

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
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IATSE LOCAL 52

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Key Grip
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Job Description:

The Key Grip is the head of the entire grip department responsible for camera equipment, accessories, and anything associated with the camera's operation and movement, as well as anything that cuts or diffuses the lamps set up by the Gaffer's crew.

Duties & Responsibilities:

The Key Grip starts out by gathering his or her crew consisting of a Best Boy (second grip), and as many grips needed to get the job done. He or she attends any preproduction meetings before the scheduled shooting day. He or she will also scout the location to determine what additional support equipment (extra dollies, cranes, mounts, etc) will be needed, if any. He or she will also determine the production needs and whether or not any additional support equipment (i.e. a second four-week-drive truck, snowmobiles, boats, etc) is needed for the particular terrain in order to get the company's film equipment to a certain spot.

Once on location, the Key Grip works with the gaffer and starts directing where the grip equipment goes. This includes lifting, moving, carrying, transporting, rigging, operating, building, and placing production equipment where it needs to be. Once this is in progress, the Key Grip plans what will be needed for the next series of shots. This is based both on experience and from meetings with the producer, director, cinematographer, etc.

Requirements:

Knowledge of carpentry, electricity, and cameras are very helpful to grips. Physically, they must be in good shape. They may have to move camera cranes or dollies as heavy as 400 pounds or climb heights as tall as 65 feet. They must also be physically agile enough to avoid the hazards associated with working on sets, such as tripping over wires and being hit with falling equipment and set sections. Must be mechanically inclined, with an excellent understanding of light, color, and electricity. Must also have good leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills.

The most important requirement for a grip is experience, gained through on-the-job training. Significant experience is required to operate equipment that carries cameras.

Grips are required to be very flexible regarding work hours. They may work only two days a week and from 12-18 hours a day. If a scene to be shot takes place at night, the grip must work at night. Because producing scenes is a group effort, grips must be able to work well with others and be patient. A particular shot may have to be set up repeatedly.