



Commercial Filming FAQ



Feature films, car commercials, fashion catalogs, motion and still photography all happen at White Sands National Monument. The bright white sand dunes are a perfect backdrop for commercial filming and photography. This FAQ sheet will give the basic information for commercial filming and photography at White Sands National Monument.

Application Information

Filming and photography at White Sands National Monument requires a permit when the size of a film/photo group, the amount of equipment, or the activity of the film/photo crew has the potential to damage the natural resources or impact the visitor experience.

Whether the final product of the film/photo group is commercial or non-commercial, student, freelance, or non-profit is irrelevant. Impact to the natural resource and/or the visitor experience is the criteria used to manage this activity. Film/photography crews of three or

more people should complete a film/photography application.

One or two people taking still photography using a hand-held video camera, or still or video camera with a tripod do not need a permit. The final product use, whether commercial or non-commercial, student, freelance, or non-profit is not a factor in requiring a permit. A permit is required when photography includes model(s), props, equipment, or any combination of these items, regardless of the number of people with the shoot.

Application Fee

There is a non-refundable fee of \$200 to process and review a request for filming or photography at White Sands National Monument. This fee must be paid at the time of the application. This fee must be

paid in cash, traveler's cheques, or money order for the exact amount. No personal or company checks will be accepted.

Application Process

Please complete the application form located on our website under Special Park Uses/Commercial Filming and Photography (www.nps.gov/whsa/permits-for-special-park-uses.htm).

Answer each question in as much detail as necessary. If the question does not apply to you or your group, put N/A on the line for that question. Make your description of the activity as detailed as possible. If there is not enough room on the application, attach an outline, a concept, a storyboard, or a prospectus for the activity. The application must be signed by the person who will be on-site for the filming activity.

You may submit the application email at WNSA_film_photography@nps.gov or via fax to at 575-479-1116. Please put "film/photography application" in the subject line of the email.

You may also mail the application to:
White Sands National Monument
P.O. Box 1086
HAFB, NM 88330-1086
ATTN: Film Permit Coordinator
or
Federal Express delivery to:
White Sands National Monument
19955 Highway 70 West
Alamogordo, NM 88310
ATTN: Film Permit Coordinator

Student Film or Photography Projects

Film and photography projects that are a part of an education curriculum or class must fill out an application. However, the application cost for student projects as part of an education curriculum or class will be waived. The only cost to the student will be a \$3 per person (16 years and older) monument entrance fee for

all persons involved in the activity. If a student does not fill out an application and obtain a valid permit, applicable fines and citation will be issued by a law enforcement ranger. The college program coordinator also will be contacted about the failure of the student to follow permit guidelines.

Permit Application Review

- 1) The time from receipt of the application to approval or denial of the permit will be no more than five business days.
- 2) If an application is denied, a letter detailing the reasons for denial will be mailed five business days after the receipt of the application.
- 3) Application fees are non-refundable, even if the permit is denied.
- 4) Applications that are denied will not be issued a permit and will receive a detailed written explanation for the denial.
- 5) A permit will be issued once the

application has been reviewed and approved.

- 6) Discussion of the permit and its conditions will vary depending on the complexity and lead time.
- 7) The activity requested in the application will dictate the conditions placed on the permit to ensure the natural resource and the visitor experience are not impacted.
- 8) These conditions will vary with each individual permit. Individual permit fees will be assessed after the application is approved.

Permit Fees

Fees for the permit will depend on the complexity of the permit. Each request is reviewed on its own merits.

Fees include but are not limited to: location fees, monitoring fees, and early entry or stay late fees.

A written estimate of fees will be given to the applicant at the time of approval of the application, which will occur within five business days after receipt of application.

Please see the fee schedule on our website: www.nps.gov/whsa/permits-for-special-park-uses.htm for a general range of fees that could be associated with your request.

Timeline

An approximation of the permit process:

- 1) Submit application and \$200 fee;
- 2) Within five business days of receipt of application, the monument will provide a confirmed approval or denial of the application via email. A written explanation for denial and/or a written estimate of fees for the approved application will be provided with the approval or denial letter.

- 3) Permit for an approved application will be issued five business days prior to the first day of the shoot.
- 4) Tech scout(s), selection of dates, and timeline of events will occur based on the individual permits.
- 5) Close out of final paperwork will occur no later than seven business days after the final day of the shoot.

Local Contacts and Area Services

You can find a detailed list of location managers and scouts from the local area who can answer questions about services

that may be needed for your permit on our website: www.nps.gov/whsa/permits-for-special-park-uses.htm.

Distances and Travel Times

Alamogordo is the nearest town to the monument. The distance from Alamogordo on Highway 70 West to the entrance to White Sands National Monument is 13 miles and takes approximately 20 minutes to drive.

the drive. The paved, blacktop road turns to a plowed gypsum sand road at approximately four miles. This packed gypsum sand road is very firm and does not require any special vehicle to continue into the dunes.

Distances and travel times in the monument: When you enter the monument from Highway 70 West, you will be traveling on Dunes Drive. Dunes Drive is eight miles one way and will take you into the Heart of the Dunes, where the tall, bright white sand dunes are located. The road is a two-lane road with soft shoulders and pull-out areas along

Travel time from the entrance of the monument to the end of the eight mile Dunes Drive is approximately 15 minutes. The speed limits in the monument start at 45 mph and drop to 35mph and 25 mph along Dunes Drive. Please obey all posted speed limits.