STRAIGHT 8 SHOOTOUT 2026 CANNES RULES

intro

congratulations - you're about to make a short film in one of the hardest ways possible. we salute you for that

now don't make it harder by getting our rules wrong or missing out on some tips that follow here. pay particular attention to **film type**, **film speed/duration**, **entry number** and **copyright**. and make sure you know what minimum 'close focus' means on your camera and don't screw it up!

once you've entered you're committed to it - always a good thing. and there can be no backing out - and there are no refunds

you can return to these rules at any time via your straight 8 entry portal. which is where you and we keep track of your entry from start to finish, including submitting your soundtrack and entry form.

new!

even if you're familiar with straight 8 rules, we urge you to read all of these carefully as every year there are some important updates.

e.g. see the subtitles section - this is a mandatory requirement to ensure accessibility.

safety / responsibility

you are responsible not just for the safety of yourself and your team during recce'ing, rehearsing, filming and recording but also that of the general public. please be safe and put safety above everything else. follow the law and all local guidelines. straight 8 / seven productions ltd cannot be held responsible for your production in any way.

in the unlikely event that your film becomes lost or damaged whilst in our care, we will only be able to replace your cartridge. we will not be able to refund your production costs: the star talent, thousands of extras, catering, eight trashed skodas and so on.

keep going ↓

copyright

the copyright paragraph below is the law. please read it and consider it carefully at concept stage. you will be signing this as part of the film submission form and you must stick to it:

“as the entrant submitting the above straight 8 film, i confirm that i own all the rights to the film. i can show it anywhere i want to but only after i have received an official copy of the film from straight 8.

i grant straight 8 (a division of seven productions ltd) non-exclusive rights to show the above straight 8 film in part or whole, if they choose to do so, anywhere on any format at any time in the future under the banner of straight 8 including but not limited to the following: straight 8 events, straight 8 screenings at other events, straight 8 website or podcasts, straight 8 showtapes, straight 8 branded dvds, straight 8 feature films, straight 8 tv programmes or features within other tv programmes, straight 8 ‘channels’ within other websites, podcasts and the like.

i warrant that i am entitled to assign these rights for all contributors to, and all elements of, my film. i and all actors and crew appearing in or involved in the making of my film have completely released all rights to me for use with the film wherever and whenever it is shown as detailed above.

all composers and performers (and publishers if relevant) of any part of the film’s soundtrack have completely released all rights to me for unlimited use with the film wherever and whenever it is shown and as detailed above.”

so just for example… make sure your film does not contain any copyrighted material. spiderman costumes and footage on tv screens are a bad idea.

your soundtrack needs to be 100% original. if you use music it needs to be an original composition with no copyrighted samples, no library music, no creative commons, no free online music.

keep going ↓

the film

you need to supply your own super 8mm film cartridge - you can use any type of **colour negative** film. **we cannot accept entries on reversal or black & white** film. the film should be new or in excellent condition with no damage to the cartridge, otherwise the lab may not process it due to the risk of contaminating the bath.

if you are unsure of where to buy film, look in our shop first, or check out our list of film outlets or hit google (other search engines are available). you will be using either 50D, 200T, 500T or our rather special 250D if you get it from us. **nothing else**.

the first shot of your film, for a minimum of 3 seconds, needs to clearly show your entry number which you get from the portal beginning: *S8SH26C…* how you show your entry number in your film is up to you, so long as we can see it clearly when we see your film. check out some gr8 examples below:

we strongly recommend that you also include the title of your film visually. this can be at the start and combined with the entry number, but equally the title can come wherever you want it to land. **do not add any credits stating or hinting who your company is please** - see judging!

make sure you understand how to use your chosen super 8 film type with your camera, particularly regarding its 'asa'/ 'iso' rating. not all cameras recognise all asa ratings. if in doubt ask someone who knows... or email us. if your camera is new to you, make sure you've thoroughly tested it

everything about your film can only be made in-camera on that one cartridge. for this specific shootout edition (not for our other straight 8 2026 competition), its maximum length is 2 minutes 25 seconds. **we project / transfer at 24 frames per second for shootout**. you can make a shorter film but it is impossible for it to be longer (trust us). NB - if you use 250D see important info on length on our shop link - as this film only runs for 2 minutes 15 seconds max.

keep going ↓

if you do make a film shorter than the maximum length, then when you've completed your last shot, cover the lens and viewfinder and run the film to the end before removing it from the camera. you should then see the word 'EXPOSED' stamped on the last part of film showing on the cartridge (or a notch on 250D). we will then trim off the black. this is preferable to, say, filming your credits for the last 30 seconds. end your film in a great way, not a using up celluloid way.

