

### **Overview of Role**

Reporting to the production sound mixer (PSM), the first assistant sound (formerly known as the boom operator) in High-end TV and scripted film is mainly responsible for the placement of microphones on set, positioning personal microphones on cast and operating the boom pole during takes. On smaller productions, they may also prepare and set up sound equipment, either sharing this task with the second assistant sound or being wholly responsible for it themselves.

They collaborate with other departments and act as the principal communication between the production sound mixer and the rest of the crew and, in most cases, they can step up and replace the production sound mixer when required. They can also be asked to detach from the main unit and record sound for B rolls with a portable recorder.

### **Core Responsibilities:**

These core responsibilities are provided as a guide and are not exhaustive. The exact responsibilities on a particular production will vary depending on the scale and budget band.

#### **1. Prepare sound equipment during pre-production**

- Set up and test sound equipment under the supervision of the production sound mixer
- Become familiar with equipment and script
- Complete minor repairs of equipment and carry out basic cable soldering
- Prepare personal microphones, earpieces and accessories

#### **2. Stand in for production sound mixer during pre-production**

- Attend recesses and pre-production meetings on behalf of production sound mixer

#### **3. Set up sound equipment during principal photography**

- Help unload the sound cart and position sound equipment on location
- Check frequencies, settings and batteries of radio transmitters and receivers
- Apply radio transmitters to boom poles, and set up camera links when required
- Prepare time code devices and apply them to cameras
- Prepare in-ear monitors for distribution among crew and production
- Set up battery charging stations and replace batteries as required

#### **4. Operate boom microphone during principal photography**

- Operate boom microphone to capture sound, positioning it on the edge of the frame and aiming it precisely at the sound source
- Move sound boom unobtrusively without casting shadows or producing handling noises

#### **5. Fit and adjust personal microphones on cast**

- Apply personal microphones to cast, so they avoid rustling, are invisible to cameras and obtain the most natural sound
- Check microphones placement is comfortable for cast and optimise transmission

#### **6. Place microphones on set**

- Plan positions for plant microphones during set-up and rehearsal

- Position microphones so that they are unobtrusive, minimise unwanted noise and do not impede or endanger cast or crew

#### **7. Record sound for B rolls with a portable recorder**

- Operate portable recorders to record sound for splinter unit or ambience tracks when requested by the production sound mixer or production

#### **8. Monitor supplies of consumables**

- Monitor use of sound department consumables and stock levels
- Assist with the replenishment of stocks of consumables when required

#### **9. Secure sound equipment when not in use**

- Secure microphones and other pieces of equipment when not in use during breaks or at wrap time
- Help store sound cart and other pieces of equipment for the night

#### **10. Follow health and safety requirements for sound production**

- Work in line with health and safety requirements as per production's policy
- Ensure that general health and safety procedures are enforced at all times

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

- Relay communication between the production sound mixer and the rest of the sound crew
- Liaise with first assistant director and other departments to prevent and solve issues that may jeopardise recording
- Discuss production requirements for sound with production sound mixer and first assistant director
- Liaise with the camera department and gaffers to minimise any potential boom shadow or reflection problems
- Collaborate with costume, camera, VFX, other departments and cast about the positioning of personal microphones

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

- Applying the physics of sound and acoustic principles to achieve quality production sound
- Setting up and operating sound equipment as requested
- Positioning and adjusting microphones to achieve optimal sound quality
- Operating booms during takes

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

- Communication: managing most of the communication between the sound department and the rest of the film crew on set. Communicating in a clear and professional manner with minimal disruption to filming
- Collaboration: dealing with every other department of a film crew to achieve production sound requirements
- Problem-solving: troubleshooting and resolving issues with microphone placement and boom movement

#### **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 of 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