

A TYPICAL DAY ON SET

Here's a comprehensive list of do's and don'ts to maneuver through a typical day on set — from the time you arrive through the shoot itself:

Arriving on Set

- Park your personal or production vehicle in designated areas only. If you have one, place the 'production vehicle' sign on the dash. Your car should be locked with your valuables in the trunk, on your person, or at home. The transportation captain may ask for a spare key for your personal vehicle should it need to be moved for any reason.
- Report to work at the circus (the area where the majority of trucks, trailers and tents are set up) at crew call time or before. If you are new, report to the ADs (Assistant Director) trailer or to the departmental head of your specific department.
- There is a 'start package' that you will need to fill out. This package includes a start slip or deal memo, a time sheet and a Revenue Canada deduction form. If you are an incorporated company, the forms also include a company declaration form and a GST form. If you are a permittee, there is also a permittee application to accompany your start package. If you do not receive this by the end of your first day, please talk to your supervisor. **N.B.** Always include both your SIN and postal code on paperwork — if you forget, it could delay payment by a week.
- The call time you are given is the time you start work. Arrival, set-up, coffee and morning conversations *end* at call time. Plan to arrive at least 10 – 15 minutes earlier than your call time. Lateness costs the production time and money. If you are going to be late (a flat tire can happen to anybody), call the production office and have them notify your department.
- If you must leave the set for personal reasons, always let your supervisor know where you are going and how long you expect to be gone.
- Bring the right footwear for work. In the studio, wear soft-soled shoes or sneakers that won't squeak on the floor. In other areas, sturdy work boots with steel toes or properly weatherproofed footwear may be called for. If you're working on raised structures or scaffolding, wear work boots or shoes with soles designed for gripping.
- Dress appropriately for the job. Do wear dark colours—they won't distract the actors or reflect light. Don't wear t-shirts with rude or obscene graphics and slogans - the impression you leave with your co-workers, or the public, won't be a good one.
- Pay attention to the weather conditions. Even if fine weather is predicted, it's prudent to have a second set of dry, warm clothes reasonably accessible at all times. If you're working in wet or cold conditions, learn to layer your clothing. It's easier to take a sweater off, than stand there freezing without one.
- If you'll be encountering extreme weather, check with a local outdoor outfitter and other experienced crew about parkas, boots, gloves and face protection. Sunscreen is a really sensible idea. Dress with safety in mind. Remove loose clothing or jewellery if you are working near, or with, machinery.
- Don't expect other crewmembers to constantly lend you tools or equipment you need to do your job. You are expected to know the basic tools, equipment, and clothing you'll need, and to bring them with you.
- Make sure you have turned off your watch alarm, beeper, cellular phone or any other equipment that makes noise.

- Walk carefully and quietly on the set — do not run.
- Place yourself and your equipment out of the flow of traffic. This means out of the way of grip, electric, and camera gear. It is very important to be aware of everyone's workspace. You will be conspicuous as a beginner if you're constantly in the way.
- Don't sit in anyone's chair or on any piece of equipment – i.e. apple box (small rectangular box used by grips to elevate stands and other gear), unless it is your own. In particular, don't sit in the director's chair or any of the actors' chairs or the script supervisor's chair.
- Drugs and alcohol are never permissible on set. Safety is compromised and everyone else suffers from your lack of judgment. Since crews often work with heavy equipment and power, be careful with prescription and over-the-counter drugs as well. Cold remedies and antihistamines can make you drowsy or affect your judgment.

Blocking, Rehearsals and Lighting

- After the rehearsal, the only crew on the set should be the grips and electrics. All others are in the way. Be aware when lighting begins, and leave the working area of the set immediately.
- Whoever has the heaviest load has the right of way. Move aside when technicians are carrying heavy gear, or if you are by the door, offer to open it for them.
- Do not interrupt rehearsals or conferences between the actors and the director, even if it is necessary to get your work done. WAIT.
- Do not walk in front of the camera while the shot is being set up. Camera operators and assistants are often trying to get critical focus marks in a hurry. If you must walk in front of the camera, duck below the lens and announce you are 'crossing'.
- The DP/DOP (Director of Photography) doesn't need to see the back of your head as a foreground element. When lighting's going on, the safest place to stand near the camera crew is behind them.
- Don't stand in front of a light or bounce board. You will cast a shadow.
- Don't stand in doorways, entrances/exits.
- Don't point, stare, or ask for autographs of any cast or crew.
- Don't take photographs on set unless it is your job to do so and you have permission from authorized personnel.

Shooting

- When the ADs call "Quiet, please," it means exactly that. Things have progressed to the point where the director, actors, camera and sound must focus their full concentration.
- Once 'rolling' has been called, stop moving. Shifting and talking — even whispering — is not allowed. Suppress coughs, sneezes or any other bodily function that make noise. If need be, and 'rolling' has not been called, move away from the area immediately.

- The sound of a buzzer and a flashing red light outside of the studio area signals that the studio is 'locked' and the camera is rolling. KEEP OUT! When the light is turned off and the sound of a buzzer is heard once more, the crew has cut and you may enter.
- 'Final Touches' means there is about a one-minute window for props, hair, wardrobe and makeup to do their last little fine-tuning before the camera rolls. Other departments should run an eye over the set to make sure nothing's amiss. Pay attention during this critical time.
- If you didn't bring it, don't touch it or move it. Every department has gear exactly where they need it. Don't move things to be helpful.
- When taking Polaroids for continuity or other reasons, announce "Flashing" BEFORE you take the shot. This notifies the lighting and effects crew that the flash they are about to see is not anything blowing up. It also allows others to look away. You don't want to blind the camera operator and first assistant just before a take.
- Read the script if possible. If you cannot read the script, don't bother the ADs or script supervisor with questions like, "So how come the car's smashed now?" or "Is he the bad guy?"
- Furniture on the set is probably not meant to be sat on. Do not sit on any set dressing or the actors' chairs.
- Don't handle the props. More often than you'd think, they may be fragile or one-of-a-kind. Even if the set looks like a doctor's office and magazines are laid out to read, don't touch anything.
- A "Hot Set" means that shooting is not complete. Every item must remain exactly where it is for continuing photography. Please don't enter a hot set. If you must, be careful to ensure that nothing is touched, moved or adjusted. If anything is accidentally moved, notify set decorators or props, so that they can refer to their photos and restore the continuity.
- When a big stunt or special effect is being done on set, pay close attention to the safety talk by the 1st AD, special effects co-ordinator or stunt co-ordinator. Safety of the cast and crew is their number one priority. Follow all instructions to the letter and stay well clear of the action area. Paying attention could save you from serious injury.

General Etiquette

- Everyone on the set is there for a reason. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt and be courteous and polite. That youthful, unfamiliar person standing over there could be the producer who signs your paycheque.
- Don't make the craft services table the most probable place to find you. You're here to work, not graze.
- Don't ever ask guests to set without prior permission from your production manager (PM).
- Lunch and snacks are typically served on set for crew. Do not ask guests to come and meet you, without prior permission from the PM.
- If you're unsure about something, ask someone in your department to explain it. There is always time to answer a reasonable question. Wait until you can ask someone quietly and when they're not busy.
- No smoking on set. EVER. If you have to smoke, do it off set near the butt cans and use them.
- Keep coffee and food off of the set at all times.
- There isn't a contest to see who can be first in line for lunch. If there are people who have to get back to set early or are doing a walking lunch (2nd assistant camera, for example), let them get their meal first. Extras, visitors, and other non-crew people normally wait until last.