Creating Safe and Equitable Film Sets

This document outlines our expectations for how to make film sets safer and more accessible to all people who work in the industry.

We ask you to commit to upholding Catalyst Film Collective's values, to protect and uplift our production community, and help us create a harmonious work environment that prioritizes wellness, safety, equity, inclusion, and mutual respect. For more information, resources, and productive solutions to violations, keep reading.

Catalyst Film Collective Mission

Catalyst Film Collective is a Portland-based nonprofit elevating new voices in film by creating opportunities for members of marginalized communities to tell our own stories—both in front of and behind the camera—at all levels of production. We believe this industry is uniquely positioned to change the global dialogue and culture, and that belief is a thread in all we do.

We are an intersectional group that produces and supports equitable projects that hire at least 51% self-identifying women/non-binary folx, 35% BIPoC, and are LGBTQIA+ inclusive. Our work centers on creating visibility and opportunities for all marginalized communities.

We encourage agencies, production companies, and individuals to create better art by hiring truly diverse crews. Our voices are louder together. By lifting each other up, we all rise.

Policy

It is the policy of Catalyst Film Collective that racism, sexism, ableism, microaggressions, and discrimination of any type will not be tolerated. Any violations of this policy should be reported immediately, both to your direct report on set, as well as to Catalyst Film Collective at catalystfilmcollective@gmail.com.

Big Problems Observed

- Major lack of representation on sets of BIPoC, LGBTQIA2S+, women, non-binary folx
- Inappropriate contact (sexual, aggressive, unneeded, non-consensual), jokes or comments
- General disrespect (particularly towards BIPoC, trans, LGBTQIA2S+, non-binary folx and women), disregard for desired pronouns
- Failure to plan & safety issues (day length, turnaround, equipment and logistics)
- Lack of respect towards/from actors
- Disrespect for locations and donated time/items
- Lack of space for questions, learning, openness, and/or generally militaristic patriarchal culture

Hiring

The first and most important step production companies, agencies, and individuals can take to create safe and equitable production environments is to change their hiring practices. You cannot do the same thing that has always been done, and expect different results.

1. Make a commitment for your crew demographics. If you base it on the U.S. population, it should be 50% women/non-binary, 35% BIPoC, 15% LGBTQIA2S+. Make a plan for how to get there.
2. Tokenism is the policy or practice of making only a symbolic effort. When you hire one or two BIPoC in positions without power, this is tokenism. Make sure you are hiring people from underrepresented communities in positions of power, and you are truly changing the demographics on your set if you really want to change your set culture.
3. Constantly work on building relationships with BIPoC artists and others from underrepresented communities. Make those connections when you are not crewing up, so you have a pool of talented people to pull from when you need to make those last minute hires.
4. Use open calls, and give yourself enough time to conduct a fair hiring process.
5. Do not just hire the same people you've always worked with. Commit to hiring 25% new people on every production so you are always expanding your network.
6. Think about the subject matter of the piece you are making, and make sure your crew is representative of the subject.

Prevention and Resolutions on Set

Pre-Production

Many problems on set can be prevented entirely with a little effort during pre-production.

1. Raise enough money to pay people, and follow safe set protocol. Do not jump into production if you are not ready, and this includes proper funding.
2. The AD, AD team, Producers, PM, and all PA's should be made aware of and know intimately your set policies in pre-production (or on arrival if necessary). Designate a crew member (AD, PM, key PA etc) to be the ambassador and mediator for set safety and policies. Producers should be comfortable standing behind an ambassador's arbitration.
3. Come up with a process for reporting and resolution depending on the severity of the violation (number of warnings, mediation, dismissal, or legal action).
4. The maker of call sheets should include within their information request a specific request for pronouns and consent to include said pronouns on the call sheet.
5. The AD, in the interest of safety for crew, should attempt to avoid scheduling any more than a 10-hour day and include at all times at least a ten hour turn around. Be honest when hiring crew (and at all times if schedules change) about the length of the day(s), so crew has a chance to decide if they want to take the job. If you are asking crew to work longer than normal hours, pay them accordingly. Attempt to schedule days with padded setup times and optional shots to ensure crew has the time they need to safely and properly secure equipment for each shot.

6. All locations should have at least one bathroom, and safety considerations should be planned for in advance, like sufficient lighting for exteriors. Physical accessibility should be considered. If cast or crew have disabilities, ADs should plan ahead for things like extra breaks if needed, and parking and building accessibility.
7. Plan for enough food! If you aren't properly feeding people, you are creating major problems and crew will not want to work with you again.

