



Bhutan Filming Regulation 2007

(As Amended on 19th March 2025)

**Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority
Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment
Royal Government of Bhutan**

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1. Legal Basis

This Regulation is issued pursuant to Section 250 of the Information, Communications and Media Act of Bhutan 2018 ('the Act') to ensure that filming activities within Bhutan conforms to the laws and regulations of the country and the local sensitivities, and to avoid negative impacts on the society.

2. Effective Date

This Regulation shall come into force from the 19th March 2025.

3. Scope of Application

This Regulation shall apply to all filmmakers, companies and individuals who seek to engage in any filming activity in Bhutan with or without cooperation with any local film company, an individual producer, director or any other Bhutanese individual involved in film making.

4. Amendments

The amendment of this Regulation, by way of addition, variation or repeal may be affected by the Authority and approved by the Ministry as and when required according to the needs and changes in national priorities, government policies and industry trends.

5. Implementing Authority

The Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (the Authority) shall be the sole authority to grant filming permits to local and foreign companies or filmmakers, and to implement and enforce this Regulation. Applications or proposals requesting filming permits shall be submitted to the Authority.

6. Requirement of Film Permit

- i. Any activities related to films, documentaries and advertisements shall be allowed in Bhutan only after obtaining a permit from the Authority. Applications must include details of all sequences to be filmed in Bhutan.
- ii. Shooting on restricted locations shall be subject to permission being granted by relevant authorities, wherein the foreign companies or individuals should obtain a written permission from individual organizations, after obtaining a filming permit from the Authority.
- iii. The permit shall not be transferable.

7. Fees and Security Deposit

7.1 Local Filming Permit Fees

All local filming in Bhutan shall be applicable for a filming permit fee as per Annexure I.

7.2 International Filming Permit Fees

A stated filming fee, in terms of Ngultrum, shall be payable to the Authority as per Annexure I of this Regulation. Waiver of filming fee shall be processed by the Authority as admissible after thorough review and assessment.

7.3 Security Deposit

The security deposit, which is refundable, shall be applicable to all types of foreign filming activities carried out in Bhutan irrespective of whether any filming fee has been waived off or not. The security deposit paid shall be forfeited if the requirements of Clause 7.4 of this Regulation are not met. However, the Authority shall not be liable for the payment of any direct or indirect interests on the security amount deposited with it as per this provision.

7.4. Preview of Foreign Production

The Authority shall preview the documentaries/films made. The filmmakers shall be required to make changes, if any, to the part or parts of the film, as required by the Authority. One copy each of the final edited version of the film shall be submitted to the Authority for record. The security deposit shall be refunded on receipt and acceptance of the final edited version.

8. Conditions for Filming

8.1 Requirements for Filming

The following conditions shall be followed while filming in Bhutan:

- i. The film company shall apply for and obtain the permit before filming in Bhutan;
- ii. The film company shall appoint a local counterpart to handle its travel arrangements;
- iii. Visa formalities shall be based on the filming permit issued by the Authority, and it shall be the responsibility of the local counterpart to complete visa formalities;
- iv. The local counterpart involved in handling arrangements or sponsoring the film shall be responsible for ensuring full compliance to various provisions of this Regulation, the Act, or any other laws of Bhutan, by the members of the crew. The local counterpart shall also be responsible for briefing and ensuring that the international film crew understand local sensitivities and observe existing cultural norms;
- v. The film company shall not deviate from the subject and locations originally proposed in the application. Prior written permission of the Authority shall be obtained in case of any deviation from the original script and location;

- vi. Filming permits shall not in any way entitle the members of the crew to any right of access to restricted areas or establishments, nor shall it entitle them to any privileges with regard to space or special arrangements in festival premises;
- vii. The filming team must ensure that their activities do not in any way cause undue disturbances or inconvenience to the public. The team shall strictly abide by the code of conduct and other rules as stipulated by the local authorities;
- viii. In the case of special official media visits from other countries, the relevant government organization shall depute a liaison officer to accompany the visiting film team;
- ix. The producer shall observe all rules and regulations relating to import/export, customs and excise duties, relevant taxes, and foreign exchange, in connection with filming activities in Bhutan;
- x. Every film company or individuals shall be required to have insurance before beginning work in Bhutan to cover all liabilities. The local counterparts and government shall not be liable for any mishap that may occur during filming. Further, no film permit shall be granted without a valid insurance policy;
- xi. If the team abandons its plan of filming after obtaining the permit or decides to discontinue filming for any reasons, the processing fee paid shall not be refundable. The security deposit, however, shall be refunded provided the Authority is satisfied with the reasons and/or circumstances put forward by the company as the cause(s) leading to discontinuation of the filming programme, and that no filming activity has taken place. The permit shall stand cancelled thereby;
- xii. The Authority reserves the right to revoke a permit issued without assigning any reasons. In such cases the royalty paid and the security deposit made shall be refunded without any interest;

- xiii. Screening or broadcasting of the film shall not be done or allowed without first being reviewed by the relevant authorities.

