

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About Filming in Altadena

This FAQ was prepared by the Altadena Filming Committee. The information that appears in this FAQ is based on correspondence and interviews with Los Angeles County officials and FilmL.A., as well as County ordinances, Board of Supervisor Policies and contractual obligations that accompany every film permit.

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Los Angeles County Filming Permits

Q: Who issues filming permits for Altadena?

Filming permits are prepared and approved in a process that involves several County Departments.

The permit applications are initially prepared by a filming company representative with guidance from FilmL.A. FilmL.A. confirms the applicant has the required insurance and then distributes the permit application to several County Departments for preliminary permit approval. Approval is required from the following Los Angeles County Departments: The Sheriff's Department, the Fire Department and the Department of Public Works (DPW). When appropriate, preliminary approval is also required from the Department of Parks and Recreation and/or the Department of Beaches and Harbors. DPW is responsible for granting the "final approval" of every Altadena filming permit. Once a filming permit application has final DPW approval, FilmL.A. issues the permit to the film production company.

This process is unique to the unincorporated areas of LA County. The neighboring communities of Arcadia, Pasadena, South Pasadena, Glendale and La Canada/Flintridge all have filming offices that manage their permitting process and do not use the services of FilmL.A.

Q: Who is FilmL.A.?

FilmL.A. is a non-profit, 501(c)4 organization located on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. It is funded entirely by filming fees. FilmL.A. was founded in 1995 following a joint initiative by LA County and the City of LA to streamline the permit approval of filming permits and to promote film production in the region.

Los Angeles County has contracted FilmL.A. to coordinate its filming permit approval process. FilmL.A. also coordinates filming permit approval for 15 other municipalities in the region including the City of LA.

[Contact information](#) for FilmL.A. is provided at the end of this document.

Q: What are FilmL.A.'s responsibilities?

Here's how FilmL.A. describes its purpose:

"Providing streamlined permit processing and production planning services to filmmakers and comprehensive community relations, marketing services, film policy analysis and more to local governments, FilmL.A. works to attract and retain film production in Greater Los Angeles...FilmLA streamlines and enhances the on-location filmmaking process for communities and content creators, to ensure the Greater Los Angeles economy continues to thrive"

FilmL.A.'s duties are described in the County Contract. In brief their duties entail:

- Coordinate and process film/still photography permits and fees for on-location motion picture, television, and commercial production events

Note: FilmL.A. provides a Filmmakers FAQ helpful answers for film companies wanting to film in the area. [Here's a link to the Filmmakers FAQ.](#)

- Coordinate the issuance of film/still photography permits in a manner that balances the needs of, and attempts to mitigate the impact of productions on area neighborhoods and merchant districts
- Provide reports to the County on a quarterly basis
- Market and promote the County to the entertainment industry

FilmL.A.'s role as filming permit coordinator does not include the authority to grant final approval of a filming permit.

Note: The FilmL.A. Contract is managed by the County's Film Liaison. The contract is due to be renewed in 2019. [Contact information](#) for the County Film Liaison is provided at the end of this document.

Q: Does FilmL.A. provide the public with information about on-location filming?

Yes. FilmL.A. provides community members with a FAQ with answers to a few common questions. Here's a link to the [FAQ for communities](#).

Q: Who is the County Film Liaison?

The Film Liaison is a County official who serves as an intermediary between the Board of Supervisors, County Departments and the film production companies. The Film Liaison's position currently resides in the LA County Chief Executive Office.

The current County Film Liaison has recently described his duties as follows:

- Manage the FilmL.A. contract
- Conduct an annual review of FilmL.A.'s performance
- Respond to Board office inquiries and Board orders related to filming issues
- Coordinate with FilmL.A. to resolve issues with production companies and County departments
- Assist in the creation and revision of County film policies at the Board and department level

In recent months the Film Liaison has become actively involved in the resolution of community filming issues. [Contact information](#) for the County Film Liaison is provided at the end of this document.

Q: Who decides the conditions in a filming permit and who approves the permit?

County code says that the "filming permit coordination office" approves applications for filming permits. According to the County's Film Liaison, FilmL.A. is the "filming permit coordination office." However, according to both the Film Liaison and the President of FilmL.A., FilmL.A. does not approve filming permits.

So, who does? The answer is complicated. Here's a brief explanation of who determines the conditions for a filming permit.

A film company applies for an on-location filming permit with FilmL.A. The application must be reviewed and approved by several County Departments including the Sheriff's Department, the Fire Department and the Department of Public Works (DPW). Those Departments may impose conditions on filming. For example, a permit may require that a law officer or fire marshal be present during the filming. FilmL.A.

may also add conditions on a filming permit application. For example, FilmL.A. may add the condition: "no cast or crew parking on neighborhood streets."

