

Welcome to Oakland's SHOWBIZ scene! The following pages contain tips and explanations intended to make your interaction with the film industry an enjoyable and mutually beneficial experience for both you and the production company you are hosting. Please contact me as soon as you begin working with a film production company so that I can assist with making sure:

- proper permits and insurance certificates are issued
- relevant city agencies are informed
- your neighbors are informed in a proper and timely manner (by myself and/or the production company)
- the project is legitimate and the production company has honored past commitments

I will also give you emergency telephone numbers for myself and others who can be of assistance to you at anytime during the production should the need arise, even after normal business hours.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope that your contact with the film industry will be satisfying and exciting!

**Ami Zins, Film Coordinator**

## **WHO IS THE FILM INDUSTRY...**

### **AND WHY ARE THEY IN SUCH A HURRY?**

#### ***Types of Productions, Schedules, Budgets***

There are six forms of productions that we will address: feature films, television, commercials, music videos, still photography, and corporate video. The period of time a company has to prepare to film is called "pre-production" and can vary dramatically from show to show. While feature films have the luxury of longer lead times, television and commercials suffer severe time crunches. This requires companies to find and secure locations in just a few days.

The average filming day is 12 hours long, and can cost a company up to \$100,000. For features, television or commercials, the scheduling of each production day is very important to keep the show on time and on budget. Scheduling a shooting day means allowing time and money for:

- the cast and crew to drive from the studio to the location
- parking trucks, vans and trailers
- unloading equipment
- setting up lights, sets, props
- location "moves" (moving the whole operation to a second or third location)

#### **Feature Films**

Feature films are generally two hours in length, and have a cast and crew size of 85-100. The average feature film budget is \$12 million, and preparation may begin up to 60 days in advance of the start of principal photography. During that time, budgets are set and locations are chosen. The average shooting schedule for a feature is about two months.

#### **Made-for-Television Movies (MOW) and Mini-Series**

The average MOW is two hours in length, with miniseries running from four to 30 hours. Crew sizes are similar to feature films. The budget per television movie is approximately \$2-4 million, and mini-

series budgets can easily triple that figure. Pre-productions for these usually last 30 days. A two-hour MOW can be filmed in three weeks.

### **Episodic Television**

These are usually one-hour dramatic series that shoot on the streets of California communities. Cast and crew sizes for television shows are slightly smaller than for features. Weekly series production has an average shooting budget per episode of \$750,000 to \$1.2 million. They film each episode in seven working days, with about three days shot on location (off sound stages). Most action series average nine locations per episode. Often, script approval is given just days prior to production.

### **Commercials**

These are the 15, 30, and 60-second “spots” that are shown on television. The average commercial costs \$125,000 to film and is often shot in just a day. Commercials have a very short turnaround time. Many times, they are shooting and editing one week, and the spot is airing the following week. Often, if the advertising agency is from outside of the Bay Area (as many are), final decisions on locations are not made until these executives arrive.

### **Still Photography**

The photos taken during these shoots are generally used for catalogs and newspaper, magazine or billboard advertisements. The budget for still photography varies depending on the client. Crew size is generally small compared to that of film, television or commercials. Crew and cast may include only a photographer, their assistant, a model and the client – or they can be major if the subject matter requires. Still photography shoots are generally completed within 1-2 days.

### **Music Videos**

The average music video is between 3 and 4 minutes in length. Music videos entertain the viewer (melodically as well as visually) by taking a single song and turning it into a short movie. A music video’s budget can range from a few hundred to several million dollars depending on financial backing from record companies. These shoots are usually completed within one week.

### **Corporate Videos**

Corporate Videos (also referred to as “industrials”) are usually less than one hour and not viewed by the general public. They are used by corporations for a variety of purposes that include job training, entertainment at corporate meetings, and trade shows. The budget for corporate videos is usually on the lower end of the scale because the goal is to be direct and informative, and because they are not revenue generating.

