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Film Connection

The Role of an Assistant Director

The Assistant Director or AD in a production crew is in charge of many important roles on set. These roles include tracking daily progression against the production schedule, arranging logistics, preparing call sheets, checking cast and crew, calling role and maintaining a sense of order. The AD also represents one of the highest technical roles below the line.

Day in and day out tracking of progression is important in order to keep on the production schedule. If one was to consider the screenplay the blue print, the production schedule is the road map. The production schedule is a type of master plan for orchestrating the production successfully within the allotted time and allotted budget.

Crafting and orchestrating a daily call sheet is one of the most important roles of an AD. A daily call sheet is a schedule that is issued to inform the cast and crew of when and where to report for a specific day. Call sheets include other important information such as the contact information of crew members, scenes and script pages to be shot on that day, and the address of the shooting location.

Another one of the most important roles assigned to an Assistant Director is calling the role. Simply put, calling the roll is a series of cues that help to orchestrate actions while on production. Specific phrases can vary from one production to another but the gist of these cue’s remain the same. A phrase like “Final checks” is used to signal for any last minute adjustments that may be necessary. More recognizable phrases are those of “quiet on set”, “roll sound” and “roll camera”. “Quiet on set” is to indicate that filming is about to begin , thus silence is necessary, while “roll sound” and “roll camera” are used to signal the audio and camera men to begin recording.

Lastly, the Assistant Director is responsible for maintaining a sense of order on set. There are many variables during a production that could inhibit the shooting schedule, not least of which is the human element. While the director is responsible for the creative vision of the project, the Assistant Director is responsible for seeing it through without a hitch.

In conclusion, the Assistant Director is tasked with one of, if not the most important, role below the line. They manage the production, not on a creative level, but on a technical one. It is up to them to track the progress of the film, work out the logistics, create the daily call sheets, and maintain a constant sense of order on set.