

# Commercial Filming and Photography Policy & Guideline

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Parks and Wildlife Commission

Version 1.4



<b>Document title</b>	Commercial Filming and Photography Policy & Guideline
<b>Contact details</b>	Executive Director, Parks and Wildlife Commission, Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security PO Box 496, PALMERSTON, NT, 0831
<b>Approved by</b>	Neva McCartney, Executive Director, Parks and Wildlife Commission
<b>Date approved</b>	26 February 2024
<b>Document review</b>	3 years
<b>TRM number</b>	DPW2022/0111-0041

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	unknown	Director of Planning Services	Original
1.1	June 2017	Policy Officer	Revision
1.2	August 2018	Senior Project Officer	Revision
1.3	August 2020	Senior Project Officer	Revision
1.4	May 2023	Senior Project Officer	Revision; updated template

Acronyms	Full form
Commission	Parks and Wildlife Commission
DEPWS	Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
NTG	Northern Territory Government
TPWC Act	<i>Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976</i>
TPWC By-laws	<i>Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws 1984</i>

# Contents

<b>1. Purpose</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Scope</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Policy statement</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Guidelines</b> .....	<b>5</b>
4.1. When a permit is required.....	5
4.2. Applications.....	6
4.3. Insurance.....	6
4.4. Permit processing times.....	6
4.5. Fees (unless otherwise defined under park-specific guidelines) .....	7
4.6. Acknowledgement .....	8
4.7. Compliance with permit.....	8
<b>5. Definitions</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>6. Roles and responsibilities</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>7. Legislation and related documents</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>8. Contacts</b> .....	<b>10</b>

## 1. Purpose

The Parks and Wildlife Commission (Commission), a division of the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (DEPWS), acknowledges the positive role film and photography has in attracting visitors to parks and reserves and the benefits of large scale filming activities to the Northern Territory economy.

Parks and reserves provide outstanding opportunities to capture the Territory's natural and cultural attractions through film and photography. Activities vary widely in scale and nature, from the single photographer to large-scale film and documentary crews.

The Commission is also responsible for ensuring that the activities of film crews and photographers do not unacceptably impact the conservation of cultural and natural resources, affect visitor enjoyment, or present parks inappropriately. Under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976* (TPWC Act) and *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws 1984* (TPWC By-laws), certain activities may only be undertaken with a permit.

This policy and guideline assists staff and applicants to manage commercial filming and photography on parks and reserves. It sets out when a permit is required and outlines the associated fees. It has been developed in collaboration with Northern and Central Land Councils. Consistent implementation will ensure legal compliance, effective and efficient permit administration and stakeholder confidence.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to still photography, video and sound recordings taken within parks and reserves, or featuring employees from the Commission.

Kakadu National Park and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park are managed by Parks Australia for the Commonwealth Government and are not subject to this policy.

## 3. Policy statement

Film and photography in parks and reserves or featuring employees will be managed according to whether it is recreational or commercial, standard or non-standard, as defined in this policy and guidelines.

Commercial film and photography within parks and reserves requires an application to the Permits Unit for a By-law 13 *Trade and Commerce* permit and payment of an application fee. Additional fees may apply depending on the location, scale and complexity of the activity.

A permit is not required for recreational film or photography.

Commercial film or photography includes that made for a specific project or show (such as a television station or production company), to promote a product or service and/or sell or hire the material to another party for profit.

The Commission will support proposals for commercial film and photography that promotes parks and reserves as well as tourism opportunities, benefits the screen industry in the NT and where the activities are in keeping with park values, cultural values and visitor experiences.

All activities in parks and reserves must comply with the requirements of the TPWC Act and TPWC By-laws and any other regulations that may apply.

The Commission will aim for consistent permit processing and standards for all parks and reserves; however, park-specific guidelines may apply.

The Commission, in partnership with joint management committees, may develop park-specific guidelines. The guidelines will state when consultation with Traditional Owners is required through the Commission and relevant Land Council. Where park-specific guidelines are not yet defined, Parks staff will consult with the relevant Land Council.

The Commission will issue an Information Notice for applications that are refused.

## 4. Guidelines

### 4.1. When a permit is required

Filming Type	Permit Required	Standard Conditions	Additional Conditions
Standard commercial	✓	✓	
Non-standard commercial	✓	✓	✓
Standard recreational	No permit required		
Media / news	Contact the Media Unit		

A standard commercial permit is suitable for simple, small-scale commercial photographers, film crews, crews involved in tourism promotion and sound recorders that pose a low risk to the natural and cultural values of parks and reserves. As a general rule, standard permits are appropriate for crews of up to three people with little or no requirement for props, sets, or other equipment beyond their recording devices; where access is not required to areas other than those generally available to visitors; and where there will be little to no impact on the day-to-day operation of parks and reserves or on other visitors' experiences. Standard conditions will apply.

