

# Production Assistant

## What do Production Assistants do?

Production Runners are the foot soldiers of a film or television production team, performing small but important tasks in the office, around the set and on location. Their duties may involve anything from office administration to crowd control, and from public relations to cleaning up locations. Production Runners are usually employed on a freelance basis, are not very well paid, and their hours are long and irregular. However, the work is usually extremely varied and provides a good entry level role into the film industry.

### Responsibilities:

Production Runners are deployed by the producer and by other film/television production staff, such as the production coordinator, to assist wherever they are needed on productions. Their responsibilities vary considerably depending on where Production Runners are assigned. In the production office duties typically include: assisting with answering telephones, filing paperwork and data entry, arranging lunches, dinners, and transportation reservations, photocopying, general office administration, and distributing production paperwork.

On set duties typically include: acting as a courier, helping to keep the set clean and tidy and distributing call sheets, health and safety notices, and other paperwork. On location shoots, Production Runners may also be required to help to coordinate the extras, and to perform crowd control duties, except where this work is dangerous, or performed by police officers or other official personnel.

### Skills:

Production Runners must be flexible and well organized, and be able to think on their feet. They should be able to relay messages quickly and accurately, while paying due regard to the need for silence when on set. They should have strong verbal and written communication skills, be able to take orders, and to show tact and deference towards those in positions of authority and greater responsibility. They must be punctual and enthusiastic, and understand the importance of taking detailed notes and recording expenditure accurately. They should be level headed, and able to work calmly and effectively under pressure. Production Runners must be able to contribute to good working relationships, and to create a positive atmosphere on the production. They should have good secretarial skills, and be computer literate in standard word processor, spreadsheet and email programs. They should also be aware of health and safety issues, and ensure that their actions do not constitute a risk to themselves or to others.

### Qualifications/Experience:

Enthusiasm is considered more important than experience. While there are no specific educational requirements, this is a very popular area of work, and Production Runner jobs can be very strongly contested despite the low pay. In these circumstances, a good education is a definite advantage. A large number of colleges and other training providers offer media courses that may provide a suitable background. Some experience in drama or broadcasting, whether it is in amateur dramatics, student radio or filmmaking, is also an advantage.