

France

And elsewhere? The rules, country by country

AUTHORITIES AND PROCEDURES

CNC / DRAC ; local procedures ; SACEM.

RECENT FILMS

One year after the non-commercial outdoor permit.

KEY POINT

Session transfer possible by authorized cinema; separate regime.

FILM RIGHTS

The rights holder's agreement — producer, distributor or authorized representative — by the distributor or a non-commercial screening company. For non-commercial outdoor screenings, a feature film of 60 minutes or more is screened only one year after obtaining its visa; the CNC announces no exceptions.

MUSIC

Separate SACEM procedure to be processed even for free screenings: it covers the film's music, never the film itself.

SESSION AUTHORIZATION

Authorization from the CNC after regional examination, for both free and paid screenings; the examination takes into account the location, the number of screenings, their social and cultural interest, and the situation of local cinemas. The DRAC set their submission dates; the municipality authorizes the event and the occupation of public land.

YOUNG AUDIENCE AND SPECIAL FEATURES

"Non commercial" does not mean free. Outdoor screenings are not included in the six paid association screenings; an authorized cinema can move a screening, on a commercial basis, outside the one-year deadline. The advertising material from theaters is not automatically reused.

In detail

A non-commercial outdoor screening of a feature film, 60 minutes or longer, requires authorization from the CNC after regional review. This obligation also applies to a free screening. The film must be shown within one year of obtaining its visa. The CNC does not grant any exceptions to this deadline in this case. The review takes into account the location, the number of screenings, their social and cultural interest, and the situation of local cinemas.

Sources :

- [CNC — Outdoor screenings, schedule and session changes](#)

The calendar must be anticipated: the DRAC can set submission dates related to their committees and the

summer season. You must consult that of the relevant region, without assuming that a late application will be examined in time. The film authorization does not exempt you from the procedures for the event and public reception.

Sources :

- [Ministry of Culture — Outdoor procedure in Hauts-de-France](#)

Two nuances change the project preparation. Outdoor sessions do not count towards the six paid associative sessions. Furthermore, an authorized cinema can request a session move: this screening then falls under the commercial regime and is exempt from the one-year deadline. Using a simple technical service provider is not sufficient to benefit from this regime.

Sources :

- [CNC — Outdoor screenings, schedule and session changes](#)

The notion of "non-commercial" does not necessarily mean "free". Film rights and SACEM procedures still need to be handled. The CNC also specifies that non-commercial screenings must be distinct from the offerings of certified theaters, and that advertising material intended for commercial exploitation cannot be automatically reused. A regular programming schedule requires examining the appropriate operator status.

Sources :

- [CNC — Non-commercial screening, common provisions](#)

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.