

LNCC Halloween Horrors Film Competition 2025

Categories:

1. **Horror Short Original**
2. **Horror Scene Remake Challenge**
3. **Halloween Music Video**

Open Competition: Open to all filmmaking teams. All films must adhere to PG-13 or lower rating criteria. (FilmRatings.com)

Youth Competition: Youth filmmaking teams submit films to be judged alongside other youth teams in the Youth Division. To qualify as a Youth Filmmaking team, a minimum of 50% of the cast and 50% of the crew (writer, director, videographer, etc.) must be 17 years or younger prior to the final film submission date of October 3, 2025. At least one adult is required to serve as the Team Leader on Youth Filmmaking Teams. Youth Filmmakers may submit their film(s) for both competition categories but must register and pay the entry fee for both.

1. **Horror Short Original**: Write, direct, cast and film your own original short film. Films cannot exceed 15 minutes, including the beginning and end credits, to be eligible. Film Genres may include Horror, Thriller, or Sci-Fi.

Judging Criteria:

- **Originality** -The uniqueness and originality of the premise or story.
- **Creativity** -The effective use of imagination as evidenced in the entry.
- **Theme** –The demonstration of a clear connection and relevance to the theme.
- **Plot** -The actions, events, conflicts, and turning points that propel the story forward. How the story unfolds.
- **Pacing & Structure** - The timing of the action, unfolding of plot elements and character development. The framework of the film or script. Effective use of three-act, odyssey, linear or non-linear story progression.
- **Characters** - Personalities that are distinctive, compelling, multi-layered, and unpredictable. A protagonist and antagonist with clear and active goals.
- **Entertainment Value**- Does the story keep the viewer's or reader's attention? Is it fun, engaging, or thought-provoking?

2. **Horror Scene Remake Challenge**: Pay homage to your favorite scary movie or character by recreating a scene from the film through your own lens. 7-minute time limit, including beginning and end credits. Film genres may include Horror, Thriller and Sci-Fi. Films will be judged on storyline, pacing & structure, and entertainment value.

Judging Criteria:

- **Storyline** – the remake must stick to the original storyline, including dialogue, character, set-up and use of props. However, remakes are not expected to use identical costumes, props, or locations.

- Alterations to any graphic or explicit dialogue, props, or visuals will be allowed for the purpose of meeting the PG-13 film guidelines.
- **Pacing & Structure** - The timing of the action, unfolding of plot elements and character development. The framework of the original scene.
- **Entertainment Value**- Does the remake keep the viewer's attention? Is it effective in recreating the emotions, and environment in the original?

3. Halloween Music Video: Write, direct, cast and film your own Halloween music video. Video submission may include original music and/or parodies. Music videos cannot exceed 7 minutes, including the beginning and end credits. We recommend that teams work with local musicians and composers. Most well-known and popular music has copyright protections in place and requires royalties for use. There are also many websites with royalty-free music and sound effects, (Uppbeat.io, Bensound.com, Pixabay.com).

Judging Criteria:

- **Audio/video** - audio should be clear and easily understood and video should be in focus, steady.
- **Creativity** -The effective use of imagination as evidenced in the entry.
- **Pacing & Structure** - The timing of the action and the framework of the film or script. Does the video correlate to the song?
- **Entertainment Value** - Does the music video keep the viewer's or reader's attention? Is it fun, engaging, or thought-provoking?
- **Original/ Re-make value** -
 - Original Music Video: The uniqueness and originality of the premise or story.
 - Re-make/Parody Music Video: The remake must stick to the original storyline, including dialogue, character, set-up and use of props. However, remakes are not expected to use identical costumes, props or locations.

Rules and Regulations

Entry Fee: \$25 Open Team Registration, \$20 Youth Team Registration

To be accepted into the competition, your short film must adhere to the rules. [Read them carefully!](#)

NEW THIS YEAR, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes will be awarded in each category by the judging panel AND a separate People's Choice Award will be awarded for all Open division films and all Youth division films.

