

Video Director Commands Quick Guide

A helpful list of commands and terms to bring consistency to your videos

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Director Commands Quick Guide

Video Directors will use many standard communication words to simplify a live video shoot. However, each situation is different, so adaptation is also common on a limited basis. Here are some examples:

* Standby - hold the shot or wait to begin a pre-determined move. Usually means they have a few seconds to prepare.

* Ready - warning to a camera op/tape op that they're about to be called upon in just a moment.

* Push - (zoom) a zoom IN towards a spot/person.

* Pull - (zoom) a zoom OUT away from a spot/person.

* Pan Left/Right - Only left or right movement. Pan is usually used to follow a person or to set up a shot.

* Tilt Up/Down - Only up and down movement. Tilt is usually used to track movement up or down stairs or to follow props vertically.

* Hold or "woof" - Stop the movement and/or hold the shot.

* Go - begin a pre-directed move. Usually said right after 'ready'.

* Wide shot - Normally a zoom that frames an area, such as the choir loft or the platform.

* Full wide - Zoom out to the widest point of the lens. A.K.A. "Big Wide".

* Head shot - Just a talking head. Hard to follow. Rarely used in live TV because people move too much.

* Bust - Chest-to-Head shot framed above the elbows.

* Waist Up - means actually a bit above the waist NOT at the waist. Bad to saw someone off at joints.

- * Knee Up - Knee to Head shot. Again, just above the knee - not right at the knee.
- * Head-to-Toe - just like it sounds. Normally, a camera's viewfinder (especially on studio kit equipped cameras) will show the overscan. Extra room must be allocated because less will show up on tape.
- * Follow shot - track with the person/prop as they/it moves.
- * Two-shot - Typically two people (like a duet) in full head to toe with both on screen.
- * Three shot - same as above, but with a trio.
- * Group shot - the 'group' must be defined by the director, but it is probably obvious what is meant by 'group'.
- * Check Focus - when a camera is tasked to a new shot, they are to zoom all the way in to the subject/object and get a new focus, then set up their shot. NEVER USE AUTOFOCUS!
- * Rack Focus - Artistic shot where the focus is "racked" (taking the subject out of focus). Typically used in music segments or other artsy shots. Racking focus is almost always focusing TOWARDS the camera. This takes the subject AND the background out of focus.
- * Slap zoom - Artsy effect used for high-energy shots. Zoom servo is disengaged, and the camera op manually pulls or pushes the zoom ring to the stops as fast as possible. Not used too often.
- * Dutch - using the tripod's head to angle the camera to one side or another. Again, an artsy effect used on rare occasions.
- * Take them off/Bring them on - used to dissolve (almost exclusively during music) when one shot dissolves from a camera shot of a head to toe over to a second camera's tight shot. The pan effect moves the image off on one camera while bringing the new shot into the frame. Note: do not use same to same shots.
- * Roll - video playback command meaning push play.
- * Speed/Rolling - tape op's response to a roll command after the footage is playing back properly.

* Iris up/down - CCU controlled cameras only. Shader/Engineer is to increase the iris on a camera. Normally the shader is ahead of the director, but sometimes the Director needs it when the shader is adjusting another camera.

* Cut - hard transition on a switcher.

* Dissolve - smooth transition on a switcher.

* Effect - wipe pattern or effect for graphics.

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