

CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Construction Department workers play a vital role in determining the look of films: they are responsible for building, painting and plastering all the sets required for productions. They work closely with the Art and Design Department to ensure that the Director's and the Production Designer's ideas are visually realised on sets.

The Construction Department is overseen by the Construction Manager, who is responsible for ensuring that all the required work is completed to deadline, within budget, and to the specifications set by the Production Designer. Once appointed, Construction Managers are responsible for hiring in the required number of Carpenters, Painters, Riggers and Plasterers, as well as for co-ordinating the purchase of all the necessary materials and tools.

In addition to excellent craft skills in their chosen field, members of the Construction Department must also have strong creative abilities. They are often required to create structures in a specific period or historical style, or they may be required to 'distress' their work, so that it looks worn and lived in rather than brand new. They must have an excellent working knowledge of all the materials available in their field, combined with highly developed technical skills, far in advance of those required by traditional domestic plasterers, painters, scaffolders or carpenters.

The majority of those working in the Construction Department are qualified trades persons in their specialist areas, and are likely to have worked for several years as domestic carpenters or painters before entering the film industry. Skillset's Workforce Survey (2005) indicated that the production sector as a whole believes that there are a shortage of skilled recruits entering the film industry, and that the existing workforce is ageing. In particular, it found that there were difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified individuals who are experienced in carpentry and fibrous plastering.

New entrants can enter the film industry from the construction industry once they have achieved a Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) NVQ Level 1 and/or 2. Alternatively, film employers recruit new entrants at 16 and offer full on the job training and, in some cases, day release to support the achievement of NVQs. A key issue for the industry is the retention of skilled craftsmen: wages in non-film construction are improving, and maintaining a good work/life balance, which is difficult in the film industry because of its long, antisocial hours, is becoming increasingly more important.

Many of the Construction Department roles involve enormous Health and Safety responsibilities, e.g., Rigging has real 'life risks' attached, as it is often carried out while working at great heights. Riggers must have considerable industry experience, as their work not only potentially endangers their own lives, but also the lives of the cast and crew with whom they are working. Similarly, Plasterers, Painters and Carpenters often work with tools or materials that are potentially dangerous to health. Consequently, detailed knowledge of the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety legislation and procedures is essential for many of the Construction Department roles.

Key skills required by members of the Construction Department include good communication skills, the ability to work under pressure and to deadlines, excellent practical and technical skills, physical strength, stamina and agility, as well as the ability to work well as part of a team.

Rigger/Scaffolder

Riggers/Scaffolders install and assemble rigging gear such as scaffolding, cables and ropes as instructed by Chargehand, Supervising or HOD Riggers. The role requires rigging and scaffolding experience, as well as the ability to work as part of a team, to deadlines, and under pressure.

Responsibilities

Riggers/Scaffolders are responsible for building rigs on film productions and, depending on the size of the shoot, they report to, and receive instruction from Chargehand, Supervising or HOD Riggers. The job may involve building a variety of structures, ranging from small platforms to huge constructions. Riggers are responsible for erecting and dismantling basic access and support scaffolding, such as independent and birdcage scaffolds, scaffold towers, cantilever scaffolds, and pavement and roof scaffolds. They must also position and remove specialised equipment for accessing the rig, such as vertical ladders, roof ladders, crawler boards and rope ladders. They are responsible for installing lifting and suspension apparatus, such as wire and fibre ropes, chains and slings, winches and pulley blocks.

Riggers should also be able to install powered hoists to access and transfer loads, and operate powered tools and equipment. Riggers must adhere strictly to the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety legislation and procedures. Their roles often involve real 'life risks'. This means not only the potential endangerment of their own lives, but also those of the cast and crew with whom they are working. Riggers are therefore responsible for knowing when to use a safety harness for their own protection, for showing competence in inspecting and maintaining the integrity and security of scaffolding, and for establishing a safe working environment.

Skills

Riggers on film productions must have wide knowledge of all aspects of rigging. They should be able to work effectively both independently, and as part of a team. They need good communication skills. They should have excellent health and safety knowledge and awareness. The role is physically demanding and they need stamina and good co-ordination, and must be comfortable working at heights. They should also be prepared to work long and often anti-social hours.

J.I.S.R.S AND EXISTING S.I.T.A.C

Qualifications/Experience

Riggers need some accredited qualifications, such as Rigging/Scaffolding qualifications in C.I.T.B. Part 1 & 2, or NVQ/SVQ to the equivalent Lifting Equipment Training and Certificate.

Three years (actual working days) in the film industry logged and assessed by Heads of Departments

IPAF Certificate

PASMA

Aspiring film industry Riggers are recommended to spend at least two or three years with a reputable scaffolding company in order to gain valuable experience and training. But if the opportunity arises they could also start their career straight into this industry. Extensive knowledge of the Health and Safety legislation and procedures relating to rigging is essential. As the role involves travel, a full EU driving licence is required.

