



8 WAYS TO GIVE YOUR PRODUCTION THE “HIGH GREEN”

*A Guide for
Senior Production Managers*

- 1 Start Smart . . . Make Railroad Scenes a Priority** — Start early on concepts, with the director and producers, the production designer, locations and qualified rail industry liaison. Understanding deliverable rail resources early in production creates a safe set, saves money, and offers opportunities for stronger on-screen production values.
- 2 Retain Rail Industry Professionals** — Federal regulations . . . union work rules . . . mergers . . . sweeping changes in railroad management practices, commerce law, and insurance requirements . . . all have drastically changed the rail industry over the last 10 years. A railroad specialist will insure on-time, on-budget, safe rail scenes with maximum visual impact.
- 3 Scout Smart** — Don't fall in love with unavailable locations. A few railroads will not work with productions, period. Some locations have such heavy rail traffic you would think you were standing beside a subway. Move on. Look at small railroads. Their operating schedules may be flexible enough to accommodate a filming schedule.
- 4 Be Flexible** — When carriers do cooperate, expect heavy rail traffic and customer service requirements to restrict use of certain routes, equipment, and facilities. A railroad professional will help the production team create plans maximizing available railroad resources; lock up difficult locations; find suitable alternatives; and encourage railroad management cooperation.
- 5 Institute a Safety Plan** — The laws of gravity and inertia are never repealed for production crews. Safety on the railroad is a constant challenge even for professional railroaders. Expect railroad contracts to require a comprehensive railroad-style safety program including formal cast/crew training and regular job briefings. If the railroad doesn't require this, you should! An accident will KILL the rail scenes . . . GRAVEYARD DEAD!
- 6 Comply with Industry Regulations and Work Rules** — US Federal Railroad Administration (USFRA) regulations govern rail operations; workplace safety; rail employee hours of service; and equipment condition. Union work rules add further complications. Work rules and regulatory compliance are required by carrier contracts and insurance underwriters. Violations are costly. In accident investigation mode, USFRA and NTSB investigators become a thorough and focused investigative force.
- 7 Establish Reasonable Schedules** — Trains are big, cumbersome . . . and take time to go anywhere, do anything. Required equipment, operating crews, and supervisors may come from distant points . . . so get cars, locomotives, and rail personnel in place well before the rail scenes go to camera. Allow production department adequate prep/dressing/strike time so crews can work safely around unique equipment. Plan a rehearsal . . . it will save time, money, and help insure safety.
- 8 Create Realistic Budgets** — Railroads are capital intensive businesses with substantial overhead costs. Even simple production operations require significant equipment, train crew, and supervisory personnel commitments. Avoid budget "placeholders." Refine railroad requirements and cost estimates in Development, or early in Prep.

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