

Director of Photography (DP)

The Director of Photography (a.k.a “DP”) is in charge of the entire look of the film by creating the aesthetic of each scene through the choices of specific lights, cameras and lenses.

Responsibilities

- Working with the Director on the aesthetic of the film.
- Head of the Lighting Department.
- Head of the Camera Department and hiring the following:
 - Camera Operator
 - 1st Assistant Camera
 - 2nd Assistant Camera
 - Digital Imaging Technician (DIT)

Things To Consider...

- Be knowledgeable on lighting.
- Be knowledgeable on specific cameras and lenses.
- Understand generic framing, different types of shots, as well as different camera movements and how they are achieved.

Process

Pre-production:

- Work with the director to agree on the aesthetic of the film.
- Create a shot list and detailed camera set ups of each shot of the film.
- Decide on which camera will be shot on as well as the lenses that will be needed for each of your planned shots.
 - Pick your camera department.
 - Pick your gaffer.
 - Attend, with your Gaffer, the Tech Scouts to plan where the camera and light set-ups will be.
 - Create an itemized list of equipment needed to hand to the CW Equipment Manager prior to production.

Production:

- On set the DP will be calling the shots on the camera and lighting placement to create the shots that have been predetermined.
 - The DP will sit behind the monitor in video village determining if what’s on the monitor is the look they are going for.
 - It is also the DP’s job to make sure that there is enough coverage for each scene.

- Every day after wrapping, the DP and the director will review the dailies from each day to make sure that the production is properly representing their shared image.

Post Production:

- During editing of the film the DP will be there for color correction and review to make sure that every shot that was planned was completely covered.

Tips

- Research cameras and lenses to understand the look of each lens with each camera.
- Research the basics on lighting as well as in depth information about different kinds of lights and the look of each type of light.
- Use the knowledge of both camera and lighting to understand how certain looks are achieved in films.
- After researching both lights and cameras, re-watch your favorite films and break it down shot by shot and think about where the lighting and camera placement was on set.

Additional Resources

- *Professional Lighting Handbook*, by Verne Carlson, Sylvia E. Carlson
- *The Camera Assistant's Manual*, by David E. Elkins, SOC
- <http://www.cinemaworkshop.com/camera-team/> (Camera Department Documents)
- <http://www.cinemaworkshop.com/production-team/> (Shot List and Equipment Request Form)