' with a special focus on its heritage, urbanization, hills, waterfront location and charming character. New Westminster is also desired for its proximity to film studios in Burnaby, Richmond and Surrey making location filming more efficient.

By far, the most important reason film companies keep coming back is you! Film friendliness and accommodation has given New Westminster a great reputation in the film industry. In fact, New Westminster is so popular, the Film Office turns down filming requests almost as often as it says YES in order to ensure filming is sustainable and to not overburden any neighbour.

**Filming Benefits to You and New Westminster!**

Bottom line, filming brings millions of dollars to New Westminster! Filming supports our local economy. In BC, filming spends \$3B annually. In 2017, the New Westminster Film Office generated over \$1M in film permit revenues that support the delivery of City services.

For New Westminster merchants and/or residents, one day of filming equals \$10,000 - \$20,000 of spending in our community for locations, goods or services. Based on 135 film permits issued in 2017, the economic spin off of filming in New Westminster was between \$1.3 – \$2.6M. Finally, New Westminster residents, who work in the filming industry, were paid over \$47M in 2017. In turn, these residents (filming employees) buy goods and services in New Westminster and contribute to the wellbeing of our City.

Finally, filming is known to create 'film tourism' where fans come out to see where their favourite shows and movies are filmed. Popular productions such as Once Upon A Time, Supergirl, Riverdale and Supernatural see fans visiting our City to watch filming or find locations seen in past episodes.

In summary, filming is a powerful economic generator for New Westminster. The compilation of film permit revenue, economic spin-off and filming employment is estimated at \$50M annually.

**How Can I Get My Business to be Used as a Filming Location?**

The script drives the 'look' for the desired location and all properties have potential. To become a filming location, there are generally two ways. The first is if a Location Scout approaches you and the second is by registering your property on the Creative BC website: <https://www.creativebc.com/community/register-your-property>. The City does not get involved in listing or promoting merchant properties.

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If you are approached to use your business as a filming location, please ensure the owner and renter (as applicable) are involved in creating a written agreement with the production company that outlines privileges, expectations, compensation and responsibilities.

If you are uncertain if a Location Scout is bonafide you can check with the City Filming Coordinator, 604-527-4613, or confirm the production is real and active through the Create BC website, and in turn, call the production to validate the Location Scout and interest: <https://www.creativebc.com/crbc-services/motion-picture-services/in-production>.

**If My Business Is Used as a Filming Location...What Should I Get Paid?**

The City does not get involved in location compensation. However, compensation is often scaled to the scope and duration of filming use. Is it an actor just walking into your business (establishing shot) or is it multiple days of interior filming with a “re-dressing” of the inside of your business? It is important that a written location agreement is completed based on candid questions and negotiations to determine compensation.

As a merchant, you should ensure that you're filming agreement outlines any terms and conditions related to filming. Creative BC has some helpful tips [here](#).

**What is the Film Application Process?**

In order to get filming approval, production companies have meet City filming bylaws, policies and procedures, which in turn, involves the successful completion of a series of steps and forms.

From your perspective, production companies need to provide you with a Filming Application letter that outlines date(s) and time(s) and location(s) of filming; film parking requests; special effects and extraordinary impacts such as traffic control or lighting; and provide filming and City staff contact information so you can follow up. You should receive this letter at least three business days prior to the proposed filming date.

In addition, depending on the scope of filming, a poll is required to ensure that you can indicate your support or lack of support for the filming application. Polling is required when there are multiple days of filming, special effects, extensions to the noise bylaw or road closures.

To help you understand the scope of filming, here are a few questions you should ask the production company (if not already indicated on the Filming Application letter you received):

1. Where are you planning to park generators, washroom trucks and lighting lifts?
2. Is there Intermittent Pedestrian Control on the sidewalk?
3. Is there any Intermittent Traffic Control on any nearby roads?
4. Are there any road or lane closures or partial closures nearby?
5. How will you ensure that filming crew, equipment or cables will not interfere with customers coming to store?

