

Studio Orientation: Crew Responsibilities

This handout describes the typical breakdown of duties for each member of a studio production crew. Each production may vary a little in assignments, and some individuals may fill two or more of these positions.

This page presents brief descriptions of each position, while the rest of the handout defines in more detail the duties of each crew member before, during, and after the program.

Producer

The manager of the television production, the Boss. Responsible for program concept, structure, content, script, and for arranging for talent, crew, equipment, playback times, and getting the production started and finished.

Director

The person responsible for the technical production of the show. Before taping, works with crew members to discuss lighting needs, camera placement, etc. During the show, gives instructions via intercom to each crew member concerning composition of shots, when to switch between cameras, when to display graphics, etc.

In theory, no crew member should make a move unless instructed by the Director.

Technical Director

The person who pushes the buttons to control what the viewer sees -- switching from camera to camera, pre-recorded videotape, or graphic -- at the command of the Director.

Audio Operator

Selects and places microphones in the studio and tests all sound sources before taping. During the production brings-in sound from microphones, audio cassette, CD, or videotape as instructed by the Director. Controls volume levels and monitors sound quality.

Character Generator Operator

Uses a computer to create "pages" of titles, credits, and other written information to be displayed over camera shots or videotape and recalls them from memory as needed.

Videotape Operator

Responsible for recording the show, and for "cueing-up" and "rolling-in" any pre-recorded videotapes during the show.

Camera Operator

Each camera operator is assigned to shoot specific parts of the scene by the Director. One camera may be primarily assigned to provide shots of the host, while a second may "headhunt" between the several guests on the show. The third camera may provide a wide overall view of the scene, with occasional closer shots as needed.

Floor Director

Works in the studio to communicate information from the Director to the "talent." Relays instructions verbally or by hand signals regarding time cues, commands to speed-up or slow-down, to take a call during a live production, etc.

Talent

The people "in front of the camera." The performers, hosts, or guests.

Studio Orientation: Crew Responsibilities

Community Producer

Manager of the video production - **THE BOSS.**

Responsible for program concept, structure, and content. Recruits talent and crew, schedules equipment check-out and cablecast times. Arranges all the details to ensure smooth operation of the production. Responsibilities include:

Format of program

Many categories of programs can be produced in the studio. Each has its own particular structure, and strengths and weaknesses as a means of presenting information.

- 1) **Performances.** Music performances, teleplays, dance recitals
- 2) **Variety.** Host introduces segments featuring music, dance, comedy sketches, etc.
- 3) **Talk show/call-in.** Guests discuss issues, often moderated by host, input from viewers.
- 4) **Magazine.** Host introduces pre-packaged stories
- 5) **Other.** Telethons, psychic readings, use your imagination!

Content of Program

Programs are good because of interesting content, not snazzy sets and lighting.

- 1) **Subject.** Research topic, create outline for program, develop questions for host.
- 2) **Guests.** Locate and invite experts on the subject, or performers.

Building of Set

- 1) **Use existing MetroEast pieces.** Look over what's available, sketch-out a plan.
- 2) **Construct a New Set.** Create a design, purchase materials, recruit construction help.

Recruit Crew

You'll need from 5 to 10 certified crew members to help on the day of production:

- 1) **Recruiting volunteers.** Consult Volunteer Directory, "network" during classes. Try to call at least 2 weeks in advance, and then confirm a few days before taping. Be specific about "crew call" times, appropriate dress, whether you'll provide refreshments.
- 2) **Assigning positions.** Tell each volunteer what you'll want them to do on the program.
- 3) **Heading production meetings.** If possible, meet in advance to discuss the content, crew assignments, and to address any possible concerns.