similarly make your soundtrack the appropriate length for your film for a good audience experience. don't leave the audience literally in the dark for ages at the end of your masterpiece! more on this to follow under "**the sound**"

once exposed, package up the exposed, un-developed cartridge and fix the address labels - available from your portal - to the outside of your package.

if sending from outside the uk, you should complete a customs form. if you need a tariff code use: HS TARIFF CODE: 3704001000. description: 'exposed, undeveloped super 8mm cine film x 1'. if you need to put a value we suggest £30. if you need an EORI number for cinelab put: GB935640221000

we cannot afford to pay import duty on your multi-million dollar epic (though we'd love to see it). seriously, we or cinelab will contact you if any import duty needs to be paid and you will need to pay this for us to get your film - but it should not happen if you stick to these rules. if sending from outside of the uk we recommend DHL. please DO NOT use USPS or another national postal service in place of a courier, they usually take much longer to arrive and result in customs bills. again we will have to contact you for payment.

please do not include any lab instructions (**no** push / pull or cross-processing, bleach bypass etc and no special scanning instructions allowed either for straight 8, sorry - not sorry). please don't contact the lab direct about anything!

your package must be *with the lab in london* by the film delivery deadline - see dates in your portal

you're responsible for choosing suitable packaging and methods of getting it to arrive on time

one more thing…

you'll have noticed that we scan the films with an open gate which is why you can see a bit of the sprocket hole on the left of frame. this means the audience sees more than you see in your camera's viewfinder. so be careful what's on the edge of frame, especially on the left hand side! see this example below... that crew member wasn't visible in the viewfinder! you've been warned

keep going ↓

the sound

your film must have a soundtrack. **no silent films please**, we all moved on!

your soundtrack will have been made 'blind' as you won't have seen your film when you submit it. make sure you've read and considered the copyright section above very carefully at concept stage. here's the key line again: "your soundtrack needs to be 100% original. if you do use music it needs to be an original composition with no copyrighted samples, no library music, no creative commons, no public domain recordings". we check all music rigorously and regularly have to reject submissions despite the clarity of the copyright para you need to sign off on.

we will sync your soundtrack to the first frame of your picture on your film. so imagine your film's sound starts while you are filming your entry number, a few frames after you press the trigger for the very first time. creative energy going into attempting perfect sync, in our experience, is better used on your concept and all the executional elements you really can control. :-)

we don't accept special instructions regarding sound sync. so, for example, if you want the first 10 seconds to be silent, include 10 seconds of silence at the start of your soundtrack and we will still sync the first frame of picture with the start of your sound file. you'll get your ten seconds of silence. we sometimes get asked to start the sound after shot 1 or 2. we say no. it just wouldn't be fair.

your soundtrack must not be any longer than your film. make the soundtrack end the way you want it to at 2m25s exactly. or less if your film is shorter. a couple of seconds over is ok if you feel there's good reason for it to fade off or finale after the end of picture - but please, no longer than 5 secs after picture ends! how you leave the audience feeling at the end is what you need to care about. make sure you're happy with the audio levels: that they're balanced throughout and at a good overall level - it's a shame to hurt the audience's eardrums and it will affect judging too.
when your soundtrack is complete, create a WAV or AIF file. but not MP3's - they are compressed and not good enough for a screening in a big cinema. stereo sound is standard, and we try to accommodate 5.1 or more by special request if you email us in advance.

name your soundtrack as you please, and **upload it to your entry portal by your sound delivery deadline** - see dates in your portal

subtitles

to be more inclusive, everyone who makes a film with any speech in it must submit subtitles. so that's a transcript of the english, or for a non-english film a transcript of the original language and an english translation. they must be literally just subtitles and not something that adds creatively to the story/idea.

to do this, please supply an SRT subtitle file to accompany your soundtrack - as well as sending your audio separately as normal. you'll upload both of these to your entry portal. you can make subtitles easily using free and paid video editing programs, or with free online tools.

we will only line it up like we do your audio, to the first frame, and as an overlay on your film. and that's it. no creative advantage but important for accessibility, so that more people can enjoy the films, and only fair if you want to make your film in a language other than english.

so: if your film has any words you must supply subtitles, and if not, you don't need to supply any

keep going ↓

film submission form

please complete your film submission form which can be found… guess where? in the portal!

this form is legally binding and by submitting it you'll be committing your entry. if you can't agree to everything on it, your film should not be submitted - even if something changed during production and your production does not comply, your entry will not be accepted and cannot be refunded either

please submit your submission form by the date stated in your portal.

judging

the winners will be decided by a vote at your shootout's premiere. there will be one vote per entering company or team. this is used to select their gold, silver and bronze choices and no-one can vote for their own film. and no tactical voting. all this stops it being a popularity contest and makes it the most democratic voting system in the world, possibly.

we don't let the audience know who made which film until voting is complete, which is why we ask you not to include the company/team name in your credits. it's nicer for everyone not to know who made what until judging is over and we reveal who will take home our coveted camera trophies.

