

FILM FRIENDLY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

screenwest

WHAT TO
EXPECT



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WHAT TO EXPECT

Film and television production takes many forms. If you have been contacted by a filmmaker who wishes to film at your property it is important you understand what this involves. Understanding what is involved before filming starts makes it a more productive and enjoyable experience.

HOW MANY PEOPLE?

Find out what type of film or series is being made and how many people will be on location. This will give you an idea of the potential impact the production will have.

“Film crew” could mean three people, or three hundred, it depends on the size production.

Every job is different but as a rule documentaries tend to have the least amount of people involved, and feature films the most.

In Western Australia, a feature film will usually have between 30 to 100 people on location. A television commercial production usually has between 10 to 40 people.

WHAT DOES EVERYONE DO?

People have different roles on a film set.

Small film shoots tend to have multiskilled cast and crew. For example, a short film can have a single actor who does their own hair and makeup. As the size of a production grows, jobs become more specialised and the volume of work increases. Reading the end-credits of a film is a reminder of how many people it can take to make a screen production.

The number of cast and crew on location varies throughout a working day. For example: cast may only act in certain scenes and some specialised technical crew are only needed for specific tasks. An efficient screen production will manage the workflow and minimise the number of people.

For more information on what each role does read **‘Who’s Who on a Film Crew’**.

THE MOBILE WORKPLACE

Cast and crew on location are at work. Like everyone else they need access to water, toilets, shelter, power, an area for meals, first aid supplies and enough space to perform their work. The production company must provide these facilities and ensure the workplace is safe.

Small productions usually find the basic facilities in the filming location or immediate surrounds. Whereas larger productions often separate their workplace into two areas:

1. **Location:** where the filming takes place; and
2. **Unit base:** for meals, costume and makeup. Facilities are usually set up in purpose built trucks and marquees. Unit base is ideally walking distance from the filming area.

Trucks with equipment integral to the filming process i.e. camera, lighting, generator, sound and props are known as essential vehicles. Essential vehicles need to be parked as close to the filming location as possible. Larger productions usually have several trucks parked near the filming location and several more at the unit base.

Car parking is also required as the long hours associated with film work make it hard to use public transport. Ideally car parking is close to the unit base. A film crew's size is often represented in car numbers. The ratio is usually one-to-one: one car for each person.

A standard workday is usually 10 hours of filming plus a 45-minute lunch break and whatever time is needed for makeup, hair and costume at both ends of the day.

Film crews often arrive at a location very early to set up so filming can start as soon as there is enough natural light.

The first to arrive and the last to leave the unit base or set are usually the caterers, unit, hair, makeup and costume crew as well as associated trucks, marquees and portable toilets. Much of the early activity requires the use of generators for power.

When filming is over for the day, all equipment from the filming location is returned to the essential vehicles. All signs of activity are removed from the location unless the crew returns the following day, in which case trucks and equipment often remain on site with security personnel in place.



FILMING ON YOUR PROPERTY

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK IF APPROACHED BY A PRODUCTION THAT WANTS TO USE MY PROPERTY?

- ☐ What type of production is it? e.g. short film, advert, feature film
- ☐ What is the name of the Production Company and title of production?
- ☐ Who is the contact person at the production company?
- ☐ What are the dates? How many shoot days, how many prep days?
- ☐ What are the shoot hours?
- ☐ Are the dates likely to change and are there alternative dates that should be held?
- ☐ What kinds of activity will be happening in the scene(s)?
- ☐ How many crew and cast?
- ☐ How many vehicles?
- ☐ Does the production have all appropriate insurances in place?

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PROPERTY IS CHOSEN?

1. The first call will be from the Location Manager or Location Assistant to see if your property is available on a particular date or set of dates and whether you are interested in it being used as a location.
2. If interested it is common for a Location Manager to come and take their own photos of your property to show to the Director, Producer and Production Designer.

The Location Manager will arrange a “recce” for the Director, Producer/s and Production Designer. They will all come to your property to do a walk through.

To note: your property is likely to be on the shortlist. So, there may be several recces to your property before a final decision is made.

3. If your property is chosen and a fee is agreed upon, the Location Manager will draw up a Location Agreement between you and the production company.

Before you sign the agreement, you are responsible for checking you have the authority to allow access to your property for commercial purposes. If a production is jeopardised because you are not legally authorised to grant them access you may be personally liable for any damages.

