

WHAT HAPPENS DURING PREP?

Prep is the period of time before filming starts and is one of the busiest times for the Production team and for the creative teams who need to prep for the show such as the art department, props team, costume, makeup and construction.

Below is an outline of what takes place during an 8 week prep period. Every Production is different, and has different requirements and demands. Some prep periods can be longer or shorter than this, it just depends on what you're making.

This outline is written from the point of view of the Production team, who act as the central hub of information, planning and logistics throughout the prep period and beyond. Each department will have its own individual timeline during prep, but Production will help to oversee the major aspects of prepping for a shoot.

WEEKS 1 – 2:

- Production office is opened and set up
- Accounts are set up with suppliers e.g. stationary, taxis, printers, couriers
- Meetings are held with insurers and Production Executives for the initial set up of the Production – paperwork, production policies and guidelines are all issued and implemented.
- The Production team start to join the Production and begin prepping across these weeks; reading and breaking down scripts, setting up logs and accounts, creating important admin folders etc.
- Other HoDs may have already started such as the Location Manager and Production Designer who need the biggest headstart to prep for a shoot.
- Producer/Director may begin travelling to the office, travel and accommodation is arranged.
- Various kick off meetings between departments and execs will start to happen to get the ball rolling and discussions happening.
- Some people may undergo refresher courses for training in health and safety or first aid, or any other training the Production company feels is necessary
- The Production team will likely start researching suitable spaces for upcoming requirements such as prop stores, rehearsal spaces, and setting up accommodation for cast members and any HoDs who have it included in their deal.

Weeks 3 – 4:

- More crew members will start to join the Production and begin prepping. More of the art department will likely start on the Production along with the costume team, props team and construction team. The production team will be sorting out contracts, and sending out information to any new starters.
- The director, DOP and Producer may start to go on smaller location recces with the Location Manager to pin down a few key locations.
- Script meetings called 'page turns' will be taking place between the director, producer, DOP and other key HODs like the Production Designer to discuss creative choices
- The Production team will be getting different drafts of each script and sending this out to the relevant people
- The 1st Assistant Director will join and may also go out on recces with the director. They will start prepping to create a schedule.
- Actors will start to be cast in the roles, with directors and producers attending casting sessions. The Production team will start going through the process of on boarding the new actors, sorting out contracts and paperwork and sending them information.
- Some early costume fittings may start to happen.
- Construction may get underway if there are any sets that need to be built.
- The Production team will be busy looking ahead to the rest of prep as well as meeting the demands of the wider crew and cast as they join; sorting travel and accommodation, sending out paperwork, setting up training courses, liaising with H&S about any health and safety requirements, booking rooms for rehearsals, recces, and readthroughs etc.
- The Production team will also be busy doing deals to get suppliers set up for the shoot including facilities companies, transport teams, unit medics and camera and lighting equipment.

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Weeks 5 – 6:

- Prep is very busy by this point. The art department will be very busy prepping sets for shooting, buying and creating set dressing and props, and creating graphics.
- The Production team will likely be dealing with clearances as more decisions get made creatively about any branded or copyrighted items the designer and director would like to use.
- The costume team will be organising fittings, shopping for costumes and getting their stock ready for the shoot.
- The 2nd Assistant Director will have started and will be busy arranging background artists for upcoming scenes, as well as creating fitting and rehearsal schedules for the cast members for the remainder of prep.

- The Production team will be busy prepping for upcoming read-throughs, recces, production meetings and tone meetings and ensuring everything is in place and organised.
- There will likely be very many other meetings happening between the director, producer and various departments and execs. These include page turns, creative discussions, script meetings, casting sessions and budget discussions.
- It's likely that further recces will be taking place as the Location Manager moves to finalise the list of locations for the filming before the technical recces commence.
- More crew will be start including more of the costume team, props team, script supervisor (if necessary), Makeup Designer.
- A tone meeting may happen in this period for creative HoDs, the Producer, Director and execs to discuss the overall look and style of the Production.
- It is likely there will be more rough drafts of the scripts and the schedule coming through as a result of the various meetings and discussions happening.
- Any children that require licensing in shoot week 1 will have their licenses sent off if this has not been done sooner.

Weeks 7 – 8:

- These last two weeks are very busy. Almost all of the crew will start to prep in some capacity in this period, even if it's just for the last two days.
- The makeup team will start prepping, conducting makeup fittings if necessary and getting kit prepped and in place for the shoot.
- The technical recces, Production meeting and readthrough will likely happen in week 7, with the Production team ensuring everything is in place and everyone is where they need to be.
- More budget discussions will be had, with forecasts made for the shoot ahead based on what has been planned and scheduled after the technical recces.
- The Production team will be arranging final travel and accommodation for those cast members starting in shoot week 1.
- The script team will produce the final shooting scripts to be issued.
- The 1st AD will produce a final shooting schedule to be issued.
- Rehearsals may happen during these two weeks with the cast members and directors
- The Production team will be looking ahead to shoot week 1 and finalising any equipment required, gathering risk assessments and booking advisors for the shoot.
- The facilities team will deliver the trailers for costume, makeup and assistant directors and these will be loaded with any necessary kit, costumes, equipment and paperwork.
- The 3rd assistant director will prep the radios ready to be distributed on the 1st day of shoot.

- The camera and lighting teams will prep equipment at the camera hire house and lighting hire house respectively, and load the required kit on to their technical vehicles.
- The DIT will ensure all their equipment and hard drives are prepped and ready for the first day of filming
- The locations team will be finalising locations and agreements with locations owners.
- The Production team will be ensuring all the cast and crew have any and all relevant information for the shoot.
- The props department will finalise dressing sets ready for shooting, alongside the art department who will also be overseeing any final design requirements for filming.
- The 2nd AD will spend the last day preparing the call sheet for Shoot day one which will be sent out to all of the crew and any cast members who are filming that day.

FILMING COMMENCES – SHOOT DAY 1