



Commercial Filming, Photography & Sound Recording Information and Guidelines

The National Park Service (NPS) is mandated to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” (16 U.S.C. 1) For this purpose the Department of the Interior developed RM-53, which governs filming, photography and sound recordings in National Parks. Under these guidelines NPS units have the authority and responsibility to manage, permit and/or deny filming, photography and sound recordings in ways consistent with park management and mission.

It is the policy of the NPS to allow commercial photography, still photography, filming and sound recordings to the fullest extent possible while providing for the protection of park resources and ensuring the enjoyment of those resources by park visitors.

Filming permits are required for any filming or photography when the activity:

- Involves the use of a model(s), actor(s), set(s), or prop(s) that are not part of the location’s natural or cultural resources or administrative facilities.
- Takes place at location(s) where or when members of the public are generally not allowed.
- Requires access to the park after normal working hours.
- Incurs additional administrative costs to the Park to monitor the activity.
- Indicates potential for resource damage, including wildlife, or undue disruption of visitor activities.

For purposes of definition, "filming" or "film-making" is commercial still photography, motion picture photography, videotaping or sound recording. Documentaries, travelogues, feature stories and similar types of filming require a permit, if the elements listed above exist.

A permit is not required for:

- Visitors using a camera and/or a recording device for his/her own personal use and within normal visitation areas and hours.
- Press coverage of breaking news. Although breaking news would not require a permit, this activity is subject to time, place and manner restrictions, if warranted, to maintain order and ensure the safety of the public and the media and protect park natural and cultural resources.

Breaking news is defined as an event that cannot be covered at any other time or location. The determination of what is considered to be breaking news is at the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her representative. Documentaries filmed specifically for sale to a news station or educational

channel are considered a commercial venture and require a permit. News media crews, when not covering newsworthy/news making events, but shooting human interest, staged events, or other topics are required to obtain a permit before proceeding with filming.

Permits issued for commercial photography (advertising) specifically prohibit implied or stated endorsement by the National Park Service. Identifiable NPS equipment, uniforms, signs, buildings or insignia may not be portrayed in commercial advertising in any way that would imply NPS endorsement of the product.

Costs : A \$50.00 non-refundable permit application processing fee is required for all applicants and must be received before a permit will be considered regardless of whether or not a permit is ultimately issued (additional charges may be incurred if the permit application process requires over three hours of staff time). All commercial filming permits and still photography permits are subject to cost recovery and a location fee. No waivers are allowed.

If your request is approved, and depending upon the size and scope of the project, we may determine that it is necessary to have NPS staff monitor permitted activities. Cost recovery rates are calculated at \$50/hour/permit monitor, and are not prorated. Also, if at the request of the Permittee, NPS staff assists with permitted activities, in such ways as scouting, monitoring, consulting, providing interviews, etc., the Permittee shall be billed \$50/hour/employee. All charges will include travel time to and from filming location(s).

The location fee is calculated per day and must be based on the following schedule and is determined by the type of activity (commercial filming versus still photography) and the number of people on park lands associated with the permitted activity. There is no deviation from the schedule.

Commercial Filming/Videos		Still Photography	
1 - 2 people, camera & tripod only	\$0/day		
1 - 10 people	\$150/day	1 - 10 people	\$50/day
11 - 30 people	\$250/day	11 - 30 people	\$150/day
31 - 49 people	\$500/day	Over 30 people	\$250/day
Over 50 people	\$750/day		

The applicant or permittee is required to notify the NPS of any delays or schedule changes at least 36 hours in advance. Should the applicant or permittee fail to provide such advance notification, the applicant or permittee is responsible for paying all costs incurred by the NPS anytime during the application, permitting, or operational process, including those due to cancellation, moving, or rescheduling of the project. Such payment will include but not be limited to a non-refundable charge for each staff person scheduled for the affected activity. Such charge will, at a minimum, be the equivalent of two hours overtime for each employee assigned. These costs may be recovered through the posting of a bond at the time of application, or through a bill for collection presented at any point after initial contact.

Insurance and Bonding: Permittees will be required to obtain a certificate of insurance showing general liability coverage, **issued by a United States company**, which **must** show the **U.S. Government, National Park Service, Ozark National Scenic Riverways** as additionally insured. Short term policies must show coverage on "occurrence" basis. The amount of commercial liability insurance may range from \$300,000 to several million depending on the nature of the project. Additional amounts may be required for high risk activities.

Certain activities may trigger the need for the permittee to post a refundable damage bond. The amount of the bond will be equivalent to the estimated cost to NPS for clean up, repair or rehabilitation of resources or facilities that could potentially be impacted by the permit activities. At the conclusion of the permit, the bond will be returned to the permittee after costs of clean up, repair or rehabilitation are deducted.

