

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
19-02 Steinway Street Astoria, NY 11105
Phone: (718) 906-9440
Fax: (718) 777-1820



IATSE LOCAL 52

JOB DESCRIPTION – Prop Department

Job Title:	Property Master
-------------------	-----------------

Prop Masters oversee, and are responsible for, the procurement or production, inventory, care and maintenance of all on set props associated with productions, ensuring that they are available on time, and within budgetary requirements. They also ensure that selected props suit the film's style and overall design, and that they accurately reflect the production's time period and culture. Property Masters oversee the staff, and the smooth running, of the on set property department, working to high standards of accuracy and detail. As much of the work involved is administrative, the role is often office based. Property Masters are responsible to production designers. They are the first members of the property department to be recruited onto productions, usually approximately five weeks before principal photography begins.

DUTIES

During pre-production Property Masters work with Directors, actors, production designers and art directors to break down the script, and to determine what props are required. At this stage Property Masters carry out research into period props, by referring to archives, internet files, books and photographs, or by discussing the requirements with specialized advisors. Property Masters subsequently draw up complete properties lists, and set up and label the properties tables, which are used during production. From the lists, Property Masters select which properties are to be brought in, or hired, and which are to be made.

Property Masters allocate budgets to purchase, hire or create props, and plan and manage these budgets. They prepare the overall production schedule for their department, and work with other members of the team to produce the day to day schedules. For purchased or hired props, Property Masters ensure that accurate lists of sources are drawn up and maintained . For props that must be made, Property Masters work closely with carpenters, prop makers, or other artists, to oversee and coordinate the construction and completion of these props.

SKILLS AND EDUCATION

Property Masters usually oversee the work of a number of people, and must therefore have excellent leadership, management and motivational skills. As heads of department they should be able to cope with pressure, and be willing to work long and unorthodox hours to meet tight deadlines. Excellent practical, organizational, planning and time management abilities are vital, as are written and oral communication and presentation skills. Good computer skills are important. Property Masters must have solid financial skills, and be able to work within budgets. They need confidence in order to negotiate successfully with suppliers and manufacturers. Craft, repair and research skills are useful, and a full driving license is essential. The role may involve significant manual labor and can be physically demanding.

The Property Masters' role is not an entry-level job. They usually have many years' experience in the props department, and have worked as standby props, dressing props, , and assistant property master..