



Doctor Who © BBC Studios

High-end TV Skills Fund **Producer's handbook**

Producer’s Handbook

Welcome to the “Producer’s Handbook”

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Being a producer

So you got the job, congratulations. But what do you have to do now? What are you responsible for? Do you have to hire everyone? Do you have to have a qualification in HR? What if things go wrong, could you end up in court, is it your personal responsibility?

As the saying goes, with great power, comes great responsibility and being a producer covers everything from development right through to delivery. It understandably can be a daunting role.

This handbook is to be used as a reference guide to help address some of the paperwork and jargon you will come across and give you confidence that you are fulfilling the role and its requirements effectively, conscientiously and legally. Undoubtedly there may be things you come across that are production-specific and not covered in this handbook. Similarly, there will be activities listed below which you may not need to be across in your individual production. If in doubt, just ask! Life is one learning experience and the moment you think you know everything, it's possibly time to throw in the towel!

The role of producer in high-end TV

Appointed by the executive producer, it is **your** responsibility to oversee **all** aspects of the production. This includes putting together the production team and casting the show. The specifics of your role vary depending on which production company you are working for and also on which point in the production you're appointed.

"Ultimately, it is the producer's responsibility to ensure that a project moves safely through all the phases of production and produces the best possible show within the confines of the allocated schedule and budget. In other words, do whatever is necessary to get the job done."

- Marcus Wilson, executive producer, Fifty Fathoms Productions

How productions work

Usually productions break down into three stages: pre-production, production and post. Below is a breakdown of the key areas but this list is not exhaustive!

Pre-production

Pre-production can take months, depending whether you have been involved in the initial story creation and pitching process from the outset.

Script

Typically, you'll be developing the script(s) and working with the writer, script editor, executive producers and director(s). You have the responsibility of ensuring that the scripts can be filmed within the planned schedule and budget (as inherited or developed with the line producer). You will also be signing off shooting scripts and subsequently amendments which may be required before and as filming continues.

Recruitment

You will usually hire the director(s) ensuring agreement from the execs and broadcaster. You will then work with them to ensure that the vision is realised to the fullest of its potential.

Alongside the director and with input from the line producer (LP), you will recruit the heads of department (HoDs). It is not usually the case that you would end up physically doing all the paperwork for this process – you'll mostly work in conjunction with your LP. The HoDs in turn will

crew up their specific departments. It is important to ensure that your recruitment is as wide and diverse as possible – for multiple reasons. Usually this is part of the commissioning and greenlight requirements. See below.

Casting

Alongside the casting director and director, you will “cast” the show, including recognising the financial implications and different negotiations with agents. You are of course obligated to work within the law. Therefore it must also be checked that other “cast members” (eg supporting artists) have a right to work in the UK and don’t have a criminal record as this could lay your production open to heavy fines and other issues. See below.

Scheduling and budgeting

Working closely with the line producer you set up the overall parameters for the shooting and post schedule, and budget. As pre-production continues, the 1st AD will provide detailed episode specific schedules for you to approve and the post-production supervision will provide more detailed post schedules for approval.

Approval of key facilities

Alongside the line producer, you select and approve the main facility providers for the production (eg studio hire, production base, main equipment supplier and post facility) Depending who you are working for, you may already have approved/preferred suppliers. Refer to the company handbook/production company manuals for details.

Health and safety (H&S)

Legally, as producer you are responsible for H&S on a production. Ensuring that your freelance crew members are qualified and their certificates up to date is also your responsibility. See below for more details.

Clearance and compliance

You are responsible to ensure that the finished production complies with all relevant laws and codes. More details below.

Child protection

If you are employing underage artistes, you must ensure that all legal requirements are complied with. See below.

Filming location approvals

You have overall approval of the filming locations put forward by the director and location manager. Aesthetics must always be balanced by safety, easy/difficulty of facilitation and cost. You also must ensure that the correct contracts and insurances are in place.

Publicity

Working alongside the executive producers, you work with the publicity and marketing teams to ensure your production gets the promotion it requires. You may have to help facilitate press launches, set visits, supplying stills, and exert gentle pressure to the LP to free up key cast to appear on chat shows.

Production

During production, the responsibilities above continue to a lesser or greater degree depending on how long principle photography takes and how many episodes you are filming. In addition to these, the following are in addition:

Set visiting

Many producers spend time on set for much of the day (when they are able to, depending on what is required of their time). It is imperative to go “walkabout” so that you stay in touch with both your cast and production personnel. This keeps you abreast of what is occurring and can pro-actively problem solve prior to potential issues “blowing up.” Whenever you have big set pieces such as a stunt/VFX sequence, or night shoots etc, it is always best practice to be there – it demonstrates a walk-the-talk attitude and, pragmatically, it also means that if required you can make editorial decisions there and then. These big set pieces are so expensive to mount, that you don't want to watch the rushes and then be disappointed with the outcome. In turn, your presence also supports the director.

Rushes

You have a responsibility to watch and collate notes from yourself and the execs as you go along, to deliver to the director when appropriate so that they can be addressed, ensuring no nasty surprises in the edit.

Cast liaison

Even on the smoothest productions, it is inevitable that there will be issues you have to deal with to ensure your cast have an excellent working environment. Being visible and at times accessible is paramount to a good working relationship.

Shoot issues

Despite the immense amount of meticulous planning, things always go wrong at various points during a shoot. From cast illness to locations falling through, terrible weather.... the list can be endless. You will have to be on call to work collaboratively with the line producer to steer the production into the best course of action, whatever is thrown your way!

Post

As producer you are in overall charge of the post process, the post-production schedule and the subsequent finished programmes. You have responsibility to ensure that the final episode(s) have the highest editorial quality and are technically compliant. This includes mixing sound, grading, editorial compliance and fulfilling the “deliverables”. All this is covered below in lots of detail.

Different productions inevitably have different hot spots from pre to post. Below is an A-Z of key areas/phrases and jargon to try and help you unpack what is required as producer of a HETV drama. It also endeavours to demystify and explain the reasons for certain processes and procedures. Although film making is creative, there's a lot of common sense behind much of the decision making. Please remember, knowledge is undoubtedly power, but there is no such thing as a “stupid” question and if you're ever unsure of something, just ask your line producer...

Jargon you will hear

Albert

“Albert” is the industry organisation, founded in 2011 and governed by an industry consortium, to help tackle climate change associated with filmmaking. It is the place to go to find out how we can improve our carbon footprint when we produce content. Many of our studios and broadcasters are already committed members of “Albert” and are leading the changes, including BAFTA who support “Albert.” As the producer, you have a big part to play in making a creative and real change. More information [here](#), including links to find out more and practical tips on everything from callsheet distribution to charging production equipment in remote locations.

Amends (also called revisions)

Unfortunately, a term you may end up using a lot. If a script isn’t delivering for you or the exec, you may well ask for amendments. Sometimes directors, actors, script supervisors all ask for amendments to be made for specific reasons – whether it’s a continuity error or something to make a scene more visual or to make it more straightforward to shoot within the constraints of the schedule and budget. If you’re making content for a UK broadcaster, you may find you have to amend specific scenes to be more “compliant” with the timeslot that you’re going to be TX-ing. Most HETV productions tend to be broadcast post-watershed, but compliance is still important.

Amends tend to follow a colour system (derived from the States but adopted globally). It is up to you and your production if you wish to use different colours, but industry standard has been to label and print amendments on specifically coloured paper. So that all members of the production can ensure they are working off the most recent version of the script!

The colour system is as follows: white (unrevised); blue (first revision); pink; yellow; green; goldenrod; buff; salmon; cherry; second blue revision; second pink revision and so on...

It is in everyone’s interests to have as few amendments as possible, but it is accepted that they are an inevitable part of the production process.

Bible

Apart from the obvious, this can be used to mean a variety of documents.

It may refer to the specific production manual for the particular company you’re working with. It may also refer to the fictional “world” of the series you’re working on. Eg, where characters live, who they’re married to, who their children are, their backstories.

Breaking down a script

This means going through each scene in a script and working out which “elements” are required to achieve the scene. “Elements” are if you like, the “ingredients” to make the recipe, eg cast, locations, set design, props, make up requirements, costume, SFX, VFX etc. Directors do this to ensure that they can work out their filming requirements per scene. 1st ADs do this to identify what is required from a schedule perspective as this impacts the budget. All departments break down the scripts in prep so that they can ensure they specifically deliver what is required for each scene.