### **Personnel**

Regardless of the size or type of production, the key players with whom you will be involved remain (relatively) the same:

#### **Location Manager/Scout**

This person is responsible for finding, selecting, and finalizing the locations needed for the script. They are the first people to make contact and arrangements with the location. However, the location manager may not be present on the day of the filming, and it is important that you also know the following personnel.

#### **Unit Production Manager (UPM)/Producer**

This is the executive in charge of all production arrangements, i.e. location contracts, negotiations, and shooting schedules. The location manager reports to the unit manager (features and television) or producer (commercials). The UPM may not be at the location, but can be reached at the production offices.

#### **First Assistant Director (1<sup>st</sup> AD)**

The main job of the assistant director is to assist with the cast and to act as a

liaison between the director and the cast and crew. The first assistant is in charge of the set and everything that happens on it. The 1<sup>st</sup> AD is always there and is your most important contact on the day of filming.

## **SCOUTING AND SHOOTING**

### ***The First Call***

Usually a location manager will call you to request the use of your property for filming. After you have conceded that your property is available, you should ask certain questions of the location representative, involving:

- type of production (commercial, TV, feature, music video, still photography, corporate video)
- name of production company/title of production
- how many preparation and restoration days
- how many shooting days
- daily work hours
- description of activity and script content
- number of people and vehicles
- will there be any pyrotechnics or stunts?

If you do not recognize the company's name, there are several ways to determine credibility:

- ASK THE OAKLAND FILM OFFICE—call (510) 238-4734
- ask for references from the company's last several locations
- ask for the producers or directors list of credits
- ask for a contract with a parent company (sometimes independents will work out of studios)

When considering the location request, take into account:

- How do your tenants feel about filming?
- Accessibility—Can a camera, lights, and all necessary cast and crew fit in the area?
- Safety—Is it safe to film here? Are there any problems with fire regulations or building and safety? The Oakland Fire Marshal's Office can assist you with these questions.

Information to give the film company:

- turnaround time—when you can approve and sign the contract
- restrictions for use of your facility
- fees and personnel costs

### ***Determining Fees***

How much are you going to charge to rent your location? If you are a small business (shop or service), you should be compensated for all lost business while your premises are closed for filming in addition to a location fee. If you are a larger business (corporation, office building) and not necessarily put out of business for the filming day, but inconvenienced, base your price on the going rate other businesses are charging. Leave negotiating room for differing types of activity and impact. Call the Oakland Film Office if you have problems determining a fee structure or finding out "going rates."

Property owners should develop a sliding fee scale that takes into consideration various production budgets and crew size. In addition, it is important to charge fees based upon that length of the company's stay. Many times they will ask to film for a half day or less. You should charge a lesser fee on the days to prepare a location, and restore the location to its original condition.

You should take into consideration your level of inconvenience. You might want to charge different fees for interior and exterior filming. Since exterior filming is less intrusive, we suggest you charge a lower fee.

If you are a property owner or manager, decide whether you will have an all-inclusive rate (that includes an on-site monitor, electrician and any other required building services or personnel) or use a fee plus reimbursements. For the latter case, provide estimates to the production company of the approximate costs of these services and personnel.

On top of these considerations should be the actual costs associated with having a crew in your home or business which include phone calls, water, and power.

### ***The Scout***

The location manager will conduct the initial scout of your location, and you may want to provide him/her with a list of written guidelines before the scout begins.

The location manager will consider the following:

- The “look”—does the location meet the script needs?
- Is there ample parking close by?
- Is there an area close by for the caterer to feed cast/crew?
- Is there sufficient access to the facility—freight elevators, loading docks?
- Are the tenants amenable?

If you are a business, guidelines should include your company’s policies in the following areas:

**Electrical:** Can a production company use the on-site power? Would there be a charge? If the production company needs to tie into the building power, should a building electrician be present?