FilmL.A. coordinates this Department approval process using the County's Online Permit System (OPS). FilmL.A. must also confirm that the applicant has the insurance needed to indemnify the County against liabilities that may result from the filming.

Once all filming conditions, insurance checks and Departmental approvals are collected, FilmL.A. will approve the *permit application* and submit it to DPW for *final permit approval*. After DPW grants *final permit approval*, FilmL.A. issues the actual filming permit.

This distinction between *permit application* and *permit final approval* is confusing, but it lies at the heart of the County's permitting process. DPW's final approval is perfunctory — DPW only looks only for Departmental approvals and confirms all boxes are checked. DPW does not examine the collected contents during final approval. In other words, the collected content of the final approved permit is actually set by FilmL.A.

The Altadena Filming Committee researched the impact of the County's distributed filming permit approval process and found that the existing process results in lack of accountability. The Committee's findings and recommendations are captured in a Committee Report: [Accountability for Filming Permit Approval and Enforcement](#). The report is available online at the Altadena Town Council website.

Q: Can a filming permit application be denied?

At a meeting of the Altadena Filming Committee, Arturo Piña of FilmL.A. said that it's extremely difficult for FilmL.A. to deny a permit. He said that he did not know of a single instance where a permit was denied.

There's probably good reason why a filming permit is seldom, if ever, denied. The County's "Temporary Use Permit" Ordinance allows permit refusal only when the "applicant has failed to meet the burden of proof" that all requirements are met. (see 22.56.1880 - Director's findings and determination).

What needs to be proved? Here's an excerpt from the County code:

Note: In the following passage, "the director" refers to a County role in the permit approval process. The "director" role is not a reference to a film director.

- "...the applicant of a temporary use permit shall substantiate to the satisfaction of the Director the following facts:*
- A. That the operation of the requested use at the location proposed and within the time period specified will not jeopardize, endanger or otherwise constitute a menace to the public health, safety or general welfare; and*
 - B. That the proposed site is adequate in size and shape to accommodate such temporary use without material detriment to the use, enjoyment or valuation of the property of other persons located in the vicinity of the site..."*

It's unlikely a film permit application would fail to meet these standards. Consequently, FilmL.A. or DPW would seemingly be required to issue any and all requested filming permits in the unincorporated portions of LA County.

Q: Are there any limits on the frequency of filming?

There are no codified limits on the frequency of filming in Altadena. In response to the question, “Is there currently any limit on how many film shoots can take place at a single property in a year?” the committee received the following response from FilmL.A.:

“No, there is no limit per the County... we consistently advise property owners to self-regulate and to be sensitive to community concerns the number of days one can utilize [a] property for filming... While folks make mention of having a limit on the number of days, we stress that it’s important to thoroughly assess any of those suggestions with the Supervisors Office, County Planning and County Counsel.”

However, according to Jennifer Morales of FilmL.A., filming permits are seldom issued to a single location for more than 14 shooting days per year. This is not a limit, rather a collateral effect of the Federal and State Tax Code for rental properties.

FilmL.A.’s claim that there is “no limit per the County” appears to be at odds with the County code. Here is an excerpt from the ordinance that directly addresses permit denial due to frequency of use.

*[Filming permit] approval will not result in a frequency of usage likely to create incompatibility between such temporary use and the surrounding area. Where an application is **denied due to frequency of usage**, the filming permit office shall specify the minimum time period between approvals which, in its opinion, is necessary to prevent such incompatibility.* (LA County Code of Ordinances Title 22: Planning and Zoning, 22.56.1925 – Movie on-location filming § A)

In addition, the Supervisors have a policy that requires County Departments to write rules that mitigate disruption caused by filming. Here’s an excerpt from that policy:

“The County will promulgate rules and regulations, subject to approval by resolution of the Board, governing ... any film activity ... within the County... The rules and regulations may be based upon the ...mitigation of disruption to all persons within the affected area...” (County Filming Policy III.a.2 – Rules and Regulations)

The Filming Committee made numerous inquiries to County officials about any Departmental rules or regulations that might govern filming disruption in Altadena. Since the Committee was unable to obtain a direct response to those inquiries it appears that, despite the Supervisor’s policy, no rules or regulations exist.

Note: all the surrounding incorporated communities have policies for limiting filming in a neighborhood. Altadena and the other unincorporated communities are an exception.