“Breakdowns”

This is a term referring to the scenic information which is laid out in a particular format. Below is an example of a “sheet” – which is where the 1st AD inputs the scenic elements which make up each particular scene. Many departments across the production use the breakdown sheets – to cross check specifics and continuity.

The screenshot shows a software interface for production management. At the top, it displays 'Day Number: 3' and 'Date: Wed, 24 Jul. 2019'. Below this, there are fields for 'Sheet', 'Scene(s)', 'Int/Ext', and 'Set'. The 'Scene(s)' field contains '1' and 'NOEL'S FLAT'. The 'Int/Ext' dropdown is set to 'INT'. The 'Day/Night' dropdown is set to 'Day'. The 'Page(s)' field shows '1' of '8'.

The main area is titled 'Elements' and contains a list of items categorized by department. The categories and their items are:

- Cast Members:** 2. Noel, 1. Leon
- Background Actors:** (empty)
- Stunts:** (empty)
- Vehicles:** (empty)
- Props:** Bed, Desk, Instant Coffee, Kettle, Latte Glass, Milk, Mug, Stool
- Camera:** Establishing wide of Noels flat
- Special Effects:** (empty)
- Wardrobe:** Leon Suit #1, Noel Outfit #1
- Makeup/Hair:** (empty)
- Animals:** (empty)
- Animal Wrangler:** (empty)
- Music:** (empty)
- Sound:** (empty)
- Art Department:** Couch
- Set Dressing:** Drum Kit, Newton's Cradle, Sound Proof Tiles
- Set Building:** Set Build, Skirting Board, Wall Paper
- Greenery:** (empty)
- Special Equipment:** (empty)
- Security:** (empty)
- Additional Labor:** (empty)
- Visual Effects:** (empty)
- Mechanical Effects:** (empty)
- Miscellaneous:** (empty)
- Notes:** (empty)
- Other:** Drinkable Liquid

Two callout boxes with pink arrows point to specific elements in the list:

- The first callout box points to 'Set Dressing' and contains the text: "Story day and time within a script impacts the entire production. Costume and make up changes, production design requirements, lighting requirements."
- The second callout box points to 'Wardrobe' and contains the text: "These elements are 'attached' to this particular scene – and act as an aide memoir for different depts to ensure they cover all aspects of each scene"

Bullying and harassment

These terms can be used interchangeably.

Everyone on a production is covered by employment law, regardless whether they are being paid or otherwise. As a producer you have a legal (and moral) responsibility to protect your workers from unwanted, disrespectful behaviour.

Bullying: Unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated or offended. It is not necessarily always obvious or apparent to others and may happen in the workplace without an employer's awareness. (Definition from Acas).

Harassment: When someone behaves in a way which offends you or makes you feel distressed or intimidated. This could be abusive comments or jokes, graffiti or insulting gestures. Harassment is a form of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. (Definition from Citizen Advice).

Some examples of what could constitute *bullying* are:

- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by constant criticism

Some examples of what could constitute *harassment* are:

- Spoken or written words or abuse
- Offensive emails, tweets or comments on social networking sites
- Images and graffiti
- Physical gestures
- Facial expressions and jokes
- Offensive memes
- Hugs and kisses

It doesn't make any difference if the term "banter" is used or if something was meant as a "joke."

Under equality law, a discrimination or victimisation claim can be brought by **an employee against another individual employee** *rather* than just the employer.

Legally, any claim done by the individual employee is *also* seen as having been done by the employer **regardless of their knowledge or consent**.

In many cases, employees would simply make a claim against their employer. But this is a stark reminder for both employers and managers that, according to the law, acts of discrimination against an employee can be taken as the responsibility of both the individual who did them **and** the employer. Both the employer and the individual employee will be on the hook for any compensation awarded to a successful claimant and will need to fight it out amongst themselves with regard to damages paid.

All HETV productions that contribute to the ScreenSkills HETV Skills Fund are eligible to apply to have free leadership essentials training for themselves and their HoDs, which can take place at your production base at a time to suit you and your teams.

The free bespoke training, designed by the ScreenSkills High-end TV Fund, has been delivered nationwide by leadership and management training professionals. During the half-day course, topics include team management, HR essentials, dealing with bullying and harassment effectively and recognising unconscious bias when crewing up.

Attendees of the programme so far include crews of Red Productions, ITV, Hartswood, Carnival, Studio Lambert, Framstore, Union VFX, Vertigo, Clear Cut, Netflix, Sky, Third Day, New Pictures, Playground, Sister Pictures and Baby Cow Productions.

“It was very useful to have an exchange of experience and views on the matters involved – particularly with other HoDs from a variety of departments. A lot of what was covered felt like common sense, but it was reassuring to find that your instincts on how to handle a situation are the recommended methods.”

- Judith Bantock, Head of Production of Baby Cow Productions Ltd

More info, including on how to book a course, can be found [here](#).

Callsheet

This document is the “go to” for the entire cast and crew. It comprehensively details daily what is going to be shot, which scenes, which cast are needed, where the crew are supposed to be, what time the day is supposed to begin and end, plus additional requirements needed/pick-ups/weather/first aid requirements and other details pertaining to each individual filming day.

On a drama production, it is usually created jointly by the production coordinator and 2nd AD with input from the HoDs. In turn, the callsheet is based on the overall production schedule (usually created by the 1st AD on software such as movie magic). The line producer or PM will usually check the callsheet prior to its distribution.

The callsheet often is sent out electronically towards the end of each filming day for the next day’s work and an advance schedule is included so that cast and crew can check for any changes to the proposed filming schedule.

As there is much sensitive data on a callsheet, secure rollout and disposal of this document is critical. This is usual custom and practice, but do liaise thoroughly with your line producer regarding this (and other paperwork which falls into the sensitive/business critical category).

All our productions must adhere to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) policies and, of course, no one wants to read unmanaged spoilers in a Sunday tabloid expose.

Example of a drama callsheet

Often some H&S key points are detailed

Often the callsheet will detail not just the "unit call" but also how many filming days there are scheduled overall. It will also specify derig and travel times where appropriate and if the day is semi-continuous etc

It is important for the cast and crew to have an advance schedule for the next days. They are always subject to change.

These rows contain the scene elements which are due to be filmed this day.

This area is usually where any additional information regarding depts and HoDs goes.

***** DRAFT DAY 1 CALLSHEET *****

<p>PRODUCER: A Person DIRECTOR: B Person LINE PRODUCER: C Person</p>	<p>Company Name/Logo Title of Production Company address TEL: +44 (0) 123 45677 FAX: +44 (0) 123 46789</p>	<p>CALL SHEET 01 DAY 01 OF 20 Today's day, date and year UNIT CALL 0800 BREAKFAST @ BASE FROM 0700 LUNCH @ BASE AVAILABLE FROM 1000 ESTIMATED WRAP 1900</p>
<p>Unit Base for vehicles: Studio 81/Bus Depot Car Park, 69-71 Kirkstall Rd, Leeds, LS3 1LH Unit Base for artists/cost/men: You may have a mailing address to put here Location A: And you may have an address here too Location B: Clear skies in the morning, clouding over later Weathers: 07:24 Sunset ☾: 16:14 1st Artists Call: 0700 1st SA's Call: 0700</p>	<p>Specific addresses detailed here. An old man reminisces over times gone by but gets more maudlin then angrier as time goes on.</p>	<p>Contact Mables: Production Manager: D Person 07970123456 Production Co-ordinator: E Person 07970123456 1st AD: F Person 07970123456 3rd AD: G Person Location Manager: H Person 07970123456</p>

Ep	Scene	Set/Synopsis	D/N	Equip	Cast	SA's	Notes
UNIT TRAVEL TO LOC A AND RIG							
PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A NO SMOKING LOC. USE DESIGNATED AREAS ONLY							
7	8	INT. PUBLIC HOUSE An old man reminisces over times gone by but gets more maudlin then angrier as time goes on.	Night 1	Steadicam Mini-mist	Ulysses	1 x Son 1 x Wife 10 x Maitres 2 x son's friends	Mariners to have board/unseen
UNIT MOVE TO LOC B							
8	9	INT. BOARD ROOM This venture capitalist is retiring but not before he urges his team of young bucks to rally round him for one last reckless adventure.	Day 2		Ulysses	1 x Son 1 x Wife 10 x Board Members 2 x son's friends	

