



HOW-TO:  
**HOST A  
MOVIE**  
IN THE PARK



Toronto Alliance for  
Better Parks

Version 2014

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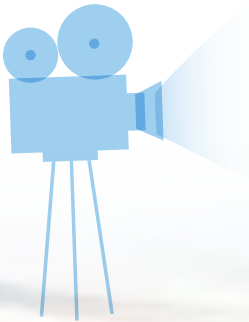
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# WHY SHOULD I HOST A MOVIE IN THE PARK?

Hosting a movie in your park is a great way to create a safe, fun space to bring community members together from all ages and backgrounds for a free event. What better way to meet neighbours and relax outside during a warm evening than laying out on cool grass and watching a movie under the stars?

Typically held in the summer, movies in the park work well paired with other events or activities, such as the last day of school, a community picnic, or launch of a new community garden. They are also a great way to build interest in starting a park friends group, if your park doesn't have one already.

As with any event, there are some challenges. These include unpredictable weather, overall cost of permits and equipment, dealing with noise issues, and trash. But being prepared and finding the right partners and volunteers can make it all go smoothly.



# WHO SHOULD I CONTACT?

You'll want to reach out to a few key people to let them know you want to host a movie in the park. These contacts are crucial in creating a successful event right from the beginning.

## **PARK SUPERVISOR**

This is the city staff person responsible for parks in your neighbourhood. Your park supervisor can help you find a suitable park, support you in your permit application, and connect you with other city staff that you will need for your event.

## **YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR**

Your local councillor may be able to help with the event, advertise the event, or connect you with potential partners who already host or would like to host a movie in the park.

## **PARK FRIENDS GROUPS**

There are over 100 park friends groups across the city already, so there may be one for your park. Reaching out to a park friends group is a great way to connect with residents committed to animating and caring for parks. Find a full listing of park friends groups at [www.parkpeople.ca](http://www.parkpeople.ca)

## **SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT OFFICE**

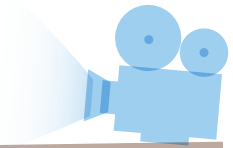
When you know which park you want, contact the special event permit office to find out if the park is available on the day you have chosen.

**North York and Etobicoke:**  
416-338-2572

**Scarborough and Toronto East York wards 29-32:** 416-338-3294

**Toronto and East York remaining wards:**  
416-338-2614

# HOW DO I GET STARTED?



## FIND PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- Finding partners and volunteers is important to help offset the costs and time needed for a successful event. Potential partners may already host movies in the park, own the equipment needed, or have the resources to help with costs. Volunteers are essential in not only helping to plan in the lead up to the event, but in making sure everything goes smoothly on event day.
- Potential partners and volunteers are your local park friends group, city councillor, MPP, Business Improvement Area, local unions, or residents associations.

## GET SPONSORS AND DONORS

- Sponsors, donors, and funders can help cover the costs of your event. Be sure to give potential sponsors enough time so that their logo can be included on event flyers and advertisements. You can also include their logo on

the screen before the movie or allow them to say a few words. Put all details of sponsorships or donations in writing so you have a record.

- Potential sponsors and funders are Toronto Park People, real estate agents, banks, local businesses and restaurants.

## PICK YOUR PARK

- Do a site walk of the park in the evening at the time the movie would play.
- Find a wide flat space. Some parks have amphitheatres you can use.
- Depending on the park and neighbourhood you may want nearby parking access.
- Choose a spot with minimal light pollution from passing cars or street lights.
- Check to see if your park has access to electrical power. If not, you will need a generator.

## FIND ACCESS TO WASHROOMS

🍃 If your attendance is over 100 people you will need access to a washroom. Providing portable toilets will add extra cost, so choose a park with its own washrooms or one near a library, school, or community centre. You will want to speak to staff at these facilities to let them know about your event and ask about any increased costs from extra staffing and extended hours.

## CHECK THE SUNSET TIME

🍃 It's important to know what time sunset is on the day you plan to have your event. It's good practice to start your film about 15 minutes after sunset. In June this means a later start than in August. Consider the audience you hope to bring out when thinking about start time. Check [www.timeanddate.com/sun/canada/toronto](http://www.timeanddate.com/sun/canada/toronto).