Filming Conditions and Enforcement

Q: What are permit conditions?

Each filming permit includes a set of conditions, or proscriptions, that restrict the film production. For example, the conditions may restrict parking to only one side of the street, or limit the time the trucks might arrive in the morning, or limit the production hours. In some cases, the conditions may be inferred.

For example, a permit may specifically allow the use of generators or night-time lighting. A permit that does not specifically state the use of generators or night-lighting might be construed as a proscription against their use.

Some conditions will appear on both the FilmL.A. door hanger notices and the actual filming permit. *The door hanger will not include all the information that is on the permit.* The actual filming permit should always be available on-location at request.

[Door hanger notices](#) are described in the “[Notification](#)” section.

Q: Are there standard permit conditions?

FilmL.A. does not publish a list of standard conditions applied to every film permit. However, the County document, [Guidelines and Best Practices for Filming Activities In County of Los Angeles](#), includes a number of guidelines including standard hours for filming, notification and surveys of affected residents and businesses, cleanup and parking.

Generally, 7 am is considered a normal permitted arrival time and 10 pm is considered a normal permitted departure time. They also include boundaries for allowed parking for equipment vehicles. In addition, FilmL.A. asserts that all permits in Altadena include a stipulation against cast and crew parking on neighborhood streets. Furthermore, all companies are required to have off-street parking for cast and crew.

Q: Who are FilmL.A. Monitors?

FilmL.A. Monitors are employees of FilmL.A. who are assigned to a filming location to ensure compliance with filming conditions and to field questions and concerns from the community.

Note: FilmL.A. does not require a Monitor for every shoot. Monitors are assigned when required by Special Filming Conditions or when compliance with permit conditions is deemed necessary, as, for example, in the case of a large-scale production requiring a large cast and crew.

Q: Is there a penalty for violating a condition on a filming permit?

A filming permit is much like a construction permit. If a builder fails to conform to permit conditions, the County has the authority to shut down the construction. It's the same with a film shoot. If a filming company does not comply with permitted conditions, the Department of Public Works and FilmL.A. has the authority to shut down a shoot.

There are no lesser penalties for violating a condition on a filming permit. Shutting down the film shoot is the only option. For example, if a film company were to ignore parking conditions, the only enforcement remedy available is the draconian step of shutting down the shoot. (Violating a parking condition is not a ticketable offense.)

In practice film shoots are seldom shut down. In general, the filming is a short term project concluded before a complaint can be brought to the proper authorities.

In this case 'proper' matters. Most productions (with the notable exception of those executed entirely on private property) are required to have a law officer on duty. However, the sole concern of the law officer

is to ensure safety. As a matter of convention, law officers do not enforce conditions regarding crew parking, placement of generator, hours of operation, or other proscriptions that appear on the permit. The Fire Department can also shut down a shoot, but they are solely interested in matters that might cause a conflagration.

In most cases, if there's a permit condition violation, the on-site law officer, or other County official, will leave it up to FilmL.A. to address the problem. If a [FilmL.A. Monitor](#) has been assigned to the production, the law officer will leave compliance matters to the Monitor. As a rule, Monitors are only assigned to a small percentage of productions.

In summary, the County provides one option for penalizing violations of permitted filming conditions--shut down the production. As a consequence, many violations, like crew parking on neighborhood streets, are simply ignored.

Q: What do I do if the film crew ignores the permitted conditions?

Filming permits will include conditions, like restrictions on parking or restrictions on filming hours. There are numerous cases in Altadena where these conditions have been ignored by the film crew.

If a violation occurs in your neighborhood, FilmL.A. recommends that you contact the [FilmL.A. Monitor](#) if one is present. However, no Monitor may be present, since Monitors are only required for a minority of film shoots. If no Monitor is present, it is recommended that you contact the production's location manager.

If the FilmL.A. Monitor or location manager has been ineffective or not helpful and the problem persists, call FilmL.A. (213-977-8600). If it is after hours, call the same number and select option #2. If you speak to someone be sure to get their name.

If you do not speak to a person at FilmL.A. and only leave a message, leave your name, phone number, address of the filming site and a brief description of the problem.

If the issue involves traffic, traffic safety, or pedestrian safety, contact the law officer on duty. If the on-site law officer has not been responsive, contact the CHP Officer Ian Ramer or Sergeant Waterman of the Altadena Sheriff's Station, depending on which agency has provided the on-site officer. Their contact information is provided at the end of this document. If there is no law officer on duty, contact Sergeant Waterman.

If you contact FilmL.A., the Sheriff or the CHP, we recommend you take note of the time and date you called and the time and date you received a reply.

