

JOB PROFILE VIDEO PLAYBACK OPERATOR (VPO)

Definition

The most important task of a Video Playback Operator is to establish, maintain, and transfer a video connection from a (film) camera to a monitor, record the signal, and play it back as often as needed, independent of the (film) camera.

A Video Playback Operator can act as an assistant to the Video Assist Operator (VAO) or – depending on the workflow – manage a film set independently.

Knowledge / Education

A playback operator has knowledge of the processes involved in film and television production, including various production and post-production techniques, industry-standard (film) cameras, video transmission frequencies, and basic networking skills.

There is no formal training program for this role in Austria. Technical training and on-set experience are helpful.

Area of activity and responsibility

A playback operator is technically (equipment, know-how) located in the camera department and assigned to the directing department in the execution of the task.

VPO - AREA OF ACTIVITY:

Divided into the production phases of pre-production, filming and post-production, the scope of work of the Video Playback Operator includes:

Pre-Production:

- Project-specific setup of video (transmission) equipment in coordination with the DoP and 1st AC
- Ensuring the functionality of all video equipment
- Quick and secure handling of all video recorders and all related functions

Filming:

- Connecting, monitoring and adjusting the video feed output and other auxiliary devices
- Establishing video connections via cable or wireless transmission
- Providing playback and video checks for all departments for control purpose and clarification of specific questions (i.e., continuity)
- According to prior agreement with DoP and/or 1st AC, focusing on details during recording (e.g., focus accuracy, reflections, etc.) and providing feedback if necessary

Post-Production:

- Cleaning and returning rented equipment in coordination with the camera assistants and film production company.

Epilogue

There is currently no established job description for this profession. Therefore, in cooperation with the Austrian Association of Cinematographers, aac, this job description was formulated based on current production processes, see <https://www.aacamera.org/vpo/>.