

Safety Guidelines - Filming in Calgary

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Sources: City of Calgary Fire Department and Calgary Police Services

Calgary Fire Department

Film productions must inform the Calgary Fire Department (CFD) about any filming activities taking place in Calgary.

If the production is using **City-owned assets or services**, the City's Film Friendly Team will connect them with the CFD.

For filming on **private property**, it is the production company's responsibility to contact the CFD directly and share their filming plans.

Fire Department Access

In the event of an emergency, call 911 and follow the procedures laid out in your site-specific Emergency Response Plan.

To enable emergency service access:

- Fire access roads are required if any part of a building's first-floor exterior wall is more than 50 m from where fire trucks can reach.
- Access roads must be at least 6 m wide and have at least 13 ft, 6 inches of vertical clearance.
- Turnarounds are required for dead ends over 50 m.
- Production vehicles, trucks and trailers must not block fire access roads, exits or fire protection equipment.
- On filming locations that are fenced or gated, keys must be readily available for emergency access.

The Fire Safety Officer (FSO)

Fire Safety Officers (FSOs) and the fire department must understand the specific activities involved when filming in Calgary. Once the details are provided, the FSO will assess whether the proposed activities are safe and can be approved.

Based on this information, the FSO can share their requirements and concerns. These may include the type and amount of equipment on site, safe exits from public buildings, fire department access, set construction, parking, use of aircraft, flammable materials, special effects, stunts, and more.

A risk assessment meeting during pre-production with production staff and the FSO may be required, along with a Production Fire Safety Plan.

Safety Inspections

An inspection will be conducted before the first day of filming to confirm that all agreed-upon safety requirements have been met. If any changes are made to filming plans that could affect safety, the CFD must be notified.

Production companies are expected to actively monitor their filming activities and ensure they do not create safety risks. If a production fails to manage safety or correct violations, the CFD may take enforcement actions including:

- Issued warnings
- Temporarily stopping production
- Assigning a full-time standby FSO at the production's expense

During the CFD's review of the filming activities, the production company can expect to:

- Identify a liaison for communication with the CFD for the duration of production.
- Review the filming plan with the CFD including:
 - Scheduled dates and times of filming
 - Identifying any fire or safety risks
 - Use of special effects (smoke, pyrotechnics, etc.)
 - Stunt plans
 - Use of vacant properties
 - Tents with an over 500-person occupant load
 - Set equipment that may present a fire hazard (generators, lighting, obstructed exits, alterations to fire protection systems, etc.)
 - Productions that may cause the public to gather and/or large crews that may affect evacuation
 - Productions occurring in forested or mountainous brush covered areas where a potential for wildfire may exist
 - All built sets (interior and exterior)

The CFD will determine if regular site inspections are enough, or if a standby FSO is needed on set.

- If regular inspections are needed, the location must be checked before filming begins to confirm it meets safety requirements. Any agreements made will be shared with other FSOs and enforced.

Set Safety

Maintaining a clean, well-organized set helps ensure safety. Production companies are responsible for safe storage of combustibles and for designating smoking areas with proper disposal. All buildings and sets must be kept clean and free of fire hazards and proper disposal of waste is required:

- Keep areas that aren't continuously monitored free of flammable trash.
- Store combustible waste in non-combustible, approved containers.
- Use self-closing metal containers in areas with flammable materials.
- Store ashes in approved metal containers until they are removed.
- Remove dry vegetation within 6 meters of any building.
- Do not store anything in mechanical, boiler, or electrical rooms.

Examples of Housekeeping Hazards

- Sawdust and wood scraps left from set construction
- Trash or flammable materials left on floors, stages, or platforms
- Dry vegetation too close to buildings
- Props or equipment blocking exits or fire equipment (e.g., extinguishers, hoses, valves)
- Flammable set materials like hay bales, trees, plastic, foam, etc., not treated with fire retardant
- Unsafe storage or disposal of hazardous, combustible, or flammable liquids

Exits and Exit Routes

- Post exit signs in any room or area with more than 60 people.
- Keep a 1 m wide clear path around the perimeter of soundstages or approved facilities ([NFPA 140 4.10.3](#)), as approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction.
- Follow posted occupancy limits - overcrowding is a serious safety risk.
- Keep electrical cables for lighting and power neat and out of the way. Where possible, run them overhead, in cable trays, or tape them down to prevent tripping or blocking exits.

Portable Gas Generators

- Have the correct size fire extinguisher nearby and ensure staff are trained to use it.
- Check the generator for fuel leaks or oil-soaked parts.
- Do not place generators under flammable areas like eaves, dry plants, sprinkler heads, or near fire equipment (hydrants, standpipes, exits, etc.).
- To avoid delays, fuel generators to full capacity before arriving on set. If refueling is needed, turn off the generator first and enforce a strict “no smoking” policy.
- Make sure ventilation doors are opened on generators that require manual operation.
- Secure generator trailers or tractors properly - use emergency brakes and/or wheel chocks.
- Inspect for electrical hazards such as:
 - Proper grounding
 - No frayed cables
 - Correct cable connectors
 - Bus bars protected from unauthorized access
- Minor issues may be fixed by the Fire Safety Officer (FSO), but serious problems must be handled by a licensed electrician.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in the following areas:

- In forests, brush-covered, or mountainous areas
- Where pyrotechnic special effects are used or stored
- Where flammable liquids or gases are used or stored (e.g., for special effects or fueling)
- Inside tents or air-supported structures
- Near spray painting or finishing areas

Prop Firearms

A City of Calgary Film & Theatre Firearms Discharge Permit is required for all productions using firearms and replicas, including airsoft, pellet, BB, purpose built and cast models.

