



BELIZE

**CINEMATOGRAPHS ACT
CHAPTER 241**

**REVISED EDITION 2011
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This is a revised edition of the Substantive Laws, prepared by the Law Revision Commissioner under the authority of the Law Revision Act, Chapter 3 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011.

This edition contains a consolidation of amendments made to the Act by Act No.15 of 2004.

CHAPTER 241**CINEMATOGRAPHS****ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS**

1. Short title.
2. Interpretation.
3. Permission for cinematograph exhibition.
4. Supervision at exhibitions to ensure safety from fire.
5. Penalty for violating the provisions of this Act.
6. Duty of occupier/ owner of exhibition premises.
7. Powers of magistrate to modify agreement etc.
8. Powers of magistrate to apportioned expenses etc.
9. Power of entry.
10. Rules.
11. Board of Film Censors.
12. Duties of censors.
13. Appeal Board.
14. Penalty for exhibiting films or poster with out approval by Board.
15. General penalty.
16. Act not applicable to private exhibitions.

Schedule – Approval of the Board of Film Censors.

CHAPTER 241

CINEMATOGRAPHS

Ch.63.
 R.L., 1958.
 CAP.197,
 R.E. 1980-1990,
 38 of 1963.
 3 of 1966.
 S.I.44 of 1966.
 15 of 2004.

[7th November, 1919]

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Cinematographs Act.

Interpretation.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

“Board” means the Board of Film Censors appointed under this Act;

“celluloid” means and includes the substances known as celluloid and xylonite and other similar substances containing nitrated cellulose and other nitrated products;

“censor” means a member of the Board;

“cinematograph film” means any film containing celluloid which is intended for use in a cinematograph or any similar apparatus;

“Minister” means the Attorney General;

“poster” or “film-poster” includes any printed matter, placard, illustrated pamphlet, photograph, picture or other device for advertising a film or a cinematograph exhibition;

“rules” means rules made under this Act.

Permission for cinematograph exhibition.

3.-(1) A person shall not conduct or allow to be presented or given by means of a cinematograph or other similar apparatus for the purpose of which films are used any exhibition of pictures or other optical effects without the written permission of the Minister granted under his hand or under the hand of the Solicitor General.

(2) The Minister may refuse to grant such permission or grant it subject to the rules and subject to such special conditions and restrictions to be specified in the permission as to him may seem fit and any such permission may be revoked by the Minister at any time.

40 of 1963.
3 of 1966.
S.I. 4 of 1966.

(3) Permission to present or to allow to be presented by means of a cinematograph or other similar apparatus for the purpose of which films are used for exhibition of pictures or other optical effects under this Act shall not be refused or revoked on the ground that the applicant is a national of a CARICOM Member State.

15 of 2004.

4. Where the Minister grants any permission upon condition that the exhibition be conducted under the superintendence of some officer or person designated in the permission, such officer or person may at any time order the exhibition to cease or give any other direction which he may think necessary for ensuring the safety from fire of the premises at which the exhibition takes place and of the people attending the exhibition.

Supervision at exhibitions to ensure safety from fire.

5. Every person who conducts or who in any way assists in conducting any exhibition in contravention of this Act or any rules or of any condition or restriction specified in a permission granted under this Act commits an offence.

Penalty for conducting exhibitions against the provisions of this Act.

6.-(1) The occupier or the person who manages or receives the rent of any premises at which it is proposed to conduct any exhibition shall ascertain whether the requisite permission of the Government has been obtained, and if so, the terms of such permission.

Duty of occupier/owner of exhibition premises.

(2) Such occupier or person shall also give notice to the Commissioner of Police or to the officer in charge of the nearest Police station if, and so soon as he has reason to believe that there is an intention to proceed with the exhibition either without the Minister's permission or with such permission but without having everything done which may be required under such permission to be done previous to the exhibition taking place.

(3) Any occupier or person referred to in this section who fails to comply with the provisions of this section commits an offence against this Act.

Power of magistrate to modify agreements and to apportion expenses.

7. If any occupier of premises is prevented by any agreement from carrying out any structural alterations which are necessary to enable him to comply with the provisions of this Act or any rules, and is unable to obtain the consent to those alterations of the person whose consent is necessary under the agreement, he may apply in a summary manner to the magistrate of the district in which the premises are situated and the magistrate, after hearing the parties and any witnesses whom they may desire to call, may make such an order setting aside or modifying the terms of the agreement as he considers just and equitable in the circumstances of the case.

