



**Job Title: First Assistant Camera Technician /  
Focus Puller**  
**Department: Camera Department**

### **Overview Of Role**

Reporting to the camera operator, the first assistant camera technician / focus puller in High-end TV and scripted drama is responsible for the overall management and coordination of the camera crew to produce the desired shots. They set up, test, operate and de-rig cameras as well as cleaning, maintaining and packing them for transport, and they assess the technical quality of shots. In addition, they troubleshoot any mechanical and electronic faults.

To carry out their role, they liaise primarily with the director of photography, camera operator and second assistant camera technician, as well as grips, electricians, the script supervisor, production and other departments.

### **Core Responsibilities:**

These core responsibilities are provided as a guide and are not exhaustive. For a more detailed breakdown of the first assistant camera technician's required knowledge and skills, please refer to the National Occupational Standards for Camera.

#### **1. Prepare and test camera equipment before shoots**

- Recommend camera equipment that meets technical requirements and enhance visual style
- Compile full inventory of camera equipment and consumable stores
- Check the condition of cameras, lenses, filters and all accessories
- Carry out camera and lens tests, including lens collimation, back focus and tracking
- For film cameras only, carry out steady test
- Check accessories, cables, cable ports and camera supports are available and operational
- Check the quality and fit of weather-proofing materials
- Carry out any additional camera tests required by director of photography
- Make sure equipment is appropriately packaged and arranged on camera trucks

#### **2. Clean and maintain cameras**

- Ensure constant cleanliness and ongoing maintenance of all camera equipment
- For film cameras only, regularly lubricate and maintain film transport mechanism, removing and resolving any problems related to jammed film
- For digital cameras only, examine and clean optical low pass filters (OLPF)
- Identify and resolve mechanical or electrical malfunctions or broken components
- Refer any malfunctions or problems that you cannot resolve to relevant department or personnel

#### **3. Set up camera equipment for shoots**

- Establish a secure and adequately sheltered on-set base on which to assemble cameras and monitors, and to load film when working with film cameras
- Check there are sufficient charged power sources
- Mount and level camera bodies and check locks are secure
- Perform daily field tests on camera functionality, adjusting camera speed, ISO and shutter settings as required

- Check the availability and condition of lenses, filters and accessories
- Assemble camera bodies, mechanical and electrical attachments and secure lenses in mounts, fitting supports when required
- Check the balance of camera heads
- Position cameras and mounts for shooting
- For film cameras only, attach magazine, lace film in camera transport mechanism, adjust variable pitch and reset footage counter
- For digital cameras only, adjust settings on camera menus and align with other cameras when required
- Set up and position viewfinders and monitors, checking exposure tool levels, testing signals, adjusting monitors and locking or marking monitor controls

#### **4. Monitor camera operation and shot quality during shoots**

- Select and fit filters
- Set and adjust cameras and lenses, taking account of combined filter factors
- Adjust lens apertures as directed by director of photography
- Focus lenses and make any required focus marks
- Maintain and adjust focus throughout shots, reporting any suspicion of soft focus
- Monitor the effect of light sources, setting flags when required
- Monitor the operational settings of cameras throughout the shoot, making adjustments when required
- Analyse shots for technical faults, resolving those within your area of expertise and reporting those that are not
- For film cameras only, call out the reading on the film footage counter after each take
- Make sure cameras are safe and secure when unattended

#### **5. De-rig camera equipment after shoots**

- Secure and protect cameras from environmental damage while de-rigging
- Remove cameras and lenses from mounts
- Check cameras, lenses and accessories for malfunctions and breakages, rectifying any within your area of expertise
- Report any breakages, malfunctions or missing equipment.
- Clean all camera equipment that has come into contact with the ground, water or harmful substances
- Store de-rigged camera equipment in original flight cases for transport

#### **6. Pack camera equipment for transport**

- Check equipment and rectify any damaged or missing parts prior to packing
- Cross-reference packed equipment with carnet or shipping list when required
- Pack and label camera equipment in original flight case, ensuring it is secure, protected from damage and meets the legal requirements for the shipping agent and country of destination
- Check that associated documentation matches equipment, resolving any discrepancies with the production office

#### **7. Liaise with other people and departments to meet production requirements**

- Ensure close liaison at all times with camera operators, and with grips when on tracking or crane shots
- Liaise with electrical department when positioning flag stands for lens flares
- Communicate with assistant director to make sure there is sufficient time for getting focus marks and rehearsal
- Liaise with script supervisor to record technical data for each camera set-up

- Inform other people and departments about any technical matters and camera movements that will affect them
- Resolve issues with minimal disruption to shooting, referring those you cannot resolve to relevant personnel or head of department
- Liaise with production and camera facility company about equipment requirements

#### **8. Supervise camera crew**

- Supervise crew throughout shoots, allocating and overseeing their work to required operational positions, providing any required instructions, feedback, advice and information
- Keep crew informed about changes to on-set procedures and production schedules
- Take measures to ensure their ongoing availability when booking additional crew

#### **9. Follow health and safety requirements**

- Work in line with health and safety practice for all aspects of your defined role
- Make sure crew read any risk assessments supplied by production and comply with all health and safety requirements
- Immediately raise any matters of concern regarding on-set health and safety with head of department and first assistant director

#### **Role Specific Skills:**

- Setting up and operating cameras to achieve desired shots
- Assessing shot quality against aesthetic and technical requirements
- Troubleshooting technical faults
- De-rigging, maintaining, cleaning and packing cameras

#### **Other / Transferable Skills:**

- Communication: interpreting other's requirements of shots and communicating camera department requirements to crew and colleagues
- Teamworking: collaboration within own and with other departments
- Problem-solving: resolving issues with shot quality so that production requirements are met
- Management and leadership: coordinating and managing camera crew during production

#### **Attributes:**

- Resilience, enthusiasm and curiosity: adapts positively to changing work priorities and patterns, ensuring deadlines continue to be met. Proactive and explores new ideas and non-standard ways of working which will enhance and deliver the best results for the production
- Productivity: organises work effectively and achieves required results within deadlines. Demonstrates the drive and energy to get things done in pressurised situations and escalates appropriately when necessary
- Ethics and integrity: honest and principled in all their actions and interactions. Respectful and inclusive of others, and meets the ethical requirements of their profession
- Flexibility: willing to both listen and respond to changing priorities and working requirements as required, while at all times maintaining high standards in a constantly changing production environment