

## Government Streamlines Cinema Licensing, Boosting Ease of Business



In a significant administrative reform, the Indian government has transferred the power to grant licenses for cinema halls, theaters, and multiplexes from the Delhi Police to the Revenue Department. This pivotal decision, enacted on Friday, July 25, 2025, and announced over the weekend, aims to liberalize the licensing regime and significantly promote the ease of doing business within the entertainment sector, addressing long-standing industry concerns.

Under the new directive, issued by Delhi Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena, the responsibility for licensing under the Cinematograph Act, 1952, will now fall under the purview of a district-level committee. This committee will be chaired by the concerned District Magistrate (DM) or Deputy Commissioner (DC) and will include a multidisciplinary team of experts. This panel will comprise the Deputy Commissioner of the respective Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) zone, a structural engineering or building expert from the Public Works Department (PWD), a fire safety expert from the Delhi Fire Service, and an electrical system expert.

The move is designed to eliminate bureaucratic bottlenecks and reduce red tape, which stakeholders in the hospitality and entertainment industries have frequently cited as sources of delays, corruption, and excessive scrutiny under the previous police-led system. By shifting these regulatory functions from the enforcement agency to civil administrative control, the government aims to create a more transparent and efficient licensing process.

This reform follows a series of similar measures initiated by the Lieutenant Governor in recent months. Earlier, licensing powers for seven other categories of businesses, including eateries, hotels, guest houses, discotheques, video game parlors, amusement parks, and auditoriums, were also withdrawn from the Delhi Police and delegated to civic authorities. These reforms align with the broader national objective of "Maximum Governance-Minimum Government" and enhancing India's "Ease of Doing Business" rankings.

Industry insiders and cinema hall owners have largely welcomed the change, describing it as a "much-needed and long overdue reform." They anticipate that the new single-window system, coordinated through the District Magistrate's office, will bring greater clarity and predictability to the licensing process. This restructuring is also expected to bolster safety and compliance standards, as the multidisciplinary committee will emphasize technical soundness alongside regulatory approval, fostering a more conducive environment for the growth of the entertainment industry in the Capital.