

**BKSTS/ CEA
CERTIFICATION
OF BASIC
PROJECTION
STANDARDS**

**AN INTRODUCTION
FOR PROJECTIONISTS**

What makes a good projectionist?

How do you determine how good a projectionist is?

What difference can good projection make to the presentation of a feature film?

A good projectionist is one who has been trained to a good standard, not just in pressing a button to start a projector, but in all the basics of film care, in how to lace up with care, and to show a film in the right ratio, sound format, with no blemishes.

A new method of determining how good a projectionist is has been developed by a committee supported by the BKSTS and the CEA.

This has set a list of minimum standards of specific tasks that projectionists will have been trained to. These tasks will be witnessed by appointed assessors, and listed on a Personal Record Sheet for each applicant.

Once the applicant has met all the standards listed, he or she will be issued with a certificate in their name, confirming that they have met the minimum standards, and are considered to have achieved competency within basic projection standards.

This scheme is not a training scheme; all training is carried out by individual companies, or by individual cinemas. Once training has been completed however, the award of the certificate is a recognition of the minimum standards that the whole industry will accept, even though it is likely that you will have been taught to a much higher standard.

The difference that a good projectionist can make to showing a feature, or even the complete programme, is priceless.

A feature film may have cost millions of pounds to produce; the Director and Cast, and everyone else involved will be expecting it to be enjoyed by cinemagoers just as it was made, with perfect lighting, focus and sound, and with nothing to spoil the image on the screen. With the correct training every performance can be like this.

Regrettably this is not so. In many cases standards of training have slipped, and this is noticeable by what appears on the screen. Black spots, dirty joins and scratches. Even new prints show signs of damage after only a few days.

With the modern equipment now available film damage is much easier to avoid, but even with older projectors it is still possible. Ninety percent of film damage is caused by poor projectionists, and poor film handling. This is all avoidable.

Training is about many things. Everyone can be taught how to do the job, can be shown how to lace up and start a programme, can join up all the separate parts of a programme, and can be given awareness of health and safety, and other legislation.

But showing films is more than just this. It is presenting a film so that the customer is unaware of your involvement.

Good projection doesn't necessarily lead to more customers, but bad projection can drive them away, therefore any means of raising quality must be embraced. The public pay to see perfect presentation, not to be made aware of imperfections. And if they don't get this they will resort to the perfect picture and sound that they can get from DVD's at home.

You are the person that can make this difference - don't just show films, present them.

Listed below are all the criteria that you will be assessed on.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. Has read, signed and understands relevant H & S Policy and ensures that it is fully implemented.

You will be asked questions relating to knowledge of the policy relating to machinery, electrical, xenon lamps, working at height. and Safety policy.

Also specific questions on COSCH and Risk Assessments. and that they are fully conversant with what is required of them.

2. Participates in prescribed H & S training activities.

The assessor will want to see evidence of participation in these activities by checking file logs etc. and that you understand the use and location of documentation.

He will ask you for examples of your involvement in ongoing H & S activities.

3. Understands Rules/Regulations relating to emergency lighting and evacuation.

You will be asked why there are two lighting systems and the reasons for them.

Also what action should be taken in the event of failure of either the Primary or Emergency lighting system.

4. Participates in an evacuation, and take necessary action if equipment fails.

The assessor will look for evidence of participation in an actual Evacuation Drill.

You will be asked what impact an equipment failure would have on Evacuation procedures.

(It is accepted that there may be a shared assessment, in that the Cinema may have records of staff involvement in evacuation drills as part of their own Health and Safety procedures. Any assessment records are not intended to replace existing H and S procedures).

FILM AND PROJECTION

1. Can identify all the key parts of the projection equipment including the film path.

You will be asked to identify specific parts of the projection equipment ; and to explain what they do.

The assessor will ask for examples of how mechanical film damage can be caused, and the means of avoiding it. You will be expected to give a description or show examples of actual damage.

The film path includes the routing from the long play/non rewind through the projector and the return, and you should be aware of this.

2. Demonstrates correct procedures for lacing up film in order to prevent film damage.

The assessor will check that the film path through the projector is cleaned, giving emphasis to the gate area and sound head, before any lacing up commences.

He will witness that the lacing up procedure is carried out correctly whilst checking that there is minimum contact of the film with the box floor.

3. Checks and adjusts focus, racking, and screen ratio.

The assessor will want to witness a programme start in its entirety. He will also want to check your ability to carry out a manual start.

The assessor will confirm that, at the first opportunity you check the image through the porthole.

If more than one show is starting at the same time, he will check that you check each projector for correct operation.

You will be asked for your understanding of different ratios, reasons for poor light, focus, and incorrect framing.

He will look for focus and racking to be checked again once the feature has commenced.

