

Utility Sound Technician

ISCO: 3521 Broadcasting and audio-visual technicians

EQF LEVEL: 3 - 4

Synonyms: Sound Assistant, Sound Maintenance, Cableperson

EST: Heli assistent | **LV:** Skaņas palīgs | **LT:** Garso operatoriaus asistentas

Department: Sound

The Utility Sound Technician (in short – the Utility) is assistant to both the Production Sound Mixer and the Boom Operator on a film or television set. The utility begins work on the first day of shooting and helps unload, check and set up sound equipment. They find and stop unwanted noise (including laying carpets) and check batteries for the Sound Crew. They may help attach clip microphones, negotiate cables on the studio floor and ensure sound rushes are correctly filed at the end of the day.

The utility often acts as a Second Boom Operator, or even Second Mixer, thus repairing and servicing equipment such as cables and hardware, as necessary. As both mixer and boom operator(s) may be busy with their tasks at any given time, the utility may also apply or adjust personal microphones or actors' wireless transmitters, may move microphones or assist in running cables, and may liaise with other departments on issues such as noise minimisation and set lock-up.

The utility sound technician's role combines personal qualities such as multitasking, teamwork and problem-solving skills with in-depth knowledge of film production, electrical engineering, and sound equipment usage. It is a medium-diverse job where the environment is often unpredictable, and the tasks must be completed rapidly. The utility is a humble team player who does not lose focus in slow moments or shy away from tasks others might find boring or repetitive. Tactful verbal communication skills are also a great boon and will help them get repeat work. Most importantly, utility sound technicians must be expert multitaskers.

<p>Level of responsibility</p>	<p>Junior, at least 1 year of practical experience in the field</p>
<p>Department structure</p>	<p>Production Sound Mixer Boom Operator Utility Sound Technician</p>
<p>Professional competences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth knowledge of film production and professional – film making’s pre-production, production, and post-production stages. • In-depth knowledge of dialogue capture process, including single- and multi-tracking, microphone choice in different environments, synchronisation, monitoring • In-depth knowledge of sound recording hardware, different audio recording devices and equipment, their specifications • Basic knowledge of electrical engineering – understanding of electric chain, Voltage, Current, Resistance and Ohm's Law • Basic knowledge of sound equipment usage, including different microphones, recorders and their supplements, equipment usage in different environments • Basic knowledge of live sound mixing – providing an audio signal and processing it a mixing console on set
<p>Personal skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork – the utility acts as a team player and can effectively execute the tasks assigned directly to them. • Multitasking – is able to maintain focus on a given task while at the same time keeping track of what is going on around them and what the boom operator is doing. • Problem solving – is able to solve unpredictable technical errors, prioritise and find solutions alone or along the boom operator. • High stress tolerance – can stay positive and clear-headed even under immense pressure on set.
<p>Tasks and responsibilities</p>	<p>Pre-production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preproduction Meetings: Attends pre-production meetings with the sound department, including the Production Sound Mixer, Boom Operator, and Sound Mixer. Gains a thorough understanding of the

production's sound requirements, the script, and the shooting schedule.

- **Equipment Preparation:** Assists in the preparation and maintenance of sound equipment. This includes checking and organising microphones, cables, headphones, wireless transmitters, batteries, and any other gear. Ensures that all equipment is in good working order.
- **Equipment Transportation:** Assists in transporting sound equipment to and from the shooting locations. This may involve loading and unloading equipment from vehicles and ensuring that it is securely stored during transportation.
- **Location Scouting:** Participates in location scouting trips with the sound department. Helps identify potential sound challenges and assist in finding solutions to minimise background noise or other acoustic issues.
- **Cable Management:** Helps organise and manage audio cables on set. Ensures that cables are neatly coiled and safely taped or secured to prevent tripping hazards and interference with camera equipment.

Production

- **Boom Pole Handling:** If necessary, assists the Boom Operator with the handling of the boom pole during sound tests and rehearsals.
- **Communication Setup:** Assists in setting up and maintaining communication systems within the sound department. This includes walkie-talkies or wireless communication devices to ensure seamless coordination during filming.
- **Permits and Clearances:** Ensures that all necessary permits and clearances related to sound recording are obtained. This may involve obtaining permissions for location sound recording and complying with copyright and licensing regulations for music and sound effects.
- **Transportation Logistics:** Coordinates transportation logistics for the sound department. Ensures that all team members and

	<p>equipment are transported to and from shooting locations efficiently and on schedule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Documentation: Maintains organised and detailed records of equipment lists, equipment condition reports, and any issues or challenges encountered during pre-production tasks. Accurate documentation is crucial for accountability and equipment tracking.● Backup Equipment: Assists in preparing backup equipment, such as additional microphones, recording devices, and batteries, in case of technical failures or emergencies.● Safety Awareness: Promotes safety on set by being aware of potential hazards and taking steps to mitigate risks, especially in relation to sound equipment setup and cable management.● Assist with Technical Setup: Collaborates with the sound department in setting up microphones, headphones, and other equipment on set during sound tests and rehearsals.
<p>Additional knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Privacy awareness (in the context of microphones placement on actor's body)● Safety on Set● Ethics on Set● Medical certificate● Driving licence B2 (considered as an advantage)● Language skills with minimum B2 level in English



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Co-funded by
the European Union

FilmSkills is a joint project of Tallinn University's Baltic Film, Media and Arts School, Latvian Academy of Culture, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonian Cinematographers Union and Lithuanian Shorts. FilmSkills is financed by the European Union under the grant agreement no. 2021-KA220-HED-03.