If the resolution of the problem proves difficult, please notify your Town Council Member or the Altadena Filming Committee with details of the incident. In many cases, they will work with County agencies to develop a fair and lasting resolution.

All [contact information](#) is provided at the end of this document.

Q: Who is actually responsible for enforcement of filming permit conditions?

No one person or agency is responsible for enforcing permit conditions.

Law enforcement is responsible for enforcing safety and traffic regulations. Fire is responsible for enforcing fire restrictions. The Department of Public Works is responsible for ensuring traffic safety. FilmL.A. has an enforcement role and may stop a permit condition violation, but functions primarily as an industry promotion and filming permit service.

Q: Can the permit conditions be changed during a shoot?

Yes! FilmL.A. may change the permitted conditions at any time by adding a 'rider' to the filming permit. For example, the shooting hours may be extended or traffic control restrictions may be changed. Typically, FilmL.A. will consult relevant County Departments (e.g. Sheriff, Fire, Public Works, etc.) before making a decision to change the permitted conditions.

Q: What if a film company shines a 10K spotlight into my house? Is that OK?

It depends. The film permit conditions will describe what the film company can do. For example, a permit often includes conditions like: "generator," or "exterior lighting." In theory, these activities should appear on the permit. If they do not, the film company is restricted from those activities.

Q: Who do I call if a truck arrives before the permitted call time?

If a production vehicle arrives early call FilmL.A. Their [contact information](#) appears at the end of this document. It's worth noting that a law officer will not be able to help enforce the permit conditions because it is not a violation of the vehicle code.

Q: Who do I call about a problem with generator exhaust?

If there is a generator exhaust problem, call FilmL.A. Their [contact information](#) appears at the end of this document.

Q: What are neighborhood surveys and when are they required?

In the case of exceptional productions with permitted hours before 7 am or after 10 pm, FilmL.A. will require that the production company obtain survey information from the neighbors. Similarly, the use of helicopter, firearms or other potentially disruptive effects, may also trigger the surveys.

The neighborhood survey provides neighbors a chance to express their concerns so that FilmL.A. and the film company can make the necessary accommodations. The reason for any concern should be clearly explained in the survey. Generally, just saying 'no' will not be sufficient for FilmL.A. or the film company to make accommodations.

Surveys are conducted by the production company. Typically, survey data will be collected from businesses and neighbors within 300 feet of the permitted location and/or 200 feet from equipment parking. Results are given to FilmL.A. for analysis. The results of the surveys are not binding and they are not made publicly available.

Finally, the conditions for the production may change after the survey is taken. Changes to the permit do not trigger a follow-up survey.

Public access to a filming permit

Q: May I see the filming permit while the shoot is in progress?

A filming permit is a public document. Filming permits are available on request at the location. Filming permits are also available online 3 days after the shoot.

In a meeting with the Altadena Filming Committee, Arturo Piña of FilmL.A. reported that the filming permits are not available online during the shoot because of a concern that the shoot may attract unwanted attention.

In order to access the permit online, you must have an account on [FilmL.A.'s Online Permit System](#) (OPS). Alternatively, you can request the permit by contacting FilmL.A. or by sending a request to the Altadena Filming Committee (altadenafilmingcommittee@gmail.com). They will obtain a copy of the permit for you.

Film companies are required to show filming permits on demand. [FilmL.A.'s contract](#) with the County includes Terms and Conditions that stipulate the permit be available for inspection by the public.

From the [FilmL.A. contract Exhibit U \(see page 76\)](#):

2. PERMIT REQUIREMENT – This permit must be in the possession of permittee at all times while on location and must be made available for inspection when requested by the Permit Authority, its authorized representative(s) or the public.

If you would like to inspect the permit, ask for the location manager or someone from the location management team. They should produce the permit. If there's any hesitation, contact FilmL.A.

Note: A phone number for the Location Manager typically appears on FilmL.A.'s door-hanger notification. Feel free to contact the Location Manager to obtain a copy of the actual permit or express any concerns.

When there is any question about a filming permit, FilmL.A. recommends you contact them.

Q: Are filming permits available on the set?

Yes. The production company is required to have the permit in their possession while working at the permitted location. See [the preceding FAQ](#).

Q: Who do I ask if I want to see the filming permit?

In general, ask for the location manager if you have any questions or concerns about the shoot. The location manager should be able to show you the permit upon request. In some cases they will make you a copy. If the location manager will not provide a copy of the permit, contact FilmL.A. and request assistance.