Production

1. At the start of production the AD will hold a meeting with crew to share the set policies and guidelines for behavior, and process for reporting (and with new crew upon arrival).
2. All crew are personally responsible for paying attention, upholding set safety and policies, and reporting issues to the ambassador. If you are not from an underrepresented community, use your privilege to help make sets safer for all.
3. At no times should crew be engaging in inappropriate conduct towards anyone else on set. This includes unwanted sexual or aggressive contact/comments, verbal harassment (including slurs, jokes, and insults) or specific negative targeting or singling out.
4. All crew are hired for a reason and should be respected. Respect includes avoiding interruption, micromanagement, taking over someone else's work (do not take equipment from someone else's hands while they are carrying it *unless it is an immediate threat to safety*), repeatedly questioning directions, insulting someone else's work, and patronizing other crew.
5. Attempt to give accurate calls for the time it will take you to finish your work. 'Camera in five' is not useful if camera is up in 15. Perfection isn't the goal. Accurate and helpful estimates are.
6. If a day is running longer than was initially stated, crew need to be asked privately and give consent to stay longer (for the same pay). They need to be able to say no without retribution.
7. Actors engage in a particularly difficult state of vulnerability every time they arrive to set. Respect for actors should be observed at all times, and the set policies include them. An actor's consent should constantly be at the forefront of a production's concern. If a scene of emotional intensity is approaching, particularly a scene with sexual or on-screen non-consensual behavior, the AD or a member of the AD team should check in with actors regularly to gauge their comfort and consent levels. An AD should provide a closed set at any time requested, limiting traffic only to those most vital to the scene or those requested by the actor. Breaks from the scene should be respected within the production schedule to allow an actor time to gather themselves and recover/prepare.
8. Actors are also responsible for upholding set policies themselves. At no time should abuse or harassment from an actor to crew be tolerated within a production.
9. Locations, donated items and time should be respected at all times. Productions of all levels should attempt to the best of their abilities to secure insurance coverage for equipment and locations used.

Set Culture
Some tips for a smoother and more equitable set culture.

1. Learn everyone's names as quickly as possible.
2. Be respectful. Regardless of job title, everyone is an equal human being. Treat them as such.
3. Be patient, particularly with people who have less experience than you. If something can be done better *ask* if you can teach it.
4. Say thank you, and be appreciative of others' good work or helpfulness.
5. Pay attention to make sure the people around you are being treated with respect. If they are not, say something immediately.
6. Eat food, don't be hangry.
7. Be prepared to learn something. Be open and be collaborative.
8. Try to have fun. Productions should never feel like life or death, but can easily be efficient and safe while being a positive experience for all involved.

Resolution/Mediation

1. Violations of set policies should be addressed as soon as possible, and protocol should be followed.
2. In the case of harassment, the ambassador should hear the complaints in a private setting, and receive consent to proceed with mediation or other resolution strategies.
3. If mediation is not warranted, the ambassador may simply speak with the perpetrator about their behavior as part of a warning system. The party of complaint left out of the conversation as much as possible, or held anonymous.
4. For mediation, all parties should meet in private with the ambassador acting as mediator. Grievances should be heard and responded to. The ideal resolution is for the accused party to understand their problematic behavior and pledge to correct it. The ambassador may also decide to remind the general crew of set policies.
5. The ambassador should compile brief notes of complaints in a document or email at the end of each day they occur, to share with Producers, as a safety measure for the crew and a legal fallback for the production.
6. If issues with an individual persist, the producers should immediately begin seeking a replacement, and the ambassador should issue a final warning of correction in private. Experience and position should never be an excuse to create a hostile working environment.
7. Larger budget shows should consider having a private, professionally trained mediator on staff or within the production office, available to work out issues between crew members or staff.
8. In the case of a criminal violation the perpetrator should be immediately dismissed from set and the police notified.

More Resources

Definitions of DEI terms- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oi9gHmEBR_aldoihly-wnWv-3pS8ZdtK/view?usp=sharing

Definition of Sexual Harassment- https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/what-kinds-of-behaviors-are-considered-sexual-harassment.html

Oregon Film's website for reporting- https://oregonfilm.org/reporting/

BIPoC Demands in Theater document- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sDS6crGPe7HC-ezmNII28iiDYKt9Kuj0/view?usp=sharing

OMPA Oregon Industry Standards & Guidelines- https://ompa.org/resources/oregon-industry-standards-guidelines

If you are experiencing a problematic set culture, please email Catalyst Film Collective for help.

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