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6. How many cast, crew and extras will be on-set? (Helps you understand the size of filming)
7. Will you film in any weather or will your filming date change if weather is bad?
8. Is filming mostly indoors or outdoors or both?
9. Is there a dedicated spot for shuttle vans?

Note: the City asks all these questions and more through the application process. The above questions are just to help you understanding the proposed filming activity.

It is also understood and expected that production companies comply with Creative BC Filming Code of Conduct as well as all laws and rules that govern their work (i.e. WorkSafe, etc.).

**I am Not Happy with a Filming Application or Active Filming...What Can I Do?**

There are several opportunities for you to clarify your questions or express your concerns. The first opportunity is when you receive the Filming Application Letter and/or polling visit. The most effective communication is with the **Location Manager** and their contact information will be on the letter. The Production Assistant delivering the letter or doing the polling is helpful with your questions or comments but they do not have all the answers nor the authority to make changes.

Once the production company is filming on location, and you have questions, the best person to talk with is the **on-set contact** (usually the Assistant Location Manager). They are responsible for the on-location filming and their phone number is on the Filming Application Letter. Alternatively you can ask any filming staff member (visibility vests) to radio the on-set contact so you can meet and talk with them.

The Filming Office phone number is also on the Filming Application to assist your filming inquiries.

**Why are all those Film Trucks Needed?**

It is true, filming does not travel light! To create the onscreen magic, production companies need a large variety of cameras, lights, cables, props and equipment. Then they need all the staff to move set up and operate the equipment in the shortest amount of time possible. In turn, more vehicles are needed to host actors, feed the crew and provide basic amenities.

Well before the Filming Application Letter is distributed, the Filming Coordinator has worked with the Location Manager to reduce their parking request, and distribute it to several areas, to minimize the on-set parking needs. For example, staff vehicles and the bulk of equipment trucks are parked outside the filming neighbourhood and people and equipment are shuttled in.

The Filming Application Letter will include the parking details for essential on-set filming vehicles and equipment. As some filming equipment is heavy and awkward some essential on-

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set parking is needed. If you have concerns about parking, please discuss them with the Location Manager who will try to find a solution.

**What should I do if I think filming will affect my business?**

The Filming Application Letter will include the Location Manager's phone number and all financial questions or concerns should be discussed with the Location Manager prior to filming. The City does not advocate or negotiate any financial terms between production companies or merchants but the City does expect production companies to work with merchants fairly as outlined in Section 4.9 of the City Filming Policy. Generally there are two options a) a proactive compensation agreement, or b) reactive compensation (if applicable) using the industry standard Compensation for Loss of Business Form found at [www.creativebc.com](http://www.creativebc.com).

**Sometimes one production will pay more than another – why?**

No two filming productions are the same. Filming size, scale, duration, location and impacts are different with each permit. Filming compensation is based on a) the magnitude of impacts directly affecting your business or b) the purchase of goods, services or locations by production companies. Since each filming permit has a different mix and level of impact, compensation will naturally be different between permits.

**What are the Filming Policies?**

The City Filming Policies and Bylaw, along with related Bylaws and Creative BC Code of Conduct are all on the City website at <https://www.newwestcity.ca/business-and-economy/filming-in-new-westminster/filming-policies#policies-and-bylaws>.

These policies and Bylaws guide the Filming Coordinator through the film application and film permit process. The film policies have been developed and refined based on 25 years of filming experience in New Westminister with the goal to create sustainable filming. The Film Coordinator regularly meets with key residents associations, The Chamber of Commerce and the local BIAs to promote communication and understanding.

**What happens if Production Companies Break the Rules?**

There have been instances where production companies go beyond the commitment in the Filming Application Letter or break filming policies or other rules. In these instances, the Filming Office should be notified, 604-527-4613. The Filming Coordinator will address the situation with the production company, and if possible, resolve the issue quickly. The Filming Office can also levy fines to the production company if they broke the neighbourhood filming agreement or policies.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.newwestcity.ca/business-and-economy/filming-in-new-westminster>.