Applications: Complete the *Application for Commercial Filming/Still Photography Permit* (NPS form 10-932). Please review the **Terms & Conditions** below before submitting your permit application as they outline the specific requirements and restrictions of the permit. It is important that your response be as detailed as possible concerning your proposed activity. For example, we must know how long you propose to film, photograph or record, where you propose to film, photograph and/or record, the type of equipment to be used, and any proposed special effects. You are also encouraged to attach copies of storyboards or scripts. **You will not be permitted to arrive and then select locations on the day of shooting.** If you are not familiar with the park, we highly recommend an advance trip to scout locations.

Mail the completed application along with the required permit application processing fee to: Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Attn.: Commercial Services Program Office, P. O. Box 490, Van Buren, Missouri 63965.

The information on the application will be used by NPS staff to evaluate the impact of the proposed activity on park resources and visitors. Most requests can be processed within 5 working days. Requests which involve multiple locations, complex logistics or coordination with other visitor activities will require a minimum of 15 working days to process. Projects which require environmental or cultural resource evaluation must be submitted not less than 30 days before the start of proposed activities. Due to the lack of park staff available to assist with scouting, monitoring, consulting, providing interviews, etc. it may be necessary to allow only one crew in the park at a given time. Applications are handled in the order in which they are received. Priority will not be given to urgent requests.

Filming applications will be returned to the applicant if submitted incomplete, cannot be approved as submitted, or are received without payment or without a social security or Federal Tax Identification Number. This may delay the consideration of a permit.

Permits: All projects will be reviewed to ensure protection of the park's resources and values, and that no disruption of normal visitor use will occur. A permit within areas administered by the NPS may be denied or revoked if the project:

- 1) Poses a threat to the park resources;
- 2) Places unreasonable burdens on supervisory capacity of the park staff;
- 3) The permittee does not agree to pay assessed cost recovery;
- 4) Would conflict unduly with the public's normal use;
- 5) The Permittee fails to obtain insurance, or to agree to pay assessed cost recovery;
- 6) The project depicts activities that are not permitted within the park;
- 7) The application does not contain sufficient information on which to base a permit.

In addition, a permit may be revoked if the Permittee fails to comply with the permit and/or conditions as written.

If your application is approved, a Special Use Permit will be prepared and mailed to you for signature. Upon receipt, please review, sign and return the permit to our office for the Superintendent's signature. After the Superintendent signs the permit, a copy of the permit will be forwarded to you. *The approved, signed copy must be in your possession at all times during the filming.*

Terms & Conditions: To maintain park natural and cultural resources and quality visitor experiences, the following restrictions and requirements apply to Special Use Permits for commercial filming and photography:

- 1) Filming activities will not conflict unduly with the visitors' experiences in the park. All park areas will remain open to the public. Visitors will be allowed to watch filming from an area identified by the Permittee and approved by the NPS.
- 2) Filming may take place only in areas open to the general public.
- 3) Set up and placement of permitted support equipment (i.e., tripods, cameras, etc.) on public walkways is prohibited.
- 4) Filming equipment and props cannot be dragged or driven off road or off trail.

- 5) Disrupting or stopping vehicle traffic is not allowed.
- 6) All traffic regulations must be obeyed. Vehicles must remain on established roadways, roadside pullouts or parking areas. Crews must utilize established pullouts and parking areas at all times while filming, loading and unloading crew and equipment. Vehicle access on public unpaved roads may be restricted following rain or other conditions that may damage wet areas.
- 7) The Permittee and participants will not disturb, adversely effect, alter, damage or remove any natural/cultural resources, archeological or historic artifacts.
- 8) Wildlife will not be harassed, disturbed, manipulated, baited, fed, called with any wildlife-calling device or filmed by means of spotlighting (the use of artificial light).
- 9) Contacting/interviewing park visitors is prohibited unless accompanied by an NPS representative.
- 10) Government equipment may not be loaned, rented, or diverted from normal use for purposes of filming.
- 11) Each day Permittee will remove all equipment, props, litter and debris from filming location(s), returning the site to its original condition within one hour after completion of filming. All tracks and other visible signs resulting from filming activity will be eliminated upon completion of filming activities. This will be done under the direction of the NPS. Cleanup will be to NPS satisfaction with final inspection made by an NPS representative. Permittee will provide for proper and immediate disposal of these items and all litter.
- 12) The use of firearms, including the discharging of blank ammunition and explosives, is prohibited.
- 13) Nudity is prohibited.
- 14) No employee of the NPS may work for the permittee in any capacity whatsoever while in uniform or if directly involved in the supervision of the Permittee. NPS employees may not perform or appear to perform official duties for purposes of filming unless such performances have been approved by the NPS. NPS employees may not read/perform/scripted materials. No personal gratuity of any nature will be offered to any employee of the Government in connection with the exercise of the privilege granted.
- 15) Aerial photography must be performed at a minimum altitude of 2000 feet above ground level. The use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), including drones, remote controlled aircraft, etc. is prohibited.
- 16) Violation of the terms and conditions of the permit may result in the immediate revocation of the permit.

Other stipulations may be added depending on the specific nature of your request.

If you have any questions about the application process or your permit, please contact the Commercial Services Program Office at (573) 323-4949, or email: paula_hull@nps.gov.