

The Ministry of Culture of the Central People's Government, with the Approval of the Government Administration Council, Issues Five Provisional Regulations on the Film Industry

January 11 1950

The Ministry of Culture of the Central People's Government has formulated four provisional measures — "Issuance of Exhibition Licenses for New Films," "Review of Old Films," "Export of Domestic Films," and "Import of Foreign Films" — all of which have been approved by the Government Administration Council and promulgated on January 11.

Issuance of Exhibition Licenses for New Films

According to the *Provisional Regulations on the Issuance of Exhibition Licenses for New Films*:

All film production enterprises registered and approved by the Film Bureau of the Ministry of Culture are exempt from pre-screening for their new films and scripts.

After a film is completed, before its distribution or exhibition, the applicant must submit two copies each of the film registration form and the synopsis, to the Central Film Bureau or its authorized agency to apply for registration and to obtain a nationwide exhibition license (valid for two years, renewable upon expiration).

Once the exhibition license is issued, the film may be shown throughout the country. No theater or mobile projection unit may exhibit films without an exhibition license.

If the film's content is reported to contradict the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the relevant provincial, municipal, or regional cultural and educational authority shall examine the report; if verified, the case shall be submitted to the Ministry of Culture for a decision. Local authorities are not permitted to ban films on their own authority.

Review of Old Films

According to the *Provisional Regulations on the Review of Old Films*:

All films previously screened or imported, whether Chinese or foreign, are regarded as "old films."

If an old film's content is anti-world peace, anti-people's democracy, harmful to China's national interests, or promotes obscenity, superstition, or horror that could disrupt the new social order, it may, depending on the seriousness of the case, be cut or banned from exhibition.

All registered film producers must submit their old films to the Film Review Committee of the Central Film Bureau for review. Upon approval, the Bureau shall issue a nationwide exhibition license.

- Old films in centrally administered provinces and municipalities shall be reviewed by the Central Film Bureau's Film Review Committee.
- Old films in the major administrative regions shall be reviewed by regional film review committees under the respective cultural and educational authorities.

Approved films may receive either nationwide or regional exhibition licenses (valid for one year, renewable upon expiration).

Nationwide licenses must be approved by the Central Film Bureau's Review Committee.

If a film is later reported for problematic content, the review body may reexamine it as necessary. No theater or projection unit may show old films without a valid exhibition license.

Export of Domestic Films

According to the *Provisional Regulations on the Export of Domestic Films*:

All registered film enterprises wishing to export films must submit two copies each of the application form and synopsis, along with a complete print, to the Central Film Bureau's Film Review Committee for examination.

Upon approval, a foreign distribution license (valid for two years, renewable upon expiration) will be issued.

With this license, the exporter may apply to the foreign trade authority for export clearance.

If the Film Bureau considers the film worthy of encouragement, it may recommend tax reduction or exemption.

After export, foreign exchange earnings from film sales must be settled according to the People's Bank's foreign exchange regulations, with certification by the Film Bureau or its authorized agency. If necessary, the Bureau may coordinate with state banks to provide export loans or advances.

Film producers who are actively producing new works may apply, through the Film Bureau, to use foreign exchange from export revenue to import necessary production materials and equipment.

Films may be distributed abroad either through the Bureau's overseas distribution agency, or by the producers themselves.

However, self-distributing producers must register with the Bureau's overseas agency and report all foreign earnings in foreign exchange, which the agency has the right to inspect and audit.

If intentional foreign exchange evasion is discovered, the offender will be barred from future film export and punished under People's Bank regulations.

When selling foreign distribution rights, applicants must submit written reports to the Bureau detailing territories, duration, price, and buyer information, to verify foreign exchange settlement. The Bureau or its authorized agency may, if necessary, purchase the film's rights under equal terms through a state film distribution company.

All exports — whether prints, sound negatives, or duplicate negatives — must have financial guarantors before shipment to ensure performance of export obligations.

Import of Foreign Films

According to the *Provisional Regulations on the Import of Foreign Films*:

All registered film enterprises wishing to import foreign films or films produced by Chinese studios abroad (e.g., Hong Kong) must apply to the Central Film Bureau or its authorized agency.

Upon approval, the application will be forwarded to the foreign trade authority to issue an import license.

After import, the applicant must submit two copies each of the review application, the complete film, a Chinese synopsis, the original dialogue script, and customs and tax documents, to the Film Review Committee for examination.

Upon approval, a nationwide exhibition license (valid for two years, renewable) will be issued.

If the film contains content that is anti-world peace, anti-people's democracy, harmful to China's national interests, or promotes obscenity, superstition, or horror, it may be cut or banned. Even after approval, films may be re-reviewed if deemed necessary.

Only finished prints may be imported; negatives or duplicates may not be imported without special authorization from the Bureau.

The state film distribution company may purchase domestic screening rights for imported films in foreign exchange after approval.

If the foreign producer or agent distributes the film in China, the revenues may not be remitted abroad.

All imported films must possess an exhibition license before screening; no theater or projection unit may show any film without a valid license.