Pre-production

In the weeks before taping, here are a few additional details to attend to:

- 1) **Schedule playback time.** Contact Playback Department, fill-out Cablecast Request Forms. If live, coordinate studio reservation with live playback time.
- 2) **Reserve Studio.** Most reservations are for 4 to 5 hours. Book well in advance. You may also wish to reserve microphones, special lighting gear, Music CDs, etc.
- 3) **Tape needs.** How many videotapes will you need? Of what length?
- 4) **Special Releases.** Will you need permission to use copyrighted materials, will your talent include persons under 18?
- 5) **Request Staff assistance when needed.** If you have special needs, MetroEast staff can be assigned to provide guidance and support. They should not be considered crew.

Production (Taping)

On the day of taping the show, the Producers main job is to make sure that each crew member has all the information and materials they need to perform their jobs.

- 1) **Prep Director.** Get her all information needed for preparation. Go over the “rundown” to make sure she understands each segment and element.
- 2) **C. G. material to operator.** Correct spellings of names of all talent and crew, phone numbers, dates, credit roll information.
- 3) **Select breaks.** PSAs, promos, etc. to be rolled in. (if needed). It may be useful to build-in a short break to allow everyone to take a breather during the show.
- 4) **Program Tape.** Check out a blank tape from the Equipment Room. Get it to the tape operator for recording the show at least 30 minutes before taping.
- 5) **Meet with guests and talent.** Explain what’s going to go on and answer questions to help put them at ease. Encourage them to ignore the cameras and focus on the discussion. Don’t rehearse questions and answers or they’ll sound forced.
- 6) **Final decisions.** Last minute changes of format, set, breaks, crew positions, C. G. , roll-ins, or any adjustments (before tape rolls). Keep everyone informed of changes.
- 7) **Let the Director direct.** Don’t “backseat direct.” If you’ve prepared adequately, the Director and crew will already know what you want.

Post Production

After the taping ends, there is still plenty of work to be done.

- 1) **Make sure studio and control room are clean.** Assign crew to remove gels and extensions from light crew, neatly stow set pieces and furniture, stow cameras and “figure eight” camera cables, return mics and cables to Equipment Room.
- 2) **Drop finished tape in Master Control.** Take the program upstairs and turn it in to the staff in Master Control.
- 3) **Brief crew and talent on time of next shoot.** Let them know when the show will be cablecast, or how they can get personal copies.
- 4) **Thanks.** Let the volunteer crew know that the show is not possible without their hard and good work.

Publicity and Building an Audience

Before and after taping, take steps to make sure someone actually watches the results of all your hard work.

- 1) **Neighborhood newspapers.** Send a brief announcement to Oregonian, Gresham Outlook, East County News, and Willamette Week which gives the name and replay dates for the program, and a brief summary of the content.
- 2) **MetroEast’s newsletter.** Write a brief article for inclusion in the monthly publication, which is sent to MetroEast clients, and distributed around the community.
- 3) **Promos.** Create a 30 second spot to be played on access channels
- 4) **Premiere party.** Invite crew, guests, family, local dignitaries to a screening of the program at MetroEast or other location.

Studio Orientation: Crew Responsibilities

Director

Manager during taping of program - THE BOSS.

Responsible for communicating effectively with Camera, Audio, Switcher, Character Generator (CG) and Videotape (VTR) operators.

Pre-Taping:

Check with producer about any special needs.

The Director will ultimately be responsible for the technical quality of the show. He should discuss the details with the Producer to avoid any unpleasant surprises.

- 1) **Go over Rundown.** Discuss program outline to make sure the Director understands the nature and requirements of each segment of the show.

Coordinate crew during pre-taping preparations.

While the crew should know their responsibilities, it's your job to make sure that everything gets done according to the demands of the production.

- 1) **Assign positions** to crew. Make sure crew members have something to do.
- 2) **Review job descriptions with crew.** If you haven't worked together, brief them on your directing "style." Determine 2 or 3 basic shots from each camera position, review rundown with control room crew, noting cues for each position (audio, CG, switcher).

Half hour before taping verify the following.

