



Film Permit Frequently Asked Questions

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division

800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009-1740 • (805) 654-2457 • <https://www.vcrma.org/film-permits>

If you are filming in the unincorporated areas of Ventura County, you will need complete a film permit application and obtain a film permit for filming activities. This page will provide you with additional information and answers to help you understand the County of Ventura's film permit process.

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When to Apply [Top](#)

Q. When do I need to apply for a Film Permit? [Top](#)

A. If you are filming in the unincorporated areas of Ventura County (including private property) and your project consists of any of the following, a film permit must be obtained:

- TV Series
- TV Movie
- TV Pilot
- Commercial
- Feature Film
- Photo Still
- Music Video
- Infomercial
- Public Service Announcement
- Documentary
- Web Production or Series
- Televised Live Sporting Event

Filming for personal use such as family events, weddings, graduations, parties, and other holiday activities are exempt from obtaining a film permit. Student film productions may also be exempt from obtaining a film permit. Please see the student film section below to determine if a student film production qualifies for this exemption.

Q. Does my filming location allow the issuance of film permits? [Top](#)

A. A film permit can be issued for a property/filming location if:

1. The property's **zoning** allows the issuance of a film permit.

Some properties have zoning that does not allow the issuance of a film permit or a film permit with waivers. To find out the zoning for your property or a specific film location, click [here](#). Contact the Film Permit Coordinator to see what type of film permit, if any, is allowed in your zone.

2. The property is located on a **legal lot**.

The State Subdivision Map Act, and Ventura County Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances prohibit the issuance of any permits on lots that are illegally subdivided. Therefore, prior to the issuance of a permit or other entitlement, the County must determine whether the lot is legally created.

Note: The assignment of a tax assessor parcel number and the payment of property taxes does not guarantee that the parcel is legal. For example, the legality of a lot may be affected by the way the lot was created (deed, lease, map, etc.). The unincorporated area of Ventura County contains a considerable number of suspected illegal lots that have been bought and sold over the years. County staff at the Planning counter can provide information on whether the parcel in question is known to be legal, may be illegal, or provide assistance when not enough information is known to make a determination on the legal lot status.

For more information on legal lots, click [here](#).

3. The property has **no active violations**.

A film permit will not be issued if any of the proposed filming locations is on a property where an active violation exists. All violations must be abated prior to issuance of a film permit. For more information on how to abate a code violation, contact the enforcement agency listed on the property owner's notice of violation.

Application Process [Top](#)

Q. What do I include in a film permit application? [Top](#)

A. The film permit application must include:

1. A complete and signed [Ventura County Film Permit application](#) (including a detailed description of filming activities, all assessor parcel numbers of all filming locations, completed questionnaire, etc.);
2. A [site map](#) that indicates specifically where all of the filming activities will occur on the parcels; and,
3. An Owner's Authorization signed by the property owner for each location (If an agent is signing on behalf of the property owner, submit the original copy of this [form](#)).
4. The Film Permit Application Fee

Q. Who do I send the application to? [Top](#)

A. The completed application can be emailed to the Film Permit Coordinator at film.permits@ventura.org.

Q. How long does it take to obtain a film permit? [Top](#)

A. Requests for filming in the unincorporated area of Ventura County should be made at least **three days** prior to the start of filming activities, and at least **one week** for requests in which waivers are required. An incomplete application (i.e. application missing insurance documents or signed owner's authorization) may be submitted for early review. However, a film permit will not be issued until the application is completed and approved.

Q. How will I receive my approved film permit? [Top](#)

A. Once approved, the Film Permit Coordinator will email a copy of the approved film permit to the applicant.

Q. When would I apply for a film permit with waivers? [Top](#)

A. A film permit "with waivers" is required when filming activities exceed any of the following thresholds:

- After hours filming activities (i.e. before 7:00 am or after 10:00 pm);
- Excessive noise (e.g. explosions, gunfire, aircraft), light, glare, or dust exceeding that which is normal for the area, except when the nearest residence is more than 2,000 feet from noise source;
- Exceed a total of 60 days on any lot in any 180-day period; or,
- Other thresholds listed in Section 8107-11.1.a-f of the *Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance*.

The film production will need to obtain fifty percent plus one (50%+1) approval from the residences which may be impacted by the filming activities (60% if located within the Coastal Zone).

The "waiver" process is in lieu of a much longer Conditional Use Permit process which might normally be required when these thresholds are exceeded. Note: Some properties have zoning that does not allow the issuance of a film permit with waivers. In these areas, filming cannot exceed the above thresholds.

You can download the full Film Permit Waiver Instructions at this [link](#).

Forms [Top](#)

Q. *Where can I obtain a copy of the film permit application?* [Top](#)

A. The application can be submitted electronically at this [link](#).

Q. *Do I need Insurance?* [Top](#)

A. The County of Ventura Planning Division does not require the production company to provide insurance if filming on private property/locations.

