

**THE NEW YORK
FILM ACADEMY**

Shooting Manual

Universal Studios, Universal City, CA 91608. 818.733.2600

THE CREW

Crew Positions and Responsibilities

DIRECTOR:

- ◆ The Director will choose the location.
- ◆ Explain the scene (shot) to the crew and actor.
- ◆ Choose the camera placement and lens for the shot.
- ◆ Call for the camera to “ROLL” and for the “ACTION” to begin.
- ◆ Give the actor and crew any necessary cues or directions during the shot.
- ◆ Call “CUT” at the end of the shot.
- ◆ Decide if the take was acceptable after conferring with the DP and AC.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY (DP):

- ◆ The DP will set the frame according to the Director’s decision.
- ◆ Take the light reading with the light meter and inform the AC how to set the lens aperture.
- ◆ Check if the matte box is dipping into the frame by looking through the eyepiece.
- ◆ Roll camera according to the Director’s cue.
- ◆ Look through the eyepiece at all times while the camera is rolling.
- ◆ Cut the camera according to the cue of the Director.
- ◆ Report whether the take looked acceptable and if focus was maintained throughout the shot.

ASSISTANT CAMERA (AC):

- ◆ The AC will load the camera.
- ◆ Set the footage counter to zero.
- ◆ Roll off 3-5 feet of film while setting camera speed to 24fps.
- ◆ Move the camera to the position requested by the Director and DP.
- ◆ Rotate the lens requested by the Director and DP into shooting position.
- ◆ Make sure mirror is not blocking eyepiece by turning inching knob.
- ◆ Take tape focus measurements and set lens focus accordingly, conferring with the DP for sharpness.
- ◆ Make focus marks and rehearse any focus pulls with actor and crew.
- ◆ Set the aperture on the lens according to the DP’s specification.
- ◆ Make a slate with shot name, film stock, ASA focus length, T-stop, and section.
- ◆ Check to see if the camera is rolling at 24fps and call “SPEED” before each take.
- ◆ Execute any focus pulls during the take.
- ◆ Fill out camera reports with all relevant shot information, ie. Shot name/number, take number, footage count, T-stop, focal length, and any other remarks.
- ◆ Download the film at the end of the fillmm roll.
- ◆ Clearly label the film box with NYFA, Title, Date, Section, and Crew Name.
- ◆ Be sure that you properly seal the film box so that it is not re-opened.

GAFFER/GRIP:

- ◆ The Gaffer will set up the lights under the direction of the DP.
- ◆ Check and maintain safe electrical distribution.
- ◆ Help move any necessary equipment.
- ◆ Make sure all wires are safely dressed and taped down.
- ◆ Help AC put down tape marks for complicated shots.
- ◆ Hold slate to identify every take.
- ◆ Hold bounce board when needed.
- ◆ Organize equipment on location.
- ◆ Make sure all equipment is accounted for whenever changing location.

SET PROCEDURE

- 1.** The Director stages or “blocks” the action for the shot and makes sure it is working, while the rest of the crew pays close attention to anticipate its own role.
- 2.** The Director explains the shot to the DP, and the AC moves the camera into position.
- 3.** The Director chooses the lens. The AC puts the lens in place, opens the aperture and clears the mirror from the frame.
- 4.** The DP sets the frame, and the Director checks and approves it.
- 5.** The Director calls for a rehearsal for camera. (An additional camera rehearsal may be staged so the Director can check through the viewfinder as well.)
- 6.** The DP and Gaffer set up any necessary lights.
- 7.** The AC takes tape focus, and makes any necessary focus marks.
- 8.** The action and focus pulls are rehearsed at the call of the Director.
- 9.** The DP takes a light reading and tells the AC where to set the T-stop on the lens.
- 10.** The AC sets up a slate that the DP shoots for as long as it takes to read aloud.
- 11.** The Director asks the actors and crew if they are ready for a take.
- 12.** When the director, cast, and crew are ready, the director calls “ROLL CAMERA”. The DP turns on the camera while looking through the lens. The AC calls, “SPEED” as soon as the camera is rolling at 24fps. The Director calls “ACTION”.
- 13.** During the take, the DP must always keep his/her eye pressed against the eyepiece. The AC executes any necessary focus adjustments for blocking moves, and checks to make sure the camera continues to run smoothly.
- 14.** The Director keeps all attention on staging and performances.
- 15.** The Director calls “CUT” when he feels the shot has come to completion.
The DP cuts the camera.
- 16.** The Director asks the DP and AC if the shot was acceptable (framing, focus, etc.)
- 17.** The Director decides whether to do another take, or to move on to the next shot.
- 18.** The AC checks the footage counter to see how much film was rolled off the previous shot and makes notes about the shot in the camera reports.
- 19.** The Director thanks the crew and cast and moves on to the next shot.

