



Wellington
City of Film
Te Upoko o te Ika

WELLINGTON FILMING PROTOCOLS



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INTRODUCTION

Wellington is globally renowned as one of the best places in the world to make movies. Our studio infrastructure, creative capability, world-leading post-production facilities, prop makers and diverse range of filming locations make Wellington a landmark for iconic storytelling.

From the world's most successful directors to passionate students developing their craft, rarely a day goes by without someone calling "ACTION!"

The Wellington region is officially recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as a 'creative city of film'.

Wellington is committed to a screen sector that benefits our communities through best practice and seeing our stories on screen. Each year, film production in Wellington contributes millions of dollars to the Wellington economy, provides thousands of jobs to residents and engages a diverse range of local businesses.

Screen Wellington champions all screen content from film, television, commercials, social media content and gaming.

This document is the go-to guide for all things filming on-location in the Wellington region.

If what you're after isn't in this guide, feel free to [contact Screen Wellington](#) - we're more than happy to help.



About WellingtonNZ

WellingtonNZ is a council-controlled organisation tasked with enhancing prosperity, vibrancy and liveability across the Wellington region. Our mission is to create a thriving region for all; with more businesses succeeding and employing more people, more people participating in and attending events and experiences, and supporting more collaboration and engagement across the region.

Our ambition is to promote Wellington as a region to visit, live, study, work, do business and invest. Through Wellington storytelling, we intend to bring Wellington to the world and in turn, bring the world to Wellington.

The Wellington Regional Economic Development Plan 2022-2032 (REDP) which covers the Wellington-Wairarapa-Horowhenua region, identifies Screen, Creative and Digital as one of four key sectors that can be accelerated to build on our competitive advantage and future opportunities.

Screen Wellington

Our regional film office, Screen Wellington, is a business unit of WellingtonNZ and a member of the Regional Film Offices of New Zealand (RFONZ) network. Screen Wellington's core functions include:

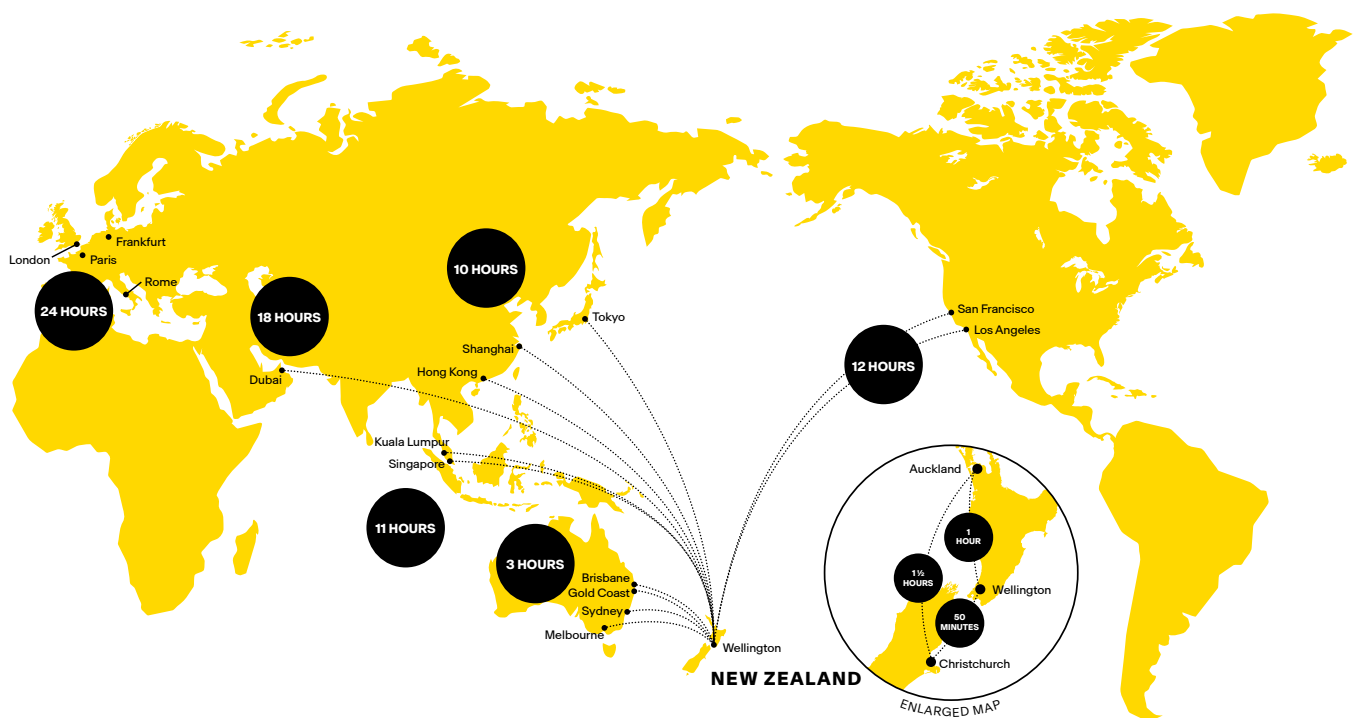
- **Attraction** of domestic and international productions to our region
- **Sector development** including supporting skills development, the tertiary sector and local producers with IP and content development
- **Facilitation** of filming requests on public and council-controlled locations. We work with local councils, iwi (Māori tribe), landowners, Department of Conservation

