

## **Production Etiquette on Film Sets** **(Guidelines set by NB Film Co-op)**

*Etiquette*: the set of rules or customs that control accepted behaviour in particular social groups or social situations. (Source: Cambridge Dictionary)

**PREAMBLE:** The NB Film Co-op provides opportunities for members to participate on film productions. This is a privilege and not a right and to ensure its continued availability, there are rules of conduct recommended for behaviour on a film set. Like etiquette for dining and social occasions, there is an appropriate way to do things on a film set.

These guidelines apply to both filmmakers (directors) and their crew and cast. On most film co-op productions, everyone is volunteering their valuable time to help a filmmaker realize their vision. In return, there should be a level of respect and appreciation shown.

### **DIRECTORS/FILMMAKERS**

*Don't take it for granted that everyone should want to help you.* Members are volunteering and are not financially bound to your film so they can easily depart if their contribution is unvalued. A good practice at the beginning of each shooting day might be to thank everyone for helping on the project and telling them how much you appreciate their assistance.

*Don't show favoritism* to some crew and ignore others. Everyone is important. This goes for paying some crew and cast on a volunteer shoot and not others. It can build up resentment and mutiny in the ranks if that practice is discovered.

*Respect people's time* and be prepared for your shoot day. Do proper planning by visiting locations in advance if possible and do up shot lists and floorplans. Besides being efficient on the day for your crew, consider your actor's time. If an actor is not needed for a shoot until late afternoon on the schedule, don't have them arrive on set at 8:00am with the rest of the cast and crew.

*Avoid extra-long shooting days.* Rationalize your shot expectations, number of takes, number of shots per scene. Everyone is volunteering and no one has time for you to be Stanley Kubrick. Remember his crew was being paid by the hour, yours is working for free.

*Don't hog all the newest Co-op equipment* – you are part of a co-operative, and it should be possible to accommodate more than 1 shoot simultaneously. The Co-op has a vast equipment pool. Cinematographers should be able to rationalize equipment choices with a combination of new and old gear to achieve the desired film aesthetic. Be prepared to compromise and share the Co-op's gear.

*Safe Sets are your priority.* Do not allow inappropriate conduct on your set. Place no one in harm's way. This would include allowing dangerous stunts, shooting in unsafe locations, and

making crew or cast do things for the film that could put them in danger. It is your responsibility to create a safe set for everyone.

*Do not bring dangerous firearms or weapons on set.* A toy gun is one thing, but a real gun is not a toy. On professional shoots there are gun wranglers which you will not have, so play it safe and keep real weapons off set.

*Child actors require adult supervision (parent or designate).* They are also only allowed to be on set for a limited number of hours under child labour rules so adjust your shoot to accommodate these limitations.

*Protect all equipment from unsafe situations* (especially the Film Co-op gear as we do not have funds to easily replace it and you will be held responsible if you were negligent in its care). This could include mounting gear on car hoods, using cameras on a boat etc. You must inform the Co-op of any equipment usage that could be construed as potentially dangerous.

*You represent the Co-op and film community* - It is important to have a stellar reputation so that we can continue to make films within the community. So be respectful in all situations with the public and anyone you are dealing with related to the film.

*Look after your locations* - Ensure that locations are left in the same condition that you found them. If you damage something, leave a mess or act rudely, this will affect your future shoots and others who want to shoot there. Clean up your messes and take garbage away with you. Thank the property owners for their assistance.

### **Crew Etiquette**

Many filmmaker etiquette rules above apply to crew. Here are some additional ones.

- Show up on time to set. Even as a volunteer you should be professional. Other people are depending on you
- Be respectful to everyone on set.
- Don't ask a lot of questions except to the person you are working with in your department.
- Don't interrupt the director when they are working with actors.
- Don't continue to talk when the AD says "Quiet on the Set!"
- Don't swear on set or around the public.
- Respect locations – don't lean against paintings on the wall, sit on things that intended to be sat upon. Avoid damaging the location, but if something is broken, report it.
- Don't touch or move anything on a hot set. The set dresser put it there for a reason, and you will break continuity if things are moved between shots in a scene.
- Don't leave your coffee cup or other stuff on set or it may inadvertently be in shot.
- Don't walk in front of the camera while a shot is being set up.

- Volunteer to do fire watch on occasion and let others eat first. The gear and set need to be safeguarded while the crew are on break.
- Don't complain out loud if things are not going as quickly or smoothly as you think they should be – shoots are hard and morale can be affected if people are complaining. You can always choose to work with others in the future if you are not happy.