

START FILMING AGAIN IN COLOMBIA



After the national government gave free rein to the reactivation of cultural industries in mid-June, the country's audiovisual sector has been preparing to gradually restart.

For the time being in Colombia, starting to film again means focusing on three aspects

1. PRECAUTIONS

Members of this sector, as well as the whole community, are obliged to follow the biosafety protocols established by health authorities to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

In addition to the three measures that have proven most effective in containing the transmission of the virus – washing hands at least every 3 hours, physical distancing of at least 2 meters, and permanent use of masks – companies and employees in the audiovisual sector must assume a series of responsibilities, some of which are as follows:

- Be informed and trained in the measures established in the general biosafety protocol, as well as those in the specific protocol for cultural industry activities¹ and the proposals made by the different trades in the sector (makeup and hair, wardrobe, continuity supervisors, camera and lights, sound, post-production, location managers, directing assistants, and scripts).²
- Adopt administrative measures that help reduce exposure to the virus, such as redistributing and/or making work schedules flexible, reducing interaction and concentrations of people.
- Work virtually if possible (for example, pre-production processes, music composition, script writing, individual rehearsals, casting – through pre-recorded videos or video calls – and various post-production processes).
- Production companies are responsible for providing their artistic and technical teams with personal protection equipment (PPE), including masks, disposable gloves, minimum 60% glycerin alcohol for hands, and antiseptic alcohol, minimum 70%, for disinfecting spaces and objects. It is everyone's responsibility to report confirmed and suspected cases of Covid-19 in a timely manner, which should then be reported to the appropriate EPS and ARL.

1. Complete measures can be found in resolution 666 and 957 issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in April and June 2020, respectively.

2. These protocols are available at: <https://directorioicc.gov.co/comision-filmica/gremios-colombianos>

- Follow the “respiratory etiquette,” which requires everyone to cover their nose and mouth with the inside of their arm when sneezing or coughing. Also, avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes.
- When possible, provide transportation for all production personnel in vehicles disinfected daily. Ideally, the same vehicle will always transport the same group of people. The driver should keep a record of the passengers he transports each day as well as their route. Complementary to this, companies are invited to promote the use of alternative means of transport, such as bicycles/scooters and walking.

On set or location

- Take everyone’s temperature at the beginning of filming and do not allow entry to people with a temperature higher than 38 degrees.
- Assemble the scenery and lighting days prior to the shooting.
- Eliminate scenes where there are clusters of extras or, if this is not possible, recreate them using post-production effects.
- Avoid physical contact (handshakes, hugs, and kisses) unless indicated by the script.
- On a daily basis, clean and disinfect not only surfaces, facilities, and common areas, but also materials, equipment, and elements used during filming.
- Ensure spaces are constantly ventilated, through open windows or doors and fans.
- Always have bathrooms available with potable water, antibacterial soap, toilet paper, and paper towels.
- Collect and separate personal protection equipment and hygiene products to be disposed of in specific bins with a lid and a pedal to open.

2- PERMITS

As was the case before the pandemic, filming in public spaces requires a permit from the appropriate authorities in each city or municipality. In view of the so-called “new normal” that we are experiencing, some changes have been implemented

Bogotá

Each production company must be registered on the economic reactivation website provided by the municipal government in Bogotá,³ where a Safe Mobility Plan must be registered for each audiovisual project, in addition to its own biosafety protocol if the company has 10 or more employees.

Requests for the Unified Permit for Audiovisual Filming PUFA (as per its Spanish acronym) continue to be made using the filming module on the SUMA platform.⁴ Permits will be approved with the condition that on any day of shooting, the artistic, technical, and logistic staff never exceed 50 people.