(DoC) and the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) to ensure filming across the Wellington region meets local by-laws, minimises disruption and respects the whenua (land).

The key to promoting Wellington as an attractive place to film and maintain its "film-friendly" status is through efficient facilitation. Screen productions are fast paced in nature, work to tight time frames and often include last minute changes. Being a city that can accommodate these requests is essential for attracting productions and encouraging repeat business. We all have a part to play in maintaining and caring for the whenua so future filmmaking can happen.

HOW TO GET TO WELLINGTON

Getting to Wellington is seamless, with direct international flights within major cities like Sydney, Melbourne, and Los Angeles, and easy domestic connections within Aotearoa.



But it's not just the journey that's appealing, Wellington has become a magnet for global film and television production. International companies like Netflix, Amazon Studios, Warner Bros and Universal Studios have chosen Wellington for its world-class production facilities, including the legendary Wētā Workshop and Park Road Post. With its stunning natural backdrops, compact and accessible city layout, and thriving creative community, Wellington is the ultimate destination for filmmakers looking to bring bold visions to life. Wellington also offers all levels of accommodation and privacy for visitors to the capital.

Wellington's ferry terminal is a gateway to adventure, connecting New Zealand's North and South Islands with multiple daily sailings across the stunning Cook Strait. Located just minutes from the city centre, the terminal offers easy access to passenger and vehicle ferries operated by Interislander and Bluebridge. The scenic three-hour journey to Picton is a favourite among filmmakers and travellers alike, offering breathtaking views of rugged coastlines, rolling hills, and the tranquil Marlborough Sounds – making it not just a mode of transport, but a cinematic experience.

FILMING IN WELLINGTON

Locations

Wellington boasts an incredible variety of filming locations – from urban landscapes to coastal vistas and lush forests. Screen Wellington makes it easy to explore these options through its ever-expanding online directory of available filming locations, accessible here:

Explore filming locations in Wellington

➤ [Filming locations in Wellington](#)

If the location you're interested in isn't listed in the directory, don't worry – you're still welcome to apply for a filming permit. The Screen Wellington team will review your request and assess the feasibility of filming at your chosen location.



Production facilities

Wellington offers world-class facilities and vendors to help make your project come to life. From sound studios, production office space to crew directories, Wellington offers some of the most skilled professionals in the industry.

Explore Wellington's Screen industry directory

➤ [Screen industry directory](#)

Crew

Wellington offers some exceptional crew that have worked on some of the biggest projects. Get in touch with Screen Wellington who can provide directories showcasing the talented people working in Wellington.



WHEN DO YOU NEED A PERMIT?

Film permits on public land

A permit is required for any filming on public land. This includes parks, reserves, beaches, footpaths, roads, sports fields and similar locations. A permit is required for any production regardless of its size, impact, or whether it's commercial or non-commercial in nature. For clarity, this includes film, television, advertisements, social media content, student assessments or training/corporate videos.

Note: This permit requirement does not apply to news-gathering activities intended for immediate release.

Permits serve as a contractual agreement between the production company and the council. They authorise the use of council-owned land for filming purposes, as outlined in the approved application. Screen Wellington facilitates these agreements, acting as an intermediary between productions and the relevant council.

