

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
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IATSE LOCAL 52

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Gaffer
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Job Description:

The Gaffer, also known as the "Chief Lighting Technician" or "Department Head" or works with the Director of Photography as the set lighting crew chief. He or She is the one who is the head of the entire lighting crew and implements the Director of Photography's vision by utilizing and delegating his or her lighting crew as well as working with the Rigging Gaffer to light the set.

Duties:

The Gaffer's primary role is to design and execute the lighting for the production. A major part of this is the preliminary preparation of scouting the location for any and all lighting problems or manpower needs, and determines the availability of power, cable runs, etc. He or She then develops a list of all needed equipment and expendables that need to be rented and/or purchased to light scenes as well as provide electricity to all other departments.

In addition to this, the Gaffer consults with the Director of Photography and prepares the lighting and electrical order, and then communicates to the Rigging Gaffer on rigging lights in the grid or the ceiling, or anywhere else lights may need to be rigged. As the Gaffer is the head of the electrical crew, he or she delegates to the other electricians on what lights need to be placed, any accessories that need to be placed, and where and what diffusion or color correction they will need. He or she also directs the technicians in focusing and balancing the lighting, spot/flooding, and lastly, adding or removing scrims or dimmers.

Other duties the Gaffer may have to take on include metering the scene to determine the camera aperture, and consulting with the Director of Photography on any special conditions such as frame speed, practical monitors, HMI synch, filtration, etc.

While the scene is being filmed, the Gaffer deals with safety, monitoring the scene for any changing conditions, shifting sunlight, or clouds.

Skills & Education

The Gaffer is in charge of the entire Lighting Department; therefore, he or she must understand the language of film-making and be very attentive to details. He or She must be a problem-solver and have the ability to communicate well, not only with the Director of Photography, but also when delegating his or her crew. The Gaffer must have a well-rounded knowledge of the filmmaking process and must understand photography to correctly light a scene.