Power of magistrate to apportion expense of alterations.

8. Where in any premises any structural or other alterations are required in order to comply with the provisions of this Act and of any rules, and the occupier alleges that the whole or part of the expense of the alterations ought to be borne by the owner, the occupier may apply in a summary manner to the magistrate of the district in which the premises are situated and the magistrate, hearing the parties and any witnesses whom they may desire to call, may make such order concerning the expenses or their apportionment as he considers just and equitable in the circumstances of the case, regard being had to the terms of the contract between the parties; or in the alternative the magistrate may, at the request of the occupier, determine the lease.

Power of entry.
40 of 1963.

9. A police officer or any officer appointed for the purpose by the Minister may at all reasonable times enter any premises in which he has reason to believe that an exhibition is being or is about to be given with a view to seeing whether the provisions of this Act or the rules or the conditions of any permission granted under this Act have been complied with, and if any person prevents or obstructs the entry of a police officer or an officer appointed by the Minister, such person commits an offence against this Act.

Rules.

10. The Minister may make rules as he thinks expedient for regulating and controlling cinematograph and other similar exhibitions.

Appointment of Board of Film Censors.

11.—(1) The Minister may from time to time appoint fit persons, not less than three in number, as the Minister thinks necessary, as censors, who shall together constitute a Board of Film Censors for Belize, for the purpose of censoring cinematograph films and film-posters.

(2) The censors shall hold office during the Minister's pleasure, and the Minister shall nominate one of the censors as Chairman of the Board.

(3) Notice of any such appointment and of any revocation thereof shall be published in the *Gazette*.

12.—(1) It shall be the duty of the censor or censors deputed for the purpose by the Chairman of the Board, to examine every cinematograph film and every film-poster submitted to the Board for approval, and the censor or censors so deputed may exercise all the powers of the Board.

Duties of censors.

(2) The Board's approval shall not be given in the case of any film or any poster which in the opinion of the Board depicts any matter that is against public order and decency, or the exhibition of which for any other reason is in the opinion of the Board undesirable in the public interest.

(3) As regards a film, such approval may be given generally or on condition that any portion of a film shall be omitted, or may be given subject to a condition that the film or a portion of the film shall be exhibited only to persons of a specified age or sex or only at certain times.

(4) Such approval shall be signified by a certificate in the form set forth in the Schedule or to the like effect and such certificate may at any time be cancelled by notice in writing.

Schedule.

(5) A film to which any matter has been added after it has been approved by the Board shall be again submitted for approval, and until it has been again approved shall be deemed not to have been approved.

13.—(1) For the purposes of this Act, there shall be an Appeal Board, consisting of a Chairman and eight other persons nominated by the Minister, and any person aggrieved by a decision of the Board may appeal to the Appeal Board whose decision shall be final.

Appeal Board.
40 of 1963.

(2) The quorum of the Appeal Board shall be five but subject thereto the Appeal Board may act notwithstanding any vacancy in their number.

(3) In the absence of the Chairman from a meeting the members of the Appeal Board present at the meeting shall elect one of their number to act as Chairman during such absence.

Penalty for exhibiting films or poster which have not been submitted to and approved by Board.

14. Any person who exhibits any cinematograph film or exhibits, displays, or publishes or distributes any film-poster, unless such film has been submitted to and approved by the Board in the manner hereinbefore provided, commits an offence against this Act.

General penalty.

15. Every person who commits an offence against this Act or against any provision of the rules shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars or in default of payment to imprisonment for any term not exceeding six months.

Act not applicable to private exhibition.

16. This Act shall not apply to an exhibition given in private premises to which the public are not admitted whether on payment or otherwise.

SCHEDULE

CINEMATOGRAPHS ACT

Approval of the Board of Film Censors

[Section 12 (4)]

WE CERTIFY having examined on the -----
day of -----20 , a film entitled
-----submitted to
the Board of Film Censors and have approved of the same being exhibited
within Belize subject to the following conditions:-
(specify conditions, if any).

For the Board of Film Censors.