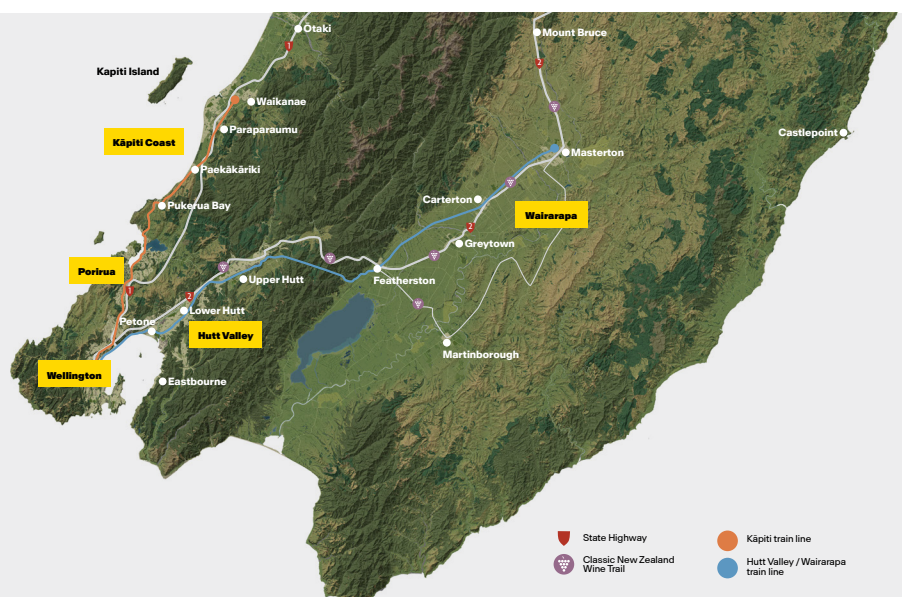
The Greater Wellington region stretches from the north of Ōtaki on the west coast, across to north of Castlepoint on the east coast. It takes in Kāpiti Coast, Porirua, Wellington City, Hutt Valley and the Wairarapa and covers 8,111km² of the lower North Island. We have a coastal marine area of 7,867km² with almost 500km of coastline and there are 320km of rivers and waterways.

Who do we work with?

- Department of Conservation
- Greater Wellington Regional Council
- Wellington International Airport
- Various Wellington venues and local businesses
- Mana whenua
- Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)
- KiwiRail
- Maritime NZ

Who do we permit for?

- Wellington City Council
- Hutt City Council
- Upper Hutt City Council
- Porirua City Council
- Kāpiti Coast District Council
- South Wairarapa District Council
- Carterton District Council
- Masterton District Council



APPLYING FOR A PERMIT

Screen Wellington facilitates and issues film permits to productions that apply to film within the Wellington region. Screen Wellington uses the site FilmApp to track permit applications.

Before submitting a permit application, productions are strongly encouraged to review:

- [Wellington Filming Protocols Guide](#)
- The '[Before you Film](#)' ↗ page on our website.

Proper preparation is essential. Submitting all required documents and information ensures a streamlined permitting process and helps prevent delays or disruptions.

Commercial vs non-commercial and low vs high impact productions

In Wellington, the filming process and permit requirements are the same for both commercial and non-commercial projects. However, identifying your project type helps us understand its economic impact and whether location-based fees apply. We encourage all applicants to visit the 'Before you film' webpage and use the guide to check the commercial nature and impact of your production. This will help you understand any potential fees and ensure you have all the information needed before applying.

Location-based fees and exemptions

While there are no fees to obtain a film permit, some locations charge fees to support the maintenance and preservation of the land. These costs are set by the councils to ensure we are giving back to the whenua.

Location fees apply only to commercial productions.

Students, charities, and non-commercial productions are exempt.

If you believe your production should be exempt from location-based fees, please indicate this in your FilmApp application or contact Screen Wellington directly to discuss eligibility.

Parks, beaches and reserves

Productions must respect the natural environments in which they operate. These areas are carefully preserved by dedicated rangers who work to protect their ecosystems. For large productions, especially those filming in sensitive or fragile locations, a site visit may be required. During these visits, rangers will identify areas that must be treated with care or avoided entirely.

Screen Wellington issues permits for all parks within the Wellington region, except those managed by the DOC or the GWRC. Before applying for a permit, check who manages/owns the land you plan to film on, and contact the appropriate group for a permit/concession.