4. Monitors sound quality and levels in the auditorium.

It is important that you should be aware of what the sound is like from the auditorium; this, after all, is where the customer is sitting. The assessor will confirm that you know the specific things that you should be listening for, all screen and surround channels playing, no noticeable distortion or other audio faults, but above all, that the sound is at an acceptable level. At the same time, whilst looking at the screen a check on the evenness of light and focus is done. He will also note whether you checked the sound rack to confirm that the correct sound format was in use.

He will ask you the limits of using the monitor panel in fault finding, and will want to confirm that you have sufficient knowledge of possible sound faults and can take appropriate action to rectify them, or to report them.

5. Understands the construction of film, speed of projection, and can identify sound tracks and ratios.

During your training you will have learnt about the properties of film, and how it becomes a print. You will be asked questions about your knowledge of film and sound; about different screen ratios, and how they are achieved, and about the different sound tracks and how they are achieved.

6. Can demonstrate the making of a join.

The assessor will want to see that you can make good joins in a film. more importantly he will watch how you do it. Whether attention is given to cleanliness of the rewind bench, and whether you check that the splicer is also clean.

He will check that you know how a join is made in rack, and also that base and emulsion sides are not transposed. He will confirm that you are aware of, and use correct methods of part identification.

He will also check to see whether you can adjust the splicer for a well made join.

7. Can identify film damage, the likely causes, and remedial action to be taken.

The assessor will ask what you look for when making an inspection of the print. He will also ask for different examples of film damage, and causes.

8. Understands timesheets, and ensures that programmes run to time.

You will be asked for a detailed explanation of the current timesheet. Also, what actions you take if start times in more than one screen clash.

9. Knows who to contact in case of problems of projection equipment failure.

Equipment problems could relate to any occurrence above and beyond your knowledge, therefore the assessor will ask for the procedure if there is an equipment failure that is beyond your knowledge

He will ask you some technical questions relating to the need for assistance from someone else, and that you are aware of the chain of command for reporting different faults or emergencies.

10. Understands and follows company procedures for the receipt, secure storage and dispatch of film.

The assessor will check that on receipt, you ensure that the print is the correct one for the future screening, and that you check that the number of cans match the number of reels listed on the labels.

He will check that you complete a condition report clearly and legibly, following making up. If the report is for poor, or un-run-able prints, he will ask you for the correct procedure for obtaining a replacement print.

If making up for a non-rewind, or tower system, He will want to see effective measures are taken for correct identification of leaders and tails for return and that you do re-attach the leaders and tails correctly.

He will especially ensure that you are aware of Company procedures relative to print security.

11. Can make up a complete programme.

The assessor will want to confirm that all the separate elements come together in the making up of a complete programme, although he may not be able to witness it in its entirety

What he will look for is that you clean the workbench before commencing, that you aware that all the filmlets are head out or tail out, and that you can confirm the ratio of each filmlet/trailer.

Once again he will check that the joins are made correctly, and that this is confirmed by you.

MAINTENANCE AND ORGANISATION

1. Demonstrates knowledge of company's preventative maintenance procedures for projection and sound equipment.

The assessor will check you on daily, weekly and other routine maintenance procedures, ensuring that you are able to carry out routine tasks, including checking oil levels. checking Dolby levels, cleaning lenses etc. and able to examine parts for wear and tear.

You will be asked questions as to why certain maintenance tasks are carried out, and the importance of recording all maintenance tasks in a register or on a wall chart, (dependant on whichever method your cinema uses).

The assessor will ask for your awareness of the company criteria for xenon lamp changing, and how it may, or may not apply to you.

2. Carries out routine household duties, such as cleaning projection rooms and equipment.

The emphasis on cleanliness of the projection box cannot be overdone, and you will be assessed not only on methods of cleaning, but also on your attitude toward the need for it.

The assessor will check that the correct cleaning materials for each task are being used, and your knowledge of Health and Safety when cleaning around projection equipment.

3. Knows where to find all projection room spare parts.

Although this is self-explanatory the assessor will ask you for some basic items, to check whether they are on site, and whether they can be identified.

XENON LAMPS

1. Can change and line up a xenon lamp, using all relevant company safety procedures and equipment.

Some companies do not require their projectionists to change xenon lamps as part of their normal duties and if this applies, you will not be assessed on this. Other companies consider that a projectionist who is single-manning should be able to carry out this procedure. The certificate of competence will indicate whether you have been assessed on this element.

Before commencing the assessor will check that you can give a detailed explanation of the complete xenon lamp changing procedure. The assessor will check that you are wearing all the correct personal protective equipment. (The assessor will also be similarly protected).

He will ensure that all aspects of Health and Safety are rigorously observed by you. He will want to see that you have confirmed that the lamp is cold.

If it is possible he will witness the xenon lamp line-up procedure, and will ask relevant questions. This will include your awareness regarding care of the lens during the xenon lamp line-up.

2. Records the change of lamp.

You will be asked why recording this information is so important, and how the total hours usage of the lamp is calculated.

The assessor will ensure that you can record the information correctly in the relevant company documentation.