**Maintenance:** Are there any regularly scheduled activities that may interfere (gardening, watering schedules, etc.)? What about the crew using the on-site trash receptacles? Who will be responsible for ensuring that the location is left in a condition acceptable to the management?

**Parking:** Can the company park any or all vehicles on or near the premises? The average feature film with use 10-25 equipment trucks and 40-65 automobiles, and the average commercial will use about half that amount.

**Management:** What types of insurance will be required? What type of contract? Who will be assigned the principal contact? Who will actually work the shoot (if different)? How will charges be assessed: flat fee plus reimbursed or all-inclusive? Who will provide security and access to the building after hours? Can the production company use either public or private phones at the site?

If you are a homeowner:

- You will want to limit the area for eating and drinking. There should be no eating or drinking in the house; designate an area for that purpose.
- Large trucks should not be allowed in the driveway because they tend to damage things like sprinkler heads. Vehicle parking should be planned in a way so as to avoid congestion on your street.
- There should be NO SMOKING in the house. You may want to provide a designated smoking area outside.
- There should be no lights placed in such a way to scorch walls, ceilings, curtains, plants or trees.

- Use of nails, tape, pushpins, tacks, clamps or the like, should not be used on any wall, door, beam, woodwork without prior approval.
- All floors should be covered in areas where crew will be walking. Power cords may be brought through the house only on floors protected by coverings.

### ***The Survey or Technical Scout***

If the location works artistically and logically for both the production and for you, the location manager will return with the director, 1<sup>st</sup> assistant director, unit production manager and the art director to conduct the “survey” or “tech scout.”

The director or art director may ask if things can be added, moved or removed for the shot. Be as flexible as you can—the director is trying to match the location to the script.

### ***Final Approval***

Who gives the final approval? Who signs the location contract? If the person responsible for giving approval is unavailable, who may act in his/her place? Time is of the essence when a production company is making final arrangements for a location (known as “locking down”). Many locations have been lost because approval was not given in time. Having an established set of guidelines that clearly outline the filming policies for your property can eliminate concerns over saying “yes.”

### ***The Contract***

This is the most important part of hosting a film production. It is vital to include as much information in the location agreement/contract as possible—for everyone’s protection. The film company may also have a location agreement, which you can use, and attach your provisions to it.

If you manage or own a building, you need to determine what your role will be when companies are using only tenant space and no common areas. If the filming does not impact the common areas of the building, then no contract needs to be executed with the building itself. If a tenant occupies the entire property, then the agreement should be written solely with the tenant. If you generally have a “no sublease” clause in your leases, you may want to exclude filming/location use.

It is a very good idea to require a payment or partial payment up front—before the shoot is scheduled to begin. You might also want to request a damage deposit at this time.

### ***Insurance***

Most insurance policies for filming on location cover liability up to \$1 million. Make sure that your name (if you are a homeowner) or the name of your company or business and your employees are named as “additional insureds.”

### ***Prep Days***

Once you and the company have “locked down” the shooting schedule, they will need to start a day (or two) before the shoot to prepare (dress) the set. Preparations may include:

- covering existing signage
- placing gels or other coverings over windows
- removing/rearranging/adding furniture
- painting leaves and foliage or adding foliage and greens
- erecting flats (wood and canvas panels, which are painted to resemble walls)
- adding tabletop props and wall hangings
- removing/replacing doors
- clearing parking spaces on the street by posting “no parking” signs 48-72 hours in advance, or by bagging meters

### ***The Shoot***

Before the scheduled day's work begins, arrange to meet with the location manager and/or the 1<sup>st</sup> assistant director and any other critical personnel to run through the day's shoot. This meeting should take place before the equipment arrives, as the placement of vehicles is critical. The purpose of this "pre-filming meeting" is to make sure everyone is clear on what was agreed upon, and what both parties expect.