↗ [Department of Conservation permits](#)

↗ [Greater Wellington Regional Council Concessions](#)

Cemeteries and war memorials

Filming may be permitted in some cemeteries; however, each application is reviewed case by case. No filming is permitted on war memorials. Please contact Screen Wellington if you have any questions.

Filming on sites and places of cultural significance

When planning to film on sites of cultural or historical significance, it's essential to engage early with mana whenua. This ensures respectful collaboration, acknowledges and preserves the mana, and supports culturally appropriate storytelling. Screen Wellington has prepared some basic guidelines to assist, should you require them.



FILMING CONDITIONS

Filming in the road corridor

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) defines the road corridor as the area from the private property boundary on one side to the property boundary on the other. This includes the berm (grass verge), footpath and carriageway.

Does your filming change the usual way that pedestrians, motorists and cyclists would ordinarily use that section of the road corridor?		
YES	NO	MAYBE
<p><i>e.g. you plan to place a camera on the road</i></p> <p><i>e.g. you are filming from the footpath but the picture vehicle being filmed is not following NZTA road rules</i></p> <p>You will need a Traffic Management Plan (TMP)</p>	<p><i>e.g. filming a vehicle following the NZTA road rules from the footpath in a way that pedestrians are not blocked</i></p> <p><i>e.g. filming someone walking on the footpath from the footpath in a way that pedestrians are not blocked</i></p> <p>Only a permit is required.</p>	<p>If you plan to only film on a wide/double footpath, a TMP may not be required.</p> <p>Please contact Screen Wellington to assess whether you require a TMP.</p>

Traffic management

A TMP is a formal document detailing how traffic will be safely managed during filming or other activities that impact public roads. TMPs must be prepared by a certified traffic management provider and approved by the relevant road controlling authority (e.g., local council or NZTA). Preparation and approval typically take 2–3 weeks, so please factor this into your production timeline.

It is the responsibility of the Location Manager or Producer to arrange the TMP and obtain approval before submitting a film permit application. If a TMP is required, it must be included with your application. If the TMP is still being processed at the time of submission, please include a letter addressed to Screen Wellington confirming its status. Approval for

your permit can only occur once the TMP has been sighted.

Common types of TMPs used for filming:

- Stop/go traffic control
- Parking resolutions
- Road closures

These activities always require consultation and engagement with any businesses or residents who may be affected. Alongside consultation, letter drops to residents nearby may also be required.

For road closures within Wellington City Council jurisdiction, approval must be obtained through the Regulatory Processes Committee.

Note: Timeframes for processing vary between councils, so it is important to consult with Screen Wellington regarding their required lead times. Consider accessibility around footpaths for the whole community, including wheelchair users and those with prams.

Road closures

Road closures for filming purposes are rare and generally reserved for large-scale or high-impact productions. These require significant planning (including a TMP), public notification, and formal council approval.

City centre (CBD) road closures

In the CBD, road closures are typically only permitted on weekends, and even then, they are subject to restricted timeframes to minimise disruption to traffic and businesses:

- Permitted closure windows:
 - Before 12.00pm (midday)
 - After 4.00pm
- Closures during weekday peak hours are highly unlikely to be approved due to their impact on traffic flow, public transport, and commercial activity.

During a road closure

- Street signage and road markings may be temporarily modified (e.g. covered, altered for continuity), but must be restored to their original state before the road is reopened to the public.
- The production must ensure that public safety, emergency vehicle access, and

alternative transport routes are considered and clearly documented in the TMP.

Important considerations

All road closure requests must go through the Regulatory Processes Committee (for Wellington City Council).

Productions are responsible for:

- Contacting and liaising with a certified traffic management company
- Consulting with affected residents and businesses
- Providing advanced public notice (e.g., signage, letter drops)
- For the summer period, please check with each council for their summer shutdown dates as this may impact your filming activities.

Due to the complexity and time required for approval, it's strongly recommended you allow a minimum of 30 working days if a road closure is needed. Get in touch with Screen Wellington early in pre-production to ensure approvals are met in time for your filming activities.

Need free parking in the city?

Productions filming in the Wellington CBD are eligible for five free parking permits for metered parking. This excludes:

- Loading zones
- P5 or P10 spaces / temporary parking

If parking in a loading zone is required, a separate application to Wellington City Council (WCC) is needed.