Chargehand Rigger

Chargehand Riggers are responsible for managing a team, or gang, of Riggers on specific rigging projects during film productions. Depending on the size of the film, they report either to the Supervising Rigger or to the HOD Rigger. Chargehand Riggers must ensure that all their work is carried out according to the brief, that it is completed on deadline, and that it adheres to strict Health and Safety standards. The role requires rigging experience combined with leadership skills.

Responsibilities

Chargehand Riggers are responsible for managing the construction of specific rigging projects during film shoots. Once the film's rigging requirements have been calculated, Chargehand Riggers are briefed by either the HOD Rigger or the Supervising Rigger about the construction of one of the rigs required for the film. Chargehands are responsible for managing a crew, or gang, of Riggers and for ensuring that rigs are constructed according to the brief, and to deadlines.

The work is varied: Chargehands and their team are responsible for assembling and installing rigging gear such as scaffolding, ropes, cables, pulleys, winches, lifting equipment and specialised access equipment. They lift, lower, move or position machinery and structures for set and scenery. They may also rig lighting and camera equipment, including erecting camera and crane rostrums, as directed by the Director of Photography. Other duties can include suspending and supporting set pieces, lamps, special effects equipment and props. Chargehand Riggers are also responsible ensuring that all the work carried out on their projects meets the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety legislation and procedures.

Skills

Chargehand Riggers need good management skills, and they must be comfortable managing teams of Riggers. They need a wide knowledge of all aspects of rigging. They should be able to work effectively, both independently and as part of a team. They should have excellent Health and Safety knowledge and awareness, and be capable of conducting risk assessments on set and on location. The role is physically demanding, and they must be comfortable working at heights.

Chargehand Riggers need some accredited qualifications, such as Rigging/Scaffolding qualifications in C.I.T.B. Advanced Scaffolder, or NVQ/SVQs to the equivalent or Sitar Advanced Credited

Lifting Equipment Training and Certificate.

Three years (actual working days) in the film industry logged and assessed by

Heads of Departments

An Understanding of Health & Safety Legislations

IPAF Certificate

PASMA

Supervising Rigger

Supervising Riggers report directly to HOD Riggers, and are likely to be directly responsible for rigging requirements on several different sound stages, or on location builds during film shoots. Supervising Riggers must ensure that all work is completed to deadline, and that it adheres strictly to the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety legislation and procedures. The role requires rigging experience combined with strong leadership skills.

Responsibilities

Supervising Riggers act as the 'eyes and ears' on the floor for HOD Riggers during productions, to ensure safe and smooth operations. Supervising Riggers are responsible for managing several of the Rigging 'gangs', each led by a Chargehand Rigger, who work on a film shoot. Liaising with the HOD Rigger, they co-ordinate the work of Rigging gangs on a number of different sound stages or on location builds. They ensure that the correct number of crew members work on a particular rig, and that the required materials arrive on time, at the right location. Supervising Riggers must ensure that the construction of the specific projects under their responsibility progresses smoothly, and meets deadlines. The work is varied, and may include managing the building of scaffolding to support street scene facades, constructing a rostrum capable of taking heavy loads, or 'blacking out' a building to allow crews to shoot day for night. Above all, Supervising Riggers are responsible for ensuring that all work is carried out according to the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety legislation, guidelines and procedures. They must ensure that the safety of the crew is paramount, as a large proportion of rigging work takes place at great heights, and Government figures show that falling from heights is the biggest cause of death or injury in the construction industry. Supervising Riggers also advise the production team and other relevant Heads

of Department about what access is possible, and practical, onto rigs, taking into consideration the location and any potential hazards.

Skills

Supervising Riggers must have good management skills, and be comfortable supervising teams of Riggers. They need a wide knowledge of all aspects of rigging. They should be able to work effectively both independently, and as part of a team. They should have excellent Health and Safety knowledge and awareness, and be capable of conducting risk assessments on set and on location. The role is physically demanding, and they must be comfortable working at heights.

The most important features of an effective supervisor would be:

- a. Getting to know the employees in his charge, particularly in the case of young persons.
- b. Passing on information and theory in a clear manner with regard to safe systems of work.
- c. Actually showing by practical demonstration how a task is done safely.
- d. To ensure a safe working practice to all employees

HOD Rigger

Head of Department (HOD) Riggers are in charge of the Rigging department, and are hired by, and report to, Construction Managers. Riggers' role in the film industry is equivalent to that of regular scaffolders, although film work is much more complex than traditional scaffolding, and Riggers' work may range from building relatively small platforms, up to the construction of the main supporting structures of elaborate film sets. HOD Riggers ensure that all work is completed to deadlines, and that it adheres to stringent Health and Safety standards. The role requires extensive rigging experience, and strong leadership skills.

