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The job of an AD

The job of an assistant director is incredibly important and is responsible for several important aspects of running a set. The first is calling the roll, informing the crew and actors of when the shot is taking place and making sure everyone is ready. The second is developing call sheets and organizing paperwork. Last I will explain how the AD communicates with the crew and helps delegate PA’s.

“Calling the Roll” is the most important job he is tasked with. On a film set there are many departments that rely on the AD’s communication especially when the crew is preparing for the shot. For instance there’s the grip and electric department, camera department, hair and makeup, art department , all of which the AD is talking to and delegating the time frame of when the shot will take place. Assistant Directors also need to be efficient with turnovers. A slow turnover can create many problems such as losing light and going into “Grace”. Most film shoots go by a 12 hour work day once you go over the 12 hours you are going into grace more commonly know as overtime.

He must create the schedule for the day otherwise known as a “call sheet”. A call sheet creates a detailed list of what time each department should arrive on set, where the set is located, what scenes are being shot at that location, and a contact list of everyone attending that day. If there is a 2nd AD on set most likely the 1st AD will assign this task to whoever is 2nd AD. Permits, another drooling form of paperwork that also is important. I can speak from personal experience from the last shoot I was on we did not have the greatest parking permits for the grip truck and production bust. This made it incredibly difficult to find parking on and off of location. A line producer may be in charge of permits as well depending on the size of the production.

PA’s and AD’s greatly depend on each other, they are truly the keystone to any film production. The AD is in charge of delegating the PA’s to wherever he needs them no matter what the task may be. The relationship is important because whether it’s a turn around or a company move the AD can and should be able to rely on the PA’S to quickly and efficiently to complete tasks that may or may not determine how the rest of the shoot may or may not turn out.

With this much responsibility it would be no surprise if you mistook an AD for a director on set. He is by far the loudest and most involved of any other crew member.