Duties of an Assistant Director

One of the most misunderstood jobs on set is the Assistant Director. What is it that they exactly do? Here are some of the duties of the Assistant Director.

The main job of an assistant director is to schedule the film. Scheduling starts with lining the script, breaking down the pages, and creating a schedule. A schedule has two forms, a physical shooting schedule and a production board.

Another one of the main duties of the AD is to contribute and to coordinate, not to control. The Director is in the authority seat and the AD is to be of service to him or her by ensuring the scheduling is taken care of. The Assistant Director also communicates to the group what the director wants them to know.

The AD works in between the producer and the director to get the job done on time and to keep order on set. The scheduling of all cast and crew members, management of the daily operations on the set during filming, working with the unit production manager to keep operational costs within budget and the coordination of future operations are also in the job description for the AD.

Sometimes there may be a second Assistant Director. Their job is to be responsible for the information distribution, reporting and casting notifications, preparations during the shooting process, recording information and getting the actors to and from set on time and keeping them aware of any schedule changes.

On some rare occasions there may even be a third Assistant Director, typically they would be needed on a big scale production. Their main job would be to work with large crowds or the extras in the film.

Assistant Directors are vital to a production because they are the messengers and organizers for the Director. They make the Directors job much easier by taking on whatever the Director needs of them and ensuring the scheduling and coordination for the film is set in place. Basically they are to act as a relief for the Director who is above the line in production and if the Director is happy and working efficiently so will the production members “below the line”.