When technical set-up is nearly complete, walk through this basic checklist:

- 1) **Program tape.** Before taping, record 30 seconds of bars and tone and 15 seconds of black. Play back the recording to verify good video and audio.
- 2) **Cameras white and black balanced.** Cameras colors "match" when switching between different cameras shots of the same subject. Colors appear lifelike.
- 3) **Audio set and working.** Mics functioning, pre-recorded sources cued.
- 4) **C.G. loaded and ready.** All needed information, properly positioned and spelled.
- 5) **Set positioned and lit properly.** Check for attractive camera angles, distracting background objects, Evenness of light levels
- 6) **Phone set and working.** For live call-in shows, check the system by having a crew member call-in from a phone in the lobby.

Everyone into positions.

Before taping actually begins, get crew and talent into positions to work out any of the more demanding segments of the show.

- 1) **Rehearse "Transitions".** Practice the open and close of the show, and any significant transition points in the show such as roll-ins of pre-taped materials.
- 2) **Final Check.** Put talent on set 15 minutes before taping for a final check of audio levels and lights.

During Taping:

Direct the Program

Being a good Director requires the ability to communicate instructions clearly, make quick decisions, look ahead, juggle several activities at once, and keep calm when things go wrong. It also helps to have a basic understanding of the abilities and limitations of your crew and equipment.

- 1) **Communicate Effectively.** Make instructions clear and concise to crew members. Address cameras by number. Use common terms to define camera shots, such as “close-up” and “medium close-up.” Be specific; don’t ask for “a shot” or “his graphic.”
- 2) **Look Ahead.** Try to anticipate what’s coming up next, so you can prepare the crew. Also, try to have a back-up plan in mind, in case things don’t go as planned.
- 3) **Give “Ready” commands.** Where possible, give each crew member a chance to prepare for your move. Say “Ready to cut to Camera 1... Cut to Camera 1.” This gives the camera operator a chance to make any last second adjustments to the shot, and lets the Technical Director get her fingers on the right buttons to carry out the command.
- 4) **Stay Calm.** If something goes wrong -- and it will -- don’t yell, cry, or leave for home. Take a deep breath, regroup, and get back on track.

Post Taping:

Clean-Up and Break-Down

Just as you supervised the set-up of the studio, you should direct the activities of the clean-up that follows. Make sure each crew member has a job, and all required clean-up activities are completed before the crew goes home.

- 1) **Make sure studio and control room are clean.** Assign crew to remove gels and extensions from light grid, neatly stow set pieces and furniture, stow cameras and “figure eight” camera cables, return mics and cables to Equipment Room. Sweep or gather-up any papers, boxes, rubbish.
- 2) **Normalize Equipment.**
Control Room (DO NOT POWER DOWN ANY EQUIPMENT.)
Switcher—all busses on black.
Cameras on bars on CCUs.
Audio board—fader bars down, all buttons normalized position.
- 3) **Thanks.** Let the volunteer crew know that the show is not possible without their hard and good work.

Studio Orientation: Crew Responsibilities

Technical Director

Responsible for the technical look of the show. Primary duty is operation of the video “switcher”, but may also include white balance of cameras, and “shading” during taping. Everything the viewers “sees” on the screen is put there through the actions of the TD, but at the command of the Director.

Pre-taping:

- 1) **Supervise lighting.** Make sure cameras have adequate light on all areas to produce quality picture.
- 2) **White, black balance cameras.** These adjustments make sure that colors will be reproduced accurately by the cameras, and that the color reproduction will be the same on all cameras.
- 3) **Set Iris levels** on CCUs and match cameras. Set camera control units to AUTO IRIS, or set to MANUAL IRIS and adjust settings.
- 4) **Discuss proposed techniques with director.** Talk with Director, and examine Rundown to determine whether you’ll be asked to perform any out-of-the-ordinary effects or transitions during the show.
- 5) **Practice opening and first few shots** with director and crew.

Taping:

- 1) **Operate switcher** according to director’s commands. Director should give a “ready” command, to allow time to prepare for the requested switch, followed by an “execute” command. Don’t “backseat direct.”