8.2. Content

The following conditions with regard to contents should be followed and maintained by all the members of the crew:

- i. The tone and content of programming shall not in any way incite discrimination, hatred or violence against any individual or identifiable group based on race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital or family status, or political affiliation;
- ii. Violence shall be neither glorified, exploited nor used out of context;
- iii. Utmost care should be taken with regard to the sensitivity of the portrayal of matters relating to gender, children and youth;
- iv. Programmes must not provoke domestic, international, religious or political conflicts;
- v. Pornography, either in words expressed or depicted, or in any other form shall not be permitted;
- vi. Any matter invading privacy of life, home or correspondence of any person shall not be portrayed without the subject's expressed and written consent; and
- vii. Documentaries shall not engage in publicizing information that is false, and not authenticated. They should always seek a true source of information.

8.3. Filming in Restricted Locations

Any filming activities at certain restricted locations such as Dzongs, monasteries, national parks, mountain peaks and other protected areas, private and public property, shall be carried out only with prior written permission and approval from the concerned authorities or individuals.

8.4. Safety Considerations

For the safety of the cast, crew, and the public, all filmmakers shall:

- i. Put in place such safety measures, such as fencing, safety nets, and any other safety considerations;
- ii. Arrange adequate safety precautions wherever tracks, cranes and other heavy equipment are used, particularly in public areas. All equipment should be removed, and where not possible, adequate precautions shall be taken to seal off the area to the public, in consultation with the Royal Bhutan Police or other concerned authorities; and
- iii. Obtain written approval from the Department Forest and the Royal Bhutan Police and other district or local authorities, if a particular scene(s) of the film require the use of fireworks, special effects or filming especially in the forest. In addition to this written approval, the film production company should have adequate safety equipment (e.g. fire fighting equipment) and people on the set to prevent accidents.

8.5. Filming on Highways

While filming on highways or on any motorable roads, the filming company shall:

- i. Obtain the permission of the relevant Authority and the Traffic Police and inform district authorities before at least three days of filming;

- ii. Not hold up traffic longer than periods specified in the permission given;
- iii. Appropriately post sign boards to warn traffic about filming activities going on with information about the time of the closure and opening of the road, and requesting their cooperation; and
- iv. Make announcements on public radio and other media informing people about filming activities to take place at a particular location at a particular time with information on time of the closure or opening of road(s).

8.6. Filming on State Property

To film on state property, the filming company shall:

- i. Apply in writing to the organization or agency concerned, informing them of the intention, date and plan for filming. Permission must be obtained in writing; and
- ii. Contact the concerned agency at least three days in advance if officers are needed on location when the filming starts, and if local law enforcement should be involved.

8.7. Filming in Remote Areas

For any filming activity to take place in remote places, the film company shall:

- i. Inform the local district administrator; and
- ii. Give adequate notice to inform the public of any filming activity in the areas.

8.8. Filming in Crowded Areas

For any filming activity to take place in crowded areas, the film company shall:

- i. Give proper notification to the residents, public and business companies which may be affected by the filming activities; and
- ii. Include in the notice the name of the company, name of the production, company contact, and type of activity and duration.

9. General Code of Professional Responsibility on Location

While filming, the following general code shall be followed:

- i. Production vehicles, cast and crew shall observe designated parking areas and rules;
- ii. All catering, construction and trash from the filming shall be removed from the location;
- iii. All production shall refrain from disturbing the peace and quiet of neighborhoods and shall maintain noise levels as low as possible;
- iv. When using floodlights to film at night, permission shall be obtained from the municipal authorities and police, and the residents in the areas shall be informed;
- v. All sets and props shall be removed upon completion of filming;
- vi. All cast and crew shall respect the sensitivities of local communities; and
- vii. The production company shall comply with the provisions of the permit at all times.

10. Failure to Comply with the Regulation

Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with the provisions of this Regulation shall be guilty of an offence and the Authority shall, subject to the degree of violation, impose the following penalties:

- i. Issue a written warning letter for the first violation.
- ii. Impose a penalty equivalent to a maximum of six (6) months daily minimum wage depending on the gravity of the offence for the second violation;
- iii. Suspend the filming permit for a period of two months or impose a penalty equivalent to six (6) months daily minimum wage or both depending on the gravity of the offence for third violation;
- iv. The filming permit shall be cancelled automatically upon the fourth violation;
- v. Notwithstanding the above provisions, if the violation is proven to be severe, the Authority may impose a penalty up to one (1) year daily minimum wage or suspend or cancel the filming permit or the security deposit shall be forfeited, project stopped, and the filming company may be barred from future filming in Bhutan; and;
- vi. In the event, if the filming permit is cancelled, the defaulter shall not be eligible for the filming permit for a period of three (3) years

Annexure I

a) Local Filming Permit Fee

Details	Fees (In Nu.)
Filming Permit	1000
Duplicate Copy	500

b) International Filming Permit Fee and Security Deposit

Details	Fees (In Nu.)	Security Deposit
All types of Filming	150,000	100,000