***** Security o/n at loc, make safe on wrap and leave equip *****

Artist	Character	P/U	Make Up	Costume	Ready/Set
A.N. ACTOR	ULYSSES	0750	0600	0630	0900

Parking for all supporting artistes will be at ***** address

Supporting Artist	Character	Call	Make Up	Costume	Ready/Set
A. Niece	Son	0800	0600	0630	0900
B. Nephew	Wife	0800	0630	0600	0900
X12	Maitres/Board Member	0800	0600	0630	0900

ART DEPARTMENT: As per ***** (0797 123 456) instruction.
ACTION PROPS: As per ***** (0797 123 457) instruction.
CAMERA DEPT: As per ***** (0797 123 458) instruction. Steadicam ready on set for 0830
ELECTRICAL: As per ***** (0797 123 459) instruction.
SOUND: As per ***** (0797 123 451) instruction.
COSTUME: As per ***** (0797 123 452) instruction.
MAKE UP: As per ***** (0797 123 453) instruction.
LOCATIONS: As per ***** (0797 123 454) instruction.
PRODUCTION: As per ***** (0797 123 455) instruction.
SCRIPT SUPERVISOR: As per ***** (0797 123 456) instruction.
 Hand progress report to ***** on wrap to then be delivered to production office
RADIOS: As per ***** (0797 123 457) instruction.
 10 x Radios and kit fully charged and ready for 0800

N.B. AT ALL TIMES CABLES MUST BE SECURED AND COVERED BY MATS. ALL KEYS MUST BE RETURNED TO SECURITY. ALL MOBILE PHONES TO BE SWITCHED OFF ON SET. THIS DOCUMENT IS HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COMPANY'S DATA PROTECTION POLICY, PERSONAL INFORMATION MUST NOT BE DISCLOSED TO ANY UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS AND MUST BE KEPT SECURELY. THEREFORE, PLEASE PRINT A HARD COPY OF THIS CALL SHEET ONLY IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY AND ENSURE IT IS NOT LEFT ON A DESK, COPIED ONTO AN UNENCRYPTED PORTABLE STORAGE DEVICE OR LEFT IN A PLACE WHERE IT COULD BE TAKEN BY A THIRD PARTY. ALL CALL SHEETS ARE TO BE SHREDDED ON DISPOSAL.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Risk Assessment attached to gobbet. Generic RA for shoot a/v from production office
 First Aider: As per ***** (0797 123456)
 First aid kit with First Aider on set at all times
 Fire Extinguishers available c/o Design Team
 Police: **** Police Station, ***** Leeds: Tel: 0845 60 60 60
 Nearest Hospital: LGL 24hr A+E, Leeds General Infirmary, Great George Leeds. Tel: *****
 Rushes to be handed to ***** 2nd AD on wrap then to be delivered to Production Office

RUSHES:
FACILITIES: 1x Generator, 1x Dining Bus
All facilities up & running for 0745 please.

CATERING: c/o ***** caterers. Contact: ***** (0797 123 456)

☛ Breakfast @ Unit Base for	38	From 0800
☛ Lunch for approx.	38	From 1330

Tea, Coffee, Water and Juices available throughout the day please

ARTISTE TRANSPORT ORDER **WEDNESDAY 30 JULY**

Driver	Time	Artiste
Jo Maxwell - People Carrier 07970 123 456	0750	A Superstar from **** hotel and convey to unit base for 0800
2 x 16-seater Minibus - Star 0797 123 457	0815	To be at ***** and then ferry as required

SCHEDULED SCENES FOR THURSDAY 1 AUG: Ep 2 / Sc 6: Ep 2 / Sc 7 / Sc 8 SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Cameras

This is of course an extremely large area to begin to think about. Often if you are the producer on the second season or more of a drama series, the "look" and "feel" will already have been established and therefore a certain type of camera, set of lens and particular colour grade will have been employed. A word of caution however, you may not need to hire the sexiest camera on earth to be able to make your show look phenomenal. It's always advisable to discuss camera options with your DoP (director of photography) as well as your line producer to discuss production value/look/cost. It is possible to hire in specific cameras for specialist sequences – eg if you wanted a slow-motion sequence, you may wish to specifically hire in a Phantom camera – expensive to hire -but may just give your scene the cutting-edge style and quality you are after.

Sony F55s, Arri Alexas, The Red, Canon C300s are all commonly used, but knowing your post-production workflow and what you need to deliver from a technical specification is imperative. Much delivery to networks is now 4K resolution, so you need to ensure your camera choice (and workflow) can deal with this. Often DoPs will choose a phenomenal set of prime lenses to hire which will elevate the visuals and ensure that they (alongside the colour grade) will be utilised to

achieve the look of the show and to achieve the correct cinematic feel you, the director and the execs wish to achieve.

CAN

This is a casting advice notice. A document stating what you're specifically looking for in the scripted roles that are being cast. It is used to communicate to actors and/or agents what roles are available so they can assess what they would like to be put up for. Key information a CAN includes is:

- The title of the production
- Who wrote it
- Who's directing
- Who's producing
- What production company or studio is associated with it
- Potential range of shooting dates
- It also includes a list of roles that are being cast, accompanied by a blurb about each character that explains:
 - Whether the role is a lead, major supporting character, or minor supporting role
 - What sort of person the character is; eg, "A shy and quiet guy" or "An outgoing dynamo who is always the most popular guy in the room".
 - A description of what that character's role is in the overall story of the film.

Usually your casting director will liaise with you thoroughly about this.

Once you've had a chat with your casting director and you've agreed with the director (and execs if appropriate), usually the casting director and LP will take over the negotiations to secure your preferred cast with their specific casting agencies. Even though you may be saying yes to all the agents demands, be aware this can sometimes/often be a laborious process.

Most HETV dramas (if not all) work to [Equity](#)'s terms (the UK actor's union) and generate their contracts via [PACT](#) (the trade association for UK producers). What contract you use is production- and budget-specific and specific to where the show is going to be broadcast and the terms exclusive to the type of contract. Buy-outs, daily engagements, fixed-term, multi-episodic. there are many different options. Best practice is to discuss options with the casting director and line producer. If you are potentially working with overseas talent, the production may/will require working visas to be organised in addition to travel, accommodation and per diems. They may also be members of the Screen Actors Guild ([SAG AFTRA](#)) and so you may have to work within the terms of SAG despite having an Equity drawn up contract.

It is important to ensure you are completely aware of any restrictions and also if an artiste is on first call to a different show as this can have major ramifications for your own schedule if anything goes awry on the prior job.

As well as cast for your production, it is equally important to ensure a credible and believable "cast" of extras in your scenes (otherwise known as supporting artistes, background artistes, NSEs (non-speaking extras)). Best practice is to liaise with your casting directors to ensure you are using reputable agencies to provide this on-screen talent.

Supporting artists agencies (SAAs) are a convenient, one-stop-shop for productions. They take the pain out of sourcing and selecting significant number, and different types of supporting artists (SAs) for production. Their core service generally includes: Sourcing and supplying SAs, including through 'street' and/or 'open casting' as required

Managing the logistics of SAs' availability, booking, release and transportation needs

Processing SAs' payments:

When required, providing the legal and tax records for each supporting artist and reporting to HMRC on behalf of the production

- *The Extra Factor Supporting Artiste Liability and Best Practice Report*

Please be aware that although some productions do source NSEs from elsewhere (ie don't use an agency), there is an increased risk level around whether the robust checks establishing right to work in the UK have been carried out, the right documentation in place and whether the performer is DBS (disclosure and barring service)-checked. If you hire someone who doesn't have the right to work or indeed has a criminal record, you are leaving the production open to risk, fines and scrutiny.

Since 2016, all agencies have been required to check that their cast have applied for and got their disclosure certificate. A basic disclosure certificate contains impartial and confidential criminal history information held by the police. It details any unspent criminal convictions or states that the individual doesn't have any. More details regarding walk-ons (NSEs) and basic disclosure [here](#).

All the broadcasters have their own specific producers' guidelines which you must ensure you look at. An example of the ITV Producers' Guidelines can be read [here](#). And a link to Ofcom's Broadcasting Code [here](#).

