

Assistant Director

An assistant director's duties include tracking the progress of filming versus the [production schedule](#), and preparing [call sheets](#).

A First Assistant Director is responsible for the preparation of the shooting schedule and script breakdown used to plan the shooting of a film or television show. The AD works directly with the Director to manage of the minute to minute operations on the set during the process of filming, as well as co-ordinating the necessary communication of details of future operations as the filming progresses. Other duties include tracking the progress of filming versus the production schedule, observing all rules related to union crafts, labor contracts and location agreements, maintaining safety on the working set, and working with the Unit Manager to keep operational costs within the budgeted plan.

A Second Assistant Director is responsible for information distribution and reporting, cast notification and preparations during the shooting process, recording of all data relative to the working hours of the crew and cast, management of the background cast (atmosphere or "extras"), preparation of call sheets, production reports, and other documentation. When needed, the Second Assistant Director can assume the duties of the First Assistant Director on a temporary basis.

The lowdown

- Being the Director's right-hand person, taking responsibility for a number of important practicalities so that the Director is free to concentrate on the creative process
- Breaking down the script into a shot-by-shot storyboard, working with the Director to determine the shoot order, and how long each scene will take to film
- Drawing up the shooting schedule (a timetable for the filming) and making sure it's kept to

To do this role, one needs to:

- be an authoritative team-leader and motivator
- be an approachable team player
- have exceptional organizational and time-management skills
- plan ahead
- trouble-shoot
- pay close attention to detail
- be an excellent communicator
- have tact and diplomacy skills
- routinely deal with problem or even crisis situations
- prioritize tasks
- multi-task
- work long and often unsocial hours

- be flexible
- have a positive approach
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What does a First Assistant Director (First AD) do?

First ADs' main duties are assisting the [Director](#), co-coordinating all production activity, and supervising the cast and crew. They are also in charge of a department of other Assistant Directors and [Runners](#).

Overall, they provide the key link between the Director, cast and crew, whilst also liaising with the production office, and providing regular progress reports about the shoot.

Before the shoot, the Firsts' main task is to create the filming schedule, working in careful consultation with the Director. When drawing up the shooting schedule, First ADs must also be aware of the budget, cast availability and script coverage.

Preparing the storyboard, overseeing the hiring of locations, props and equipment and checking weather reports are all key pre-production duties for Firsts.

During production, they must ensure that everyone is on standby and ready for the Director's cue for action.

First ADs' main responsibility is to keep filming on schedule by driving it forward, so they make announcements and give directions to coordinate the cast and crew. They also control discipline on the set, supervise the other Assistant Directors and oversee the preparation of the daily 'call sheet' (a document with daily shooting logistics, distributed to all cast and crew).

Firsts are also responsible for health and safety on set or location, and must take action to eliminate or minimise hazards.