

## **Set Decorating Department Job Descriptions**

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### **SET DECORATOR**

The Set Decorator is the head of the department, responsible for overseeing and executing the creative vision of the Production Designer. Reporting to the Production Designer or Art Director, the Set Decorator ensures that all decor is properly selected, transported, placed, and prepared within both studio and location sets. They manage the maintenance, replacement, and tracking of inventory while also overseeing the department's budget to ensure efficient spending. In addition to delegating tasks and supervising the workflow of the team, they coordinate with other departments to ensure that all sets are decorated in alignment with the production schedule and artistic direction. A strong and clear line of communication within the Set Decorating department is crucial to achieving a cohesive and visually compelling final product. Additionally, the Set Decorator is responsible for ensuring that all safety procedures related to set dressing and decor placement are followed to maintain a secure working environment for the crew.

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### **ASSISTANT SET DECORATOR**

The Assistant Set Decorator serves as a key supervisor, reporting directly to the Set Decorator and assuming full responsibilities in their absence. They play a crucial role in researching, purchasing, renting, leasing, and acquiring set decor items, ensuring that all selections align with the artistic and practical needs of the Decorator. Additionally, they oversee the transportation, movement, placement, and preparation of all dressings, coordinating logistics to maintain an organized and efficient workflow. They are responsible for tracking inventory, managing replacements, and ensuring that all set dressing elements are accounted for throughout the production process. Maintaining clear communication with the Buyer and Lead Dresser is essential to prevent task overlap, streamline execution, and uphold the overall vision of the Set Decorator. This role requires a keen eye for detail, strong organizational skills, and the ability to problem-solve in fast-paced production environments.

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## **LEAD DRESSER**

The Lead Dresser plays a crucial role in maintaining the quality and efficiency of set dressing and wrapping. Reporting to the Set Decorator or Assistant Decorator, they oversee the dressing crew, manage the scheduling of pickups and returns for set dressing, and coordinate the logistics of both studio and location sets. Their responsibilities include ensuring the crew is equipped with the necessary tools and materials to carry out their tasks efficiently, while also providing guidance on best practices for handling and arranging set dressing elements.

They are actively involved in pre-production planning, production tech surveys, and meetings where they provide valuable input on set dressing requirements, anticipated challenges, and logistical solutions. Additionally, they collaborate closely with other departments to ensure seamless integration of set dressing elements with the Set Decorator's design in mind.

A strong grasp of film production, furniture installation and repair, drapery, upholstery, rigging, and material handling is essential, as is the ability to adapt to evolving creative and technical demands. Beyond their technical expertise, the Lead Dresser plays a significant role in refining set aesthetics, offering creative solutions, and ensuring that every scene aligns with the artistic vision of the Decorator. Their ability to lead a team effectively, troubleshoot issues on-site, and maintain an organized workflow makes them an indispensable part of the set decorating team.

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## **GANG BOSS**

The Gang Boss is a highly skilled set dresser with specialized expertise in set dressing and rigging. They play a crucial role in organizing and leading a team of Set Dressers and Set Dec Crew to efficiently execute the dressing and wrapping of sets. Reporting to the Lead Dresser, they are responsible for coordinating tasks, assigning responsibilities, and ensuring that all set dressing elements are properly handled, arranged, and secured. They also oversee the availability of necessary tools and materials, ensuring the team is well-equipped to complete their work efficiently.

In addition to managing the crew, the Gang Boss assists with the transportation of both crew members and set decor items, facilitating smooth transitions between locations. While they provide vital leadership and support, they do not replace the Lead Dresser. However, if they consistently undertake higher-level responsibilities, they should be recognized as a second Lead. Their role requires a deep understanding of set logistics, team coordination, problem-solving, and adaptability in fast-paced production environments.

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## **SET DEC FABRICATOR**

The Set Dec Fabricator is responsible for the crafting and assembly of custom set pieces that are not structural or architectural builds. The Set Dec Fabricator is responsible to the Set Decorator or, in their absence, to the Assistant Set Decorator or Lead Dresser.

The Set Dec Fabricator collaborates with multiple departments, including Props, Construction, and Wirework, to design and execute unique set dressing elements. These builds may range from custom furniture pieces to specialty decorative components. The Set Dec Fabricator should have a strong working knowledge of woodworking, non-practical electrical (low-voltage) applications, and non-practical plumbing, among other fabrication techniques.

The Set Dec Fabricator is required to have a basic Set Dec tool kit. As projects dictate, additional tools may be necessary, in which case a kit rental should be arranged with the Head of Department (HOD).

In addition to fabrication duties, the Set Dec Fabricator may be called upon to fulfill the responsibilities of a Gang Boss or Set Dresser on a temporary basis as required by production.

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## **SET BUYER**

The Set Buyer works under the Set Decorator and is responsible for acquiring set decor, ensuring that each piece aligns with the artistic vision and practical needs of the Set Decorator. They purchase, lease, or acquire decor for all studio and location sets while ensuring that rental agreements are properly completed, and items are thoroughly documented and photographed. The Buyer handles vendor payments, tracks invoices, and follows up to confirm transactions are processed correctly. When applicable, they collaborate with the Set Dec Coordinator to ensure all vendors are paid promptly. They also coordinate closely with Lead Dressers to manage pickups, returns, and on-set requirements. Expected to work independently, the Set Buyer must demonstrate strong negotiation skills, attention to detail, and the ability to source unique and period-accurate items that enhance the authenticity and visual appeal of the set.