Similarly, audiovisual producers will be obliged to comply with the biosafety protocol for the management and control of Covid-19 when filming in public spaces in Bogotá, as established in Resolution 872 of September 2, issued by the District Institute of the Arts, Idartes. It is worth clarifying that this protocol complements the measures provided both at national and district level and includes the following:

- Have a space for health personnel or the person designated for this task, who will be responsible for verifying compliance with general biosafety measures.
- Define and mark the different work spaces by zones, such as: production base, filming set, health control area, lounge, cleaning and disinfection area, etc. In each area, a maximum number of people must be defined and enforced in order to guarantee social distancing of 2 meters.
- When designing the filming plan, the management team should take into account the time needed for the general biosafety measures required in each department.
- Those in charge of food should double their food hygiene and safety practices and, for example, ensure that all meals are served in closed, individual packaging, as sharing food and utensils among members of the artistic and/or technical team is prohibited.

Finally, in order to support the struggling audiovisual sector, Idartes temporarily decided not to include in the total PUFA cost the value corresponding to the institution due to additional time required by audiovisual productions to implement current biosafety measures.⁵

3. www.bogota.gov.co/reactivacion-economica/

4. www.suma.dadep.gov.co/

5. Resolución 910 del 17 de septiembre de 2020.

Medellín

The Medellín Film Commission is granting the necessary permits for filming in public spaces in the capital of Antioquia through FilMedellín's one-stop website,⁶ whether it is of a commercial, cultural, artistic, academic, or community nature.

Each production company interested in obtaining these permits must register its biosafety protocol with the “Medellín Me Cuida Empresas” platform⁷ provided by the municipal government, which will authorize it.

Likewise, FilMedellín has a biosafety protocol available, downloadable on the website,⁸ which establishes a series of recommendations, including:

- Stagger work schedules, depending on the departments, to avoid too many people being on set at the same time. Favor labor methodologies through “advances” of specific departments and, above all, do not exceed a maximum of 12 people on set or related areas, such as the production base, dressing rooms, or eating area.
- Ensure space for staff to store their work materials and personal items individually, separated from others.
- If someone in the filming area presents symptoms, they should be reported to the biosafety department, ensuring that the person is isolated until they receive instructions from health authorities for individual care.
- Complete a “health characterization survey,” in which each person provides information about their family environment: how many people they live with, what their work activity is, and if any of them are considered to be high-risk. A general overview of their activities in the previous three weeks, and whether they have been in contact with people with symptoms or a confirmed case of Covid-19.
- Download the CoronApp application to report you and your family's health status. This does not replace the survey described above.
- Inform the Film Commission of Medellín of each recording or filming at least one day in advance in order to monitor audiovisual activities in the city, allowing for verification of protocols by the municipal government of Medellín.

6. www.filmedellin.com/ventanilla-unica-filmedellin/

7. www.medellin.gov.co/irj/portal/medellin/acceso-formulario-permisos-empresas

8. www.filmedellin.com/download/protocolo-de-bioseguridad-rodajes-en-medellin/

Cali

The capital of Valle del Cauca has promoted the issuance of a Digital Health Passport for workers in the different sectors authorized by the government to restart their activities, including artistic and cultural companies.

This passport can be managed on the platform www.cali.gov.co⁹ where each audiovisual production company must register its own biosafety protocol.

Cartagena

Perhaps the most desirable Colombian setting for filming, the walled city, has created the district platform <https://adaptayreactiva.cartagena.gov.co>, where companies interested in resuming operations can request the corresponding authorization from the local government. In addition to various institutional data, they are required to include their own biosafety protocol.

At the same time, the Institute of Heritage and Culture of Cartagena is preparing the upcoming opening of the city's Film Commission, which will centralize the management of permits required for filming in different public spaces.

3- INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS TO COLOMBIA

Since September 21, international air operations began gradually in the country, initially with the airports in Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, and Cartagena, with flights to the United States, Ecuador, Brazil, Chile, Turkey, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. With the second phase of reopening, which began on October 1, airports in Barranquilla, Armenia, Bucaramanga, and Pereira started operating. As well as the progressive reestablishment of flights from Europe, starting with one per week with each airline. .

The directives of Migration Colombia recommends checking in through its website www.migracioncolombia.gov.co to make the immigration control process easier and safer, as well as downloading the CoronApp application so each passenger can report their health status prior to the trip and during the 14 days following the trip.

9. www.cali.gov.co/infraestructura/publicaciones/153272/pasaporte-sanitario-digital/