

Overview of Role

As head of the grip department, the key grip in high-end TV and scripted film reports to the director of photography and is responsible for the safe movement of cameras on set. This can involve very complex movement, such as underwater, in the air or over rough terrain. They conduct recces and plan grip activity for each location. They organise the grip department for a production and are responsible for health and safety in their department. Finally, they oversee the set up and operation of grip equipment by the grips and liaise with the standby construction crew so that camera movement meets production needs. Sometimes the key grip will head up a grip department working with the blue / green screen units in collaboration with the visual effects department.

Qualification guidance: the health and safety implications and dangers associated with grip equipment, means preference should be given to grips with an Advanced Grips Level 3 Diploma in Professional Competence.

The production of the grips department skills checklists was supported by the [Certified Grips and Crane Technicians Branch](#).

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. Conduct recces of grip department requirements

- ☒ Before recces, review production paperwork to identify any scenes with additional requirements and discuss them with the director of photography
- ☒ Before recces, review location restrictions, permissions and plans
- ☒ Arrange for any required additional personnel or suppliers to attend recces
- ☒ Take relevant production paperwork, measuring equipment and notetaking equipment to recces
- ☒ Assess locations and take notes and photographs of all aspects including geographical conditions, topography, camera positions and movement, measurements, GPS locations, access issues, security and risk assessment concerns
- ☒ Discuss desired camera positions and movement with director and director of photography
- ☒ Keep notes of all requirements and update them as ideas change and develop

2. Plan grip activity for each location

- ☒ Review notes and photographs and arrange to obtain any additional information required
- ☒ Design track and grip equipment that takes account of shot requirements and any location specific restrictions, consulting with specialists when required
- ☒ Work with director of photography and director to negotiate and agree options for camera movement that will meet budget requirements and technical restrictions
- ☒ Research and select grip equipment for the production, including specialist equipment for rough terrain or difficult conditions, and select which facilities house to work with
- ☒ Assess and specify power options

- ☒ Work with the best boy to create equipment lists, including specialist equipment such as cranes and tracking vehicles
- ☒ Find the best solution to meet shot requirements within budget, assessing costings and adapting equipment lists when required
- ☒ Work with the best boy to assess required crew levels and expertise to build, operate and remove grip equipment
- ☒ Assess time required to install and remove equipment against the production schedule and shooting schedule
- ☒ Review and edit plans as script, design requirements and schedules change, sharing updates with crew

3. Create methods of control for the grip department

- ☒ Create a system to engage crew with relevant knowledge, skills and experience
- ☒ Create a system to monitor crews' knowledge, skills and experience against ongoing work requirements, arranging training, certification of supervision when necessary
- ☒ Create a suitable system to share instructions, plots, schedules and grip requirements with grip department crew
- ☒ With the assistance of the best boy, create a system to order, seek approval, arrange delivery, collection, replacement and return and check condition of equipment, ensuring that suppliers are competent, equipment is tested and relevant safety certification can be supplied

4. Oversee the rigging of grip equipment

- ☒ Obtain relevant permits and licenses for cranes, parking and access from the locations department
- ☒ Ensure that the correct specialist grip equipment is specified, and operators are suitably certified and experienced
- ☒ Ensure everyone knows what they need to do and has all the equipment they need
- ☒ Instruct the grip crew on installation, rigging and set up of grip equipment, making sure it is safe and follows the plan
- ☒ Make sure grip crew exercise caution and report any issues when building or moving grip equipment
- ☒ Ensure grip equipment is installed correctly with tie downs and weights in place when required and safety features in place and working
- ☒ Make sure any cables are long enough to reach power sources, that supplies of fuel and any required battery charging stations are in place
- ☒ Make sure rigged grip equipment will achieve the specified camera movements

5. Oversee the operation of grip equipment during shooting to meet production requirements

- ☒ Organise each day's shooting requirements
- ☒ Work with crew to obtain the best results, adjusting as required and advising on methods to achieve desired camera movement
- ☒ Constantly review and keep detailed notes about the operation of grip equipment and movement of cameras
- ☒ Offer support and guidance to grip crew about faulty equipment and liaise with the director of photography and 1st assistant director about difficulties and delays to shooting and negotiating longer timeframes when required

6. Manage health and safety in the grip department

- ☒ Produce, submit and distribute department risk assessment method statements for shooting on set, on location, specialist equipment, complex shots and terrain
- ☒ Monitor the effectiveness of risk assessment method statements, conducting dynamic risk assessments when required
- ☒ Introduce yourself and best boy to the company senior person responsible (SPR) and health and safety advisor
- ☒ Display appropriate health and safety notices and the location of policies and risk assessment method statements
- ☒ Make yourself and crew aware of the health and safety regulations, contract terms, production policy and risk assessment method statements, how these affect work and safety practices and the implications of non-compliance
- ☒ Ensure crew have all necessary information and equipment to work safely, including personal protective equipment
- ☒ Hold department briefing meetings, especially for unusual operations, allowing crew members to ask questions
- ☒ If working abroad, ensure there are adequate translators with grip department knowledge to communicate with local crew
- ☒ Encourage near miss and accident reporting in the department
- ☒ Monitor and adjust working practices, working hours and breaks to make sure crew are properly rested
- ☒ Ensure drinking water, food and toilets are available nearby
- ☒ Ensure medical cover and nearest emergency hospital are listed on the call sheet or movement order

Role Specific Skills:

- ☒ Bridging the creative vision, technical application and health and safety of grip equipment
- ☒ Designing rigs and specifying equipment to achieve desired camera position and movement in difficult terrain
- ☒ Building, rigging, derigging and dismantling grip equipment
- ☒ Configuring grip equipment to achieve required camera movements

Transferable Skills:

- ☒ Communication: liaising with director of photography, director and heads of department about grip requirements and the implication of grip equipment choices, and briefing grip crew and standby construction crew about grip requirements
- ☒ Organisation: developing departmental methods of control, and managing health and safety
- ☒ Problem-solving: identifying ways of achieving desired camera movement in difficult situations
- ☒ Management: assigning duties and overseeing work
- ☒ Securing work: collating proof of competency and experience, establishing and negotiating rate, and clarifying and approving deal memo and contract

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 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