Special Filming Conditions

Q: What are “Special Filming Conditions”?

Special Filming Conditions are an additional set of conditions added to the standard conditions applied to a filming permit. Special Filming Conditions are LA County Supervisor-approved documents that only apply to a few, frequently-filmed neighborhoods. These Special Filming Condition documents are created when neighbors organize to work with County officials to address recurrent filming concerns.

According to the County’s Film Liaison, permits that do not comply with Special Conditions will not be approved. However, in public meetings, representatives from FilmL.A. have asserted that compliance with Special Conditions is not required. The small print at the top of each Special Condition document appears to confirm FilmL.A.’s assertion that a permit need not comply with the Special Conditions.

[These] Special Filming Conditions...will be included in the terms and conditions of permits issued for filming in this area and are in addition to the standard terms and conditions applicable to filming permits generally. While these Special Filming Conditions will be included as terms if a permit for filming in this area is issued, they are not intended to, and do not, establish the criteria or standards for determining whether or not a particular permit (or permits) will be issued for this area. The decision whether or not a particular permit (or permits) will be issued is vested in the discretion of the appropriate City or County department or their designees (including FilmL.A., Inc.)...

For more information about Special Filming Conditions in Altadena, check out the report on [Altadena Special Filming Conditions](#).

Q: How do I find out if my block has Special Filming Conditions?

Check out the report on [Altadena Special Filming Conditions](#). There is also a list of Altadena Special Filming Conditions on the [FilmL.A. website](#), but that list is difficult to locate.

Q: Can our neighborhood get “Special Filming Conditions?”

Neighbors may obtain “Special Filming Conditions” for their neighborhood. However, the County does not have a well-defined process for obtaining Special Conditions.

When asked about the process, different County officials will describe various approaches that required the consent of FilmL.A., the Los Angeles County Counsel and our Supervisor. Because of the bureaucracy and a general reluctance of County officials to introduce any constraints on filming, the neighborhood must be very motivated.

If you wish to start the process of creating “Special Filming Conditions” for your neighborhood, we suggest approaching the County Supervisor’s Field Deputy responsible for Altadena. We also recommend contacting the Altadena Filming Committee who can birdog the process.

As of this revision date, the Field Deputy is Sussy Nemer. See the [contact list](#) below.

Notification

Q: What is a door hanger?

FilmL.A. is required to notify nearby businesses and residences within a 500-foot radius of the permitted filming location. FilmL.A. typically uses a door hanger to notify affected properties. The door hanger includes basic information about the production including shoot day, start time, strike time, and contact information.

Q: Will I be notified if there's going to be a film shoot on my block?

It depends. The LA County ordinance provides general guidance about notification. The FilmL.A. contract is more specific; it requires that FilmL.A. create a "radius map...for notice distribution to all residential and commercial buildings within 500 feet of a filming/still photography shoot location and 500 feet of production-related parking to the surrounding area." It also requires FilmL.A. to distribute notifications 24 hours in advance, but they acknowledge that this may not always be possible. In that case FilmL.A. is supposed to contact the applicable Supervisor's office.

In practice, FilmL.A. provides this notification by placing door hangers on buildings within this 500-foot radius. The door hanger typically includes information about parking, special effects and, most importantly, contact information for a representative of the production company. * FilmL.A.'s own notification policy is to provide 2 days notice when possible.

* For issues, concerns or questions regarding the filming refer to the *Filming Conditions and Enforcement* section of this FAQ.

Q: Is email notification an option?

FilmL.A. provides an email notification option for predefined neighborhoods. Email notifications may include updates to permit changes. Neighbors and business owners in these predefined neighborhoods may sign up for email notification on the [FilmL.A. website](#). The service is not currently available in



FilmL.A. door hanger

Altadena. However, a few neighbors in Altadena have managed to make ad hoc arrangements with FilmL.A.

Q: Does the actual film permit have more information than the door hanger?

Yes. There is more detail on the actual permit. The permit includes a description of the filming conditions, the County fees and the production logistics including equipment, numbers of cast and crew and special effects. If you're curious about the information that film companies are required to provide, here's a [link to an example Film permit application](#).

The permit is the *only reliable source of information about the conditions placed on the permit*. In addition, the permit is required to include the following attachments: the [Filmmaker's Code of Professional Responsibility](#), the [County's "General Terms, Conditions and Restrictions for a Film Permit"](#) (see page 76 of linked document) and any Special Filming Conditions applicable to the filming location.

Note: a film company may request riders for a permit. Consequently, the conditions like arrival and departure times, parking restrictions or traffic interruptions may change as needed. Riders, like permits, must be approved by FilmL.A. and the applicable County services.