It is the responsibility of all production companies to follow all relevant federal, provincial and municipal laws when using, transporting or handling firearms, weapons, ammunition or powder. If a prop firearm is to be discharged, visible and/or audible to the public during filming, a prop firearm permit is required.

Prop Firearm Permit

Please allow for a minimum of **3 weeks** for Calgary Police to process a Film & Theatre Firearms Discharge Permit Application.

- If filming on **City property**, please complete the Film & Theatre Firearms Discharge Permit Application and send it to film@calgary.ca. You will be contacted within two business days to discuss the request details.
- If filming on **private property**, please complete the Film & Theatre Firearms Discharge Permit Application and send it directly to firearmssupport@calgary.ca.

Prop Firearm Safety

- All firearms on a set should be in the care and charge of the designated handler who should:
 - Hold a valid Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) and any certifications required by the [Firearms Act](#) and the [Chief Firearms Office](#).
 - Be familiar with the specific weapons being used, including their registration and safety requirements.
 - Know how to properly load and unload the firearm.
 - Check each weapon before and after every use.
 - Keep a daily inventory of all weapons in their care.
 - Ensure all legal requirements for storing, transporting and using weapons and ammunition are always followed, as outlined in the Firearms Act and related regulations.
- Only firearms made specifically for theatrical use by qualified professionals should be used.
- Live ammunition is never allowed on set, at any time.
- Firearms that will be fired must not be altered unless:
 - The changes follow all laws and regulations
 - The work is done by a qualified Gunsmith

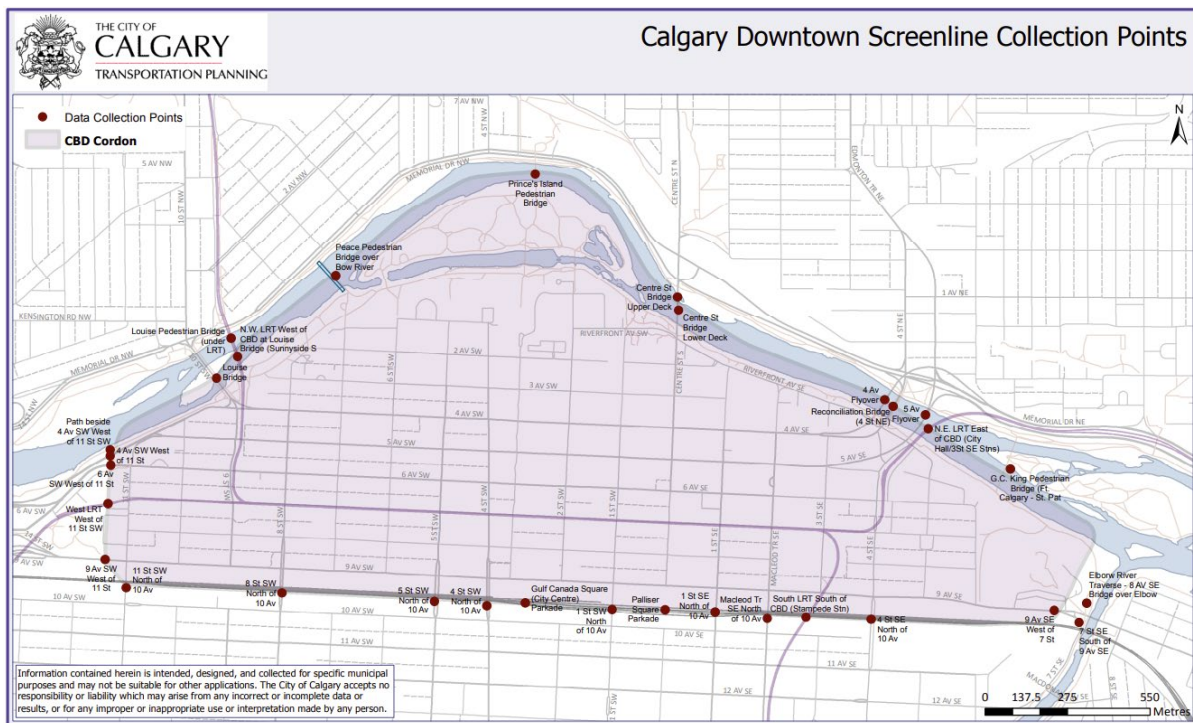
Refueling Requirements

All operators must adhere to [City of Calgary Bylaws 13M2004 and 60M90](#)

- All equipment must be turned off during refueling.
- Drivers must have current Transportation of Dangerous goods certification and show proof if requested by a Fire Safety Codes Officer.

Refueling Locations

- Refueling is not permitted within 7.5 meters of a building, in a covered parking structure, on public streets or on public walk/roadways.
- Refueling must be done on private property with the owner or business' permission.
- Diesel generators may be refueled on public streets only if the area has no public access and all safety requirements are met.
- Refueling is not allowed in the downtown core (purple area on the map below) between 6:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday to Saturday, unless carrying less than 400 litres of fuel.



Safety

- Refuelers must always display a 'NO SMOKING' sign.
- A fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 2A 10BC must be on board.
- Refueling vehicles must have static charge protection, including a grounding strap that is permanently attached to the vehicle or clamped to the equipment being fueled.

Fuel Storage and Dispensing

- Tanks under 450 L must comply with [CSA-B620](#) and or [CAN/CGSB-43.146](#)
- Only approved hoses and automatic-closing nozzles may be used for dispensing flammable liquids.
- Refueling vehicles must have an emergency shut-off switch for spills or leaks.
- Vehicles may carry a maximum of 450 L of flammable liquids. Vehicles carrying more must comply with [Transport Canada regulations](#).
- Refueling vehicles must never be left unattended in areas posing a fire risk.