

Filming in Thailand



General Information

Fast approval for filming and efficient government procedures

Permission to film in Thailand is granted by the Film Board of Thailand, comprised of representatives from many government agencies. These representatives formed the Sub-Committee on the Review of the Request for the Permission for Foreign Film Production in Thailand (SRF), appointed by the Film Board. Their review facilitates a “one-stop” service for filmmakers, assuring fast-approval for permission to film, given that all required information and documents are in order.

An unmatched diversity of locations/scenery

Thailand’s diversified geographical characteristics, historical sites, and lifestyle of our people offer unmatched diversity of locations, and storylines. All locations are conveniently accessible via our modern and convenient transportation mode. Thailand geography presents a system of mountainous region in the north, the uplifting of plateau in the northeast, the central plains, and coastlines paralleled by the Andaman Sea, and the Gulf of Thailand in the south.

Our historical sites are found throughout Thailand. These historical sites are the remnants of the different eras in Thailand dating back to the Sukhothai (600-1400 AD), and the Rattanakosin (1782 A.D.-present). The lifestyle of our people is a synchronization of ancient, and modern, and a harmonic blend of rural and urban, to provide an unparalleled filming experience. At the Chao Phraya, and Mekong River Basins, traditional ‘ancient’ lifestyles along the waterfronts synchronize with ‘modern’ day living.

Equipped with the most advanced technology

Thailand is ready to provide to international filmmakers with talented crews and technicians, filming equipment and studios. Due to the competitive nature of the entertainment and technology industry, our entertainment equipment, and the skills of our technicians are all keeping pace with rapid international advancement. World-class pre-production, production, post-production and communication equipment is thus at low cost.

Abundant skilled and creative human resources

Renowned to the world as the “ Land of Smiles, our people are gentle, friendly and are widely recognized for their hospitality. This nature has nurtured Thais into being service-minded, hard working and flexible. Local production crews have worked in many international productions over the years developing the skills in the domestic industries. We are now ready to expand our services to serve international film and television markets.

Our skilled and creative production resources, specialists in pre-production, production and post-production processes are now confident to work in international environments helping you transform your dream onto film.

Low costs of production and living expenses

A.T.A Carnet Law applies in Thailand. This means that temporary admission exempt of import tax is allowed for all professional equipment. This includes production equipment provided that all equipment brought in for filming is brought back out again when the filming is concluded. In addition, Thailand has signed Double Taxation Treaties with many foreign countries. These treaties are designed to prevent foreigners from countries legislated under the taxation treaties from taxation in their home country and again in Thailand.

Living expenses are low, whether it would be accommodations, food, transportation fees, recreation, and every other kind of living expense. When working with tight budgets, you will find your money stretches much further in Thailand.

All round convenience

A variety of accommodation, food, transportation, and services for filmmakers can be found in Thailand. Accommodation from five-star hotels to guesthouses can be selected to meet your budget. International cuisine is available from the finest restaurants or more convenient dishes can be found at roadside vendors. In addition, our transportation infrastructure facilitates travel and provides convenience for film crews. Vehicles such as motor homes, tour buses, helicopters and marine crafts are for rent at an extremely reasonable cost.

Filming in Thailand is hassle-free, as local coordination companies handle all arrangements. These companies provide assistance for all legal documentation from filming and work permits to contact and coordination with all related agencies. Local coordination services include recruitment of production crews and talent, location scouting and fulfilling clients' specific needs for equipment, special effects and other technical services.

Rules and Regulations

In order for foreign production companies to film features, television, video visions or still pictures in Thailand (for broadcast, advertisement or distribution), the following rules and regulations apply.

Procedure to Follow for Filming in Thailand

(Step 1-5: Before arrival in Thailand)

Step 1: It is advised that a Thai based coordinator be hired to assist the foreign production company. This company is best able to adhere to procedures that must be followed before a film permit is granted.

The coordinator can assist with the following procedures:

- Enter into agreements with and liaise with government agencies for all legal documentation
- Prepare all required documents for consideration by the Film Broad including 10 copies of the story board and treatment for commercial advertisements, and 25 copies of the full script for feature films.
- Obtain work permits, advise on tax payments and other procedures.
- Arrange for on-the-ground transportation, accommodation, food, equipment, local talent, studio rental and other requirements of the foreign production crew.

A partial list of coordinators is provided in this book. We strongly recommend foreign production companies to use local coordinators.

Step 2: Request an application for permission to film in Thailand and fill in the form completely. Application forms can be obtained and submitted both in Thailand and from overseas offices of agencies listed on the proceeding page

A. If the application is made abroad, it can be submitted through the following agencies in your country:

- Royal Thai Embassy or Consulate
- Office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand
- Thai Trade Center

If the application is made in Thailand, forms can be obtained from the Film Broad of Thailand and resubmitted to the same office. The applicant must submit the application form according to the schedule as set in B before commencement of filming.

Signature of the foreign applicant and authorized coordinator in Thailand is needed on the application form.

B. For still picture, the photographer has to inform the Film Board before commencing work. The photographer does not need a Film permit.

- For documentary film and commercial advertisements, the application form should be submitted 5 working days in advance for the Film Board to consider the application.

- For feature films, TV series, docudramas or any fictional stories the application should be submitted 14 working days in advance.