Parking and Traffic

Q: What can be done about cast and crew parking on my street?

FilmL.A., the Sheriff's Department and the Department of Public Works all report that cast and crew parking on area streets is the most commonly heard complaint associated with location film shoots.

This problem persists despite a filming permit condition that prohibits cast and crew from parking on area streets. In fact, many productions are required to obtain offsite parking, sometimes called a base camp, in order to meet this permit condition. Cast and crew are shuttled to and from the basecamp as needed.

The cast and crew frequently ignore the parking proscription. Cast and crew are not ticketed for parking on neighborhood streets. On-site law enforcement officers will often say they cannot enforce the parking condition because they do not know which vehicles belong to residents and which belong to cast and crew. More importantly, law enforcement explains that cast and crew vehicles cannot be ticketed because a violation of a permitted condition is not a violation of the California Vehicle Code.

Note: In the City of LA, cast and crew vehicles may be ticketed or towed for violation of parking conditions.

So who enforces the parking conditions? That responsibility falls on the shoulders of the location manager. If the location manager is unsuccessful, call FilmL.A. They have the option of canceling the filming permit. There are, however, no known instances of FilmL.A. canceling a permit for a parking violation.

Q: If film trucks take up the parking on one side of the street, can crew and cast parking take up the other side?

According to Jennifer Morelos at FilmL.A., production companies are allowed to request posting (i.e. no parking signs) only for working production vehicles. For example, a grip truck or a picture car. The approved parking will be documented on the permit and indicated on the door hanger notification.

“We do not allow cast and crew cars to be parked on area streets. The film permits for your area include the following condition: ‘No cast or crew parking on area streets’. Consequently, production companies must either park their crew cars and personal cars in an off-site parking lot, or inside the property that is hosting the shoot.”

Note: The County does not currently have a service that will enforce cast and crew parking violations. In practice these conditions are not enforced.

While the permit condition “No cast or crew parking on area streets” does appear on the filming permit, it does not typically appear on the FilmL.A. door-hanger notification. However, the actual filming permit with all filming conditions is available to the public on request at the location.

Q: Can production companies request and be approved for posting no parking signs on both sides of the street?

FilmL.A. will not approve a request for posting both sides of the street if the purpose of that request is just for the cast and crew’s parking convenience.

According to Jennifer Morelos at FilmL.A., they do allow posting on both sides for getting a specific picture or if there is a safety concern — for example, the road is narrow or winding or if there's a placement near hydrants or red curbs. But these are exceptions and require approval by the Roads Division in the LA County Department of Public Works. If parking on two sides of the street is permitted, it must be staggered so that the trucks are not parked across the street from each other. These requests are rare.

If FilmL.A. does allow posting on both sides of the street, they will add the following condition to the filming permit: "Equipment staging and vehicles may park on one side of the street only."

Sometimes FilmL.A. or the Department of Public Works will require that both sides of the street are posted No Parking, with the understanding that production vehicles may park on only one side, in order to avoid traffic congestion.

Q: What if production and/or crew parking creates a safety hazard?

Report the problem to the on-site law officer. If he or she does not act, notify the contact at the Sheriff's Department or the CHP. See the [contact list](#) at the end of this document.

The Department of Public Works also has a traffic hazard enforcement role. If the law officer is not responsive, contact Anthony Moran, DPW head inspector for the area: 626-338-9515, amoran@dpw.lacounty.gov.

Q: Is it legal for a film company to block my street?

It depends on the conditions described on the permit. Before issuing a permit that entitles a film company to block a street, FilmL.A. will first consult with the Department of Public Works and the local law enforcement agency to ensure there are no safety concerns. With permit approval, a street may be blocked intermittently for up to 2 minutes at a time.

Onsite Law Officers

Q: Why do film companies hire a law-officer to be on location?

Film companies hire law officers to be on location for two reasons 1) to meet the minimum permit conditions, 2) to address security and safety concerns recognized by the production company.

Q: Who determines if hiring a law officer is a required permit condition?

Before FilmL.A. will issue a filming permit, they seek authorization from the Department of Public Works (DPW). As part of the authorization, DPW may stipulate a *minimum* number of officers for the shoot. (Ostensibly to address traffic & safety issues). In addition, FilmL.A. may require additional law officers in order to meet Special Filming Conditions that apply to the location listed on the permit request. In any of these cases, the film company will be required to hire law officers as a condition of the filming permit.

Q: Are film companies always required to hire a cop?