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## **ON-SET DRESSER**

The On-Set Dresser ensures the continuity and accuracy of set dressing throughout filming, reporting directly to the Set Decorator. Their responsibilities include maintaining the precise placement of all set dressing elements for the camera, preserving the integrity and cleanliness of set pieces, and coordinating with the Set Decorator, Propmaster, Script Supervisor, and Camera Department to ensure visual consistency between shots. They must have a keen awareness of camera angles, lighting, and lens choices to anticipate framing needs and make necessary adjustments. Additionally, they are responsible for preventing damage to set dressing, troubleshooting unforeseen issues, and ensuring that any necessary touch-ups are completed efficiently between takes. The On-Set Dresser also maintains and cares for indoor plants and floral arrangements as required by the Set Decorator. If additional “live” plants are used indoors and provided by the greens department, a clear understanding must be established regarding who is responsible for their maintenance. To perform these duties effectively, they must be equipped with essential tools, dollies, packing materials, cleaning kits, ladders, and a digital camera or smartphone for quick reference documentation.

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## **ASSISTANT ON-SET DRESSER**

The Assistant On-Set Dresser serves a supportive role on set, working closely under the guidance of the On-Set Dresser and Set Decorator. This entry-level position is designed as a learning opportunity for individuals aiming to eventually assume the full responsibilities of an On-Set Dresser. In this role, the Assistant On-Set Dresser helps with the setup and maintenance of set dressing elements by preparing and organizing essential tools such as dollies, packing materials, cleaning kits, ladders, and digital devices for reference documentation. They assist in the careful placement and minor adjustments of set pieces, ensuring that set decorations remain camera-ready between takes. They also support coordination efforts with the Set Decorator, Propmaster, Script Supervisor, and Camera Department by carrying out tasks like documenting continuity through quick reference photos and helping to troubleshoot minor issues under supervision. This role is structured to build practical knowledge of camera angles, lighting, and framing, while gradually increasing responsibility as the individual learns industry best practices, preparing them for a future role as an On-Set Dresser.

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## **DRAPER/UPHOLSTERER**

Under the supervision of the Set Decorator or Assistant Set Decorator, the Draper/Upholsterer is responsible for producing, altering, and maintaining drapery and upholstered elements used in set decoration. Their work includes crafting custom drapery, reupholstering furniture, and constructing elements such as tents, awnings, and other fabric-based decor. They are also involved in restoring vintage or period-specific upholstery pieces to match the artistic vision of the Decorator. Additionally, they may assist with on-site installations, ensuring that fabric treatments and upholstered items are correctly positioned and secured. This role requires expertise in various sewing techniques, fabric selection, and textile maintenance, as well as the ability to work independently while interpreting design specifications and drawings provided by the Set Decorator.

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## **SET DEC COORDINATOR**

The Set Dec Coordinator is an essential office-based role that requires exceptional organizational and administrative abilities. Reporting directly to the Set Decorator, they are responsible for managing the rental, purchase, and labor budgets, tracking expenditures, and ensuring accurate financial documentation. Additionally, they assist in coordinating vendor payments, maintain financial records, and follow up to confirm that all transactions are processed correctly.

Beyond financial management, the Set Dec Coordinator assists in research and sourcing, identifying unique and hard-to-find decor elements to align with the artistic vision of the decorator. They also oversee department paperwork, ensuring that all necessary documentation, contracts, and clearances are in order.

A vital communication hub within the department, the Set Dec Coordinator informs team members of schedule and script changes, ensuring seamless collaboration with other departments. They also ensure compliance with clearance and legal requirements for set dressings and props. Additionally, they assist in hands-on tasks such as dressing sets when needed, and managing the archiving of department materials at the conclusion of the shoot. Their role demands efficiency, attention to detail, and the ability to multitask in a fast-paced production environment.

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## **SET DRESSER**

The Set Dresser reports to the Lead Dresser, Set Decorator, Assistant Set Decorator, or Gang Boss as required. Their primary responsibility is to handle and arrange set decor items, ensuring that all elements are correctly placed and visually aligned with the Decorator's artistic direction. They transport and position set dressings within both studio and location sets, carefully preparing each scene to meet the creative and technical needs of the shoot. Additionally, they assist in maintaining inventory, tracking decor pieces, and coordinating wrap procedures to ensure all items are accounted for and stored properly.

Set Dressers must possess a keen understanding of film production processes, including script breakdowns and scene continuity, and be adept at furniture handling, and basic construction techniques. They work closely with other department members to execute set changes efficiently while maintaining the integrity of the Decorator's visual design. Their role requires adaptability, attention to detail, and the ability to collaborate effectively within a fast-paced, ever-changing environment.

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## **SET DECORATING CREW**

Set Decorating Crew members play a crucial support role within the department, assisting with various set decor tasks under the supervision of the Lead Dresser or other senior staff. Their responsibilities include handling pickups and returns of set dressing items, preparing and positioning decor elements, and ensuring proper inventory management throughout production. They work closely with Set Dressers to facilitate the smooth movement and arrangement of dressing materials. While they contribute significantly to the setup and breakdown of sets, they are not expected to independently dress a set but rather provide assistance in executing the Set Decorator's vision efficiently and effectively.

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## **CORE POSITIONS REQUIRED FOR EVERY SHOW:**

Set Decorator, Buyer, Lead Dresser, Set Dresser, and On-Set Dresser.