Step 3: Related documents, which must be submitted along with the application form which include:

- Treatment (for documentaries)
- Story board (for commercial photo and films)
- Synopsis, and script either in English and Thai (for film)
- Title, lyrics and detail of production relating to the music (for music videos)
- Final Script
- Shooting Schedule [date and location (s) suggested for filming]
- Itinerary
- List of filming dates and locations, listed on a daily, including government buildings, religious compounds, National Parks, and other venues.
- List of VIP person to be interviewed and details of interviewers
- Name list of crew/position/passport no. of each member of crew
- List of all equipment to be used in the shoot, especially military weapons, chemicals, and explosives
- Copy of partnership and company registration, stating purpose of the company
- Copy of commercial registration

Step 4: After permission to film is granted, the film crew or the local coordinator must apply for crew work permits before entering Thailand. Work permit applications can be obtained from Alien Occupational Control Division, Department of Employment. If the film crew intends to stay for a period not exceeding 15 days, no work permit applications are necessary. The production crew/coordinator must only inform the film Board. The Film Board will then inform the Alien Occupational control Division for formal approval.

Step 5: import and export of equipment and consumables for filming should be in accordance with Customs Department rules and regulations including those on bonds and payment of taxes. However, if the equipment can be regarded as professional equipment, it can be declared under ATA Carnet Law for temporary import exemption from duty and tax. Check if your country is a member of the ATA Carnet Treaty. If so, you have the right to declare your professional equipment under the ATA Carnet law.

(Step 6-9: Filming in Thailand)

Step 6: Upon arrival in Thailand, the filming crew should inform the Film Board of Thailand

Step 7: The Film Board will appoint a Film Board Representative(s) to facilitate the film crew

Step 8: The film crew is required to inform the Film Board Representative(s) specific location shoot schedule at least 2 days prior to the date filming

(Step 9: Departing Thailand)

Step 9: Upon completion of filming, the crew is required to present all film rolls, videocassettes and still pictures to the Film Board Representative(s) to affix signature on the film case and to receive an approval seal authorizing the production was legally completed. In order to take the film out of Thailand, export permit fees must be paid to the Film Censorship Section, Sub-Division 2, Registration Division, Royal Thai Police.

Important Notes:

- A coordinator can carry out and coordinate for the application throughout the whole application process (step 1-9) and also for pre-production processes including arranging for production crew, equipment and vehicles.

- In case the applicant does hire a Thai coordinator, the coordinator should notify the Film Board of Thailand to work out details for further or coordination. (Appendix B)

- The film script, plot and the film itself should not subvert or affect the traditions, culture, morals, national security, public order, environment, rules and regulations of government agencies or the dignity of Thailand. If a breach is made in any area mentioned above not under Film Board jurisdiction, the Film Board may seek the opinion of the concerned agency(s).

- The film must follow the film script, the plot and details as agreed to by the Film Board.

- The Film Board Secretariat must be notified of any change(s) in advance of implementing the changes.

DETAIL ON EXPENSES FOR THE FOREIGN FILMING CREW:

1. Expenses of the Film Board Representative(s) for each filming:
A Film Board Representative(s) is assigned to oversee film production from beginning until end, in line with details of the approved script.

A. Film used for public relation purposes within organizations

The Film Board Representative(s) fee for overseeing the film shoot is at the rate of 2,000 Baht per person for a period of 5 days.

and/or

The Film Board Representative(s) fee for overseeing the film shoot in a province where the representative(s) has to travel from their domicile to the production site is at the rate of 4,000 Baht per person for a period of 5 days.

Foreign production crew must bear the expense for transportation, accommodation, and food for the Film Board Representative(s) at the same rate as that of executives of the foreign film crew.

B. Documentary film, and commercial advertisement

One Film Board Representative shall be assigned to oversee the film crew throughout the filming.

Fee for the Film Board Representative is 2,000 Baht per day. In case, the film crew travels outside the province in which the Film Board Representative is present, the film crew is responsible for transportation, accommodation and food expenses of the Representative at the same rate as that of executives of the foreign film crew.

C. Feature Film/Docudrama/TV drama

The Film Board Representative(s) will be assigned according to the number of filming units and to the filming schedule. One representative per 1 unit x 10 hours. In case filming exceeds 10 hours per unit, 2 representatives (or more depending on the workload) will be assigned per filming unit. The fee is 2,000 Baht per person for a period of 12 hours.

In case the Film Board Representative(s) has to travel outside of his domicile, the same condition as A applies.

For days when a Representative is present but there is no filming, the production crew pay 500 Baht per person per day.

Documentary(s) produced through government agency invitation must acknowledge the Film Board of Thailand and submit the completed application form provided by the government agency to the Film Board.

2) An export fee of 100 Baht per 100 meters of film is charged by the film Censorship Section, Sub-Division 2nd, the Registration Division, Royal Thai Police Department

3) Income tax for each talent and crew member engaged by the foreign production company is to be withheld. Computation of income tax for each tax payment is at the rate of 5-37 percent (depending on income earned). Withheld tax should be remitted within 7 days of the month following payment. For more information contact the Revenue Department

For more information and concerned application forms for filming in Thailand, please contact Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.mfa.go.th)