20. At the end of the roll, the AC downloads the camera and places the roll of film back into the film canister, correctly labeled and sealed with the Date, Section, NYFA, Title, Roll Number, Type of Processing, Name.

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On-Set Safety Guidelines

Exhaustion

Shoot-related injuries can occur away from the set. Overworked cast and crew and/or short turn-around times can lead to accidents to and from a set due to people falling asleep at the wheel. Restricted hours were put in place by unions to help curtail those types of accidents from happening.

Even though student shoots are not typically union productions, it is the responsibility of the Producer, Director, and AD to observe industry-standard turnaround times when making call times. Turnaround time is the number of hours between the time your crew leaves and their call time the following day.

- NYFA productions must observe at least 10 hours of turnaround time.
- Suggest or arrange carpooling for cast/crewmembers to minimize alone time at the wheel.

Hazardous Situations

Common sense must be used when filming. At no time should “getting the shot” be put ahead of cast or crewmembers’ safety. If a set-up is unsafe or a person feels uncomfortable about the safety of a set-up, another solution must be found to achieve the shot. Excluding the concerned person(s) from the shot does not constitute a solution. The Key Grip, A.D., and Producer are responsible for all on-set safety. They have the responsibility as well as the final say in determining if a shot is unsafe.

Hazardous situations can include:

- Guns w/o permits
- Unsafe driving conditions/Actors driving on camera
- Uncontrolled traffic interactions
- Stunts
- Precarious or jerrybuilt rigging or equipment.

The faculty member in charge of the class must approve all potentially hazardous shots.

Proper Equipment Handling

The majority of equipment-related accidents are due to lack of experience/knowledge on how something works or simple lack of attention. The latter is up to the A.D., Gaffer,

Key Grip, and all other crew in a position of authority to monitor and maintain.

General Set Safety

- Use common sense. If something seems unsafe, it probably is – find a better and safer way to do it.
- Know the location of the nearest hospital. If you get injured, don't be a hero - stop working and get examined.
- Work on set with closed-toed shoes and properly fitting garments. Avoid clothing and accessories that might drag or get caught on equipment.
- Wear rubber-soled shoes when working with high-amperage electricity.
- Always keep heat-resistant gloves within reach.
- Use common sense with liquids on set - don't put a cup of coffee on top of a distribution box, or an open water bottle on a table above a light.
- Lift anything heavy with the knees, not the back.
- Say "points!" when walking through a doorway with a dangerous object or if the object precedes your entrance.
- When climbing a ladder, make sure it is on solid ground and have someone spot the bottom. Don't climb up the wrong side of a ladder; it may not be rated to support you.
- Gaffer tape and paper tape are not electrical tape.

Electricity

- Never touch another metal object when in contact with a powered light, light stand, or other electrical source.
- Do not plug anything in or manipulate a light with your knees touching the ground.
- If someone is being electrically shocked – DON'T grab or touch them. Quickly assess if the power can be easily cut. If not, push the person clear of the electricity with a non-metal object such as a wooden apple box.
- Do not throw water on an electrical fire.
- When using a generator, make sure it is set for the proper voltage (usually 120).
- Remember, the max of most household outlets is 20 amps, sometimes 15. Know the circuitry of the location before running power.

C-Stands

- Whenever possible, build c-stands to take up as little room on set as possible. You'll work faster and more safely.
- When standing behind a c-stand, the knuckle of each arm and riser should be to the right. Loads put on an arm should cause it to rotate so that it tightens its knuckle.
- At least one sandbag should be over the tallest leg of a stand.
- The sandbagged leg of the stand should either be directly under the load-

bearing arm, or immediately opposite the load-bearing arm (depending on the situation.)

- Always lift stands from the top riser first, and never lift risers all the way to the top. Leave a few inches of room in the rise.
- Lift from in front of your body. Get an apple box or ladder to stand on rather than lifting above your head.
- Avoid grabbing around the sliding portion of the riser. If the riser falls, it will pinch your hand between the collar and the next rise.
- Place an empty water bottle, coffee cup, ball of tape, or cut tennis ball on protruding c-stand arms.
- When double-arming, place a sandbag on the opposite side of the arm as a counterbalance.

