

Topic no. 58**Preparing for Shoot**

Preparing for a film production shoot can be pretty stressful. You've got budgets to manage, cameramen and editors to hire, and a whole slew of locations, sets, props and pieces of equipment to keep track of. If you're not organized and on top of things, it can be easy to fall off track.

Want to make sure your upcoming shoot goes as smoothly and seamlessly as possible? Then make sure you follow these 5 simple preparation tips:

1. Make a shooting schedule

If you want your shoot to be on time, on budget and to go as planned, then a shooting schedule is an absolute must. Sit down with your directors, producers, sound guys, location managers and DPs, and break down your shoot into manageable sections. Outline what scenes you'll shoot on which days, and pay careful attention to what actors are needed and what locations/sets you're using. It's usually most cost-effective to shoot all of one location's shots in a single day or period of days. The same goes with actors. You don't want an actor just sitting on the sidelines for two weeks getting paid. If you can organize your shoot so that their scenes are done all at once, you'll save money and time in the long run.

2. Create a shooting script

The next crucial step in ensuring a smooth film production shoot is to create shooting scripts. Once you've created your schedule, use that to create daily scripts for all the actors, cameramen, directors and other crew members. Make sure to include all the scenes you'll be shooting for the day – in order – and leave out any extraneous scenes or dialogue you don't need. This makes it easier for everyone to stay on track and in the right headspace.

3. Double check your locations

Sure, you might have secured that movie theater three months ago, but what if the theater owner quit or was replaced since then? What if they got a new event management system, and your reservation was lost? You don't want to leave locations up to chance, so take time to check in with each and every one you've arranged. Make sure to get confirmations that you can – and will – be allowed to shoot on the property on the days you need.

4. Verify your equipment and props

Nothing throws off a shoot like realizing you don't have the right lights or mics to complete a scene. Check in with your crew members and make sure they have all the equipment they need to do their jobs. Also be sure to turn on each piece of equipment, test it out and ensure it's in proper working order before your shoot rolls around. Equipment issues cost you time and money, and they can put your shoot significantly behind schedule.

5. Keep in constant communication with your team

Have regular meetings with your crew, and keep a constant stream of calls, texts and emails going. Keep them apprised of any changes, and be sure to send out shooting schedules and scripts ahead of time, so they can all properly prepare. You want to make sure every single crew member is on the exact same page before your shoot begins.