1. Competition Time Frame:

- Registration opens on Monday August 11th.
- Teams must be registered by September 5, 2025, 11:59 pm (1 minute before midnight) to be included in the competition.
- Films **must be uploaded to YouTube** before 11:59 pm on Friday, October 03, 2025.

2. Length of the Film (including beginning and end credits):

- Horror Short entries - 15 minutes (900 seconds) or less.
- Scene Remake entries - 7 minutes (420 seconds) or less.
- Halloween Music Videos - 7 minutes (420 seconds) or less.

3. Compulsory Elements (Horror Short category only): For creative fun, three compulsory elements (a prop, a person's name, and a line of dialogue) must appear in each Horror Short film. The 2025 compulsory elements will be included with your registration paperwork and announced on the LNCC website and our [Facebook Page](#) at 8:00 am on Monday, August 11th.

4. Youth Competition: For all film categories, there is a Youth Division. Films submitted by youth filmmaking teams will be judged alongside other youth films separate from the overall competition. For a team to qualify for the Youth Division, a minimum of 50% of the production crew (writing, directing, filmmaking etc.) and 50% of the cast must be 17 years old or younger prior to the final submission date of October 3, 2025.

5. Filmmaking: All creative work must happen within the eight-week time frame, beginning August 11 through 11:59 pm October 3, 2025, including filming, screenwriting, rehearsals, set dressing, makeup, camera work, editing and sound editing. No previously shot video footage should be included in the films. Certain preparations can be made beforehand: assembling the team, securing gear, scouting locations, sourcing music and securing music copyright. Previously taken still photos may be used such as a still or animated logo of your production company. If you've secured sponsors for your production – great! You are welcome to add the sponsor logos and "Thank Yous" in the end credits of your film. Late registrants will not receive extra time to complete their films.

6. Animation: The LNCC Halloween Horror Film Contest accepts animations. In this case, all drawings (whether made by computer or by hand) must be done within the competition time frame. Models used for stop motion animation can be created beforehand.

7. Language: Your Short Film, Scene Remake, or Music Video entries can be in any language. If it's in anything other than English, English subtitles are required. Subtitles can be added in the video editing program.

8. **Submission:** Before uploading your film, you must complete the Final Report. This is a Google Form that will be emailed to the team leader. The team leader is responsible for submitting and signing the Final Report.

9. **Film upload:** Film entries will be uploaded to YouTube. Once registered, you will receive specific instructions on how to submit your film entry via YouTube.

10. **Judging:** All registered films will be rated by a panel of judges and public voting. NEW this year, there will be prizes awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd by the judging panel and a separate People's Choice Award for all Open division films and all Youth division films. Films receiving the highest overall scores will be shown at the Film Screening event on Friday October 24th. The number of films shown at the screening event will be based on the number of film entries in each category.

11. **Film Content:** The LNCC Halloween Horrors Film Competition is not adult entertainment. We require all entries to refrain from using graphic or explicit content or excessive foul language. For the Scene Remake and the Halloween Music Video you may omit, blur, black out or alter any language or visuals that are of a graphic nature from the original film, without penalty. Entries containing graphic or explicit content will be disqualified from the contest. Minors can take part in filmmaking for all three categories and any future screenings must not exceed a PG-13 rating. Any participants younger than 13 years of age must have parental consent to participate in films with a rating of PG-13. **All entries must adhere to the PG-13 or lower rating.** More information on the ratings can be found on FilmRatings.com.

12. **Film Rights:** By entering the competition you grant the London Nelson Community Center the right to host your film on the LNCC and City of Santa Cruz website for up to two years following the final competition date of October 24, 2025. The film's creative teams still reserve all creative rights to their films outside of the LNCC Halloween Horrors Film Contest. *LNCC reserves the right to make changes to the rules before the competition starts. The participants will be informed of any changes via email.*