Light and Other Stands

- Before affixing a heavy light, put a sandbag over a leg of the stand.
- Always lift stands from the top riser first, and never lift risers all the way to the top. Leave a few inches of room in the rise.
- When lifting a heavy light onto a stand, don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Lift from in front of your body. Get an apple box or ladder to stand on rather than lifting above your head.
- Avoid grabbing around the sliding portion of the riser. If the riser falls, it will pinch your hand between the collar and the next rise.
- When using a "Junior" stand, make sure the lockdown on the stand's receiver has been loosened enough to allow the light's peg fit.
- The pin in a light's "Baby" connector should fit in the groove at the top of the baby stand – usually this means the top of the connector should be flush with the yoke of the light.
- Use crush tips or tape to avoid scratching floors with stands.

Lights and Cables

- Always wear heat-resistant gloves whenever handling a hot light.
- Check that a light is off before plugging it in. If using a distro-box, verify its outlet is off before plugging the light in. Once all are plugged in, turn on the distro-box's outlet and then the light. When unplugging, go in the reverse order.
- Turn off a light before wrapping it.
- Say, "striking," and try to have a hand in front of the lens of light when turning it on.
- Use needle-nose pliers (e.g. Leatherman Multi-tool) or backwards clothespin (C- 74) to remove hot scrims.
- Wait for a scrim to cool down before putting it back in its scrim bag.
- Wait for a light to cool down before placing it in its case.
- Move the flood /spot switch easily; flipping it too quickly could break the bulb.
- If there is a frayed or loose connection in a light, do not use it. Wrap the

- plug thoroughly with tape and write a label describing the issue.
- Do not try to fix a light by yourself. Tag it and get a replacement.
- Make sure a light is unplugged before you attempt to change the lamp. Being switched-off is not sufficient.
- Never touch a bare bulb with your fingers, it could be extremely hot and/or oil from your hand may cause it to explode.
- Keep a light's cable from running between the light and the yoke. Have it run unencumbered from the light to the ground (or ceiling).
- Never run a light with the stands sunk into beach sand or wet earth. Use wooden blocks.
- Place HMI ballasts on a pancake or other wood apple box.
- Make sure an HMI ballast is switched off when connecting feeder cable.
- Use a safety chain on a light's barn doors. It is required to use a safety chain on both the light and barn door when hanging a light above someone.
- Cabling should have plenty of slack and should not be stretched across the floor.
- Avoid creating trip-lines.
- Loosely coil excess cable length at the base of the light or near the distro-box.
- Don't run power through a tightly wound cable – it can generate a lot of heat and cause the cable to melt or combust.
- Check your cables' temperature – make sure they are not too hot!
- Know the power rating for your cables. Don't plug lights into flimsy extension cords meant for household use, or use ground-lifters.
- When joining power-cables together, tie the connecting ends into a knot so they don't come unplugged.
- Use sandbags or tape to secure long cable runs.
- Protect actors from closely positioned open-faced lights by placing something that can shield them in the event of a bulb burst.
- Use cinema-rated gels; many theatrical gels cannot handle high temperatures.
- Do not improvise diffusion or gels out of other materials (i.e. wax paper); it can burn.
- Watch china balls very closely! They can burn. Use a wire frame to prevent the bulb from touching the paper.

Flags and Nets

- Ripping nets can happen easily. Avoid snagging the net on something while in use and especially when putting it back in its case.
- Flags and nets potentially can burn if too close to a bright enough light. Keep an eye on these set-ups.

- When outside, factor in the wind when determining how many sandbags to use – especially with 4'x4' or larger flags.
- Always have someone near large reflectors, butterflies and flags when outside.
- Tie large butterflies down with strong rope or sash.

Dolly

- Do not lift a dolly by yourself. Use two people for a doorway dolly and four for anything larger (i.e. Fisher).
- Watch where the hinges are when lifting or moving dolly track. If the track collapses, your fingers might get pinched.
- Make sure the track is touching the ground or a wedge at every possible point.
- Put a sandbag or cardolini at the end of the track's run to keep the dolly from accidentally rolling off.
- Always keep the boom locked on a boom-able dolly until you are ready to shoot.
- Keep your foot clear of the boom's zone of travel.
- Say "booming" when booming and "camera moving" or "dolly moving" when pushing dolly whenever possible – but obviously not during a take.
- When attaching a camera to the dolly, make sure all supports are locked.