UK productions delivering to US studios are particularly careful to ensure that full checks are undertaken – to avoid risking jeopardising their tax credits with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Specifically, they do not make payments to cast or crew without their 'right to work' documentation being in place.

-*The Extra Factor Supporting Artiste Liability and Best Practice Report*

More information regarding an individual's right to work [here](#).

Children

Working with child performers is understandably heavily regulated.

Remembering that children are children first and performers second, is a **must** for all producers. The wellbeing and safety of our child performers is our primary concern and if the child will not be with their parent, schoolteacher or home tutor, they must be supervised by a chaperone, approved by the council, at all times. Chaperones can [apply for approval](#) from the council. The normal [rules for paying children](#) and [restrictions on employment](#) apply to children in performances.

The majority of our production houses have their own policies around working with children and sometimes it is a contractual requirement for key HoDs to be DBS-checked. You will need to ensure that you are up to date with your particular production company policies as you may need to implement them.

It is a legal requirement to ensure that child performers have their own adequate provision of separate facilities to get changed in and indeed rest in. It is both inappropriate and against the

statutory regulations of working with children for them to share with adults. Often when we film on location, we can hire in additional facilities if necessary.

Child licences apply for ALL performers from new-born up to and including school-leaving age. (If a performer is 18 and in education, they are still considered a “child” and may need a licence from their local education authority to enable them to take part in your production).

A child may need a licence if they're under school leaving age and taking part in: films, plays, concerts or other public performances that the audience pays to see, or that take place on licensed premises.

The person in charge of running the event must apply to the child's local council for a child performance licence. Ask the council if you're not sure you need one.

-www.gov.uk

If the child actor you are casting hasn't performed on more than three days in the last six months it is possible that you may **not** need a licence if you wish to film with them for one day only.

Don't leave this to chance though - best practice is to check with the performer's LEA.

Your line producer and/or production manager will apply for a performance licence from the performer's LEA but be aware that it can take up to 21 days for a licence to be approved and it is *usually* illegal to begin principal photography without it.

NB: If your filming requires the young person to work abroad, the parents or guardians of the child will need to apply to the Magistrate's Court for an additional licence to take the child out of the country.

The hours that child performers can work as defined by the Government must be adhered to. Chaperones fill out timesheets to send to the LEAs and it is commonplace for productions to have visits from the local authority to check that everything is complied with. Breaking breaks and not adhering to the regulations can have severe consequences for productions.

It is best practice to keep child artistes off set until the production is ready to work with them. The stop clock is going from the moment the child performer arrives at the place of rehearsal or performance and then another timing begins the moment they go onto set. The amount of “continuous” time on set is counted and adequate breaks must be taken. This can be frustrating for directors on set, but it is imperative that they occur.

As a rule of thumb, if your child performer is under five years of age, you could call them anytime between the hours of 07:00 and 22:00. If the child performer is over five years old, then this time extends till 23:00.

However, the maximum time at the place of rehearsal or performance for a child under five years of age is five hours, they can have a total time working on set of two hours. The maximum time they can be on set continuously without a break is up to 30 minutes.

For example, if a four-year-old performer's call time is 08:00, they would have to wrap by 13:00 and their time on set minimised limited to half-hour stints, up to a maximum of two hours.

For child performers aged between five and nine, this increases to eight hours of time at the place of rehearsal or performance. A total performance time on set of three hours, and they can be on set continuously up to 2.5 hours. For child performers aged nine – school leaving age, this increases to 9.5 hours of time at the place of rehearsal or performance. A total performance time on set of five hours and they can be on set continuously for up to 2.5 hours.

- For more information about working in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, click [here](#). The rules are slightly different in Scotland and Ireland.
- If you are working in Scotland, or with a Scottish child performer, [here](#) is a link to the Scottish Governments regulations.
- If you are working in Ireland, [here](#) is a link to the regulations.

The licensing authority can place conditions on the licence to protect the child's education or wellbeing, where they have reason to believe that the overall schedule might otherwise have a negative impact on the child.

Sometimes on productions, we hire tutors to come and work with our child actors on location or at the studios to ensure that their education doesn't suffer. Usually our production teams facilitate this where and when it is required.

Whilst 12 hours is the minimum required overnight break for all children, it is generally expected that most children should normally have an overnight break of no less than 14 hours duration. Licensing authorities will want to consider factors such as the time that may be required for the child to travel to and from the place of performance and their home, and whether to place any conditions on the licence to ensure the child has an adequate overnight break.

-Department for Education, Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England, 2015

Compliance

As producer, you must ensure that each finished episode complies with all relevant laws and broadcasting codes. This will be identified at the outset, but you must ensure that the production is suitable for TX in all intended territories. You must consider whether your production has any legal, ethical or moral considerations and whether it is suitable for the "timeslot" if shown on "terrestrial" television. Most creators of content wish their content to be edgy and ground-breaking, but you must do this carefully within the boundaries of what is "compliant" within the Broadcasting Code.

Ofcom regulates TV, radio and video-on-demand services. Their [Broadcasting Code](#) contains rules which broadcasters must follow. Non-adherence to the code has severe consequences and can result in productions going off air, huge fines being administered and production companies losing commissions.

All UK broadcasters have compliance editors who check commissioned content, storylines, scripts and edited content prior to TX, to ensure no breach of the compliance rules. Non-compliant content, such as gratuitous graphic sex/violence in a scene(s), can result in last minute re-cuts and problems.

Cost report meeting

These meetings are usually monthly (depending on the company you're working with and the timescales of the production). They are the meeting when the line producer and you (and the production accountant) report to your bosses, about the health of the production, with specific regard to how much of the budget has been spent to date, how much variance there has been, what is the committed spend needed to finish the episodes and whether you're on time and on budget. And if you're not, what plans you already have in place to address this. This meeting should not be the only time each month that you discuss the budget with the LP. You both have a joint responsibility to bring the production in safely, on time and on budget and it's in your interests to stay involved. You both want the best on-screen production value – working closely with your LP and keeping on top of the financial situation is the best way to do this.

Crew

This essentially covers all technical and craft roles who will be working each day when filming. Mostly they are freelance roles. Although also integral to the shoot, members of the team who are based in the production office (eg production coordinator, production secretary, archivists, researchers etc) are referred to as “production”.

On most HETV productions, you will have the final say with regards to who is on the crew.

This usually happens at the HoD level (abbreviation of “Heads of Department” – see below). HoDs often recruit and bring their own teams within a production, working alongside the line producer and their specifics around what the production “deal” is regarding pay, hours, location etc.

As the producer of a HETV production, your broadcaster or company that you’re making content for, will usually have certain criteria/targets that your production must reach to ensure a diverse workforce.

You have a responsibility to fulfil this responsibly and you have the ability to make a difference.

Women, people of colour and disabled people are all significantly under-represented in our industry as are people of differing social economic backgrounds. Disabled people appear to be significantly under-represented. Just 3% of employees across the five main broadcasters self-report as disabled, compared to 18% of the UK population.

“Television is central to the UK’s cultural landscape, society and creative economy, and we believe that creativity in broadcasting thrives on diversity of thinking.”

-Sharon White, former Chief Executive, Ofcom

More information here about the lack of diversity in our workforce in the Ofcom 2019 report [here](#)

More information [here](#) from the Creative Diversity Network about how you can make a difference to your production in crewing up, why it matters and how to put diversity in practice. As a producer, you **can** make a difference; life isn’t a level playing field but ensuring that good practice takes place when crewing up can ensure that the best, most talented individuals get to work on your productions and in turn ensure a diverse team of people. All the UK broadcasters’ specific diversity guidelines are [here](#).

NB It is of paramount importance that any crew hired who have specific qualifications, such as a gaffer or an electrician, are checked to see that their qualifications are up to date. If you don’t do this and an accident or fault on the production occurs, this could become an issue of negligence and naturally lead to a legal situation if someone is harmed. It is usual for a line producer or PM to do this, but as the overall head of the production, you need to know the liability.