Post Taping:

- 1) **Normalize switcher.** Set each of the busses to black.
- 2) **Switch cameras to color bars** on CCUs. Camera power may be switched off if yours is the last production of the day.
- 3) **Normalize all systems:**
Vector scope brightness down.
C.G. monitor to (b).
Supervise the normalization of other systems.
- 4) **Help in breakdown of set and cleaning** of studio and control room.

Studio Orientation: Crew Responsibilities

Audio Operator

Responsible for the sound (audio level) of the program. Everything the audience “hears” is controlled by the audio operator, at the command of the Director.

Pre-Taping:

- 1) **Check with Producer about audio needs.** These needs may include setting-up microphones to record voices or instruments, and playback of sound from videotape, audio cassette, compact disc, or vinyl record.
- 2) **Select mics.** Several different types of microphones are available for various uses: “Lapel” mics for talk shows, stand-mounted or hand-held mics for singers or instruments, or wireless mics when the talent needs to be free to move about. Ask at the Equipment Room for mics, cables, or advice.
- 3) **Test mics and other audio sources.** Ask a crew member to speak into each mic to verify function. Play each pre-recorded source (CD, cassette, videotape) to make sure it works, to pre-set volume levels, and to become familiar with the segment to be used during the show.
- 4) **Work with V.T.R. person to assemble breaks and PSAs.**
- 5) **Work with V.T.R. person to bar and tone program tape.** To prepare audio recording levels on the videotape recorder, the tape operator will ask you to “send tone.” Flip on the “TONE” switch just above the audio mixer, and adjust the Master Volume control until the tone is at 0dB on your V.U. Meter.
- 6) **Test and set SEND TO STUDIO level.** If the talent needs to hear callers on live call-in shows, or sound from videotape or CD, you can feed any source to a studio speaker.
- 7) **Test and set PHONE levels to and from studio.** For live call-in shows, make a test call. Get a crew member to sit in the studio wearing a talent mic. Ask another to dial the call-in number from a lobby phone. Adjust levels until each can hear the other without feedback.
- 8) **Retest and set MIC levels** with host and guests on set.

Taping:

- 1) **Operates audio equipment** according to director’s instructions.
- 2) **Works with VTR person** to maintain appropriate levels.
- 3) In live call-in, **works phone audio** and cuts off any inappropriate callers.

Post Taping:

- 1) **Normalize audio system.**
Set all faders to zero, All channels on/off button to off.DO NOT power down system.
- 2) **Pack all mics, roll cables, and return to EQ room.**
- 3) **Help with any other break down** of set necessary.

Studio Orientation: Crew Responsibilities

Videotape Operator

Responsible for preparing all video tapes for program. This includes setting-up recorder to tape show for later replay, and rolling-in pre-recorded segments as needed.

Pre-Taping:

- 1) **Get videotape(s) from producer.** (Be sure to REWIND.)
- 2) **Record 30 seconds of bars** and 15 seconds of black(With audio operators help) at beginning of program tape. Rewind and play the recording to make certain you recorded both audio and video. If not, contact Equipment Room staff.
- 3) **Time roll-in tapes** (PSAs, opening, closing, pre-packaged stories, etc.)
- 4) **Give time(s) to director** and discuss order in which tapes will be played.
- 5) **Five minutes before beginning of program:**
 - a. Insert first roll-in piece in player VTR and cue with a 5-second pre-roll (or as instructed by director).
 - b. put edit controller in "assemble mode" on Rec Deck.
 - c. zero counter on Record Deck at end of Black.
 - d. pre-roll record tape (press PRE-ROLL & EDIT on face of REC. VTR. This pre-rolls program tape back 5 seconds.)
 - e. WAIT for Director's command to roll tape.

Taping:

- 1) **Roll tape(s)** on Director's command.
- 2) **Cue roll-in tapes.**
- 3) **Play roll-in tapes** as instructed by Director.
- 4) **Keep track of time** on program tape and inform director of program time.