To process parking permits, you must provide the registration details of each vehicle in your **FilmApp application**. Parking services will also check that each vehicle has a valid Warrant of Fitness (WOF).

For WCC, if on-street parking is required for crew vehicles or equipment, productions can engage with a traffic management company to discuss options. These companies can organise temporary 'No Parking' zones using approved signage and are responsible for submitting a parking resolution to WCC to legally suspend public parking in designated areas. Early coordination is essential to allow enough time for approvals and ensure the necessary space is secured for filming.

Drones

Under Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulations, you must obtain landowner approval to operate a drone over their property. When filming on public land, permission must be obtained from the relevant council – which is done through the permitting process.

When flying a drone, you must:

- Log your flight on [AirShare](#) ↗
- Comply with [Part 101 rules](#) ↗

- If your operation cannot meet Part 101 conditions, the drone pilot must hold a [Part 102 certificate](#) ↗
- Overseas RPAS qualifications are not accepted as Part 102 equivalents due to differing regulations

When applying for a film permit involving drone use, be sure to include annotated site maps in your application. These should clearly indicate where the drone will be flying, as well as its take-off and landing points.

Weapons and simulated violence

If your production involves scenes depicting violence, the use of police uniforms, or prop weapons, it is essential to notify the police at least two hours before filming begins.

Police Communication Centre
+64 4 381 2000

In addition, productions must take steps to avoid alarming the public. This includes:

- Clearly visible signage at the filming location

- Crew wearing high-visibility clothing
- Have crew onsite to answer questions from the public
- Letter drops to nearby residents or businesses, if appropriate

These measures help ensure public safety and maintain positive community relations during filming.

Fires

Productions must engage with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) early if planning to use open-air fires. A fire permit is required for any open-air fire.

↗ [Fire Permit System](#)

FENZ must also be notified on the day of any exterior smoke effects (or interior smoke effects that may be visible externally).

FENZ Wellington Communication Centre
+64 4 801 0812

Night filming, noise and light spill

Filming in residential areas – including the Wellington CBD – must comply with noise restrictions and light spill bylaws. Excessive noise and illumination between 10.00pm-6.00am may result in production shutdown.

To help reduce disturbances:

- Film 'night scenes' in winter from as early as 6.00pm
- Minimise crew size where possible

- Use RTs (radios) instead of shouting or megaphone
- Use silent generators, generators with noise reduction or sound absorbers
- Conduct a letter drop to notify nearby residents in advance for larger productions
- Where possible, schedule large vehicle movements during daytime

HEALTH AND SAFETY

For all filming, it is standard practice to complete the following documents to ensure your production meets relative health and safety law, policies and standards in New Zealand. Screen Wellington requires these documents as part of a permit application.

- Public Liability Insurance (minimum \$2m)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Production health and safety plan (*optional*)
- Site-specific risk assessment / Job Safety Analysis (JSA)

If your production does not have a risk register or Health and Safety plan and is unsure where to start, ScreenSafe offers a variety of useful templates and resources:

➤ [ScreenSafe Templates and Tools](#)

Wider risk assessment considerations

New Zealand's unique environment and strong cultural values, especially around conservation and Te Ao Māori (the māori world), mean productions must be respectful and responsible. Considering wider risks helps protect ecosystems, build trust with communities and iwi (māori tribe), and align with local council expectations.

Broader risk factors beyond standard health and safety can include:

- **Biodiversity and conservation:** Assess potential impacts on native flora and fauna, especially in ecologically sensitive or protected areas.
- **Cultural sensitivities:** Consider iwi/hapū relationships to land and waterways, and engage early where appropriate.
- **Public perception:** Evaluate how filming activities may be viewed by local communities, including disruption, visibility, and alignment with community values.
- **Reputational risk:** Identify any risks to the production's or council's reputation, particularly around environmental stewardship or social responsibility.
- **Sustainability alignment:** Ensure activities support regional sustainability goals and do not conflict with long-term conservation or climate objectives.

RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

[Screen Wellington ↗](#)

[ScreenSafe ↗](#)

[WorkSafe ↗](#)

[Civil Aviation Authority ↗](#)

[AirShare ↗](#)

[Department of Conservation ↗](#)

[Greater Wellington Regional Council ↗](#)

[Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga ↗](#)

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