

Chapter 57 - MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

Sec. 57-1. - Purpose.

It is the public policy of the State of Georgia to market the state as a location for media productions, recognizing the economic impact this industry provides, as well as the tourism it generates for local jurisdictions, such as the City of Griffin. The city is further fortunate to have a diverse number of unique locations to attract movies and television productions to the city.

Despite the many positive benefits a media production may offer, certain inconveniences may result if the production company and city cannot work in concert to assure minimum standards are met and to assure a thoroughly-planned production schedule is followed. These concerns are best addressed through a regulatory permit.

(Ord. No. 12-10, § 1, 8-28-2012)

Sec. 57-2. - Scope of coverage.

This chapter shall be applicable to all media production activity, including filming for movies, television or video series, pilots, feature films and documentaries, commercials, music videos, photo shoots, infomercials and public service announcements, whether the final product is intended for commercial use or not, unless the activity occurs on private property within an otherwise licensed facility (such as a film or television studio). Unless otherwise excepted by this chapter, no person shall use any public or private property, building, facility, or residence for any media production without first applying for and receiving a city filming permit issued pursuant to this chapter. For purposes of this chapter, media production activity shall include areas designated for parking of trucks and equipment on public or private property, base camps used during the production activity, and food service areas. No public highway, street or road shall have its public access restricted or limited except by a permit issued pursuant to this chapter.

(Ord. No. 12-10, § 1, 8-28-2012; Ord. No. 23-22, § 1, 8-8-2023)

Sec. 57-3. - Permit requirements.

- (a) This permit is allowed with conditions in all zoning districts. Whenever a permit is sought for activities in primarily residential neighborhoods, extra consideration shall be given to the conditions imposed to ameliorate inconvenience to the residents as much as possible.
- (b) Permits are issued per location and shall be issued for a specific date range, not to exceed seven calendar days. Any production seeking to film for more than seven days must reapply and obtain a new permit for that location and date range.
- (c) Each permit shall carry an impact fee which will vary depending on the class of permit (i.e. low-impact or high-impact). Determination of permit classification appropriate for a particular application is within the sole discretion of the city manager, or his/her designee. Additionally, each permit shall carry a daily permit fee which shall be charged for each calendar day of the activity.
- (d) The two permit classifications for media production are as follows:

- (1) Low-impact permits are issued for media production activities that will cause little or no disruption to normal and customary use of the site and adjacent and nearby properties and uses (i.e. filmed exclusively on private property, no street closures, no sidewalk closures, minimal public safety needs, etc.).
 - (2) High-impact permits are issued for media production activities that are more likely to disrupt normal and customary use of the site or adjacent and nearby properties and uses due to street closures, sidewalk closures, increased public safety service needs, or other factors including, but not limited to, filming involving automobile crashes or chases, gunfire, pyrotechnics, explosives, the use of aircraft, stunts, and similar activities.
- (e) General standards. Prior to making application for a permit, it shall be incumbent on the applicant to meet with the city manager, public safety personnel, and camera ready liaison, or their designees, to review locations and the general scope of activities planned during the production. A copy of the script shall be made available, upon request, to allow the city staff to better understand the applicant's needs.

The following general standards shall apply to all permits:

- (1) No tents, temporary sanitary facilities, trash collection, or food service facilities shall be located within 100 feet of the property line of any property used for residential use, unless the owner or tenant gives written consent;
- (2) Tents, depending on their square footage, and other temporary structures may require a separate building permit from the city; any food preparation or food service provided at the location shall require a food service permit from the county health department, or evidence of exemption;
- (3) Lighting for filming should be oriented away from adjacent or nearby properties as much as possible and shall not interfere with the safe movement of vehicular traffic;
- (4) Temporary signage must be approved in writing, in advance, prior to erection, by the development director, or his designee; approval of temporary signage is conditioned restoration of permanent signage following completion of the media activity;
- (5) No regulatory traffic control signage within a public right-of-way shall be removed without the prior written consent of the chief of police;
- (6) No modification to any existing traffic signage, street light, traffic control device or other officially-installed facility or improvement shall be made without prior consent of the chief of police;
- (7) No street, road, alley, or sidewalk shall be closed, barricaded or other obstruction erected within a public right-of-way, and no access shall be denied or restricted to public or private property or facilities unless the closure or restriction is approved as a condition of the permit; reasonable alternative access shall be arranged whenever possible;
- (8) No trees, vegetation (including grasses), or ornamental shrubs shall be cut or removed from public property without prior written consent of the city in the permit, based upon an agreed landscape restoration plan. A land disturbance permit may be separately required depending upon the nature and extent of the activity.
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Traffic management plan. The applicant shall submit to the chief of police a traffic management plan to address traffic flow in the vicinity of the location where production activity is to occur, even if normal traffic flow is not to be obstructed or interrupted. Detours shall be determined and approved by the chief of police; temporary traffic control devices and signage as required by the manual on uniform traffic control devices shall be provided at the sole expense of the applicant; the city fire marshal shall also review and approve such plan. Applicant is responsible for obtaining a Georgia Department of Transportation permit before a city film permit can be issued for any activity occurring on state highways or impeding on state highways.

