

CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA

“YOUR PROPERTY IN A STARRING ROLE”

**SOUTH PASADENA FILM OFFICE
Finance Department
1414 Mission Street
South Pasadena, California 91030**

Introduction

Film Production is a major engine fueling California's growing economy. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) reported the industry spent 27.5 billion in payroll and vendor dollars statewide during 1996. Production dollars spent in California contribute significantly to our local and state economy. There are more than 230,000 Californians employed by the industry. The average feature film contributes approximately \$100,000 in state sales tax. An average production spends \$32,000 in Los Angeles County every day.

The California Film Commission (CFC) was established within the Department of Commerce to attract and promote film production in California. The CFC acts as a “red-tape cutter” for production problems on the local level and as an intermediary for businesses and communities in their dealings with film companies.

This brochure is designed to give you an overview of the film industry. If you need further information or have questions, please contact the CFC to order the complete location manual, “Your Property in a Starring Role.”

Why should you rent your property to the film industry?

Revenue

The film industry will compensate you for the use of your property.

It's Fun

Film production can be a unique and fun experience for all who are involved. It provides a break from the routine and can promote a sense of pride in your property.

It Provides Promotional Opportunities

Filming can attract media of all kinds and can be used to promote a business property. If your location is an established set, then that can be used to promote business. You can use that information to attract the public to you.

It's Good for the Regional Economy

Production dollars spent in California contribute significantly to our local and state economy. There are 479,000 employed directly or indirectly by the industry. The average feature film contributes \$450,000 in state sales tax. An average production spends \$40,000 in Los Angeles County each day.

The Necessity of Location Filming

Companies film more on location than on the studio lot because it provides a more realistic look, it's less expensive, and it's faster. If they intend to film on location, we want them spending production dollars and hiring our people here in South Pasadena.

Who is the film industry and why are they in such a hurry?

Types of Production, Schedules, Budgets

There are three primary forms of production: feature films, television and commercials. “Pre-production” is the period of time a company has to prepare to film, and it can vary dramatically from show to show. Feature films have the luxury of longer lead times, but television and commercials suffer from severe time crunches. This requires companies to find and secure locations in just a few days.

The average filming day is 15 hours long, and can cost a company up to \$125,000. For features, television or commercials, the scheduling of each production day is very important to keep the show on time and on budget. Scheduling a shooting day means allowing time and money for:

- The cast and crew to drive from the studio to the location;
- Parking trucks, vans and trailers;
- Unloading equipment;
- Setting up lights, sets, props;
- Location “moves” (moving the whole operation to a second or third location.)

Scouting

The First Call

In most cases, a location manager will call you to request the use of your property for filming. After you have determined your property is available, the first questions to ask the location representative are:

- Type of production (commercial, TV, feature);
- Name of company and title of production;
- Shooting days (how many? Nights or days?);

Hours;

- Any set dressing, prep days?;
- Description of activity;
- Number of people and vehicles;
- Pyrotechnics or stunts?

If you do not recognize the company’s name, there are several ways to determine credibility:

- Ask for references from the company’s last several locations;
- Ask for the “list of credits”;
- Ask for a contact with a parent company (sometimes independents work out of studios);
- Ask for proof of insurance;
- Call and ask the California Film Commission which is based in Hollywood.

When considering a location request, take into account:

- How do your tenants (if any) feel about filming?
- Can a camera, lights and 30 people fit in the area?
- Is it safe to film there? Any problems with fire regulations or building in safety? Are you the sole authority to grant them the right to film on the property?

Determining Fees

How much are you going to charge to rent your location? If you are a small business (shop or service), you should be compensated for all lost business while your premises are closed for filming in addition to a location fee. If you are a larger business and not necessarily put out of business for the film day, but

inconvenienced, base your price on the going rate other businesses are charging. Leave negotiating room for differing types of activity and impact.

We recommend that property owners develop a sliding scale that takes into consideration various production budgets, crew size and overall impact. In addition, it is important to charge a fee based upon the length of the company's stay. Many times they will ask to film for half a day or less.

Decide whether you will have an all-inclusive rate (that includes an on-site monitor, electrician, or any other required personnel) or use a fee plus reimbursements. If the latter, provide estimates to the production company of the approximate cost of these services and personnel.

The Initial Scout and Selection Process

A location scout who has driven by your property may call to take photographs. They will show these photos to their director along with properties of similar style. A selection process will occur and viewing of your property will take place before a final commitment is made to film at your property.

The Survey

If the location works artistically and logistically for both the production and for you, the location manager will return with the director, assistant director, unit production manager and the art director to conduct "the survey."

The director or art director may ask if things can be added, moved or removed for the shot. Be as flexible as you can—the director is trying to match the location to the script.

Final Approval

Who gives the final approval? Who signs the location contract? If the person responsible for giving approval is unavailable, who may act in their place? Time is of the essence when a production company is making final arrangements for a location. Many locations have been lost because approval for use could not be given in time.

The Contract

This is the most important part of hosting film production. It is vital to include as much information in the location agreement/contract as possible.

You need to determine whether you have the sole authority to sign for your property or if a landlord or building owner is required to sign the contract as well.

It is wise to require payment or partial payment up front—before the shoot is scheduled to begin. You may also request a damage deposit at this time. Conduct a walk through of the filming area with the location manager prior to the company's arrival. A post-filming inspection should also be conducted to identify any damage. At this time, the damage deposit can be returned. Take documenting photos before and after the filming to ensure this is handled properly.

Insurance

Most insurance policies for filming on location cover liability up to \$1 million. Make sure that your name (if it's a private residence) or the name of your company is included as an "additional insured" on an insurance certificate.

Regulations

The City of South Pasadena has its own local regulations for filming, which are approved by the City Council. We recommend that you request a copy by calling (626) 403-7263.

**This document contains excerpts from
the California Film Commission Manual
(323) 860-2960 and the Pasadena Film Office's Brochure**

