

CAMERA TERMS AND BASIC FRAMING

Although it is the director's responsibility to call for the shots needed, the camera operator is responsible for knowing the correct framing for obtaining shots needed by the director.

The **over-the-shoulder shot** is quite common in a talk show. Its purpose is to show the person speaking and also with whom he or she is speaking. The relationship between those two people becomes apparent.

The **wide shot** is usually used to establish the relationship between all the subjects and their surroundings. The most appropriate times for this shot are at the open and close of a show and occasionally, within the show to reestablish the performers' relationships to each other.

Pedestal up/Pedestal down: (ped up/ped down): raise or lower the camera. This movement is often used to show dominance, submissiveness or the lack thereof in a shot. In a show where dominance and submissiveness are not appropriate, such as a straight interview, the operator should strive to equal the heights of the talent by pedding up or down. This move is very rarely tried while the camera is on "air". It is used to frame a shot.

Dolly in/Dolly back: move the entire camera closer to or farther away from the subject or set. The dolly in is often used at the opening of a show for which a wide, "establishing shot" has been called. This movement actually brings the viewer in closer to the action on the set. The dolly back gives the viewer the feeling of leaving the action and is often used at the close of a show.

Truck left/Truck right: move the entire camera to the left or right. This movement is often used to "tighten up" the apparent distance between two subjects.

Zoom in/Zoom out: When a performer says something important, the director might have the camera zoom in to emphasize the importance of what is being said. But, if the subject begins to move around more than the framing can tolerate, or if the subject begins referring to something not already in the frame, the director might have the camera "pull out" to allow for greater movement or to see to what the performer is referring. There are many more reasons for zooming in or out, but the movements should always be motivated. It is important for the camera operator to remember to zoom all the way in to "find their focus" before their camera is live, and before the zoom starts.

Tilt up/Tilt down: Move just the camera head up or down. The command to tilt up means "show more of the top of the frame" and conversely, tilt down means "show more of the bottom of the frame."

These terms are often used in conjunction with more or less "head room", the term given to the amount of frame space above the subject's head. It's important to note here that head room is almost always based on the eyes of the subject. A general rule of thumb is keep the subject's eyes one third of the way from the top of the frame. Even on an extreme close-up, where part of the subject's face must be omitted from the frame, it is the eyes and mouth that are most

important. So the top of the head is more likely to be eliminated from the frame in favor of the mouth and chin.

Pan left/Pan right: Move just the camera head left or right. As in the tilt movement, remember that this command refers to the camera frame. Pan left means "show more of the left side of the frame." Pan right means "show more of the right edge of the frame." At this point, it might be pertinent to mention the concept of "lead room" or "nose room." Lead room is the amount of space in the frame in front of the subject in a profile shot. The subject would appear cramped in the frame without this nose room and the viewer might find such a shot uncomfortable to watch, especially where the subject is moving toward something. The viewer will naturally want to see toward what the subject is moving. There are varying degrees of lead room dependent on the degree of profile. Very little nose room is given to a subject whose face is seen three-quarters full. On the other hand, a perfect profile shot would receive more nose room.

Frame up: This term is used when the desired result is obvious and can include any or all of the previous terminology.

NOTE: When composing a shot, remember to differentiate between being "on air" or "off air". Be aware of your tally light, if it is on, all movements done on air should be executed smoothly, so that the viewer is not aware of the camera. Off air, however, speed is the most important element. When a director has asked for a new shot off air, don't worry about proper framing or composition until all moves (i.e., zooms, trucks, dollies) have been completed. The director should be presented with a well-composed and focused shot as quickly as possible. Depending on the director, you may hear the terms "on air" or "on line" to refer your camera as the one being recorded, and your tally light should be lit.