No. If the location is not covered by Special Filming Conditions or if LA Department of Public Works does not see a need, chances are the film company will be able to obtain a filming permit without needing to hire law enforcement.

As a rule, Public Works will mandate a law officer on the set when a shoot requires any use of film production vehicles in public right-of-way.

Note: According to Sargent Waterman of The Altadena Sheriff's Department, unless a crime has been committed, law officers have no jurisdiction on private property. Rather, the enforcement of filming permit conditions on private property is the purview of FilmL.A. On those occasions when there is no on-site law enforcement officer and the film company has not hired a [FilmL.A. Monitor](#), the only apparent remedy is to phone FilmL.A.

Q: Who pays the cops? Who do the cops work for?

Film companies pay for off-duty law enforcement officers to both satisfy permit conditions and address security or safety concerns.

Film companies provide the funds to hire the on-location law officers. Are these officers merely contract employees of the film company? If so, where do their responsibilities lie? Are they responsible for protecting the filming or the community? What exactly are their obligations?

When the question was addressed to Sergeant Waterman of the Altadena Sheriff's Department, he responded unequivocally that on-site officers are responsible for protecting both the community and the film company including the enforcement of the public safety and traffic conditions.

Q: Where do the cops come from?

When a production company requests a permit, FilmL.A. sends the permit application to Department of Public Works (DPW) for approval. As part of that process DPW stipulates the minimum number of police officers needed for the shoot to be conducted safely. That number becomes a requirement for the film company.

Once the film company receives the conditions, they will contact a law enforcement contracting firm like Motion Picture Officers Association (<https://mpoala.com/>). This contractor will call the Altadena Sheriff's representative or the CHP who will then assign the officers to the shoot.

Typically, officers who attend film shoots in Altadena are local to the area. If the Sheriff Department is selected, the Deputies are from the Altadena Sheriff's Station and are selected by Sgt. Waterman. If the CHP is selected, the CHP officer is from the Woodbury Station and briefed by Officer Norton.

[Contact information](#) for Sheriff's Department or CHP appears at the end of this document.

Q: Why is the on-site law officer sometimes a Sheriff's Deputy and sometimes a CHP Officer?

See "[Where do the cops come from?](#)" The choice of a Sheriff's Deputy or CHP Officer is made by the film company. In the unlikely case there's an enforcement issue, this difference matters. The Sheriff's Department has no influence on the CHP and vice versa. Consequently, enforcement issues must be directed to the appropriate law enforcement service.

[Contact information](#) for the Sheriff's Department or CHP appears at the end of this document.

Q: Who do I contact if the on-site law officer doesn't enforce the permit conditions?

Suppose that the on-site officer stays in the patrol car and refuses to enforce the parking restrictions on the permit. (It's known to happen.) Begin by approaching the officer and addressing them politely. If the officer refuses to help with a safety or parking issue, please call the supervisor as follows: If the on-site officer is from the Sheriff's Department contact Sgt. Waterman at the Altadena Sheriff's Station. If the on-site officer is from the CHP, contact Officer Norton of the CHP or Officer Ian Ramer.

[Contact information](#) for Sgt. Waterman, Officer Norton and Officer Ramer appears at the end of this document.

Miscellaneous

Q: Can a film permit be used to shut down your home construction?

An Altadena neighbor recently reported an incident where a member of a film crew threatened to stop a home construction project because the film company had a filming permit. What do you do if a member of a film crew threatens to stop work on your property?

We asked Arturo Piña at FilmL.A. how they would address this problem. Here's his response:

"We would need to get more information on the production, what was relayed, etc. Again, that's why I can't stress enough that impacted parties need to contact us. We can't mitigate the situation after the fact. Our protocol includes getting into dialogue so that issues can be rectified immediately. While we cannot get involved in any conversations regarding compensation and/or agreements made between parties, we can and do work to clarify what the issue is and work with the production so that they may have an opportunity to mitigate.

"Also, we have neighborhoods wherein residents let us know that they will be doing construction or county will advise when municipal projects are scheduled. Anyone can let us know if they are planning work in neighborhoods that are traditionally utilized for on-location filming. We can place notes in our system that relay dates, work, etc. so that crews are given advanced notice and have the opportunity to clarify whether schedules can be rearranged and/or whether their work can be completed under the circumstances. "

If you are hosting a film shoot, communicate with your neighbors and help facilitate resolving any concerns your neighbors might raise.

Note: As a matter of convention, FilmL.A. makes an effort to provide a 2-day notice. However, they are only required to provide a 24-hour notice.

