
Glossary of Film Terms:

Arm up: To raise the arm of a crane. Arm down, of course, you can figure out for yourself

Assistant Camera (A.C.): Responsible for the care and maintenance of the camera and all of its associated pieces and parts. The **first A.C.** works closely with the **camera operator** and the **director of photography** at the cameras, while the **second A.C.** loads the film and runs the **slate**.

Assistant Director (A.D.): The assistant director is the film set referee. His job is to keep everything going smoothly and on schedule and maintain peace among the cast and crew. An assistant to the **director**, the **first A.D.** runs the set and is responsible for carrying out the director's instructions. The **second A.D.** signs actors in and out and is usually the person in charge of **production assistants**. Third Assistant Director is an assistant to the second assistant director; responsible for (among other things) directing the movements of extras.

Bar: A horizontal metal tube from which lighting equipment or scenery is suspended. (Also called a barrel, batten, or pipe.) A batten is also a narrow strip of wood or metal that fastens or makes secure the lighting or scenery, as in "batten down the hatches" of a ship.

Beef: The power of a light. "Give me some more beef on the baby."

Best Boy: The second in command of an electrical or grip department. This lieutenant of grips is also in charge of delegating tasks. The second in command of any group can also be referred to as the best boy.

BFL: Big Fucking Light. Any of the bigger, heavier lights on a set. As in "Let's wrap the BFL's early tonight." Sometimes bowdlerized as Big Fat Light.

Blackwrap: Black aluminum foil used either to mold the direction of light or as heat insulation.

Boom Operator: Responsible for operating the boom microphone.

Boom up: To raise the entire camera when it is mounted on a crane or dolly. (To lower the camera is to "boom down.")

Camera Operator: Runs the camera during shooting. On low-budget films, the D.P. may also serve as the Operator.

Craft services: The department made available to provide buffet style snacks and drinks to the crew throughout the shooting day. Not to be confused with catering, provided by an outside company, which serves regular hot sit-down meals that occur every six hours or so.

Condor: An extendable boom arm, capable of hoisting lights 30 to 120 feet high. The term derives from the company that originally made them, but now refers to many

A small selection of terms one might need to know in order to keep track of things on set. For the whole vocabulary, there is a small, very interesting book, *Movie Speak, How to Talk Like You Belong on a Film Set*, by Tony Bill, oscar-winning producer and director. Some of the terms below are from the book.

high-lift devices, such as cherry pickers.

Dance floor: An area covered with (usually) plywood to enable the dolly to move smoothly in any direction.

Director: Controls the action and dialogue in front of the camera. The principal creative artist on a movie set.

Director of Photography (D.P.): Responsible for the “look” of the film; works with the **lighting director** to set-up shots and camera moves. Sometimes called the **cinematographer**. The D.P. has a number of possible duties: designing and selecting lighting, directing the gaffers of lighting, shot composition (in consultation with the director).

Dolly: A dolly is a small vehicle or truck that helps transport the camera and its crew, sometimes including the director.

Dolly Grip: Prepares the camera dolly and associated hardware, and operates the dolly during the shoot.

Electrician: A member of the electrical department; reports directly to the **Best Boy**.

Flag: An opaque cloth set in a metal frame used to prevent light from falling where it's not wanted. Also known as a solid, or a gobo.

Gaffer: Specifically, the head electrician. Generally, the head of any department. Works with the **D.P.** and the **lighting director** to light the scene. Handles the equipment.

Grip: A rigger, generally in charge of putting the camera anywhere the director wants it. The backbone of the film shoot, grips are the crew specialists assigned to the tasks of hammer and nail technology, the rigging of cameras and lights, and the moving of various equipment.

Key grip: The head of the grip department. Key grips work closely with the gaffer.

Kill it: Turn it off; cancel it. Usually in reference to a light.

Knock it down: To take the shine or newness off something, usually immediately and temporarily, by spraying it with a dulling spray, often a hair product called Streaks 'n Tips. Then the request is often simply reduced to the order "Streaks 'n Tips." (Clearly the use of hairspray in the museum is to be avoided and should be in violation of your filming guidelines, so keep an ear out for the phrase “knock it down.” Also, keep an eye on the hair stylists as they may sneak a can of hairspray onto set. Luckily, aerosol spray makes a distinctive sound when used. Know, too, that cans of aerosol water are sometimes used to add beads of sweat onto an actor’s face. It is still a violation of the filming guidelines, but, in all honesty, in most locations it is harmless.)

Lighting Technician: A member of the electrical department that is responsible for operating lights and lighting equipment on a set.

Lunch: The meal served halfway through the shooting day, no matter what time of the day or night it is served. Similarly, the shooting day is always called the day - even if it is actually night. Breakfast is usually made available out of a catering truck or at a table at the start of the shooting day. There is no such thing as dinner, only a *second meal*, usually modest. There is a distinct pecking order to the lunch line: director first if they want; stars; cast; crew; extras. Conserverators will probably be forgiven if we don't know our place, but it's probably a good idea to eat with the crew.

Manmaker: Any device used to make an actor taller. May also be used in reference to any crewmember (operator, grip, etc.) needing to be made a few inches taller for the job at hand. also **pancake**, **apple box**, **half apple**, **quarter apple**.

Production Assistant (P.A.): The runners, ‘gophers’ on the set. On set the job can include holding back onlookers, getting coffee, escorting actors to locations, acting as a stand-in while a short is worked out, or performing any other tasks required to make the production run more smoothly.

Property Assistant: Responsible for the placement and maintenance of props on a set. Also **Set Dresser:** A person who has total charge of decorating the set with all furnishings, drapery, interior plants, and anything seen indoors or on the walls.

Second Unit: These are crews that are in charge of filming minor scenes, usually at a separate location.

Slate: A board (usually black and white) placed in front of the cameras at the beginning or end of each take of each scene, identifying the scene and take numbers.

Still Photographer: A person who photographs the action (often alongside the camera) to be for publicity.

Sound Recordist: Responsible for operating the audio recording equipment on a set.

Storyboard: The storyboard is an outline consisting of renderings to illustrate the sequence, flow, and general look of a film or scene before filming begins.

Stunt Coordinator: The stunt coordinator is in charge of designing and scheduling stunt performances. Stunt performers are specially trained to act in potentially dangerous scenes, usually in the place of the regular actors.

Transportation Captain: Makes sure everyone gets to the location. Responsible for all vehicle movement and parking. All drivers report to the transportation captain.

Technical Advisor: Technical advisors provide advice on the many technical aspects of creating a film.

Wrap: The act of finishing a shot, the day’s work, or the entire production