Deal memo

This is now a necessity for any production working to the Pact/Bectu drama agreement. It is a document which the production sends to workers including all the basic terms of their engagement: hours, rate, holiday pay rate, prep, wrap hours etc, to the extent known at the time of engagement. It doesn’t replace contracts but gives all parties clarity across the production. If your production is a member of Pact, they will be able to access the templates folder of resources – which includes a blank deal memo. The deal memo already includes many of the terms and conditions as set out by the Pact/Bectu drama agreement. Usually the line producer and/or production manager will deal with sending these out via the production office. Pact members can see examples of this document via the [Pact website](#).

Deliverables

This is an over-arching term referring to what you need to provide at the end of post-production. The actual episodes, in differing formats depending on who you're making it for, plus all the accompanying sound files and paperwork to prove that you have the rights to make this show (eg cast contracts, location agreements, proof of authorship, music licences).

Greenlight

These top-level meetings with the bosses are where the production budget gets signed off and the deliverables agreed. Unfortunately, they can sometimes happen mid-prep, but usually they occur in the early stages of prep so that the production can be set up within the right parameters.

Hero

This is used in relation to many things in filming– it refers to the actual prop/vehicle/thing that will be established in shot (eg the “hero” car will be the one that the actors drive in vision but often a modified and stripped out version will be then used for any stunt sequences).

High-end

Used as a short hand for productions costing more than £1 million an hour on-screen.

HoD

Abbreviation of heads of department. HoDs include: location manager, 1st AD, script supervisor, production designer, make-up and hair designer, costume designer, director of photography, camera operator, gaffer.

Insurance

Not rocket science to work out that we need production insurance on our productions.

Most production companies already have insurance in place, but you may need additional levels of insurance depending on the level of stunts required, what and who is involved in filming.

Be aware though that, often, bad weather comes under the terms “force majeure” and therefore you may not be covered if filming has to cease due to inclement weather such as rain, wind or snow. In extremely broad terms, if one of your main cast falls ill and can't come in to film on a particular day, the production will need to do everything it possibly can to try and carry on filming until it is impossible to do so and then evidence will need to be presented to the insurers to reclaim the cost of the lost filming days and the subsequent cost of picking up the missing content.

In the meantime, the LP will usually be spending a significant amount of time ensuring that a doctor's note or hospital admission form is gained – as part of the proof that filming had to cease/be delayed/get picked up. It is not possible to self-cert when it comes to claiming on production insurance. Cast and some key HoDS often have to fill out hefty medical questionnaires (Statements of Health) prior to principle photography occurring and often the insurers will get back to you stating that there may be certain exclusions for individuals on the production. As producer, you have the final say whether it's worth the “gamble” if someone is “uninsurable” for whatever reason. It is not impossible to film with “uninsurable” persons, but you must ensure that your execs and LP have full knowledge of this due to the possible ramifications if anything goes wrong.

NB: the Statements of Health (SoH) most often get sent to artistes via their agents alongside their contracts. They collect extremely personal sensitive data and as such, on completion, should go directly to the insurers and not collated via the production office first.

Lighting

Much lighting on set is done “from the floor”. In real terms, this gives the DoP and their gaffer and department the best opportunity to light in the artistic way the show requires and is the most sympathetic/complimentary to the artistes being lit – depending on the show tone. If you are filming in a studio set, sometimes overhead lights are utilised, for example hanging (or “flown”) from a grid above. In these instances, it is usual to also have some lights on the floor alongside, to create “floor fill.” Sometimes when we film both interiors and exteriors, we may not need lights but instead use “reflector boards” to “bounce” the light onto the desired place or person in the set. This can be a very naturalistic way to light a scene and complimentary to the artiste involved.

Some of our shows utilise LED lighting on set. This can be advantageous to a production for a variety of reasons. They can be expensive to rent, but use less power to run, don’t heat up as much and it can be much quicker to go from a “day” to “night” state when you change from one to another on a set or in a location. They are more environmentally friendly than some of our other lighting types and are Albert+ friendly!

“Tungsten” lighting is traditionally what has been used to light sets/locations – they are often used to light interiors as they match the warm light associated with domestic lighting. They are the “work-horse” of our sets. Often gels are used to correct the colour “temperature.” These lights can get extremely hot, are often fairly big and heavy to move around and the bulbs can shatter when they break.

HMIs are another type of lights used. HMI stands for hydrargyrum medium-arc iodide and the specific mix of gases within the bulbs are created to match natural sunlight. These can gobble power and you’ll often see them in use if large areas are needed to be lit.

Line producer

They are usually your right-hand person and next to you, are typically the most senior person on the production. Their role is to facilitate and manage the creative vision.

According to ScreenSkills, *line producers are at the heart of a production, hiring the crew, allocating the money and making sure the filming is done safely, creatively, on budget and on time.*

Make sure you liaise with them regularly. There may be a creative tension between you (this is normal!) as you tussle between what you’d like to see on-screen and how you can afford it. Ordinarily on a HETV drama, the line producer will create the budget alongside the production accountant and then go through it with you and you’ll discuss all that is required. Sometimes the LP inherits a budget and then they’ll go through it line by line to ensure it works with the creative ambition. It is imperative that you develop an excellent working relationship with the LP as they will do everything they can to put the script on the screen. Often as things change, ensure you liaise thoroughly with the LP so that they can help/aide/advise/argue how things can and can’t be achieved. They usually only say no if something really cannot be realised safely and within budget.

You need to have each other’s backs because if things don’t go according to plan, the two of you need to work out what to do next.

Movement order

This is a document usually created by the locations team. It details where the unit base is, where specific parking for private and filming vehicles is, plus a line by line route planner from production base to the unit base. It also usually shows maps and the actual filming location, plus emergency and first aid arrangements, should anything go wrong.

Neg checks

This is the actual process of checking each script for any potential legal issues due to the content. Often this is referred to as “script clearance”. Proving that due diligence has been done to ensure no confusion between scripted named characters and real-life people. People undertaking this role can be script editors, script assistants and archivists. There are also freelance “neg checkers” who can be hired to go through the script. This process also highlights any issues around copyright and clearance.

On the day

You'll hear this phrase a lot. It refers to “when we do it for real”, ie when we actually film this “on the day” – this can be a little confusing if it is already the day you're going to be filming!

Optioning

This term can refer to a variety of things. When you choose and secure rights to a script – that can be called “optioning.” Similarly, if you're hiring cast, you can put an option in the contract that gets drawn up to ensure that should season 2 or 3 be on the cards, that you have “first refusal” on the cast coming back – ie, they're already contractually obliged to come back unless you don't want them to. You usually have to “exercise the option” by a specific date so that it is fair to the artiste – if they suddenly need to look for another job in a different show.

Page turn

A read of the script in story order.

Prop show and tell

Yes, this is what you think. The moment when the production designer brings out key hand props to ensure that what they have come up with ties in with what you and the director envisaged. This is to ensure no nasty surprises on set.

Production

Sometimes used as a term to refer to the team of people working from within the production office (eg production managers, production accountants, coordinators, secretaries, archivists, to facilitate the production). They are usually on longer contracts to oversee the creative and logistical processes from the pre-production through to delivery.

Post

This is an area where many people in production sometimes feel lacking in knowledge and can be overwhelmed by what happens when. Don't worry, if you feel like this, you are not on your own!

Post-production must be planned during the pre-production phase. Most often, the line producer or head of production will work with you to identify how long and how much it will cost to edit and mix the final product. As a general rule of thumb, post-production often takes at least the same amount of time (if not longer) than the actual shoot. It not only incorporates physical editing of the material, but involves multiple processes including cleaning up sound tracks, mixing sound, doing colour corrections, grading the final edited material, adding any VFX elements or graphics plus any additional dialogue replacement necessary (ADR) or foley (physically created sound effects), music additions as well as online technical checks to ensure that stringent broadcasting rules are adhered to.

In general, and extremely non-technical terms, most often, an editor will begin to start “assembling” a rough cut of the dailies the day after principal photography begins. The dailies are exactly that – what was filmed/shot on each particular day: each day’s filmed material, hence “dailies” – “rushes” is another term you may have heard.

As producer you will probably be sent online versions of the rushes – these will be low-res files so that you can view them relatively easily and on mobile devices. It is critical that you view these as soon as possible so that if you feel the director isn’t getting what you want, or something is missing, you can address this immediately.

