



## City of Chicago Department of Aviation

# Commercial Filming and Photography Policy at Chicago O'Hare and Midway International Airports

**Applicability:** This Policy applies to all commercial filming and photography ("filming") at Chicago O'Hare International Airport and Midway International Airport ("Airports"), other than short-term filming by news media, such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Feature films
- Television series
- General entertainment programs
- Commercials
- Documentaries
- Corporate and student presentations
- Educational films
- Professional photography

News media filming is governed by the Department of Aviation Media Policy.

**Purpose:**

To publish procedures for reviewing production requests, to define terms and conditions under which approval can be granted, and to specify operational criteria that must be met.

**Policy:**

To provide access to property and facilities operated by the City of Chicago Department of Aviation for the purpose of on-location filming and photography without causing disruption or inconvenience to airport passengers, patrons and tenants.

The terminals at both O'Hare and Midway International Airports are public buildings operated by the City of Chicago Department of Aviation, but are non-public fora for purposes of access and free speech activities. Our primary responsibility and highest priority is safe, secure and orderly airport operations.

The City reserves the right to deny filming requests for safety, security or operational reasons. Additionally, whenever the federal government declares any alert level higher than "Elevated" ("Yellow") on the Homeland Security Advisory System issued by the United States Department of Homeland Security, with regard to security conditions for operations, the Department of Aviation may suspend or prohibit commercial filming. Suspension and prohibition will be based on the totality of the security situation, including the availability of security resources at the Airports in light of increased demands and requirements by the federal government.

Pursuant to applicable laws and regulations, only ticketed persons, persons holding valid ID badges, or persons escorted by properly badged personnel are allowed beyond the security checkpoints. Law enforcement and Department of Aviation personnel have the authority to stop any unapproved filming or photography at any time.

**Objectives:**

1. To ensure the day-to-day operations of all tenants at Chicago O'Hare and Midway International Airports are not affected or disrupted by on-location filming.
2. To ensure the safety and security of all Airport users.
3. To provide the film industry with centralized and efficient procedures for obtaining Department of Aviation approval for filming at the Airports.
4. To provide the Department of Aviation with appropriate liability insurance from the filming company.
5. To prevent any filming-related damage to Airport property and, in the event of any damage, to ensure that the production company will be responsible for all repairs required.
6. To reserve the Department of Aviation's right to approve or deny any filming request involving property or facilities operated by the Department of Aviation for safety, security, or operational reasons.
7. To recover all direct costs for services rendered by the Department of Aviation as a result of filming on Airport property.

**General Requirements for filming in and around the airports:**

- Have official photo identification available at all times.
- Do not block fire escape routes and or/fire emergency exits.
- Do not block any entrance, exit, escalator, ticket counter, taxi staging area, taxi pickup area, passenger check in, security checkpoint, baggage area, or other area within or around the Airports.
- Do not interfere with airline or Airport operations.
- Remain at least 10 feet away from passengers standing in line so as to not obstruct the orderly flow and formation of passenger traffic.

## Filming Locations:

**Prior to the Security Checkpoints:** filming in public areas of the Airports prior to security checkpoints (e.g., baggage claim, ticketing lobby, parking lots, garages, roadways, etc.) is subject to the general requirements above and requires the submission of a written request to the Department of Aviation for approval of such activity.

**After the Security Checkpoints:** filming beyond security checkpoints is strictly prohibited without first obtaining permission from the Department of Aviation and all other required parties as described below (e.g., TSA, tenants, and airlines) and will be subject to the general requirements above. Because unapproved filming may compromise security or safety beyond security checkpoints, Department of Aviation Police may arrest and will report to the TSA anyone who does not obtain approval before filming or attempting to film beyond security checkpoints. Ticketed persons are not exempt from this Department of Aviation requirement.

To film areas beyond security checkpoints, anyone who engages in commercial filming must be escorted by a representative from the Department of Aviation or other approved escort (e.g., TSA, tenant, and airline representative) ("escort"), after receiving approval from the Department of Aviation. Each camera operator/photographer is required to be accompanied by one escort if multiple camera operators/photographers wish to separate and film different parts of the airport.

Please be advised that access beyond the security checkpoints is subject to the availability of escorts and will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. The Department of Aviation encourages all filming requests to be submitted with as much advance notice as possible.

**Air Traffic Control Tower and Other Federally-Controlled Areas:** the air traffic control tower is controlled and operated by the Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA"). For filming access to the air traffic control tower or any other federally-controlled areas, you must contact and obtain approval from the FAA or other responsible federal agency, along with the Department of Aviation.

**Leased Areas:** the areas that are leased to the airlines and other tenants, such as ticket counters, boarding locations and waiting areas, private offices, stores and restaurants, are under the control of those parties, and filming access to those areas also must be approved by the appropriate airline or business, in addition to the Department of Aviation.