## FIGURE OUT YOUR AUDIENCE

🍃 Figuring out your main audience will help you choose a movie. Are you hoping to attract kids, teenagers, or adults? Should you show *Ghostbusters* or *Casablanca*? Successful movies in the park use well-loved family movies that welcome everyone from children to adults.



## MAKE A WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

Creating a budget will help you when approaching potential sponsors. Your budget should include city park permits and insurance, the movie licensing fee, and outdoor movie equipment rentals. Your work plan should outline all the steps you need to complete and their deadlines. For example, if you are printing posters, by what date would you need the sponsor logos?

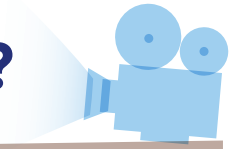
## PARK PERMIT & INSURANCE

Events open to the community require a Special Event Permit as well as insurance. See page 7 for more details.

## EQUIPMENT

You will need to rent a large movie screen, a projector, speakers, and a generator. Costs vary depending on the amount and size of equipment needed. Keep in mind how many people will attend when thinking about screen sizes and speakers. Hiring an outdoor movie company can range from \$1,000 to \$2,000 depending on the event's size and the movie shown. Costs cover the setting up and tearing down of equipment, running any generators, and playing the film.

# WHAT WILL I NEED?



## **OUTDOOR MOVIE COMPANIES:**

Bespoke Events  
[www.bespoke-events.ca](http://www.bespoke-events.ca)

HD Outdoor  
[www.hdoutdoor.com](http://www.hdoutdoor.com)

FreshAirCinema  
[www.freshaircinema.ca](http://www.freshaircinema.ca)

Open Air Projections Inc.  
[www.outdoormovies.ca](http://www.outdoormovies.ca)

## **MOVIE LICENSING COMPANIES:**

Criterion Pictures  
[www.criterionpic.com](http://www.criterionpic.com)

Audio-Ciné Films  
[www.acf-film.com](http://www.acf-film.com)

## **MOVIE LICENSING**

In order to play a movie in the park you will need to pay a screening fee. You cannot play a DVD you already own, unless you have the copyright to it. Some outdoor movie companies obtain the movie licensing, or assist you in getting it, along with providing the needed equipment. If not, you will need to obtain it yourself. These fees range from \$100 to \$500 depending on the movie.

## **FOOD**

Do you want to serve or sell snacks and drinks at your event? If yes, you will need to fill out the *Temporary Food Establishment Application* with Toronto Public Health along with your permit.

Stick to pre-packaged snacks and canned or bottled non-alcoholic drinks to make the process easier. If you want to prepare foods, consider foods with the least risk, such as popcorn, roasted nuts, and dry baked goods.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

It's a good idea to reach out to your local police station to let them know about your event. Consider also having a volunteer designated point of contact for any first aid issues that may arise at the event.

## **PRE-SHOW SLIDESHOW**

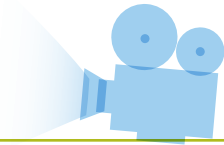
These are the slides that will run on the screen while people are arriving and before the movie plays. It can be a great way to promote your park friends group as well as your sponsors and donors. Be sure to check with the movie company what format they need the slideshow in and build its creation into your work plan.

# HOW DO I GET A PARK PERMIT & INSURANCE?

You will need to apply for a Special Event Permit for your event. For events under 200 people the permit cost is \$80, plus a \$25 administration fee. The cost goes up for larger events. You will also be required to obtain insurance. Permit forms are downloadable from the City's website, and can be submitted in person or by fax. For more information, visit (<http://bit.ly/TOparkspecial>).

## GETTING INSURANCE

- You are required to provide a minimum of \$2 million in liability insurance, naming the City of Toronto as additionally insured.
- The City can connect you with an insurance provider. You will not receive your permit until you have proof of insurance.



## OBTAINING A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT:

- Special events in parks are typically hosted by organizations, however, some unincorporated community groups, such as park friends groups, have obtained these permits when one person has agreed to sign the application.
- Permits are non-refundable and non-transferrable, so you can't move the permit if your event is rained out.
- Permits require a minimum of six weeks to process, but try for two months.
- Your event must be open to the public, free, and cannot be for profit or promotion.