A non-standard commercial permit is suited to larger projects to accommodate more complex needs such as working with Traditional Owners, accessing more remote areas, use of drones, setting up equipment or product placement, promotions and advertising. Non-standard permits require consultation with representatives from the relevant park or reserve and / or Traditional Owners, may need supervision and will be subject to standard and specific conditions.

Annual permits may be issued for standard commercial film and photography, such as collecting stock material. Permit holders must notify a Senior Ranger at the relevant park before each period of filming takes place. More information will be within the permit.

News and current affairs services covering 'news of the day' do not require a permit to film but must contact the DEPWS Media Unit before starting work.

Activities associated with filming may also require permission or authorisation, for example: driving off road; use of aircraft including drones, firearms, animals or generators; erection of structures; and disturbance of natural features. It is important for applicants to discuss intended activities fully with a representative from the Commission so permissions can be negotiated and included as conditions of the permit, or a combination of permits.

An *Operation of Aircraft* permit (By-law 32) is required to fly or land an aircraft including a drone in some parks and reserves. Refer to [Flying drones in parks | NT.GOV.AU](#) for a current list of locations where a permit is required and where drone flying is strictly prohibited. Film or photographs obtained from a drone or other aircraft must also comply with CASA (Civil Aviation Safety Authority) requirements, the Commission’s *Drones in Parks Policy and Guidelines* and the special conditions listed for this type of permit.

Screen Territory can provide information about grant funding and permission to film requirements at areas not managed by the Commission.

## 4.2. Applications

Permit applications to film at parks and reserves are made through the Permits Unit to the delegate of the Commission. Advanced notice of the filming activity is needed to allow staff to provide permission, advice and to process the permit.

It may be necessary for permit applicants to seek additional permissions or authorisations to lawfully and appropriately carry out their activity. It is the permit applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all other relevant permissions are obtained before seeking a permit.

As already stated, applications that may be culturally sensitive to Traditional Owners of non-jointly managed parks may need to be discussed with the relevant Land Council by senior rangers.

## 4.3. Insurance

Parks and reserves can be remote and challenging places to work. Where activities pose an unusual risk to the public or a park, public liability insurance to a minimum value of \$10 million is required as a condition of the permit. The permit application must be accompanied by a certificate of currency issued in the name of the applicant or company and be current for the duration of the filming.

If the project is sponsored by Tourism NT or Tourism Australia, you may be covered by the insurance of these agencies.

The Permits Unit will make a determination of the insurance required based on the information provided in the permit application.

## 4.4. Permit processing times

The time taken to process an application will depend on the type of filming and planned location. Longer processing timeframes at jointly managed parks allow for appropriate consultation with Traditional Owners. Generally, the time taken for a permit or a notice of refusal to be issued will be as follows:

Commercial filming type	Processing time (business days)
Standard	Up to 5 days
Non - standard	Up to 10 days
Non - standard (Joint Management Parks)	Up to 35 days

## 4.5. Fees (unless otherwise defined under park-specific guidelines)

Fee type	Amount (GST inc.)
Application (including annual permit)	\$55 (non-refundable)
Extension / renewal	\$55 (non-refundable)
Site use fee	As negotiated
Staff supervision / talent*	\$440/ day/person (up to 8 hours) + \$55/hour/person thereafter
Traditional Owner supervision**	\$440/ day/person (up to 8 hours) + \$55/hour/person thereafter
Traditional Owner talent***	Per MEAA award rates

A non-refundable administration fee of \$55 applies for all permit applications and extensions / variations. Additional fees may be applied to offset costs associated with facilitating filming; including monitoring, supervision and consultation with Traditional Owners.

\*A NTG Talent Release Form is required where NTG employees are used as talent, signed by the relevant staff member and submitted to the Department of the Chief Minister, Strategic Communications and Engagement Unit. The *NTG Talent and Image Use Guidelines* will apply.

\*\*Additional costs to Traditional Owners, such as an allowance for transport may also be passed on to film-makers.

\*\*\* Rates for use of Traditional Owners as talent will be guided by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) award rates. Screen Territory can advise on appropriate award rates under MEAA.