Q: Planning an important event that a film shoot would disrupt? Here's a tip.

We learned of an unfortunate incident where a film shoot ruined an important family event. The event had been 6 months in the planning. FilmL.A. notified the neighbors of the shoot two days before the filming. In this case, the neighbor was told there was nothing anyone could do.

However, there is something that could have been done.

According to Arturo Piña at FilmL.A., if you contact FilmL.A. prior to your event and give them a date, they will not issue a filming permit that conflicts with your event. So, if you live in a neighborhood with frequent filming and are planning an important event, consider notifying FilmL.A. and request that they withhold a filming permit that conflicts with your festivities.

And, it wouldn't be a bad idea to remind FilmL.A. as the event approaches and to notify your Town Council Member.

Note: In the event you haven't notified FilmLA of your event or project (or maybe FilmLA just dropped the ball) and you are notified there will be a conflicting film shoot in two days, not all is lost. You should

contact the 'production representative' identified on the door hanger ASAP. In many cases the film company will try to work out an accommodation.

Q: Who decides who get compensated for a film shoot?

Compensation is negotiated between the film production company and the neighbors who host the shoot. Typically host compensation is negotiated by the Location Manager. Sometimes nearby neighbors are compensated. Typically, the production company will negotiate with each neighbor separately.

FilmL.A. will not get involved in compensation, and the County ordinances are silent on the topic.

Q: Does Altadena get any financial benefit from a film shoot?

Altadena, as a community, does *not* receive any direct financial benefit from film shoots.

No permit fees are allocated to the community. Permit fees go to fund FilmL.A.

Note: FilmL.A. is entirely self-funded. It receives no financial support from the County.

Fees related to road use, encroachment and parking go to the Department of Public Works.

Q: My question is not covered here. Where should I go to find an answer?

Send us an email at altadenafilmingcommittee@gmail.com and we'll try to find out the answer or refer you to a better resource. If the Q&A is of general interest, we'll add it to this FAQ.

Q: There's an error in the FAQ. How do I set the record straight?

We want our FAQ to be as accurate as possible. If you find an error or an omission, please send us an email at altadenafilmingcommittee@gmail.com.

Contact information LA County Services

FilmL.A. contacts:

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|--|-------------------------------|---|--|
| FilmL.A. all-purpose,24/7 contact phone number | | 213-977-8600 (For after-hour problems select option #2) | |
| Arturo Piña | Community Outreach Liaison | O: 213-977-8642 | apina@filmla.com |
| Josh Mingo | Director of Permit Operations | O: 213-977-8607 | jmingo@filmla.com |
| Jennifer Morelos | Operations Manager | | JMorelos@filmla.com |
| Philip Sokoloski | VP, Integrated Communications | O: 213-977-8630 | psokoloski@filmla.com |
| Donna Washington | VP, Operations | O: 213-977-8600 | dWASHINGTON@filmla.com |

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|-------------|-----------|--|--|
| Paul Audley | President | | paudley@filmla.com |
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Altadena Sheriff & CHP contacts:

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|--|--|--|---|
| Sgt. Wayne Waterman | Station scheduling | O: 626-296-2104 (6a – 5p) | wpwaterm@lasd.org |
| Sgt. Brian Mann | Community Relations | | BJMann@lasd.org |
| Officer Ian Ramer | CHP, Liaison to California film commission | 213-703-2070 | ian.ramer@chp.ca.gov (preferred) ian.ramer@film.ca.gov |
| Officer Stephanie Norton | Altadena contact for CHP | 626-298-8100 (M, Tu, Th, F: 8a-5p) (Wed: 8a-6p) No after-hours contact info | snorton@chp.ca.gov |
| Los Angeles County Sheriff's Information Bureau: film and media projects | | 213-229-1700 | |
| Altadena Local CHP station | | (626) 296-8100 | |

Los Angeles County Public Works

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|----------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Gregory Graham | Department of Public Works, Supervisor, Contract Construction Contact for parking restriction approvals | O: 626-458-4917 | ggraham@dpw.lacounty.gov |
| Anthony Moran | Permit Office | 626-338-9515 | amoran@dpw.lacounty.gov |

Altadena Government Contacts

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|-------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Sussy Nemer | Field Deputy Office of Supervisor Kathryn Barger | (626) 356-5407 (626) 568-0159 FAX | snemer@bos.lacounty.gov |
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LA County Film Liaison

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| Gary Smith | LA County Film Liaison LA County CEO Program Manager for FilmLA Contract Chief Executive Office | (213) 974-2504 | gsmith@ceo.lacounty.gov |
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