Assistant Directors are a part of those “Below the Line” persons, involved in the on-set, hands-on film production. They are directly responsible to the director and “run” the floor/set. This position is considered one of the highest “below the line” technical roles in filmmaking. They are in charge of all day to day operations, and there is more than one on set to assure all bases are covered, including supervising the second Assistant Director.

The second Assistant Director may take care of or assist with things like time cards, call sheets, arranging logistics, checking cast and crew, tracking the daily progress against the production schedule, and over all maintaining a general sense of order. They serve as the “backstage manager”, supervising the second second assistant director, third assistant director, assistant director trainees, and the settling of background are also duties they fulfill. In the past, the Assistant Directing position is considered a stepping stone to Directing work. In recent times, it is more common for an AD to transition to a production manager or producer role than directing.

The second second assistant director deals with the increased workload of a large or complicated production. The third assistant director may work with the first, and may cooperate to move actors around on set, organize scenes, and supervise production assistants. Any additional assistant director may have multiple duties covering any other bases the production may need. One of an AD’s most important responsibilities is to “call the roll”, meaning the all out a series of specific cues to ensure that everyone on set is aware of what is going on, so that the production can flow smoothly and without unneccessary error. Some of the most frequently used phrases would be the following:

* “Waiting on…”
* “Final checks, please”, “last looks”
* “Quiet on the set”, “Picture is up”
* “Turnover”, “roll camera”
* “Action”
* “Cut”, “rolled out”
* “Moving on”, “next set up”

All in all, the AD’s on set are a crucial part of film production and aside from the director, they orchestrate what goes on in order for everything to come together.