## IN ADDITION TO THE PERMIT YOU WILL NEED:

- To contact Toronto Public Health if you plan to sell or serve food or drinks and fill out a Temporary Food Establishment Application.
- To submit a waste diversion plan by filling out the Waste Management Diversion Form. You are responsible for ensuring the park is clean after your event, including recycling all recyclables.
- A [noise exemption permit](http://bit.ly/TOparknoise) (<http://bit.ly/TOparknoise>), but **only** if you go over 85 decibels. Keep in mind that no amplified sound is allowed after 11p.m., on Sundays, or on statutory holidays.

## GETTING THE PERMIT FEE REDUCED OR WAIVED

- Non-profit groups can apply to have permit fees reduced or waived by writing a request to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry & Recreation one month before your event. You must meet the requirements of the Reduction in Permit Fees Policy, such as demonstrating financial need and community benefit.



# HOW DO I GET THE WORD OUT?

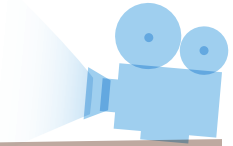
It's important to let your community know about the event through many different avenues to make sure you get a good attendance. You can't advertise your event until your permit application has been approved.

## ONCE YOU HAVE YOUR PERMIT, YOU CAN:

- Create flyers and leave them at local stores, schools, churches, libraries, and community centres.
- Use social media such as Twitter and Facebook.
- List the event in local newsletters, including your local councillor's.
- Consider pairing your movie with another event to increase attendance, such as a pre-show with children's activities, the launch of a community garden, the last day of school, or a farmers' market.
- Consider a raffle at the event and get local businesses to donate items. If you are charging for your raffle tickets you may need to apply for a license through Gaming Services. For more, visit (<http://bit.ly/TOparkgaming>).



# WHAT DO I DO ON EVENT DAY?



## CREATE A "RUN-OF-SHOW"

- This is something you will create in advance of the event day, but will be crucial to making sure your movie in the park runs smoothly. A run-of-show is the timeline of events for the day. For example, when is the movie company setting up? When do you want your volunteers to arrive? When will the food arrive? What time does the film start and end?

## SET UP/TEAR DOWN

- Make sure you have volunteers who are available to come before and stay after the event to help out with any set up and tear down that is not being taken care of by the outdoor film company. For example, if you are going to have a food or information table.

## CLEAN UP THE PARK

- Make sure the park is clean before and after your event. Use the park's garbage bins, but bring your own garbage and recycling bags just in case.

## SET UP AN INFO TABLE

- Have a table where people can leave their contact information to build a list of people who may want to hear about the next event or volunteer to help out in the park. This could be a table for an existing park friends group or a way to start up a new one.

## SPEECHES

- Pick one representative from your group to address the crowd briefly before the movie starts. This is a great opportunity to thank people and let everyone know about your group. If your sponsor or partner wants to speak before the film, limit it to a maximum of three different speakers and no longer than two minutes per person.



# EVENT PLANNING QUICK LIST

1. Contact your park supervisor, special event permit office, city councillor, and park friends group
2. Find partners and volunteers to help out
3. Create a work plan and budget
4. Find sponsors
5. Apply for your permit
6. Arrange equipment with outdoor movie company
7. Get the license to show the movie you want
8. Market your event widely in the community
9. Clean up the park before and after the event
10. Enjoy the movie!

**TORONTO PARK PEOPLE** is an independent charity that brings people and funding together to transform communities through better parks by:

**CONNECTING** a network of over 100 park friends groups

**WORKING** with funders to support innovative park projects

**ORGANIZING** activities that bring people together in parks

**RESEARCHING** challenges and opportunities in our parks

**HIGHLIGHTING** the importance of great city parks for strong neighbourhoods

**BUILDING** partnerships between communities and the City to improve parks

**WCKITCHEN**  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

Made with the support of the WC Kitchen Family Foundation

park  
people

tiff.

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401 Richmond St. W., Ste. 119  
Toronto, ON M5V 3A8  
info@parkpeople.ca  
416.583.5776

**parkpeople.ca**

Charitable Registration Number:  
84644-9437-RR0001

We would like to thank City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation and Toronto Public Health staff for their work in reviewing this guidebook.

If you have a comment or suggestion for how this guidebook could be improved in the future please write to info@parkpeople.ca