Throughout filming, back in the edit suite/post facility, the editor will begin a “rough assembly” – using the script supervisor’s notes, the DIT (digital imaging technician)’s notes and of course the script to guide them. They do not edit the high res images, but a lower res version of them which are created. (Sometimes called the “offline”.) As more and more scenes are cut together, the script editor will usually feed back to the line producer, director and yourself, how the “timings” are doing. This gives an indication of whether the estimated running times to scenes add up to the required episodic duration. Usually edited rough assembly timings are a bit long, allowing the director to then finesse, move things around and re-edit with the editor and yourself once principal photography is complete.

It is usual, once principal photography is complete, for your director to spend time with the editor prior to your viewing the episode. This is called the “fine cut.” Once the director has completed this, you will come into viewings. How you do this is completely up to you. Some producers prefer to watch on their own, others with the director and editor in attendance. It is often the case that after a viewing is complete, you may wish to make changes to edited scenes – further fine cutting will take place and when you are happy, you will then have viewings for your execs. Please be mindful that often, the more execs are involved, the more “tweaks” will be required. It can take time to get to “picture lock” and if you are working for a UK broadcaster, then often the commissioning editor for the channel will want to see a rough cut of the episode to check that it is “compliant”.

Picture lock is when all the people with power say they are happy with the final cut so that then the next post-production processes can occur. At the point that picture lock occurs, the EDL can be produced. EDL is the “edit decision list”: all the information about the specific timecodes from the recorded footage of the locked production. The post facility will then assemble the high-resolution images according to this EDL, and then further work, such as the “grade” and any VFX, can occur. An EDL is basically a reference file of the production which means that your editor can open the full resolution files in the final edited sequence – ie it’s now “online.”

If your production has any VFX, work is done frame by frame, an incredibly time-consuming process (and therefore expensive) so it is critical that they get the locked off version as soon as possible. (NB sometimes, if there isn’t much time to get a programme finished, you may have to sign off edited sequences so that VFX have enough time to do their work prior to the rest of the episode being locked). Grading will occur once the final lock off happens. Once we do the “online,” this is where all the data stored on the servers of the post facility, is downloaded and then the final files can be graded. Grading is where colour can be added, adjusted, shot by shot. It is a digital process and can enhance the look and feel of an episode, make it look “filmic,” give shots a “Scandi-noir” feel or a summery wash – whatever creatively you wish to do. It also helps ensure that the colour is consistent throughout the piece. Often colourists do the grade, but sometimes the DoP will also come into post to give input.

Once the sound has been mixed on (also known as dubbing) and any sound effects put on, the final part of the process is to “export” or “conform.” This is the process where the post-production facility electronically assembles the final HD original files in the edited sequence so that the highest transmittable quality is delivered onscreen. The final, finished programme will go through a piece of

software to analyse the content for flashing or stationary patterns which could cause harm for people with photosensitive epilepsy. This test used to be called the Harding Test.

This is a mandatory process within Ofcom's regulations and the software works on all resolutions up to 8k. If the production passes the test, it is deemed fit for broadcast. If it doesn't pass, further edits to the graded content may be required.

Sometimes it is impossible to cut round the problem and re-shoots may be required. This can obviously be extremely stressful and difficult to achieve. It is worth being aware that although it is impossible to test anything other than the finished full resolution, graded episode, there are some triggers to look out for in pre-production and during filming. Single tracking shots focusing on blinds or railings are examples of what can sometimes cause issues. Best practice is to discuss with the director, DoP and production designer in pre-production (especially during recces) – they will all have excellent understanding of this and come up with creative solutions. Similarly, if your director is keen to use single shots for scenes, sometimes the best safety precaution can be to have an alternative set-up filmed (just in case in you need to re-cut due to a technical failure).

Once you have a final episode, often delivery of the production is via file transfer – which is basically super-fast delivery down the line (high speed internet).

Depending who you are making content for, usually the post house will have to send sound tracks individually and possibly differently formatted versions of the episodes. Alongside all the accompanying paperwork, these are part of the “deliverables.”

Progress report

This is a highly important document generated daily by the production team, based on what was supposed to happen vs what actually happened. Progress reports tend to be created on all drama productions as they are an accurate reflection of what happened during filming. The distribution list is small – usually you, the line producer, execs/studio and accountant. All the actors calltimes are detailed as well as additional equipment/people hired in for the day. These documents are mostly created in Excel so that the data such as average page count, numbers of set ups, minotage etc can be tracked and analysed for efficiencies/issues. The production finance team will always use it to reference back to any additional costs. If you are working on a long-running series, often it's advantageous to refer back to the previous season's progress reports to see how the shoots worked, if additional days were required, how much footage was achieved daily etc, how many locations were utilised and so on. Below is an example of a drama progress report.

Here you can see if the production went over/under scheduled hours – you can then discuss why/how. All impacting production value and budget etc

Important to keep track of average minutage shot. You can then identify future issues pro-actively.

Scenes	Int / Ext Sets	Cast	Day/Night	Pages	Location Address					
1.1	EXT LEEDS CITY CENTRE FLAT	1, 1	D	1/8	1 Headrow House, Leeds City Centre, LS1 123					
1.2	EXT LEEDS CITY CENTRE FLAT	1, 2	D	1 1/8						
1.3	INT LEEDS CITY CENTRE FLAT	2, 3	D	1 1/4						
1.4	INT LEEDS CITY CENTRE FLAT	1, 2	D	1/8						
TOTAL				2 5/8						
Artiste	Character	CAST ID	Pick Up	M/U	On Set	Set Wrap	Meals	Travel	Notes etc	
Mickey Mouse	The Mouse Man	1	07:00		07:30	09:00	17:30	13:00 - 14:00	01:00	Pick Up
Minnie Mouse	Ms Mouse	2	08:30		09:00	11:00	17:30	13:00 - 14:00	01:00	
Daffy Duck	Birdy	3	12:00		12:30	14:00	16:00	N/A	01:00	Self Drive
Walk Ons		Call Time	Wrap time	Chaperones / Tutors		Additional Equipment				
20		City Centre passersbys	08:00		13:15					N/A
Action Vehicles		Call Time	Wrap time	Visitors to Set		Additional Crew				
10 Passing Cars		08:00	13:15	N/A		Make Up- Plus 3 Artists				
Birdy's car		08:00	13:15			Costume - Plus 1 Dresser				
Ms Mouse's car		08:00	13:15							
Facilities / Transport		Call Time	Wrap time	Equip/Tech Problems/Delays		Location Catering				
Unit base at Leeds United, x2 winnies, x2 four ways, dining bus, catering van, honeywagon		N/A	N/A	N/A		Full catering for 75. Hot Breakfast, lunch and running tea and coffee				
Location:	No of pages Shot:	Shot Prev	Shot Today	Total Shot	No of Scenes shot:	Notes:	Average:			
	2 5/8	00:00:00	00:03:54	00:03:54	4		00:03:54			
SCRIPT										
Episode No:		1		Notes		This ep timed long. Cuts may be necessary				
White Read Time:		48:00:00								
Required TX Time:		46:00:00								
Running Time to date:										
Episode No:		2								
White Read Time:		46:00:00								
Required TX Time:		46:00:00								
Running Time to date:										
H & S (Accidents, Stunts etc.)					Notes					
Producer Signed:										

Episode timings are always contentious as there isn't an exact science to this – apart from when dealing with the final edited piece. Keeping track of the estimated timings is critical however. So you're not shooting over/under

Recces

An abbreviation of “reconnaissance,” the initial recces are often location scouting where it may just be you, the location manager and the production designer looking at suggested possible main locations. Recces are initial visitations of possible locations to look for the perfect place to film and assess any potential pitfalls. These initial scouting recces take place often before the director(s) are on board. This term is short for “reconnoitre” and can also be called “scouting.”

On every production there are multiple different recces involving different HoDs. Throughout pre-production and onwards, depending on the number of locations required, there will be further recces with key HoDs, the main “technical recce” occurs usually at least one week prior to principle

photography commencing. This recce is critical as all HoDs including the director will visit all locations and the director and 1st AD talk through critical camera set-ups for each location and any additional requirements across departments. This recce is also used to ensure all possible risks and hazards at each location are identified and appropriate measures and controls put in place to ensure safe working practices.