Post -Taping:

- 1) **Rewind all roll-in tapes** and return to producer.
- 2) **DO NOT rewind program tape.**
- 3) **Label the tape clearly** with this information:
 - a. name of program
 - b. producer's name
 - c. length of program (taken from Record Deck counter)
 - d. program number (ask producer)
- 4) **Give program tape to Producer.**
- 5) Help break down and store set, and clean up studio.

Studio Orientation: Crew Responsibilities

Character Generator Operator

Responsible for all written material displayed on-screen during the production. The CG operator does most of his important work before the show, gathering information about what graphics are required, and typing the information into a computer-like character generator.

An effective CG operator has a sense of layout, color, and design. He should be detail-oriented, and a good speller.

Pre-Taping:

- 1) **Get information from Producer**
 - a. Names of all crew for credits
 - b. Names of talent and guests for title pages
 - c. Phone numbers and addresses to be keyed
- 2) **Create title pages**
 - a. Title of production
 - b. Names and titles of host and guests. Create one page for a guest, and copy it for use as a template for other guests.
- 3) **Update credit roll** with current dates and information.
- 4) **Double check spelling and accuracy** of all title pages and credit roll. Also check pages with Technical Director for layout.
- 5) **Have Producer check all information.** Ask guests to check their names and titles.
- 6) **Create a sheet which records the number and description of each page.** This will speed-up the process of locating graphics when needed. You can also add this information to the Rundown sheet.

Taping:

- 1) **Bring up pages to be keyed** per Director's command.
 - a. Type the page number on the number keypad, and press "enter".
 - b. OR select the desired page from the page list, and click the PLAY button
 - c. DO NOT change pages while a page is being displayed, except at the request of the Director.

Post-Taping:

- 1) **Save and Close your CG project ("FILE" menu)**
- 2) **Normalize C.G. monitor** by pushing in button "A" on monitor.
- 3) **Clean area.**
- 4) **Help normalize studio** (break down set, lights, and clean).

Studio Orientation: Crew Responsibilities

Camera Operator

Responsible for providing well-framed and sharply-focused shots, and smooth camera movement of subjects assigned by the Director. Also responsible for assisting with general studio set-up.

Pre-Taping:

- 1) **Help with lighting.**
- 2) **Help put together set.**
- 3) **Position cameras on White Balance card.** This is an important color adjustment that ensures accurate and consistent color reproduction by the cameras.
- 4) **Discuss proposed shots with Director.** She will examine what angles look good from each camera position, which subjects can be seen from each position, and work with you to set-up 4 or 5 basic shots which she'll use frequently during taping.
- 5) **Set all drag controls** on tripod for comfortable performance. Make sure tilt and pan locks are off while adjusting.
- 6) **Set camera height** so lens is at "eye-level" with talent.
- 7) **Adjust Viewfinder position.** Loosen locking knob, and tilt to a comfortable height for the camera height, and your height.
- 8) **Practice shots to be used.** Rehearse so that you can quickly move from one shot to another, reframing and refocusing as needed.

Taping:

- 1) **Follow Director's commands.** Some Directors prefer camera operators to find shots, and then the Director selects the best view. Other Directors prefer camera operators to move ONLY when asked.
- 2) **Be aware of your "Tally Light."** The red light in your viewfinder is lit when your camera is "hot" or being seen by the audience. Don't move the camera when hot, unless to follow action or at the Director's request.
- 3) **Keep Hands on the Camera.** Maintain a light touch on each panhandle, so you can move the camera if needed. Keep Tilt and Pan Locks unlocked. Try not to jostle the camera when hot.

Post-Taping:

- 1) **Lockdown cameras** (Tilt and Pan Locks on).
- 2) **Face cameras toward back wall and "figure 8" C.C.U. cables.**
- 3) **Help break down and store set.**
- 4) **Help clean up studio.**