film return

by default **we do not return super 8 film spools**, we store them in case of a need to re-scan in the future. however if you would like yours back, contact us as this can happen by special arrangement. you'll be responsible for carriage costs and a handling fee**.**

everyone will receive a prores digital version of their film, with its sound included (this will be your film as scanned at 24fps). these files will only be available at some point after the main premieres have taken place - depending what opportunities arise for us to screen them.

when it is ready you will be alerted to the fact it's in the portal waiting for you to download it

your film will be available to straight 8 to use in any of the ways mentioned in the copyright paragraph. you may not withhold or delay our use of your film at screenings in the real or online world. (e.g. for other festival submissions, or other reasons)

after you get your film back, resist the urge to tinker with it. you've made something with a spirit, let it stay that way! if you do make any changes, you must remove the straight 8 slate - as any edits mean it's no longer a straight 8.

finally

check our website's films page, our vimeo channel and youtube channel for examples of great past straight 8 films - for both our annual competition and shootouts. you should also check our site's faq page where you'll find answers to lots of questions. there's also a very useful guide for shooting titles, text and anything in close up that really matters for the audience to read (included at the end of these rules). you should check this out especially if a plot point requires reading something on screen!

we positively encourage social media posts from behind the scenes. please follow our socials, subscribe, tag us and use #straight8shootout liberally! we look forward to seeing all your trials and tribulations and prop-making and progress

instagram.com/straight_8_
facebook.com/straight8
vimeo.com/straight8
youtube.com/straight8
linkedin.com/company/straight8/

please also follow and tag our shootout partner companies: cinelab film + digital, apa, machine shop sfx, shots

right that's it! sorry that's so long but after over 25 years of straight 8 we know a thing or two about avoidable mistakes and we want you to do absolutely brilliantly. so, if you skimmed this document, GO BACK NOW!!!

thanks for getting involved and we hope you and your team enjoy your straight 8 shootout experience

be safe, be smart, have fun

and may the gods of celluloid smile on you

welcome to **straight 8**

deadline info ↓

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deadlines and delivery details for straight 8 shootout

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film delivery address, instructions and deadline

sound delivery & subtitles upload link and deadline

submission form delivery and deadline

ALL OF THE ABOVE ARE NOW TO BE FOUND ON YOUR ENTRY PORTAL

your film must have arrived at the lab by your film delivery deadline

any questions you can always contact us
(there's a link on the portal)

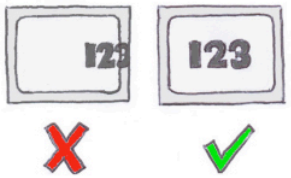
title shooting tips ↓

title shooting tips from a straight 8 veteran. n.b. urn is what we used to call the entry number:

colin dewar's straight-talking straight 8 titles-shooting tips

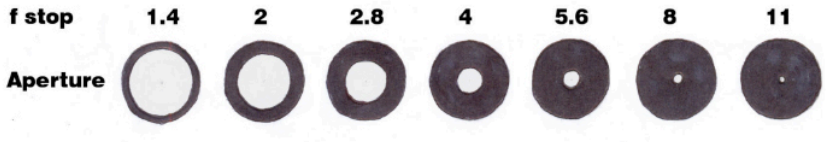
title
however you choose to film your film's title and urn, make sure that they're big / bold enough to be read easily. if you squint and can't read it then it won't be clear on film

framing
make sure that the title doesn't go too close to the edge of the frame. for cameras that have a separate viewfinder (non reflex), bear in mind that what you see through the viewfinder is not what will be recorded on film. you can minimise this problem by moving the title further away and zooming back in. it's an effect called 'parallax' and it happens when close to the subject



focus
most cameras have a minimum focal distance of around 1.5m. check yours. to ensure the title is in focus, have it at least 1.5m from the camera's film plane mark – see pic below. you can always zoom in if the title is too small. you can also film closer than 1.5m with close up (diopter) or macro lenses which are accessories that may fit your camera. also, for all filming, make sure the viewfinder is set for your own eyes. set the focus on infinity, zoom in on a very distant object and adjust the eyepiece until it's in focus. for split screen focusing, adjust until both halves line up

exposure
the more light you have, the smaller the aperture (larger f stop) you can use. this helps with depth of field (how much is in acceptable focus in front of and behind the title) and you'll have a better chance of having the image in focus
if your title is very light or very dark it won't expose correctly. bear in mind that the camera's light meter is set up to give correct exposure for a mid tone (grey) object. you can use an 18% grey card to get the correct exposure in these cases and then make sure your artwork has sufficent contrast



time
finally, make sure you leave enough time for the audience to read any titles. a good rule of thumb is to read it twice yourself. time that. then shoot to that length

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