

Location Scouting

As you scout locations there are a number of considerations to think about. Here is a list of the most obvious. You will want to modify this list according to your specific production requirements: needs and limitations.

1. Compass orientation of location (Where does the sun rise and set? Where does its path take it throughout the day?)
2. Compass orientation of each interior room in which you plan to shoot
 - Where are the windows? How will the changing sunlight affect the ambience? Are there structures outside which will reflect light?
3. Electrical service (Location of fuses or breakers? Amperage? What size spare fuses should you keep with you? Location of electrical outlets? If there is one circuit that has a higher capacity, where is it? Is it grounded?)
4. Will the look you are after require a slight enhancement to what exists naturally, or will it require a complete lighting design?
5. How efficiently can you move around the location?
 - How wide are the doors? How high are the ceilings? Do you have to negotiate stairs? Do you need ladders? Do the floors and carpets need to be protected with layout board? Are there clear paths for moving equipment? Do walls need to be protected?
6. Color of walls, carpets, draperies?
7. Where will the cast, crew and equipment park? Can you avoid line of sight with vehicles?
8. Where are the windows? What is visible through windows? Is the view acceptable? If not, how can you best hide the view satisfactorily while meeting the needs of the story? How much?
9. Where do you need to put your lights? Does this require special equipment? (off sets, wall spreaders, pole cats, etc.)
10. How many stingers (electrical extension cords) do you need?
 - What path will you use to run the power?
11. Are there practical lamps that you will need to re-globe? What bulbs do you need?
12. If you need to change the color of a wall, will the owners allow you to leave the new wall color, or do you have to return it to its original color?
13. Will this location require a generator? If so, where can it be parked for convenience, without causing sound problems? How much cable will you need? What will your electrical distribution needs be?
14. Will your shots require a dolly? With track? Will you need to lay a masonite dance floor? How much cribbing and wedges will you require?
15. Will you have to gel the windows? Black the windows? Tent the windows? What equipment will you need to accomplish this?
16. Can you make this location serve as two locations with a simple re-dress, or will you still have to find a second location, requiring a company move?
17. Is the location safe and secure? Where is the closest hospital? What permits will you require?
18. Is there ample room for staging gear?
19. Is there a place you can dedicate as a "camera room" to keep equipment organized and for your loader to work in peace, free from distractions.
20. How is the sound?