The more prosaic necessary functions such as where the genny (a big truck which generates the electricity required to power the equipment if not using local power) will park out of shot, where the toilets are and where should the monitor be assembled are also addressed. Although your team will/should be prepped prior to filming beginning, the time saved on each shooting day by having a technical recce should not be underestimated. Mostly, after the technical recce, there will be a production meeting where the 1st AD and director will go through the schedule day by day to ensure all departments have all the resources they need and any questions/concerns raised, dealt with and resolved appropriately *prior* to the shoot.

Although these cost, both in time and money, given how many tens of thousands of pounds it costs per filming day, it is cost-effective to ensure everything is planned well beforehand and leaves nothing to chance on the day.

Risk assessment (RA)

The buck stops with you as producer (alongside your production company).

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the producer is legally responsible for health and safety on a production. You are not expected to personally fill out risk assessments, but you have a duty of care to ensure that the production has assessed all potential hazards thoroughly and identified the risk level as low, medium or high. If any risk level is substantial, measures must be put in place to reduce the risk level – control measures.

On all drama productions, the 1st AD will carry out the RA on behalf of you (which you and the line producer sign off) and other HoDs will also fill out relevant Ras. For example, if there is a set build, the production designer and construction manager will have to complete a RA and they may have to also get the structure designed and inspected for sign off by a structural engineer. Usually on productions, the Ras are completed once the recces have occurred so that all potential risks and hazards which pose a significant risk can be identified and appropriate control measures put in place for the locations and also scripted action (eg asbestos at a location or a scripted scene with an actor up a ladder). Often on big productions, H&S consultants are employed to come and assess what is proposed to ensure that everything has been considered and any issues addressed satisfactorily.

Risk management is about taking practical steps to protect people from real harm and suffering – not bureaucratic back covering

- *Health and Safety Executive October 2019*

There is information available from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) which explains, Duties in the Audio-Visual Industry. It available to download [here](#).

In the context of health and safety:

A **hazard** is anything with the potential to cause harm:

- Cables are a trip hazard
- Electricity is a hazard which could lead to electrical shock, burns or fire

For a **hazard** to cause harm, a hazardous event must happen:

- Crew member tripping over the cable
- Gaffer getting electrical shock from faulty light

The **likelihood** is the chance the hazardous event will occur

- **Cable** – If lots of loose cables or over public footpath more likely someone will trip
- **Electricity** – Equipment which is damaged or not maintained more likely to get a shock

The **consequence** (sometimes called severity) is the outcome of the hazardous event.

- Tripping and bruising your knee or if the cable was at the stop of the staircase a serious injury or fatality
- Electricity could cause electrical shock leading to burns and serious injury

Risk is the combination of the likelihood of a hazardous event occurring and the consequence of the event.

Risk = likelihood x consequence

-IOSH, 2019

As a producer it is important to rely on your HoDs for their industry knowledge in working safely on productions. They in turn should keep their industry knowledge up to date. Most HoDs will have had some H& S training, although it's not illegal to work as an HoD without formal H&S accreditation. Many freelance crew have attended H&S courses and hold the [Creative Industries Safety Passport](#).

The Creative Industries Safety Passport is a one-day health and safety course designed specifically for workers, employed or freelance, working in film, TV, theatre and live events.

It promotes a safety culture based on personal responsibility for safety. This means that it encourages delegates to be pro-active in their own safety and the safety of others.

The course is approved by the Institution of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH) under their Passport scheme which is a nationally-recognised scheme and follows the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) syllabus guidelines as well as ScreenSkills' National Occupational Standards in Health & Safety X2, X3 and X3.5 and the Bectu/UK Theatre Code of Conduct for Get-in/Get-outs.

-Bectu, October 2019

For example, if you are going to be working with actors in a driving sequence on a road, then usually a specialist tracking vehicle provider will be hired (with their own risk assessments, insurance and safe working practices), the police will be involved (usually you need police motorcyclists with you) and your location manager will have worked extensively getting all the relevant permissions for the filming to go ahead.

Risk assessments are *dynamic* documents. That means that when things change, the risks need to be re-evaluated. This can happen on set if necessary – but must be recorded.

Most production companies have their own specific templates for risks and hazards to be evaluated and they all follow a basic five steps to risk assessment:

- **Step 1** - Identify the activity and hazards
- **Step 2** – Decide who might be harmed and how
- **Step 3** – Evaluate the risks and determine control measures
- **Step 4** – Record the finding and implement
- **Step 5** – Review and revise

Often a risk matrix is utilised to assess how dangerous a proposed course of action may be. An example is below:

Example of a risk matrix

Guidance on evaluating risk levels

		Severity		
		Minor	Major	Severe
Likelihood	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium
	Possible	Low	Medium	High
	Likely	Medium	High	High

Additional guidance on evaluation levels:

Severity

- **Minor:** minor burn, reflex action causing bruising – first aid, limited time off work
- **Major:** deep burn, loss of consciousness, fractures – hospitalisation, rehabilitation
- **Severe:** death or permanent disability

Likelihood

- **Unlikely:** rare occurrence (<1 in 50 chance)
- **Possible:** foreseeable occurrence (<1 in 10 chance)
- **Likely:** likely occurrence (<1 in 4 chance)

Example of how a production would use a risk matrix to assess whether something should go ahead:

Extreme scenario: You are filming abroad on location and a moving high shot is required. A drone won't cut it and you want to use a helicopter. Short of time, a local crew member suggests using their relative's nearby crop spraying helicopter. They have been using this for the last 20 years and haven't had an accident yet.

In this scenario, the potential severity of harm is "**extremely harmful/severe**" – if something goes wrong then the resulting consequences could be fatal and/or life-changing.

In this scenario, the likelihood of harm occurring is "**likely**." We have no guarantees, no insurance, no proven track record, no assurances that the pilot is trained, qualified, the helicopter serviced

and in flying hours. If you then look at the matrix, the resulting indicator square is: **intolerable/high** i.e. don't do it.

Now within this somewhat extreme scenario, if we wanted a “last-minute” helicopter flying shot and were able to find a specialist aerial photography filming unit, then we would be able to do this. The potential severity of harm is still “**extremely harmful/severe**” if something went wrong, but so long as we followed all stringent aviation laws and worked with a professional and licensed aerial supplier with the relevant documentation and insurances in place, then the “likelihood” of harm occurring reduces to “unlikely”... resulting in an overall “**moderate/medium**” risk matrix rating. IE, the proposed filming activity has the possibility of going wrong, but we have the correct procedures in place to mitigate against this. Usually for filming in helicopters we ensure that whoever needs to go up in the aircraft is happy to do so. You can't assume they will be happy to do this.

Below there is an example of the first page of a risk assessment.

Many productions have generic RAs to ensure the production and its team are covered. The individual HoD RAs are usually in place for each specific filming day. Identifying the key areas of risk. In certain circumstances then contractors will be required to provide their own risk assessment eg an animal handler, stunt coordinator, SFX provider etc.

Once the RAs are completed, often the production office will ensure they are emailed out to crew/cast and available for team members to read.

It is customary for the production team to lift certain bits of the RA and include on the daily callsheet if they feel people need reminding of specifics pertaining to a particular shoot day. If there are additional risks on the film day then the 1st AD might give a verbal briefing that day to all crew e working near water/location with restricted access.

Production title: Example of a production RA	
Production number:	Production office phone:
Detailed description of production/shoot:	
Production date(s) – studio / location:	
Location/studio addresses: (attach separate list or shooting schedule if necessary)	
Name of producer: Producer & assessor to sign at bottom of page	Name of 1 st AD:
Experts/specialist contractors	Service provided
Listed here	

Emergency Arrangements & First Aid Requirements			
Distribution list (tick to confirm)	<input type="checkbox"/>		Additional Distribution List – relevant persons only (tick to confirm distribution)
Producer	<input type="checkbox"/>		Stunt coordinator
Assessor	<input type="checkbox"/>		Special effects coordinator
Line producer	<input type="checkbox"/>		Production designer
Health & safety department	<input type="checkbox"/>		Construction manager

Main Risks identified: who is at risk and how might they be harmed?			Control Measures to minimise risk (to include who is responsible for implementation)	Please tick to confirm responsible person will receive a risk assessment	
Date/time	Risk level			Location and shoot hours	
	Low	Med	High		
Artistes Driving and Driving of vehicles on a private, locked off road. Risk of injury/death if vehicle Gets out of control / crashes		<input type="checkbox"/>		Artiste required to drive are competent, hold a license and are insured. The drivers will be reminded to drive with caution. Time given before rehearsal to familiarise with vehicle. No speeding required. All personnel to be made aware of moving vehicles by the 1 st AD and vehicles reset only when necessary. No one to be in path of vehicle when moving or re-setting. When vehicles need re-setting, vehicle supplier will do so.	