(10) The City of Griffin shall be listed in the production credits for all permits required.

(Ord. No. 12-10, § 1, 8-28-2012; Ord. No. 23-22, § 1, 8-8-2023)

Sec. 57-4. - Low-impact permit standards.

In addition to the general standards, the following minimum standards shall be met in order to obtain a low-impact permit. Due to the varying requirements of media productions and nature of the industry, these standards are not intended to be all inclusive and additional conditions may be reasonably imposed, within the discretion of the city manager or his/her designee, to minimize anticipated adverse effects.

- (a) Application shall be made no less than ten business days prior to the first scheduled event or day of filming. The permit shall be available, on location, at all times while production activity is occurring and shown to city inspectors upon request. Applications submitted less than ten business days prior to the first scheduled event or day of filming may be subject to an expediting fee.
- (b) Normal hours of activity shall be 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily; all preparation and wrap-up shall occur within one hour of this time frame. Noise shall be kept to a minimum.
- (c) No street closure, obstruction or interference with normal traffic flow, including pedestrian use of sidewalks and public rights-of-way shall occur, including use of on-street parking spaces or parking in alleys or side streets.
- (d) Facilities and locations to be used for base camp, food service, and parking shall be approved as a condition of the permit; any other required permit(s) shall be obtained prior to issuance of the permit under this chapter.

(Ord. No. 12-10, § 1, 8-28-2012; Ord. No. 23-22, § 1, 8-8-2023)

Sec. 57-5. - High-impact permit standards.

In addition to the general standards, the following minimum standards shall be met in order to obtain a high-impact permit. Due to the varying requirements of media productions and nature of the industry, these standards are not intended to be all inclusive and additional conditions may be reasonably imposed, within the discretion of the city manager or his/her designee, to minimize anticipated adverse effects.

- (a) Application shall be made no less than ten business days prior to the first scheduled event or day of filming. The permit shall be available, on location, at all times while activity is occurring and shown to city inspectors upon request. Applications submitted less than ten business days prior to the first scheduled event or day of filming may be subject to an expediting fee.

- (b) Normal hours of activity shall be 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily; all preparation and wrap-up shall occur within one hour of this time frame. Noise shall be kept to a minimum; any activity occurring outside of the above hours involving planned noises in excess of 65 db at a distance of 100 feet from the point of origin shall be addressed in the application. If activity is planned within 500 feet of a residential area outside the hours specified, or will involve noises in excess of 65 db, notice shall be given by the best means available to residents as far in advance as reasonable.
- (c) Street closure(s), obstruction or interference with normal traffic flow, including pedestrian use of sidewalks and public rights-of-way shall be detailed in the application, including any use of on-street parking spaces and/or parking in alleys or side streets. If the applicant needs to add street closures or otherwise alter or modify the conditions for sidewalks, rights-of-way, streets or parking following the issuance of the permit, a permit amendment should be sought. The city reserves the right to impose an amendment fee.
- (d) The city will not intervene on behalf of any permittee or negotiate access rights to private property with property owners; the permittee is expected to deal directly with private property owners for required permission and consent.
- (e) Facilities and locations to be used for base camp, food service, and parking shall be approved as a condition of the permit; any other required permit(s) shall be obtained prior to issuance of the permit under this chapter. If the applicant needs to add or modify these conditions following the issuance of the permit, a permit amendment should be sought. The city reserves the right to impose an amendment fee.
- (f) Based upon the proposed scope of production activity and in consideration of any potential danger to the safety, health and welfare of the community, particularly private property and residents near the location, the chief of police and/or city fire marshal may require on-site security (qualified private security or use of off-duty City of Griffin police officers) and/or may require personnel and equipment be placed on standby for portions of the high-impact activity at the expense of the applicant. The application shall detail the planned time, place, and manner of any of the following production activities: pyrotechnics, demolition, discharge of firearms or other weapons, motor vehicle chases, physical stunts, and similar actions.

(Ord. No. 12-10, § 1, 8-28-2012; Ord. No. 23-22, § 1, 8-8-2023)

Sec. 57-6. - Application and permit procedures.

- (a) Applications. All applications shall be made in writing on forms provided by the city or online through the city's electronic portal. No application shall be deemed accepted unless accompanied by payment of the requisite application fee in U.S. funds.
- (b) Every application shall state the name and contact information of a responsible representative of the applicant, who shall be available at all times during actual production activity within the city and for a period of not less than one year thereafter; more than one point of contact may be specified.
- (c) The application shall contain a detailed narrative of the scope of production activities, and include drawings, maps or plats to illustrate locations, property boundaries, existing material improvements, planned temporary improvements, curb cuts and driveways, adjoining streets, traffic patterns, and similar

information helpful to assess the impact of the proposed activity.

