

How to Use Timecode Log Sheets

A Script Supervisor or Production Assistant usually completes Timecode Log sheets at the time of shooting. Video logging can also be performed later --preferably by someone with a stake in the outcome of the finished program. Good log notes make it easier to create an effective Edit Decision List (EDL). You must know what clips are available (good picture and/or sound, proper duration, etc.) before deciding how to use them.

Fill-in top areas to document pertinent information. The small box in the upper right corner is very helpful when shooting multiple camera angles. Indicate which camera is the A, B, or C, angle with a description under "Location" (e.g. - back of the room, ISO on speaker, reaction shots, backstage, blimp-cam, etc.) It is important to maintain unique descriptors for each tape. If you intend to use footage from various shoots --and each is numbered sequentially-- you must add either a letter or a word (e.g. - G-1 or Paris-1) on both the form and the tape label. Use this code whenever referencing logged footage on your EDL.

Any time you switch tapes, start another page. Any time the scene changes, draw a line and describe the new scene. (e.g. - Warehouse exterior, Doctor's office lobby, racecar POV, Computer screens, etc.)

Explanation of Form Fields

Scene/Take #	Match shots with numbered scenes from script and indicate progressive takes. When changing camera angles or adding new shots in a scene, add letters after the scene number. (e.g. - 27A, 27B, 27C, etc.)
Timecode Start	Timecode is "hours: minutes : seconds." Depending on the tape format, hours can indicate tape number. During a shoot, get the timecode off the camera (either via a monitor hooked to a timecode generator or by asking the camera operator.) Write the starting timecode every time tape rolls for a new shot. (It gets you close for logging and editing.) Without a monitor, you may occasionally have to speak up and ask for the code. While concentrating on perfecting the image, camera operators sometimes forget to give you the code. Logging tapes after the shoot lets you indicate precise start and stop times as well as measure shot duration. This is very helpful for editing. List ending timecodes on the next line or in the "Why" section.
Description	(see logging shorthand below) Indicate framing, moves and details like who, what and where. (e.g. - "MS, 2-shot, Dolly side view of Bill and Joe walking, ZOOM to faces"; or "CU top of screen, Tilt to dialogue box"; or "WS mountains, PAN RT to Host") When logging narration, dialogue or interviews, include in-cues and out-cues --the first and last few words. (e.g. "In my opinion, the best car is why I drive it.")
★ / NG	1 star for good takes, 2 stars for very good takes and 3 stars for the "keepers." "NG" means no good.
Why	List reasons why shots are good or no good. This reminds directors of their rationale during the shoot.
Audio	Indicate audio recorded on each channel (e.g. - 1-Tom, 2-Sue or 1-NAT, 2-host)
Notes	Add any pertinent communications to the editor provided during a shoot or derived while logging.

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Logging Shorthand

CU - Close Up

ECU - Extreme Close Up

MS - Medium Shot

WS - Wide Shot

2-shot - Two people in the shot

3-shot - Three people in the shot

POV - Point of View. What a subject might see from his or her perspective

MOS - "Mit Out Sound" (a German variation) No audio being recorded

NAT - Natural or Ambient sound

SOT - "Sound On Tape"

B-Roll - Images supporting narration or interviews

ZOOM - Framing modified wider or tighter during shot (slow or fast) e.g. - SNAP ZOOM

PAN - left/right camera moves from fixed position

TILT - up/down camera moves from fixed position

DOLLY - camera position moves sideways left or right relative to subject being shot

TRUCK - camera position moves closer to or farther from subject being shot

ARC - camera position moves around at same distance from subject usually on curved track

ISO - Isolated recording of a single camera angle (e.g. - ISO on host). This provides the flexibility to later repair mistakes made during a live-switched line-edit of a program