However, insurance is required if filming on County owned properties by the General Services Agency (GSA) or County roads and right-of ways by the Public Works Transportation Department. Please contact the respective agencies for more information on their insurance requirements.

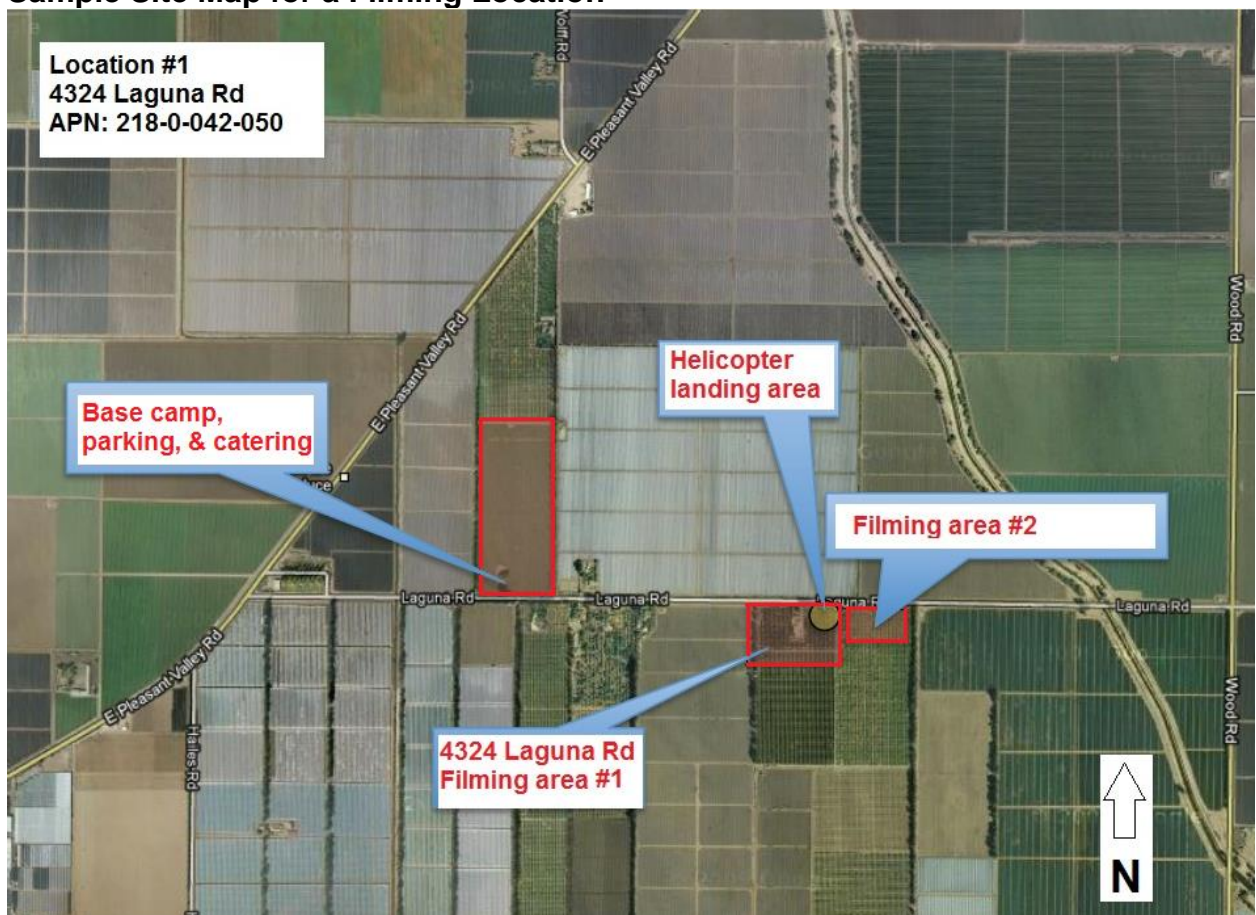
Q. What is a site map? [Top](#)

A. A site map is an aerial image of the filming location. All filming activities (i.e. base camp, parking, filming areas, etc.) must be indicated on the site map. Please provide a site map with the film permit application if:

- The production requires waivers (e.g. filming outside of regular hours); or,
- The production is located on a location with multiple APNs (Assessor Parcel Numbers) (e.g. Ventura Farms or Big Sky Movie Ranch – 4927 Bennett Road).

To find the APN(s) of a property, visit the Assessor's [website](#).

Sample Site Map for a Filming Location



Q. *What is an Agent Authorization Form?* [Top](#)

- A. For film permit applications, the property owner must sign the owner's authorization form (not the resident), unless the property owner designates an agent. In order to sign on behalf of the property owner, the agent will need to complete the agent authorization form. The agent authorization form is available [here](#). In addition to the original agent authorization form, provide a copy of the property owner's driver's license or notarization. This form will be kept on file by the Planning Division.

Q. *How do I obtain a W-9 Tax Form?* [Top](#)

- A. Requests for the W-9 tax forms can be made to the Film Permit Coordinator. The form will be emailed to the applicant or production company.