Responsibilities

HOD Riggers are responsible for the work of the entire Rigging department on films, which involves installing rigging gear such as scaffolding, cables, ropes, pulleys, winches and lifting equipment. Once HOD Riggers are employed on film productions, they ascertain from Construction Managers and other Heads of Department all the project's rigging requirements, and the build schedule. Working from set designs and storyboards, they establish the types of rigging required, e.g., they may need to build large blocks of scaffolds to hold street scene facades, or to create more intricate forms of stage rigging such as rolling rostrums to move large set pieces.

Once the schedule is established, HOD Riggers are responsible for employing a team of Riggers who either have wide ranging experience of ordinary scaffolding, or who have trained solely in the film industry. Depending on the size of the project, they appoint Supervising, Chargehand, Craft Grade and/or Standby Riggers. HOD Riggers

are responsible for sourcing all rigging materials, and for ensuring that they are supplied on time and at the agreed price.

Although Construction Managers are ultimately responsible for rigging budgets, HOD Riggers must ensure that labour and material costs are kept within agreed parameters. They must keep accurate records of the labour and equipment used. HOD Riggers are responsible for ensuring that all work is carried out according to the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety legislation, guidelines and procedures. They are liable for the safety of all rigs constructed by their department. On large budget films, HOD Riggers may appoint Rigging Inspectors as part of the team responsible for logging and inspecting every rig constructed, from large temporary roofs to the smallest working platforms.

Skills

HOD Riggers must have excellent management skills, and be able to supervise a large workforce. They need a broad and comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of rigging. They should have excellent Health and Safety knowledge and awareness, and be capable of conducting risk assessments on set and on location. They must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues at all levels of the production, and with key crew such as Directors, Heads of Department, and First Assistant Directors. The role is physically demanding, and they must be comfortable working at heights. They should be literate and numerate: the ability to understand complex drawings is essential, as are numerical skills, and the ability to keep accurate records.

Qualifications/Experience

As well as extensive experience of working as Riggers in the film industry, it is likely that HOD Riggers have accredited qualifications, such as the Advanced Rigging/Scaffolding qualifications C.I.T.B. Advanced or NVQ/SVQs Level 3 or 4

Lifting Equipment Training and Certificate.

IPAF Certificate

Extensive knowledge of the Health and Safety legislation and procedures relating to rigging is essential. As the role involves travel, a full EU driving licence is required.

Standby Rigger

Standby Riggers are highly experienced Riggers who are constantly available on set or on location during film shoots, to help remedy any last-minute problems. Usually specifically recruited by HOD Riggers or Construction Managers, Standby Riggers respond to the requirements of the Camera team, and travel with film units at all times. Standby Riggers must be skilled, creative and imaginative in order to be able to solve rigging problems rapidly and often under great pressure.

Responsibilities

Standby Riggers are responsible for dealing with any Rigging problems that may occur during film shoots. If problems arise with any of the scaffolding, cables, ropes, or rigging equipment, Standby Riggers are required to repair, refit or reassemble them. This is often carried out at the direct request of the Director or the Camera team, who may need adjustments made very quickly before scenes can be shot. After Standby Riggers have dealt with any rigging problems, they are responsible for resetting the environment to its original condition, in order to help maintain continuity. Standby Riggers are also responsible for ensuring that all their work complies with the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety legislation, guidelines and procedures. They are responsible for ensuring the integrity and security of the scaffolding they work on, both for their own safety and for that of the cast and crew who are on set at the same time.

Skills

Standby Riggers must have excellent rigging skills as well as experience of working in film production. A key requirement is that they are highly creative, intelligent individuals, with excellent problem solving skills. They must be able to work rapidly and often under great pressure; film shoots can often come to a standstill while Standby Riggers work to resolve problems with structures. The role is physically demanding, and they must have stamina and co-ordination, and be comfortable working at heights. They should also be prepared to work long and often anti-social hours.

Qualifications/Experience

Standby Riggers need extensive experience of working in the film industry. They must have some accredited qualifications, such as Rigging/Scaffolding qualifications in C.I.T.B. Part 1 & 2, or NVQ/SVQs 2 or 3

Lifting Equipment Training and Certificate.

IPAF Certificate

Extensive knowledge of the Health and Safety legislation and procedures relating to rigging is essential. As the role involves travel, a full EU driving licence is required.

PACT	Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
ITV	Independent Television
BECTU	Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union
JIGS	Joint Industry Grading Scheme
JISRS	Joint Industry Specialist Riggers Scheme
SITAC	Screen Industry Training and Apprenticeship Committee
SKILLSET	Sector Skills Council for Creative Media
TTG	Train to Gain
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
LETI	Lifting Equipment Training
IPAF	International Powered Access Federation

PASMA Prefabricated Access Suppliers and Manufacturers
Association

Legislations

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

Working at Heights Regulations 2005

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998

Provisions and use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

Personal Protection Equipment at Work Regulations 1992