- (d) When activity is to occur in or near residential areas, personal notice of intent to secure a permit and the place, date and time of the proposed media activity shall be provided by the applicant to all residential properties within 500 feet of the outside boundaries of the location(s) where production activity is to occur; to the extent feasible, written acknowledgment of the notice shall be obtained from the resident or resident's agent.
- (e) Prior to the issuance of a high-impact permit, the applicant must provide personal notice of intent to secure a permit, and include the place, date and time of the proposed media activity, to all businesses or residents which may be impacted by the activity. The boundary of impact is to be determined within the discretion of the city manager, or his/her designee. The applicant must further provide documentation demonstrating that two-thirds of the impacted businesses and/or residents, or their agents, have acknowledged and consented to the media production activity. The city reserves the right to request copies of any location agreements prior to the issuance of a permit. Although documentation is only required for two-thirds of the impacted businesses and/or residents, the city highly encourages each applicant to make an effort to communicate with private businesses and property owners.
- (f) Applicants who are found to be out of compliance with subsections (d) and (e) of this section may be cited for violation of this chapter and must appear before municipal court. If found guilty, the first offense carries a fine of \$500.00, and a second offense carries a fine of \$1,000.00. Additionally, the city may suspend the applicant's film permit and/or impose additional conditions on future permits for the benefit and protection of the citizens of the City of Griffin, as necessary.
- (g) A signed indemnification and hold harmless agreement, in a form acceptable to the city attorney, shall accompany the application, together with a certificate of insurance naming the city as an additional insured. The minimum limits of insurance coverage shall not be less than \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence.
- (h) All applications shall be filed with the city manager, or his designee, who may require such additional information as needed to assess the proposed extent and intensity of the production within the city.
- (i) Permits. All applications shall be approved with specific terms and conditions, or denied, by the city manager, or his designee, in writing. If approved, the city shall issue a permit to the applicant, in writing, with all terms and conditions clearly set forth therein. All applications for media production permits shall be approved or denied within ten business days of a completion of the application. If the application is denied, the city manager, or his designee, shall state, in writing, the reason(s) for denial. An aggrieved applicant may appeal to the board of commissioners at the next regular meeting occurring more than five days following receipt of a written denial.
- (j) Permits may be denied, in whole or in part, due to prior scheduled events or activities sanctioned or permitted by the city under other provisions of this Code.
- (k) Any material variation from the approved scope of work permitted shall be grounds for permit revocation, unless the permit is modified in advance by the permittee. The city reserves the right to impose a fee for amendments to permits in addition to any charges incidental to those permit changes (i.e. additional days, additional locations, change from low to high impact, etc.).

Sec. 57-7. - Fees and waivers.

- (a) The city will not charge an application fee for media production permits.
- (b) Each permit shall carry an impact fee which will vary depending on the class of permit (i.e. low-impact or high-impact). Determination of permit classification appropriate for a particular application is within the sole discretion of the city manager, or his/her designee. The impact fees are charged per permit as follows:
 - (1) *Low-impact base permit fee:* \$100.00.
 - (2) *High-impact base permit fee:* \$300.00.
- (c) Each permit shall carry a daily permit fee of \$100.00 per calendar day for each calendar day on which production activity physically occurs.
- (d) Applications submitted less than five business days prior to the first day of filming or production activity may be charged an expediting fee of \$100.00.
- (e) Applications requesting permission to use drones or cranes will carry an additional administrative fee of \$50.00 for review by city personnel.
- (f) Applicants seeking to utilize public parking spaces owned/maintained by the city must pay a fee of \$10.00 per day for each space.
- (g) Applicants seeking to make amendments to their permit conditions following issuance of the permit may be charged \$50.00 per permit, in addition to any additional charges associated with the permit changes requested (i.e. daily fees, parking fees, etc.). Alternatively, the city may require the applicant to apply for a new permit if the amendment amounts to a major change, as determined by the city manager or his/her designee.
- (h) The city reserves the right to require payment of a \$100.00 sanitation bond to be paid by the applicant prior to issuance of the permit. Upon completion of production, all materials and debris shall be entirely removed and the rights-of-way left in a condition satisfactory to the city manager, or his/her designee, in order to be refunded the sanitation bond.
- (i) Additional fees and charges may be assessed based upon specific requirements, including fees for the monitoring of public safety or special services by a city department, based upon labor, time and equipment necessary to provide the service. When using city-owned buildings or property other than public road rights-of-way, for production activities, a separate rental fee or charge may be negotiated.
- (j) Application fees and daily permit fees for use of city services or facilities may be reduced or waived for charitable or non-profit organizations holding § 501(c) status from the I.R.S., or for other governmental agencies. All waivers shall require approval of the city manager.
- (k) Reduction or waiver of daily permit fees may be approved by the board of commissioners for commercial productions providing a greater than normal economic benefit to the community, as determined on a case-by-case basis.
- (l) All permit fees must be paid prior to the issuance of each permit. Any fees arising from amendments or alterations to the conditions following the issuance of a permit must be paid immediately upon approval of the amendment or alteration by the city.

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The city will waive the cost of low-impact permits, including daily permit fees, for students. Student applicants must provide documentation that their film/production activity is associated with a current class for a grade.

(Ord. No. 12-10, § 1, 8-28-2012; Ord. No. 23-22, § 1, 8-8-2023)