
COVID-19: COMMERCIAL ART DEPARTMENT WORKFLOW CONSIDERATIONS

This document represents the input of a **large and informal group of commercial production designers and art directors** whose wish is to work with producers and production companies to understand and implement emerging COVID-19 protocols.

In recognition of the complex task ahead, across all facets of the industry, the group has held meetings to identify safety and workflow concerns specific to the art department. **While production designers cannot officially speak for all art department crafts, we can provide insight** to broad and specific challenges and demands our department will likely face.

Clearly, **this document is open-ended, and represents an ongoing conversation.** As the new reality evolves, and safety protocol are established by State, Local, IATSE and AICP representatives, we welcome the opportunity to collaborate with production companies in the early stages of rebuilding commercial workflow.

We all want to get back to work safely, and to find creative expression and collaboration in this new landscape. **Communication, planning, diligence and collective problem-solving will keep our workplaces and our crew members safe.** We collectively **thank you** for your consideration of these thoughts and suggestions.

1. GENERAL SAFETY

We understand that return to work will be accompanied by a stated set of practices and protocols developed by IATSE and AICP.

- Guidelines should indicate how production companies and their employees adhere to state and local public health department safety regulations.
- Guidelines should provide all employees, specifically production designers and art directors who have the responsibility of managing the art department, a clear set of practices to help production companies maintain a safe and healthy working environment.
- A safety coordinator position should be developed, to oversee the implementation of and adherence to safety practices, as developed by state and local public health officials.

2. PRE-PRODUCTION & BUDGETING

To assist production with developing a realistic timeframe, workflow and budget for the delivery of the commercial project, there is a recommendation that production designers be consulted during the bidding process.

- Effective and early communication of agency scripts and client goals will give all departments a greater chance of assisting the director and producers in achieving these objectives.
- In recognition of longer timelines to achieve objectives, slowdowns are likely to manifest in:
 - Longer response times from vendors to obtain materials
 - Less set decorating achievable within each day due to the likelihood of staggered entry into prop houses and retail stores
 - Fewer pickups or returns achievable within a day due to likelihood of timed slots for pickups at vendors
 - Isolating departments from one another during location or studio prep & accommodating correct distancing during dress days
 - Identification of points within the job timeline where crew will need to be staggered, or more time will need to be allocated, will inform budget conversations.
- Early identification of workflow will allow appropriate PPE to be procured by production and provided to art department personnel when they begin work for the production company.

3. PRE-PRODUCTION, DESIGN & PREP

We all want to work efficiently and safely; the art department's prep is frequently remote from production. Here are some thoughts about the management of that work:

- Establishing a safety coordinator and point of contact will allow ongoing concerns to be addressed promptly, while minimizing the interruption to the workflow and the achievement of objectives.
- Prompt procurement and disbursement of PPE by production at the beginning of prep, will allow art department personnel to start work safely.
- All work during prep should be performed in consultation with a safety officer, regulating the maximum concentration of people in any given area is adhered to at all times. Spatial distancing during prep is likely to include but is not limited to:
 - Engaging in remote work and digital sharing of information whenever possible. Including research, budgeting, coordinating, set rendering, illustration, graphic design, and preliminary contact with outside vendors.
 - Where remote working is impractical, work should be conducted in areas where appropriate social distancing can be adhered to. Examples of such activity would include review of set builds, review of set construction and set decor finishes and materials, review of physical props, review of practical special fx.
- Set decorators and property department should be provided additional time to adhere to safety protocols at prop houses and retail store environments; this may include staggered entry, virtual shopping, limited staffing availability, limited stock.
- Contactless payment should be considered, such as Cashét Cards.
- Pending official guidelines, drivers may need to be isolated from set dressers during pickups.

4. STAGE OR LOCATION BUILD & DRESS

- The presence of a safety coordinator is recommended for any dress, prep, shoot or wrap that occurs at a site under the producer's control, i.e. location or studio.
- The safety coordinator or their surrogates, if satellite activities are happening simultaneously, would oversee availability and access to PPE and implementation of safety rules.
- Pending state and local health input, guidelines should identify maximum concentration of people in any given area. During prep these guidelines will make sure that designers and art directors can advise their art department on correct protocols.
- All departments would be staggered in order to work in isolation from one another. Construction, paint, dressing and special effects crews would work in isolated shifts, while adhering to established protocols.
- Any environmental cleaning of a location or studio (if deemed necessary) would be coordinated by a safety advisor and/or location manager, and performed prior to the space being occupied by the art department.
- We anticipate guidelines regarding cleaning of key dressing or hand props may require additional time.
- Personal tools should not be shared and common use items such as chop saws or compressors must be disinfected when operating personnel are switched out, pending guidelines.

5. SHOOT

Under the umbrella of anticipated safety guidelines, these are more art department specific considerations:

- On-set presence of art department would be limited to production designer and key personnel.
- All work performed on set should be under direction of a safety officer and AD department, making sure the maximum concentration of people in a designated area is adhered to at all times.
- We anticipate guidelines regarding cleaning of key dressing or hand props may require additional time.
- Any environmental cleaning between shoot periods, if required by multi-day shoots, would be conducted by an outside vendor. To mitigate loss and damage, it is recommended the art department should be consulted before any disinfecting products are applied to props, set dressing, greens or scenery.

6. WRAP

- All departments would be staggered in order to work in isolation from one another. Construction, paint, dressing and special effects strike crews would work in isolated shifts, while adhering to established protocols.
- Any environmental cleaning of a location or studio (if deemed necessary) would be coordinated by a safety advisor and/or location manager, and performed after the art department has concluded their work.
- Off-site return of rental items may require more time, due to the potential of staggered entry to rental houses. Time should be factored in for this eventuality. We anticipate longer art department wraps, due to a prolonged timeline of returns.
- Recovering cash expenditures via retail returns may be impacted, pending retail protocols.
- Digital wrap should be employed wherever feasible.

Deadline

LINKS TO GUIDELINES:

[AICP Guidelines WIP](#)

[Automatik Guidelines WIP](#)

[BECTU UK Strategy and Modality Solutions - United Kingdom](#)

[CPI Guidelines - Ireland](#)

[Hobby Film Guide - Sweden](#)

[Iconoclast Guidelines WIP](#)

[Lionsgate Guidelines](#)

[Rakish Guidelines WIP](#)

[Smuggler Protocols WIP](#)

LINKS TO RELATED ARTICLES:

[AICP](#)

[Bloomberg: Here's a glimpse into our future](#)

[Deadline: Commercial Producers Trade Group Issues Guidelines As Restrictions Ease](#)

[Deadline: Leaked Film & TV Safety Documents Lay Bare The Enormous Complexities Of Re-Starting Drama Shoots](#)

[Ford testing wrist bands that buzz when workers get within 6ft of each other.](#)

[Florida safety Guidelines](#)

[Hollywood Reporter: Hollywood Maps Out Its Return](#)

[LA Times Op-Ed: How film and television production can safely resume in a COVID-19 world](#)

[Medium: The Death and Re-Birth of Hollywood](#)

[Podcast of Producers interviewing agency producers, commercial producers, directors etc](#)