

Glossary of Terms

While there are many job descriptions on a film or television set, these are the people you might come into contact with:

Assistant Director (A.D.): Carries out the Director's instructions and runs the set. The First A.D. is responsible for preparing the production schedule and script breakdown, making sure shooting stays on schedule and on budget. The Second A.D. is responsible for distributing information and cast notifications, keeping track of hours worked by cast and crew, management of extras, signing actors in and out, preparing call sheets and is in charge of the Production Assistants.

Buyer : Responsible for buying or renting props, furniture, costumes and other items on behalf of the Art Department.

Art Director: Reports to the Production Designer and directly supervises the art department as they design sets and create graphic art for the production design of the film. Works closely with the Construction Coordinator to oversee set construction.

Best Boy: Chief assistant to either the gaffer or key grip. Responsible for the daily running of the lighting or grip department.

Camera Operator: Operates the camera under instruction from the Director of Photography.

Casting Director: Supplies actors for the film or television show.

Construction Coordinator: AKA the Construction Manager, this person supervises and manages the physical construction of sets and reports to the Art Director and Production Designer.

Craft Services: Provides on-set snacks and drinks for cast and crew. Not the same as the caterer.

Director: The person in charge of the overall cinematic vision of the film and the performance of the actors.

Director of Photography (D.P.): In charge of the camera department and responsible for the overall look of the film from a cinematography perspective. Sets composition for each shot, selects camera, film stock, lenses, lighting and color scheme.

Dolly Grip: Prepares and operates the camera dolly, or a wheeled camera platform that moves on rails.

Executive Producer: Usually an investor in the film or someone who has arranged financing.

Extra: A nonspeaking actor who appears in the background of a scene. These actors are typically found by casting directors or an open call announced by the production company.

Gaffer: Head of the electrical department, responsible for designing and implementing the lighting scheme for a production.

Grip: Works with both the electrical and camera departments. Trained lighting and rigging technicians who put in lighting set-ups, move set pieces and equipment around and rig camera mounts. Handle lighting equipment needed to diffuse and shape light at the direction of the D.P. The “Key Grip” is head of the department.

Line Producer: Similar job responsibility as Production Manager/Unit Production Manager (see below).

Location Manager: Scouts and manages all filming locations. Negotiates contracts with property owners of shooting locations on behalf of the production company. Secures shooting permits and coordinates schedules with local officials. Makes sure there is proper parking for cast and crew at the locations, and that locations are left in good condition after filming is completed.

Location Scout: Searches and photographs locations during preproduction based on the needs of the script. Prepares photo presentations for the Director, Producer or Production Designer. Sometimes becomes the Location Manager once shooting begins, or works under him or her.

Producer: The person who brings the entire project together and oversees all aspects of production. In the early stages, the producer may choose a script, hire a director, help in casting and find a place to shoot the project. Once cameras are rolling, the producer makes sure the project comes in on time and on budget. May also become involved in the editing and post-production phases, as well as marketing and distribution.

Production Assistant (P.A.): Entry level “gopher” position, this person assists with any odd jobs or errands needed on and off the set.

Production Coordinator (P.O.C.): Serves under the Production Manager/Unit Production Manager (U.P.M.). Sets up and organizes the production office, coordinates travel and lodging for the crew, handles all paperwork related to insurance, daily progress reports and other matters, coordinates communication with the set and delivery of props, costumes, etc., wraps out the production office and closes all outstanding accounts at the end of shooting.

Production Designer: Works with the Director to achieve the overall look of the film from an artistic design perspective. Supervises set construction, scenery, costumes and any other item that will appear in front of the camera.

Production Manager/Unit Production Manager (U.P.M.): In charge of the production office, this person makes business deals with local vendors and hotels, hires and fires crew, approves schedules and call sheets and keeps track of the budget.

Property Master: Responsible for acquiring, placing and maintaining any props used on set.

Screenwriter: The writer of the original or adapted script that the production is shooting from.

Script Supervisor: Monitors the script during shooting, making sure there are no continuity errors and that the film can later be cut together in postproduction. Keeps track of all the details of each day’s

shooting including number of scenes shot and takes of each scene, what happened in the scene and any changes in the script that may impact future shooting days. Provides detailed reports to the production team and the editors.

Set Decorator: Works with the Production Designer on set design and decoration and oversees the dressing of the set.

Stand-In : A crew member (typically a P.A.) who stands in place of an actor while the Director sets up a shot.

Transportation Coordinator: Head of the Transportation Department, this person obtains and manages all vehicles and drivers needed as part of a shoot, including trucks, trailers (makeup, hair, talent, etc.), picture cars, honey wagons and rental cars for cast and crew.