

The AD Call

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Your First Assistant Director (1st AD) is the one who will lead the film crew into each shot. Your First AD is the boss of the crew and will keep you on track. The First AD is in command of all the other Assistant Directors (ADs), and if you have problems, either with your health and safety, you are going to be late, or with anyone else on the set, your First AD is the one to talk to. In fact, all complaints with the crew go directly to the First AD. Never bother the Director or the Producer with any of your on-set problems which is the common mistake of a PA (Production Assistant) or other film set rookie.

Here is what the First AD will say before each shot taken on a film set:

Picture's Up (from here, the 2nd AD and even the additional ADs such as the 3rd AD will say "Picture's up!" but only **directly after** the First AD calls out: the First AD *always* calls out first).

Quiet on set! (from here, the 2nd AD and even the additional ADs such as the 3rd AD will say "Quiet on set!" but only **directly after** the First AD calls out: the First AD *always* calls out first).

SPECIAL NOTE: If the film crew is especially noisy and not paying attention, or not quieting down, then the AD can yell out once more **QUIET ON SET!** But refrain from insults, but remember the First AD can get a bit loud and sometimes has to.

Actors in your places (if need be this can also be called out).

Roll Sound (from here the Sound Recordist should designate that he or she is in fact presently recording sound and will respond with "*Speeding*").

(Once the ADs are aware that the Sound Recordist is recording, the 2nd AD and even the additional ADs such as the 3rd AD will say "Rolling!" The 3rd AD will never yell out before the 2nd AD, but the 2nd AD goes only **directly after** the First AD calls out. Remember, the First AD *always* calls out first).

NOTE: It is a good idea to roll sound before rolling picture.

NOTE: The Slate should enter the frame of the camera and be prepared BEFORE the First AD calls for camera. But even before this, as a Camera Assistant you have to be in the shot before the shot starts recording.

Camera or Camera Speeding (Here, the First AD will call for camera and the camera operator will respond with "*Speeding*").

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Slate (At this point, the Camera Assistant or 2nd Assistant Camera will slate the shot). If the Camera Assistant is not in the shot, then the AD will politely say "*Slate in please.*" Point being, the slate should already be in the shot at this point)...

NOTE: soft sticks is only used if the slate is being held very close to an actor to avoid the harsh sound of the clapper board against the ears.

The 2nd Assistant Camera will slate the shot and immediately move **out** of the shot.

The Camera Operator will then let the AD and Director know that he or she is ready to go by saying "C-Set" or simply "Set."

The Director will then call ACTION!

Please note that no one else on the set should ever call action. In rare cases, a Director may have their First AD call action but this is only in rare situations. Bottom line, do not ever go over the Director and call action.

NOTE: There are slight variations of the First AD crew call on different crews and under different situations, but this is the most common and consistent (and widely used).

Remember, the film set must be extremely organized in order to meet the fast-paced schedule needs of the day's shooting. The First AD Call is one way to keep the crew in check and to keep everything grounded during the shoot. Therefore, members of the crews, listen to your First AD as that is **your** Commander in Chief.

Some history about the First AD; the First AD attends all of the production meetings, even the most secured meetings. In fact, the First AD is in a position of power on the film crew and can even override a Director if a shot is **not** getting off; if a shot exceeds over 10 takes the First AD can press to get the shot done, and even call to *move on*. Or, if the Director is simply taking too many shots and being overly artistic then a First Ad and even the Producer can step in to move on. I will briefly lecture on Director Richard Donner and how and why he was actually fired from completing Superman II regarding time and shots, and scheduling.

The First AD has to press on matters of time. The crew too must be totally aware of the issues of time and follow the lead of the First AD.

