

Film Terms

A

ABBY SINGER - The shot before the last shot of the day. Named in honor of former first A.D., Abby Singer, who used to call the last shot of the day one shot too early.

ACTION! - The command from the director for the scene to begin. It indicates that the camera is rolling.

A.D. - The Assistant Director.

AD LIB - Extemporaneous delivery without relying on a prepared script.

ADR - Automated Dialogue Replacement. Dialogue added to a scene in post production. Sometimes erroneously called "looping".

AEA - Actors' Equity Association; often called simply "Equity". SAG's sister union which represents stage actors.

AFI - The American Film Institute

AFTRA - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Represents radio artists and news broadcasters, and, in earlier times, television performers. In more recent times, however, television performers may be represented by either AFTRA or SAG, depending on the producer's contract. Discussions about merging the two organizations have been ongoing for several decades; recent Television & Film and Commercial Contracts have been jointly negotiated.

AGMA - American Guild of Musical Artists

AGVA - American Guild of Variety Artists

ART DIRECTOR - Person who conceives and designs the sets.

AUDITION - A tryout for a film, TV or stage role. Usually auditions involving reading from the script, but can also require improvisation.

AVAIL - A courtesy situation extended by performer or agent to a

producer indicating availability to work a certain job. Avails have no legal or contractual status.

B

BACKGROUND - The Extra performers. On the set, "Background!" is a verbal cue for the Extras to start their action.

BACK TO ONE! - The verbal cue for performers to return to the mark where they started the scene.

BEAUTY SHOT - On TV soaps, the shot over which the credits are rolled.

BEST BOY - The assistant to the Chief Electrician, or Head Gaffer.

BILLING - The order of the names in the title of opening credits of a film or TV show.

BIO - Short for "biography". A resume in narrative form, usually for a printed program or press release.

BLOCKING - The actual physical movements by performers in any scene. Also can refer to the movements of the camera.

BOOKING - A firm commitment to a performer to do a specific job.

BOOM - An overhead microphone, usually on an extended pole. The Boom Operator is the member of the sound department responsible for holding the boom pole, with mic attached, over and sometimes under the actors. Also usually responsible for placing radio mics on actors.

BLUE SCREEN - Shooting in a studio against a large blue or greenish backdrop, which allows a background to be superimposed later on the final image. The actors must imagine the set they are on and be aware of the limitations of their movements. Blue Screen shooting is often used to create CD-ROM video games using actors.

BREAKAWAY - Specially designed prop or set piece which looks solid but shatters easily. Breakaway props are often glass items.

BREAKDOWN - A detailed listing and description of roles available for casting in a production.

C

CALLBACK - Any follow-up interview or audition.

CALL SHEET - A sheet containing the cast and crew call times for a specific day's shooting. Scene numbers, the expected day's total pages, locations, and production needs are also included.

CALL TIME - The actual time an actor is due on the set.

CAMERA CREW - With the D.P. (Director of Photography) as its chief, this team consists of the camera operator, the first assistant camera operator (focus puller), the second assistant camera operator (film loader and clapstick clapper) and the dolly grip.

CAMERA OPERATOR - The member of the camera crew who actually looks through the lens during a take. Responsible for panning and tilting and keeping the action within the frame.

CASTING DIRECTOR - The producer's representative responsible for choosing performers for consideration by the producer or director.

CATTLE CALL - A call for large groups of people.

CATERER - Responsible for breakfast, lunch and dinner on a set. Different from Craft Services.

CD-ROM - A compact disk that holds text, music and images. One of the principal new venues for interactive video games as well as for full motion video films. Acting for CD-ROM's is a new arena for actors. SAG 's Interactive Media Contract covers salaries and working conditions for this new medium.

CHANGES - Outfits worn while performing.

CHEAT - The actor's adjustment of body position away from what might be absolutely "natural" in order to accommodate the camera; can also mean looking in a different place from where the other actor actually is.

CHECKING THE GATE! - A verbal command to check the lens on the camera; if the lens is - OK - the cast & crew will move on to the next