



To: Seattle Office of Economic Development

From: Seattle Film Commission

Re: Pay parity for Seattle Uniformed Police Officer overtime supporting film productions

It is the understanding of the Seattle Film Commission that, under the existing Seattle Police Department's (SPD) Collective Bargaining Agreement, a \$250 per-day incentive is available as an opt-in premium for Uniformed Police Officers who voluntarily agree to work permitted Special Events, and that this bonus is distinct from hourly compensation. The Commission further understands that this provision has been effective in supporting Uniformed Police Officer (UPO) staffing for special events; however, the provision currently excludes permitted film productions.

With the current exclusion, OED's film program has had challenges securing UPO volunteers for film productions permitted with the City's Master Film Permit. Most film shoots that need UPOs require complex vehicle and pedestrian traffic control. While SPD allowance for film productions to hire third party UPOs for these shoots has been helpful to grant permission for traffic control during these shoots, through 2025, the Office of Economic Development (OED), and the film industry has seen that constraints that impact proper operations. When a film shoot has more moving pieces, these constraints then lead to operation and safety issues that have been observed by film clients and SPD. Lack of consistent communication between officers, chain of command, and experience contributes to this. These safety issues are rarely, if ever, an issue when SPD UPOs staff the shoot.

An example would be a car commercial in 2025 that required vehicle holds for two full blocks of a downtown street so the camera and picture car could safely travel with no other traffic. The holds were performed using a third party UPO. The third party UPOs were not able to bring vehicles which are commonly used for temporary vehicle holds. Coordination and communication was difficult, and the officers did not perform the holds when they were supposed to. The lack of police vehicles resulted in no clear presence to deter people from passing through. This created an unsafe scenario for the public and the production. Additionally, it caused production to stop many times to re-check safety procedures, causing significant delays in filming during a tight filming schedule.



Additionally, attracting film productions to Seattle requires the assurance that we can provide expert UPO staffing familiar with the complex needs of their industry. Film productions have the flexibility to choose the location they film in, and without confidence of this expert assistance, they will take their work to other municipalities, which negatively impacts economic development and results in the loss of local jobs and business. Given the disparity created by the overtime incentive policy, we recommend if next contract includes an overtime incentive for special events, that permitted film shoots are included to create parity between each overtime opportunity for UPOs.

Thank you,
Seattle Film Commission

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