

LOCATION MANAGER JOB DESCRIPTION

Pre-production. Hours : 07:00 – 19:00 – for 4-6 weeks

Read the script. Negotiate budget with producer. Meet Director and discuss what is required. Look up reference material, phone contacts. Drive around and find locations and take extensive reference photographs. Present a selection of locations to Director and Production Designer. Narrow those down to a short list and go on initial location recce. If the Director is already filming, then recce after 20:30.

It can take up to two months to organise a large stunt set piece and about two to three weeks for an interior house. Once a location has been accepted, technical recce with all heads of departments are organised. Meetings are held with local residents associations, councils, the Police, special effects departments and if necessary the water authority, Port of London, the Military – the list goes on. Contracts are negotiated, disturbance fees and bribes paid to all parties. Insurance issues have to be considered and discussions with employment lawyers.

Next, complete a health and safety and risk assessment. Drive along the location route and write the movement order for the crew and cast. Then, find and organise a unit base for each location. This is the parking for about twenty five large trucks and around sixty cars each day and usually in central London. Oh deep joy ! If we're on farm land then organise metal surface covering and marquees if required.

Organise access to water, electricity and toilets for the art department. If required, organise and adhere to recommendations from asbestos checks. Arrange for rubbish collections.

Lunch – no time.

Deliver residents letters to each street and block of flats that we are filming in or near. Wait for the 'resident from hell' to show himself. If filming in the street, make sure all the coning is in place the day before and adequate security is organised. Double check on all paperwork concerning road closures, if you can get them.

Do all of this for each location every day. There can be up to twenty five locations for each episode of a normal drama. Two locations can be filmed in one day. All this is done so that on the day of filming the LM is left to catch anything unforeseen, such as script changes, bad weather or men digging up the road you're about to film in.

Production / filming : 05:30 – 20:30 – for 2 – 6 months

Get catering in at the unit base (having already driven an hour from home). Check with security about the previous night's activities, alarms and keys and check that cones are on the road. Get into the location whilst the crew have breakfast. Park up the technical trucks at location. Once crew are filming at 08:00 leave the assistant with the location and visit the previous day's location to check the art department's progress. Re-instating the location can take anything from a day to a week depending on upheaval. If any damage is found negotiate a solution. Clean up and vacuum if necessary.

Return to the production base to continue research and recce with the next director. Have meetings with the accountant as the budget runs away with itself. Complete the movement orders and maps for the next few days.

Double check on the location for the next day, progress of art department, the owner, the local residents and sort the unit base details. Put up signs in the street so that the crew don't get lost the next morning at 06:30.

Go back to the present location and catch the resident from hell make my assistant cry. Get a parking ticket. Miss lunch, again. Take transport captain to the next unit base to check access, water, lights etc.

At the end of the day stay until the electricians have de-rigged and the rubbish has been collected. Go to the next location and check in with overnight security that coning has been done. Check the unit base vehicles are arriving and are gaining access.

If there are night shoots, split the work with the assistant so that I work during the day. Check all is smooth last thing at night, keep the mobile on all night and check in early in the morning. These shoot nights are hell and no-one gets any sleep.

The worse could happen in that a location can fall through or that you have to swap locations around. Then, it's start all over again. Much screaming, but something always gets filmed.

Get home at about 21:00, eat a miserable take-away and fall into bed ready to start all over again at 04:30.

Tessa Crockett
Location Manager

JUST A SMALL SAMPLE OF THE KIT AND EQUIPMENT FOUND IN THE VEHICLE OF AN OVERWORKED LOCATION MANAGER WORKING ON A TELEVISION DRAMA

Traffic cones
Hi visibility jackets – up to 40 at a time
Hazard tape
Stakes and a big mallet
Large warning signs
Small warning signs
Wire and clippers
Tool kit
First Aid kit
Hard hat
Thick gloves
Padlock and chains
Spade and brush

Rubber gloves
Cleaning items including bleach
Loo rolls – unimaginable numbers
Towels and soap

Yards and yards and yards of black bags
Water containers

MacDonald wrappers (empty)
Empty water bottles

Gaffer tape
Dust sheets- oh lots

Maps – lost count of how many

Market pens
Hi vis card
Presentation boards
Digital camera
Spare data cards, cables, batteries etc
Glue, tape, scissors
String
Production company stationery
Lap top and endless cables
Printer & spare cartridge
Files and reference books

150 residents' letters
Wine for irate residents
Cash – for when the wine doesn't work

More empty burger wrappers

Rubber boots
Full set of waterproofs

Steel capped boots

Gloves, scarves and hats various
Thermals
Tea, coffee and water
Hundreds of Styrofoam cups

Empty Burger King wrappers – I'm not fussy....

Heaters and fans – subject to season

Biggest torch in the world
Mobile phone and accessories
Spare batteries

Pillow and rug to sleep under given half a chance
Lipsalve
Chewing gum
Lipstick – in case I get lucky....
Aspirin, Paracetamol, indigestion tabs