For smaller film companies, there may be only a van or two and a few private vehicles. For larger companies the equipment trucks will arrive first, and may include:

#### ***Parked closest to the location—***

- 35-foot, 5 or 10-ton electrical truck (contains all lighting equipment)
- 35-foot generator (optional) (power supply for lights, camera)
- 60-foot, 10-ton production truck (may include generators at rear of tractor)
- 20-foot camera van (camera equipment)

#### ***Parked as close as possible to the location—***

- 30-foot, 5-ton set dresser's truck (contains props, flats, greenery)
- 30-foot, 5-ton special effects truck—(if required- contains material/props for stunts, special effects)
- 30-foot crane (if needed- a large camera crane on wheels)

#### ***Parked nearby—***

- 65-foot dressing room- toilet unit (commonly called a "honey-wagon")
- 30-foot pick-up truck with wardrobe trailer
- 30-foot catering truck
- motor homes 8x25-feet (two or more) (for actors, director)
- 15-foot maxi-van (for shuttling crew, cast)
- production cars—2-3 station wagons (for errands—runs to studio)

#### ***Parked anywhere—***

- 30-foot crew bus
- 30-foot extra's bus

In addition, there may be "picture vehicles"—cars/trucks used within the shot. The trucks will be unloaded and the first set will be "set." This usually takes about 1-1/2 hours. Then the cast will arrive.

### ***The Role of the On-Site Monitor***

If you are a business owner, manager or a homeowner, it is wise to have someone at the location to monitor the filming throughout the day. Your monitor should be very familiar with your guidelines and should have the authority to approve or deny any filming requests as they arise. Be flexible, but communicate how much the company may do. If you need to find the location or production manager, find a crew member with a radio and "page" them. Listed below are some possible last-minute changes that may occur (these also apply to home use):

#### ***Weather—Cover Set***

The most prevalent reason for a change of location shooting with short notice is weather. Some companies have a "cover set" (alternate inside location) in case of bad weather, but the shoot will have to be rescheduled.

#### ***Schedule***

The company may get ahead or behind schedule and might call for a location that was previously set for another date.

**Cast (Illness, Conflicts, Not Scheduled)**

An actor in a particular scene scheduled for that day's shooting may be ill, which could mean a change to another location at the last minute.

**Script Rewrites**

Script rewrites occur quite often and may result in a change of location.

**Equipment Breakdown or Non-arrival**

The breakdown of equipment such as cameras, generators, and effects, or even the non-arrival of ordered equipment could bring about last minute changes in the location schedule.

**POST-PRODUCTION*****Clean-up***

After the last shot is completed, the cast will leave and the crew will "wrap." The assistant directors and the location manager will stay until the last truck has left. Make sure the film company is leaving your location the way they found it! All the trash should be gone, and all furniture, signs, etc. should be restored to their original places.

***Damages/Claims***

If you can spot damage as the company is wrapping, bring it to the location manager's or assistant director's attention immediately. They should either try to fix it then, or schedule a time to finish repairs. If damage is extensive, present the damages in writing to the location manager or the unit production manager as soon as possible. The unit production manager will then file an insurance claim.

In all cases of unreturned, lost or damaged property, the production manager, at his discretion, is authorized to file insurance claims. A film company is very adequately insured when on location for property and injury. This also includes personal damage; for example, if a crewmember backs his rig into the neighbor's car.

***Invoices***

The Oakland Film Office strongly encourages businesses and homeowners to request payment (or partial payment) up front, before the company has left the location. If this does not happen, invoice the company immediately to ensure payment. If you have any problems, please contact the OFC.

**Contact Numbers:*****Oakland Film Office***

(510) 238-4734 telephone  
(510) 238-6149 fax  
(510) 238-FILM hotline  
email: [filmoakland@filmoakland.com](mailto:filmoakland@filmoakland.com)  
[www.filmoakland.com](http://www.filmoakland.com)

***Oakland Fire Marshal***

(510) 238-3851

***Police Department***

*(Special Events Unit)*  
(510) 777-8525

**Ami Zins**, Film Coordinator

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