**Procedures:**

**1. Applications**

All inquiries and requests for filming at O'Hare or Midway should be made to:

City of Chicago Department of Aviation Marketing  
and Communications Division Chicago O'Hare  
International Airport

P.O. Box 66142 Chicago, IL 60666 ATTN: Gretchen Meyer Director of Customer Service  
[gmeyer@cityofchicago.org](mailto:gmeyer@cityofchicago.org)

**2. Letter of Request**

All requests must be submitted in writing to the Department of Aviation in advance of the commencement of filming. A minimum of two (2) weeks notice is required. Arrangements can be made with the Department of Aviation for a site tour. For larger or more complicated projects, additional advance notice will be required. To assist the Department of Aviation in assessing the magnitude of the request and the need for any additional information regarding the request, a Letter of Intent must be completed and must contain at least the following information:

- Type of filming involved, e.g., feature films, commercials, documentaries, etc.;
- Production dates (specify prep, strike and filming);
- A list of locations of any scenes to be filmed at the Airport.
- Number of cast and crew/personnel;
- Alteration requests, e.g., sign removal, sound system, etc.;
- Arrival and departure hours;
- Number and type of production vehicles;

- Lighting requests;
- Identification and use of props, e.g., picture vehicles, etc.;
- Items of equipment to be used, e.g., cranes, lifts, etc.;
- Special effects requests;
- Identification and use of animals;
- Stunt requests; and

All filming inquiries and requests will be reviewed by the Department of Aviation (and other Airport tenants, as needed, such as TSA, airlines, and vendors) to determine which specific requests will be approved and authorized.

The Chicago Department of Aviation works in collaboration with the [Chicago Film Office](#) on all projects filmed at O'Hare and Midway International Airports.

### **3. Insurance**

The Department of Aviation will require proof of insurance before any filming can take place on Airport property. The required insurance coverage and minimum limits are: Commercial General Liability - bodily injury/property damage (airport premises) - \$2,000,000. Higher limits may apply for certain filming locations, e.g., the airfield, and automotive insurance may be required if any vehicles are used. Completed policies should be faxed to the Chicago Department of Aviation Marketing and Communications Division at 773-894-1712.

Liability insurance must name Chicago O'Hare International Airport or Chicago Midway International Airport and the City of Chicago as additional insured in the applicant's liability policy.

If filming takes place at O'Hare inside International Terminal 5, the policy must also name Airport Property Management Group (APMG) and CICA Terminal Equipment Company (CICA-TEC) as additional insured.

The certificate of insurance must be on file with the Department of Aviation before any filming can take place on Airport property. The insurance certificate should be mailed or faxed to the above contacts.

### **4. Fees:**

Filming at the Airports beyond the security checkpoints will require security escorts, in a number to be determined by the Department of Aviation. Additionally, the Applicant must directly pay these escorts at an hourly rate approved by the Department of Aviation.

Arrangements for additional Airport personnel services such as electricians, building engineers and custodians must be made in advance of filming. Additionally, the Applicant must directly pay the personnel at an hourly-rate approved by the Department of Aviation.

Charges for the use of parking facilities is based on the number of cast, crew and equipment vehicles, as well as the vehicle parking lot(s) the film company has been instructed to use by the Department of Aviation. Shuttle service from remote parking locations will be the responsibility of the film company.

Additional Department of Aviation charges to the Applicant may apply for the use of any tenant facilities and services.

**5. Special Effects:**

Filming of certain types of scenes, including breaches of security, aircraft crashes, use of firearms or replicas of firearms, explosions, smoke machine, car crashes, etc., is strictly prohibited.

**6. Smoking Restrictions:**

Smoking is not permitted inside the Airports or within 15 feet of public entrances pursuant to City Ordinance.

**7. Garbage and Waste Disposal:**

The film company is responsible for the proper disposal of all garbage and refuse resulting from film activities.

**8. Electrical Power:**

The power supply at the Airport is used to capacity and no surplus power for filming is available. Use of wall outlets for low demand lighting may be allowed upon request to the Department of Aviation. Film companies must supply a power generator as required. All cords and wiring on the floor must be taped or guarded.

**9. Traffic Management:**

To prevent traffic congestion, production equipment and vehicles will not be permitted to park on the lower or upper level airport roadways. Complete closure of roads at the Airports is not permitted.

**10. Animals:**

No animals are permitted on Airport property without prior consent from the Department of Aviation and the affected airline. If consent is given, animals must be kept under control by qualified personnel, and no animal is to be harmed.

**11. Emergencies:**

All emergencies must be reported immediately to the Airport Liaison.

**12. Tenant Arrangements:**

The film company must provide a detailed description in the Letter of Request of any arrangements made with an airline or other tenants for the use of their premises, equipment or personnel. The film company must obtain the written consent of any airlines or other tenants for the use of their exclusive leased space.

**13. Film Location Monitoring:**

The Department of Aviation retains the right to halt any activity that is deemed to adversely impact the safety and security of Airport operations, personnel and/or property. Activities not specially disclosed in the Letter of Intent will not be allowed without prior consent of the Department of Aviation.

**14. Prohibition of Filming Trade Marks and Corporate Logos:**

Use of any photograph, film or other visual image depicting a sign, logo or scene identifiable with O'Hare or Midway Airports is strictly prohibited without prior written consent from the Department of Aviation.

The film company must obtain the written consent of any third party to use any photograph, film or other visual image depicting a trade mark, trade brand name, brand name, logo, certification mark, distinguishing guise, trade dress, corporate name, business name or other similar indicia or marking of a third party.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, an authorized representative of \_\_\_\_\_, Applicant, hereby acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of this Policy and that the Applicant agrees to abide by all of the terms listed herein. I further acknowledge that if the Applicant is found by the Commissioner, or his or her designee, to have violated any of the terms of this Policy, the Applicant must immediately cease all operations and remove its property from the Airport within forty-eight (48) hours. All property not removed within that time shall be removed by the City, at the Applicant's expense.

**Name**

**Company**

**Date**