Get to know the Location Manager as they are the person that will sort out any issues that arise. A large shoot will likely have further “technical recces” where the production crew will visit the property to plan the shoot day in more detail.

4. On the shoot day, the production company expects to find your property neat and tidy and the same way it looked when they did their recce. They would be annoyed to arrive and find that, for example, if you have painted the walls a different colour or builders are working on the roof.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PROPERTY IS CHOSEN?

The Location Manager will put rules in place to manage cast and crew on set including where they can go to eat, smoke etc.

Occasionally accidents do happen. Your Locations Agreement should ensure that you don't end up being out of pocket.

Production companies must carry full public liability insurance to hire out locations.

FILMING IN COMMERCIAL AREAS

Business owners who are considering letting their premises be used as a filming location should check the following:

- ☐ Does the production have all the necessary insurances in place and a Safety Plan?
- ☐ Will the production send a written notice to other businesses and interested parties well in advance of proposed filming activities? And address all concerns adequately?
The production should seek community feedback if filming is for an extended period or undertaking activities with a high impact on community amenity.
- ☐ Does the production have permission to use utilities or facilities at the location e.g. drawing of power or water, use of telephones or toilets? Permissions must always be obtained in advance.
- ☐ How will the production minimize on-street parking and maintain access for other businesses?
- ☐ Will the production make sure loading zones access is maintained for local businesses, so their deliveries are not disrupted. If an alternative arrangement needs to be put in place it should be discussed in advance.
The production can use loading zones to deliver or collect goods in accordance with the times on signage - unless special permission has been granted in advance.

The production must also abide by the below:

- Access to fire exits or utilities (electricity, water, telephone lines) and emergency vehicle access must not be impeded at any time.
- Essential vehicles must be parked legally and with the relevant permits.
- Crew, cast and non-essential vehicles must not park in spaces required for retail customers or use parking at other neighboring facilities e.g. library, school etc. without a permit in place. Crew and cast vehicles are to be parked legally.
- The production must not block buildings or keep equipment in front of buildings that are not working directly with the shoot.
- The cast and crew should not loiter in front of shops and block pedestrian access.
- When cables are on a footpath they must be covered and held by a rubber mat or cable ramp that is visible to pedestrians.
- Lighting stands placed on footpaths must allow for safe pedestrian access.
- Pedestrian traffic cannot be obstructed at any time unless stipulated in the permit. On occasion, a production can ask pedestrians to refrain from walking through a shot for a maximum of five minutes, depending on the location and accessibility to alternate routes.
- The filming activity must allow wheelchair and mobility aid users to move through the public space and/or safely access an appropriate detour.
- All litter is to be removed before the end of each day's filming.
- The location is left clean and tidy and in its pre-filming condition.
- The production will only leave fixtures and fittings at the location if the business owner has requested this.
- Where a film production has caused a loss of trade to a business and where that loss can be clearly demonstrated and verified through an independent audit, the Producer to may compensate that business and to make good that loss within a reasonable timeframe.



THE LOCATION AGREEMENT

A Location Agreement is a contract between the production company and the “Location Provider”. The Location Provider can be an individual, business, company or other entity that owns the property or has authority to grant access to the production company for the purpose of recording images or sound.

A location agreement will typically contain the following information:

- ☐ The name and address of the production company.

- ☐ The title of the production

- ☐ The name and address of the location provider.

- ☐ The address of the property and information specifying the areas within the property that are to be used.

- ☐ The dates and times property access is required. It should include set-up / wrap-up time required by the art department or technical crew. There may also be provision regarding additional days or varied times due to weather delays.

- ☐ A statement of indemnity provided by the Production Company to the Location Provider to protect the Location Provider against all claims that may arise from the Production Company’s use of the property.

- ☐ A statement by the Production Company to repair or remedy any damage caused to the property by the Production Company’s use of the property during the access period (ordinary wear and tear excepted).

- ☐ A statement by the Location Provider to grant release over all copyright of images or sounds recorded at the Location.

- ☐ A statement by the Production Company confirming it holds a current public liability insurance policy and the value of the cover (usually a minimum of \$20 million).

- ☐ Details of an agreed fee to be paid to the Location Provider in consideration of the rights granted to the Production Company.
