Chapter 5

* Being the Director's right-hand person, taking responsibility for a number of important practicalities so that the Director is free to concentrate on the creative process
* Breaking down the script into a shot-by-shot storyboard, working with the Director to determine the shoot order, and how long each scene will take to film
* Drawing up the shooting schedule (a timetable for the filming) and making sure it’s kept to
* authoritative team-leader and motivator

multi-taskFirst ADs' main duties are assisting the [Director](http://creativeskillset.org/creative_industries/film/job_roles/758_director), co-ordinating all production activity, and supervising the cast and crew.  They are also in charge of a department of other Assistant Directors and [Runners](http://creativeskillset.org/creative_industries/film/job_roles/1701_production_runner).

Overall, they provide the key link between the Director, cast and crew, whilst also liaising with the production office, and providing regular progress reports about the shoot.

Before the shoot, the Firsts' main task is to create the filming schedule, working in careful consultation with the Director.  When drawing up the shooting schedule, First ADs must also be aware of the budget, cast availability and script coverage.

Preparing the storyboard, overseeing the hiring of locations, props and equipment and checking weather reports are all key pre-production duties for Firsts.

During production, they must ensure that everyone is on standby and ready for the Director's cue for action.

First ADs' main responsibility is to keep filming on schedule by driving it forward, so they make announcements and give directions to co-ordinate the cast and crew.  They also control discipline on the set, supervise the other Assistant Directors and oversee the preparation of the daily 'call sheet' (a document with daily shooting logistics, distributed to all cast and crew).

* Firsts are also responsible for health and safety on set or location, and must take action to eliminate or minimise hazards.
* **Breakdown the script**: this means going through the script and making note of any and every aspect of the script that will require attention.
* **Break the script down into 8ths of pages:**
* [**Create the schedule:**](http://howtofilmschool.com/checklist-for-creating-a-schedule/#more-569) This is a task that requires input from all department heads, as well as the director and the producer. To make your life easier I recommend
* [**Movie Magic Scheduling**](http://howtofilmschool.com/creating-a-schedule-using-movie-magic-scheduling/#more-280). Your shooting schedule should outline the order in which you plan to shoot and all of the required talent and special needs of the scene. It is also very important to work with department heads here and figure out how long scenes will take to shoot, find out whether or not pre-calls are required and plan out the timing of everyday.
* **Breakdown sheets for all scenes:** these can be made easily in Movie Magic Scheduling and they are great to distribute to all departments. They are detailed sheets that highlight all the notes you took when breaking down the script. [Movie Magic Scheduling is available from Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B003332OM8/how0a85-20)
* **Create a One Liner**: this is a document that shows the scenes you will be shooting and the order in which you will be shooting them. It is a quick reference document with the most important details like the scene number, scene name, one line of description, time of day and how many pages.
* **Complete a Day out of Days:** this is a chart outlining the cast members and the days they are working. This is for you to know how many days each cast member needs to be paid for. This should be completed once you have finished the schedule and is also subject to change.
* **Have a list of all locations:** it is good to include the real name of the location as well as the name used in the script. Your locations manager should provide this list to you, if you have one, if not the production coordinator should have this.

Once you have these documents made and sorted you can have your 2nd AD [begin work on the Call Sheets](http://howtofilmschool.com/making-a-call-sheet/#more-416). When shooting begins the paperwork shifts to the 2nd AD and as the 1st assistant director your responsibilities shift to the following.

Responsibilities of the 1st AD during Production:

* **You are to be the voice** that gets the crew doing what they are supposed to and making sure that the day is made.
* **Introduce yourself on the first shoot day**, make yourself accessible but also be firm and don’t let yourself get taken advantage of. You have a schedule to keep.
* **Make sure that a blocking is done**, if a private blocking is required allow that to happen first and then have a blocking for the departments to watch.
* **Once the blocking is finished hand the floor over to the techs** and allow them to light the scene. Once the techs have finished with the floor, final touches by the art department can be done.
* **Allow for a rehearsal or two**, especially if there are any effects or dolly moves that need to be practiced.
* **When you are ready to roll make sure that everyone is aware**, be sure to make your commands out loud as well as [over the walkie](http://howtofilmschool.com/walkie-talkie-etiquette/).
* **Call for a lock up, quiet, roll camera, and roll sound.** Make sure to key the walkie and say “rolling, rolling” and when the take is over key the walkie again and say, “cut”. It is very important to address everyone in the room as well as those over the walkie. People may be all over the set and not hear you.
* **Reset everyone back to 1st positions** if you are going for another take or if the director is happy and wants to move on then let everyone know that you are moving on and what it is that you are moving on to.
* **Keep the day on schedule**, if you are falling behind try to motivate the crew to work a little faster and you may need to speak to the director if they are taking too much time on things.
* **Communicate with the Crew:** as with lunch, the same goes for shooting past the standard 12+1 day, if you think you will be going past that, run the idea by your department heads before you make the decision.

**Have a set box:** this can really save you. It is good to have copies of important documents in there, as well as water, a first aid kit, a couple of tools, nails and screws etc.

**Duties**

Once under contract with the employer, the first assistant director works closely with the [director](http://getinmedia.com/careers/director-film) and [unit production manager](http://getinmedia.com/careers/unit-production-manager) to organize the pre-production tasks. This includes contacting and hiring crew, renting or purchasing equipment, breaking down the script, and preparing a shooting schedule. In cooperation with the [UPM](http://getinmedia.com/careers/unit-production-manager), the first AD must take into account the production budget, crew and cast availability, location limitations, and the time necessary to achieve each shot. The [second assistant director](http://getinmedia.com/careers/second-assistant-director) may aid him or her, where the production requires additional directorial staff.

When production begins, the first assistant director is primarily concerned with tending to the specific needs of the [director](http://getinmedia.com/careers/director-film), but also has a significant number of additional duties. He or she will prepare “day out of day” schedules and call sheets for the cast and crew, and ensure the documents are distributed to all relevant talent and staff. On set, the first AD will direct background action as assigned by the [director](http://getinmedia.com/careers/director-film) and supervise crew. Typically, this means overseeing the set [production assistants](http://getinmedia.com/careers/production-assistant) tasked with wrangling extras or holding back traffic at outdoor locations. Supervision of the cast and crew on set also falls under this person’s purview. When a second AD is on set, he or she is delegated the task of wrangling cast. If the first AD has been delegated the duties of a [UPM](http://getinmedia.com/careers/unit-production-manager), he or she may be expected to secure contracts and releases from the talent.

- See more at: http://getinmedia.com/careers/first-assistant-director#sthash.vaCz9jjQ.dpuf