

Special Effects Technician

General Description

Special Effects Technicians are responsible for creating practical effects for camera in motion pictures, live theater, television or multimedia productions. They can include, but are not limited to, rain, wind, snow, fire, steam, fog, smoke, explosions, bullet hits and other mechanical effects. Mechanical engineering, welding, hydraulics, pneumatics, small electronics and robotics can all be part of designing an effect.

Job Description

The following skills are valuable to anyone working in the special effects department. Understanding, installation and use of a multitude of equipment specific to the fx department to produce effects such as wind, rain, snow, fire, steam, etc. Experience in the use of shop tools used for fabricating metal and wood. Welding is a very useful talent in this department. Plaster, mold making and small electronics skills are also helpful. FX Techs will be making gags (effects) very specific for a show or even just one scene. You will need to be creative and resourceful. Pyrotechnical effects require special licensing for the handling and use of these materials. There may be a crew dedicated to working in the fx shop, designing and building the gags that will be used by a crew that is dedicated to the set. Other times it may be the same people who do it all. When on set, the special effects technician' job is to ensure that the effect works properly, and safely, EVERY time. Each effect is unique, in some cases the effect will need to be reset quickly for each take. Other fx, such as smoke or rain, must remain constant throughout the duration of the scene or the day. The special effects department must work very closely other departments including stunts, construction, camera and wardrobe to create and make the effect work properly.

You must be creative and willing to work long and irregular hours. You must possess excellent communication skills and be attentive to the needs of the production.

In addition:

Safety conscious at all times. SAFETY FIRST!

Professional conduct

Excellent attitude

Willingness to learn and be a member of the team

Work well under pressure

Meet and exceed deadlines

Able to take orders and follow through

It is highly desirable to possess certifications for forklifts, scissor lifts and condors.

Tools needed on set: tool belt, utility knife, adjustable crescent wrench, channel lock pliers, diagonal pliers, screwdrivers, scissors, small tape measure, screw gun, white and black paper tape, baling wire, joes sticky tape.

Tools needed in shop: Complete set of personal hand tools.