



Job Title

Production Assistant,
Film and Video

National Occupational Classification (NOC)

5227

Job Situation

In studio and on location. Indoors and outdoors. Very physical. Teamwork. Days and/or nights. long, irregular hours. Reporting to Key Grip.

Weekly Hours of Work

55

Overtime

As required

Monthly Salary

\$4,100

Student Loan – Owing

Student Loan – Monthly Payment

Duties

Fetch and move materials and equipment. Maintain tools and equipment. Drive large van. Assist grips in set-up.

Prospects

Grip or other skilled technical work on film sets.

Job Description

Production Assistants are the foot soldiers of film and video production. You are assigned to the grip department, whose primary responsibility is setting up and breaking down equipment that is directly associated with the camera. The grips are on the move so much they tend to carry a lot of their gear attached to them—clothespins and little clamps clipped to their clothes, slings with rolls of tape and cord looped over their shoulders, utility knives, multi-pliers and small flashlights clipped handily to their belts. It can be a heavy load but you have to do your job so you keep going.

Your first job is learning who's who. Even a small budget shoot can employ a hundred people or more. With so many people and so much equipment, the operation is almost military. Your generals are the director, the producer and the camera person or cinematographer. They make the major decisions that filter down to you via the key grip, your immediate boss. The next trick is to learn the lingo—lots of technical terms and nick-names for everything.

Job descriptions on a film set are very specific and things go more smoothly if everyone is minding their own business. This means that you can really annoy someone by moving or borrowing their tools, even for a minute. Your key grip will be peeved if she looks up to see if you have anticipated her need for a crowbar and finds you helping one of the sets people move a heavy piece of furniture.

A ten to twelve hour workday is normal and you will spend most of that time on the run, up and down ladders, stairs, and scaffolding, and in and out of the big truck where your equipment is stored. The work is grueling and often outdoors in all kinds of weather. For the duration of the shoot your life will be work and sleep, with a day or two off every ten days. But it's fun