Q. *How do I obtain a Business License for filming?* [Top](#)

- A. A business tax certificate is the equivalent of a business license and is required for all film productions in unincorporated Ventura County. After you receive the film permit, the County Tax Collector will email the applicant a pdf version of the business tax certificate. The business tax certificate should be stapled to the film permit and kept at the filming location. On occasions where the Film Permit Coordinator issues the film permit after 4:00 pm, the County Tax Collector will likely send the business tax certificate the next morning.

The County Tax Collector can be reached via telephone at (805) 654-2653 or via email at Norma.Pimentel@ventura.org.

Fees [Top](#)

Q. How much does a film permit cost in Ventura County? [Top](#)

- A. The Planning Division assesses film permit fees and collects some fees for other departments. All fees are nonrefundable. You can get more information on the film permit fees at this [link](#).

Q. How do I obtain an invoice? [Top](#)

- A. The invoice will be sent via email to the applicant after the Film Permit Coordinator reviews the application.

Q. How do I pay the film permit fees? [Top](#)

- A. The Film Permit Application Fee (\$300) must be paid at the time of submittal. Payment can be made in the form of a credit card payment online (<https://vcca.ventura.org>), cash or check, payable to the "County of Ventura." Please include the film permit number on the check. After the Film Permit Application has been initialized, the Film Permit Coordinator will email the applicant an invoice of the fees. All fees must be paid prior to the issuance of a Film Permit.

If the payment is mailed, please note that it must arrive before the first prep or film date (whichever is earlier). Mail the payment to the following address:

**County of Ventura
Attn: Film Permits Coordinator - Planning Division
800 S. Victoria Ave. L#1740
Ventura, CA 93009**

If the payment is dropped off, the Planning Division is located in the Hall of Administration in the Ventura County Government Center. Click [here](#) for directions. You can drop off the payment at the Planning Counter between 7:30 am and 4:30 pm.

Other Questions [Top](#)

Q. How do I film on County roads or right-of-ways? [Top](#)

- A. Filming on any road owned and maintained by the County of Ventura requires an [Encroachment Permit](#) from the Transportation Division. Please contact Pete Wessel at (805) 654-2047 or via email at pete.wessel@ventura.org or Anitha Balan at (805)

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654-2071 or via email at anitha.balan@ventura.org to obtain an Encroachment Permit.

All Encroachment Permits will require a base camp located on private property.

County roads located in the Non-Coastal Zone do not require a film permit. However, if the base camp is located in unincorporated Ventura County, a film permit must be obtained for the base camp.

County roads located in the Coastal Zone will require a film permit. Click [here](#) to see if your filming locations fall within the Non-Coastal Zone or the Coastal Zone.

Applicants may also call the California State Film Commission to request local law enforcement to conduct ITC (Intermittent Traffic Control) and full road closures at (323) 817-4103.

Q. Do I need a Fire Safety Officer (FSO)? [Top](#)

- A.** The Ventura County Fire Department requires that all film permit applications be reviewed. The applicant must contact Lori Ross, Filming Fire Safety Coordinator, at (805) 947-8535 prior to the submittal of a film permit application. For more information and a breakdown of the Fire Department fees, please follow this [link](#).

The Filming Fire Safety Coordinator will determine if an FSO will be assigned to a production. For more information on the Fire Department fees, download the Ventura County Fire Department Department's Questionnaire for Filming at this [link](#).

Q. Do I need a film permit for a student film? [Top](#)

- A.** You are exempt from the requirement for a Ventura County Film Permit from the Planning Division if you meet all of the following criteria:
- a) You are currently enrolled as a student at an accredited film school;
 - b) You are filming a production related to coursework;
 - c) Your production (including prep, film, or strike) will not be between the hours of 10:00 pm to 7:00 am;
 - d) Your production will not generate an excessive amount of noise, dust, or light that exceeds that which is normal for the area; and,
 - e) Your production will be filmed in the non-coastal zone.

Although a film permit from the Planning Division is not required, students are required to contact other related agencies, such as the Ventura County Fire

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Department, Environmental Health Division, and the Transportation Division to verify whether a permit is required for student-related filming activities.

Q. How do I make changes to an approved film permit (apply for a Film Permit Amendment)? [Top](#)

A. After a film permit has been issued, minor aspects of the original film permit may be amended if related to the production from the original film permit.

Examples of minor amendments include:

- Adding or changing prep/film/strike days.
- Extending the production times.
- Changing the production schedule.
- Shifting the production schedule (e.g. moving the entire project back one week).
- Changing or adding new activity that may trigger a need to obtain permits from other agencies (e.g. Fire Permits, Encroachment Permit, etc.)
- Other circumstances that the Film Permit Coordinator concludes would be acceptable prior to an application being submitted.

You can download the full Film Permit Amendment Instructions at this [link](#).

Q. How do I contact the Ventura County Film Permit Coordinator? [Top](#)

County of Ventura Planning Division
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Film Permit website: <https://www.vcrma.org/film-permits>