

Spain

And elsewhere? The rules, country by country

AUTHORITIES AND PROCEDURES

Rights holders; regional and municipal authorities depending on the activity.

RECENT FILMS

Twelve months after release for public institutions: free sessions or at symbolic price.

KEY POINT

Exception possible after professional consultation; no general deadline for all.

FILM RIGHTS

Agreement of rights holders specifying the Spanish territory and the mode of operation; payment to a management company does not replace the right to program the work. A paid public operation may fall under the obligations of exhibition establishments (Law 55/2007).

MUSIC

Any collective rights due are added to the film authorization; the distributor indicates what they provide and the remaining steps are the responsibility of the organizer.

SESSION AUTHORIZATION

Regional or municipal performance rules, depending on the session status: municipal free event, associative screening, festival or paid operation. National law is coordinated with the powers of the autonomous communities.

YOUNG AUDIENCE AND SPECIAL FEATURES

Public administrations: twelve months after theatrical release for a free session or at a symbolic price (Law 55/2007, Art. 15.4), unless distributors and video sector indicate no prejudice — consultation at least fifteen days before (Royal Decree 1084/2015, Art. 18). The "symbolic price" has a regulatory definition.

In detail

Spain distinguishes between the rights of the work, the regulation of film exhibition, and regional or municipal performance rules. The status of the screening must be identified: free municipal event, associative screening, festival, or paid exhibition. A seasonal cinema open to the public for payment may be subject to the obligations of exhibition establishments, particularly identification and control of the activity. National law is articulated with the powers of the autonomous communities.

Sources :

- [BOE — Cinema Law 55/2007, particularly articles 4, 15 and 16](#)

The main particularity concerns public administrations: when they organize free or symbolic price screenings, the rule is to wait twelve months after the theatrical release. An exception exists if representatives from

exhibitors and the video sector indicate that the programming does not harm their activity. This restriction does not apply indiscriminately to all private organizers.

Sources :

- [BOE — Law 55/2007, article 15.4](#)

The implementing decree specifies the procedure for a film of less than twelve months: the administration contacts the representative bodies at least fifteen days before the scheduled programming. The examination focuses in particular on the local offer and the concomitance with commercial cinemas. The "symbolic price" has a regulatory definition; it is not sufficient to freely qualify a ticket as a reduced rate. The authorization of rights holders and accessibility remain necessary.

Sources :

- [BOE — Royal Decree 1084/2015, article 18](#)

For the film license, the contract must specify the Spanish territory and the mode of exploitation. Any collective rights that may be due are added to this authorization: payment to a management company does not automatically replace the right to program the work. The distributor must indicate the elements they provide and the steps remaining to be handled by the organizer.

Sources :

- [IB Cinema — Rights management and programming](#)

Common rules: three authorizations not to be confused

Film rights

Public screening of a protected work requires the consent of the rights holders, except where applicable legal exceptions apply. This consent must be obtained from the producer, distributor, or an authorized representative for the territory concerned. Purchasing a DVD, renting a file, or subscribing to a streaming service does not, in itself, grant the right to screen the film to the public. Free admission, non-profit status, or cultural objectives do not constitute a general exemption.

Sources :

- [GOV.UK — Showing films and TV shows in public](#)
- [U.S. Copyright Office — 17 USC, chapter 1 \(§ 106, right of public performance\)](#)
- [MPLC Italy — Outdoor Screenings](#)

Administrative authorization

It concerns the event, the venue or the operator's activity. A film license does not reserve a park and is not permission to receive several hundred people. Conversely, an agreement with the town hall does not transfer any projection rights. The exact scope depends on the country and, often, the competent authorities.

Music rights

They may require a separate procedure. This is particularly the case with SACEM in France, GEMA in Germany and SIAE in Italy. You need to check what the contract actually covers: the music incorporated in the film, the welcome music and any possible concert are different uses. Filmbankmedia also refers its British clients to PRS for Music for appropriate music coverage.

Sources :

- [CNC — Non-commercial screening, common provisions](#)
- [GEMA — Rate T](#)
- [SIAE — Film and audiovisual screenings](#)

- [Filmbankmedia — Questions about licenses and music rights](#)

Preparing a screening: decisions that prevent blockages

Define the project before booking the rights

Prepare a form indicating the country, municipality, site, organizer status, main date and fallback date, expected audience, film, language, format, entry-level price and partners. This data enables the distributor and administration to respond to a specific event.

Distinguish legal deadlines from processing deadlines

The French visa timeframe, the Spanish timeframe applicable to administrations, and the British TEN notice period do not have the same purpose. Planning several weeks of preparation is an organizational recommendation, not a universal legal deadline. A regional commission or a local permit may require a longer lead time.

Obtain a written agreement covering the outdoors

Specify the number of screenings, the territory, the authorized medium, advertising, revenue to be declared, and postponement conditions. An annual license, authorization for another country, or conditions from a partner cinema do not automatically apply to a new event.

Sources :

- [Filmbankmedia — Single Title Screening Licence](#)
- [Swank — Conditions for parks and recreation, booking and postponement](#)

Site preparation and operation

Have the gauge, circulation, emergency access, electrical installations, sanitary facilities, accessibility and noise levels validated according to applicable regulations. For the screen, request the installation, anchoring or weighting instructions and weather limits from the provider. Define who will monitor conditions and decide to interrupt the session. No single wind threshold can be given for all screens and all sites.

Sources :

- [Bari Municipality — Event file, technical documents and safety of temporary installations](#)
- [San Diego — Special Events, event preparation](#)
- [ADA National Network — Accessible Temporary Events](#)

Establish a budget and divide responsibilities

Separately plan film rights, potential music rights, site rental, technical aspects, insurance, security, communication, and applicable taxes. In the service contract, identify who reserves the film, declares the event, checks ages, manages ticket sales, and handles cancellations. A distributor's rates do not constitute a national legal scale.

The absence of a comparable authorization to the CNC does not therefore mean a lack of regulation. The relevant comparison concerns the actual project: recent or catalog film, free municipal screening or paid exploitation, already equipped venue or temporary installation. Official sources set the framework; local authorities and rights holders specify the conditions of the specific case.