				Vehicle supplied from approved supplier, is MOT'd and taxed.	
Use of track and dolly Risk of injury due to weight of dolly.	<input type="checkbox"/>			The track and dolly will be handled by our qualified and experienced grips. Grip to provide serviced and well-maintained equipment. Please see their separate risk assessment.	
Small set: Access and Egress difficulty Risk of injury due to slips/trips & if need to evacuate set quickly.	<input type="checkbox"/>			Cast and crew not involved in rigging will clear set after rehearsals to ensure maximum space. 1 st AD will manage this on set. All exits will be kept clear. Limited number of crew in restricted sets.	
Assessment completed by:				Job title: 1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	Date:
Signature of assessor:				Signature of producer:	

When things go wrong

Sometimes, despite the best plans, accidents do happen. The majority of accidents are preventable, eg due to slips and trips. It is often the case that in the most dramatic scenario, the most preventable of accidents can happen.

For example, I once worked on a big stunt sequence on a train track with a derailed train. Despite heavy machinery, train tracks, night work, explosions, fire and stunt SFX sequences, the accident that occurred was a crew member tripping over the tracks and breaking their arm, because they were texting a friend and not looking where they were going.

Accidents need to be reported and investigated properly to find out the cause, to stop it happening again.

Near misses

A “near miss” is something that has gone wrong but hasn’t resulted in someone being hurt or injured. Near misses must be taken seriously, reported, investigated and dealt with appropriately as they can provide warning signs to prevent a future accident.

If near misses are ignored, the production is putting its personnel at risk and breaching its duty of care to all who work for it.

Read more about this [here](#).

RX

Abbreviation of “recording” – i.e. the dates you are you going to be filming.

Script

Yes, a bit obvious, but when you work with a script writer or multiple script writers, you must be able to:

“confirm that all reasonable action has been taken to avoid copyright infringement, libel or defamation and negative checks have been carried out.”

-National Occupational Standards - Production, Film and TV, 2019

It is usual on most dramas to work with a script editor and it is best practice to get the scripts published in pre-production as early as possible. The script is the bible for all the HoDs; multiple amendments and delays to publishing, reduce every department's prep time and thus ability to deliver the highest onscreen production value possible.

Sides

A5 pages of the daily script pages. Often handed out by the 3rd AD or runner on productions to cast, production crew members.

Social media

Although the saying, “There's no such thing as bad publicity” is one that is often bandied about, as producer you have an obligation to ensure that the entire production work within the rules and regulations regarding this area, as in place by the production company. Seemingly innocent on-set photographs, postings, comments etc on people's social media accounts can have a huge impact. Ensuring that cast and crew know what is allowed and what isn't is critical. Similarly, ensure that you are aware of where you can access support/advice within your production company should you find yourself in a situation where a member of your cast or crew are trolled online. You have a duty of care to look after members of your production – sometimes an online post can result in police involvement. Ensure you are au fait with specific company policy and the law. More information about cyber-crime and online [here](#).

Stripboard

This is a basic overview of your filming schedule. Each “strip” is a scene (or part of a scene) and denotes the “elements” (as described earlier) required specific to the scene.

INT or EXT is referring to the setting of the scene – is it inside or out?

The start of shooting isn't always written as a banner, so look out for the end of shooting banner which is auto-generated on a stripboard

SCHEDULE DRAFT 1 Stripboard

Start of Shooting Day One					
Sheet # 3 2/8 pgs	Scenes: 3	INT	DAVID'S FLAT David steps outside bedroom to make phone call	Day	1.3.11
Sheet # 6 4/8 pgs	Scenes: 6	INT	DAVID'S FLAT Shazna is having her wedding dress fitted.	Day	1.3.8
Sheet # 8 1 pgs	Scenes: 8	INT	DAVID'S FLAT Emily and Sally talk about pregnancy at the dress fitting.	Day	1.3.8
End of Shooting Day 1					
Start of Shooting Day Two					
Sheet # 7 4/8 pgs	Scenes: 7	EXT	POLICE STATION Karens questions Lisa.	Day	5.9
Sheet # 5 7/8 pgs	Scenes: 5	INT	POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM DS Cawood interrogates Frank.	Day	2.6
End of Shooting Day 2					

This is the “Set” and a small synopsis of the scene content

These numbers are “Cast IDs”
Character names are identified by

Sheet refers to the “breakdown sheet” when the 1st AD inputted the script into the scheduling package. The number 7/8 pg refers to how long the scene is.

“Day” is referring to the actual script/story content – whether it's day or night onscreen. This impacts the schedule and time of year that you are RX

Three act structure

This is a model commonly used in narrative storytelling. It divides the story into three parts (or acts). Act one: the set-up; the foundations of what is going to happen in the story. Act two: conflict and confrontation, exploration of the world of the story and its stakes. Act three: the resolution and emotional outcome. More information and examples [here](#)

Timings

It is customary for the script supervisor to “time” the script(s). This is the closest indication that the production will have throughout pre-production of a projected onscreen end running time.

It is not terribly scientific and often involves someone with a stopwatch “acting out” all the dialogue and recording the subsequent scenic timings. Experienced script supervisors are worth their weight in gold and are the right-hand person for a director on and off set. Timings can be contentious; often one page of a script written in final draft software *can* result in one minute of screen time, but, of course, it is content-dependent. Communicating effectively with your writer, your script editor and script supervisor is essential. You don’t want to film material that ends up on the “cutting room floor” – i.e. not used. This causes major ramifications across the entire production; scenes filmed take precious time out of the schedule resulting in other scenes not having more performance time and money being haemorrhaged. Conversely, not enough content can be disastrous, ensuring shoehorning more editorial content at the last minute on a probably already stretched schedule. (Best advice, talk to the editorial team, director and SS (script supervisor) and keep an eye on that progress report;)

Travelling the cast

A phrase heard on the walkie talkie (or RT as they are also known). This basically means that the cast are on their way to set with an AD.

Tone meeting

This is a meeting which happens prior to filming. You sit down with the writer, director, show runner (if there is one, or the exec), and various other creative types to talk about the artistic elements of the episode(s). Why do various characters say this, what is the motivation for such and such a character to do a particular action. What are the emotional values of particular scenes which we want to bring out.

TX

Abbreviation of “transmitting” – i.e. when are you going to be broadcasting your episodes.

Working day

The majority of drama productions in the UK have signed up to the Pact/Bectu drama agreement. It is recommended/imperative that you ensure you are aware of this agreement as it dictates how we can schedule our productions and what the penalties might be if we need unscheduled overtime. Please be aware that there is a different agreement for film. Your line producer and production managers will be able to discuss this with you but availing yourself of the detail is necessary. If you are a Pact member, you will be able to download the agreement via the Pact site, [here](#). If you don’t have a Pact login, you can view the agreement via Bectu’s site [here](#)

There are generally three models of the "working day" in TV drama.

- **Standard working day (SWD):** 10 or 11 shooting hours with a one-hour unpaid meal break, for example 8am-7pm or 8am-8pm (plus any contracted "prep and wrap" hours)

- **Continuous working day (CWD):** nine or 10 shooting hours without a formal break*
- for example 8am-5pm or 8am-6pm (plus any contracted "prep and wrap" hours)
- **A SCWD:** semi continuous working day where the shooting day runs for 10.5 working hours with a 30-minute break for lunch
NB This is not recommended practice by Bectu and they have specific guidance around this.

*Note, the issue of a 'formal break' does not negate the legal entitlement to a minimum break of 20 minutes to be completed within six hours of starting work (or within six hours of the completion of the previous break).

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Reference materials and organisations

- (National Occupational Standards -Production, Film and TV, 2019)
- The Extra Factor Supporting Artiste Liability and Best Practice Report Prepared for Creative Screen Associates 14/11/17
- Albert
- Bectu
- Creative Diversity Network
- Creative Safety Biz
- IOSH
- HSE
- OfCom
- ScreenSkills
- www.gov.uk