The Land Councils may pass on costs of Traditional Owner consultation. In these cases, the Permits Unit will advise the applicant of estimated costs before proceeding with consultation.

Payments should not be made by applicants or permit holders directly to Traditional Owners, unless agreed by all parties that these payments are made separately from other permit fees. The Permits Unit will arrange payment by cheque or EFT and will issue a receipt to the permit-holder with a copy to the relevant Land Council.

For feature films and major projects, fees will be negotiated with advice from Screen Territory, and in the case of joint managed parks, the relevant Land Council.

Permits will be issued when fees and conditions are agreed and full payment is received.

The applicant may need to provide Screen Territory details of approved permits to monitor filming activity in the NT.

## 4.6. Acknowledgement

Producers are requested to give the following acknowledgement in the credits, where they are given:

*Produced with the assistance of the Parks and Wildlife Commission, Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security, Northern Territory Government or*

*Filmed at [name of park or reserve], Northern Territory*

## 4.7. Compliance with permit

Permit conditions provide filmmakers, photographers and image users with clear guidelines to make sure activities comply with this policy, are culturally appropriate and meet the requirements of the TPWC By-laws. Permit holders must have a copy of the permit with them while filming and present it for inspection by an Officer of the Commission when requested.

Park-specific conditions are listed as an attachment to these guidelines and on the issued permit. Conditions for Garig Gunak Barlu (Cobourg) National Park are described in the guidelines for that park.

Failure to comply with conditions may result in the permit being cancelled. Penalties may apply for serious breaches.

Material obtained must only be used for approved purposes. Where parks and reserves sites within them may be publicly identifiable, images must not display behaviour that is inappropriate, unsafe or not in keeping with normal visitor activity (does not apply to characters in a feature film). A copy of the final product must be provided to the Commission before public release to ensure material is suitable and accurate and the appropriate acknowledgements are given.

Variations to permit conditions may be negotiated. Significant variations may require re-issue of a permit with associated fees.

## 5. Definitions

Advertising	means to promote a business or product.
Commercial	means with the intent of a reward or acknowledgement, i.e. money, merchandise or services or the possibility of future reward (if done for financial reward or commercial gain, under contract or consignment for another person, and/or with a view to being sold or hired out, or for advertising a product or service).
Joint managed parks / joint management partners	refers to parks and reserves where the Aboriginal people and Land Council staff assist with management arrangements for that site.
Material	refers to recordings of an image or sound on film, videotape or electronic medium.
News of the day	refers to reporting by print, television, internet or radio of unanticipated events, such as a bushfire or other emergency.



Non-standard film and photography	means capture of material that involves the use of equipment such as drones, crew, sets, props or models, special access, activity not normally allowed to visitors and/or that raises concerns with Traditional Owners.
Recreational filming	is where the main intent of the activity is of personal interest or a hobby and not commercial gain. Excludes research.
Standard film or photography	means capture of material that involves no access beyond that usually allowed for visitors and raises no cultural concerns with Traditional Owners.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

Person/parties	Roles and responsibilities
Executive Director	Consider and approve or reject permit application and conditions for all commercial filming. If required, cancel permit.
District Manager	Assess permit application, liaise with applicant and relevant Land Council (if required) and determine permit conditions and fees.
Permits Officer	Coordinate permit application process and manage fee payment(s).

## 7. Legislation and related documents

*Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976*

*Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws 1984*

NTG Talent and Image Use Guidelines<sup>1</sup>

Drones in Parks Policy and Guidelines, Parks and Wildlife

Drones Policy, DEPWS

Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property Policy and Guideline, Parks and Wildlife

BL 13 Trade and Commerce Permit Application

BL 32 Operation of Aircraft Permit Application

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://ntgcentral.nt.gov.au/services-and-support/communications-and-engagement/images-talent-release>

## 8. Contacts

### ***Parks and Wildlife Commission,***

Permits Unit (office hours Monday to Friday 8:00 – 4:00pm)

 (08) 8999 4795    [pwpermits@nt.gov.au](mailto:pwpermits@nt.gov.au)    <https://nt.gov.au/parks/contact-parks-and-wildlife>

### ***Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security Media Liaison Officer***

Based in Darwin

 (08) 8982 2307    [Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)

### ***Northern Land Council***

Filming on Aboriginal land in Darwin and the Top End

 (08) 8920 5100    <http://www.nlc.org.au/>

### ***Central Land Council***

Filming on Aboriginal land in Alice Springs and Central Australia

 (08) 8951 6211    <http://www.clc.org.au/>