

Stunt Coordinator Guidelines for Hiring Stunt Doubles

These guidelines have been drafted to help guide Stunt Coordinators in their decision making when needing to hire stunt performers and/or stunt doubles for roles which are identifiable as female or for visible minorities.

1) SAFETY & FUNCTION

Safety and Function are the primary considerations of the Stunt Coordinator under all circumstances when hiring any stunt performer. All other factors that play into the hiring process for stunt doubles are always secondary considerations to performers being able to safely and competently execute the stunt(s). The Stunt Coordinator must always have the final authority on how to proceed regarding safety and function for all stunt performer hires.

Questions Stunt Coordinators should consider to determining performer competency:

- *Are there specific technical/skill sets required for the safe and competent execution of the stunt(s) and is the performer highly qualified for this work?*
 - e.g. Experience with acrobatics, stunt driving, motorbikes, wire work, horses, specific martial arts styles, fire, heavy impacts, water, high falls, prosthetics tolerance, etc.
- *Is the potential for injury to the performer low, medium or high?*
 - If skillset is not a factor for the stunt(s) to be performed, priority for engagement must match gender, race/ethnicity, body dimensions and other considerations necessary for selecting a good matching stunt double.
- *Does the performer have appropriate certification to do the work? (e.g. driving licence classes, SCUBA certification, small boat-operators licence, etc.)*
- *Does the performer have enough on set experience to ensure the safe and successful execution of the specific stunts/actions on a film set?*
 - Becoming a qualified, competent stunt performer is not a fast process. Understanding how a film set works, what your responsibilities are, learning the jargon, learning how to take direction, working camera angles and lighting, how to act and perform well and safely all takes time. The three stunt related deaths we've had in BC have all been 'experts' in their field, brought in to work in the industry under stunt contracts. They were not trained stunt performers. Film set experience is important for safety.
- *Is the performer mentally capable of handling the demands of the stunts/actions?*
 - e.g. Has the ability to focus, manage stress/pressure, is well rested, not impaired, etc.
- *Does the performer have any current or previous injury, illness, or impairment that may inhibit their ability to execute the required-stunts/actions safely or that may put themselves or other performers/crew at risk?*

Example 1: The stunt action requires heavy impacts, but the performer has a history of multiple concussions – alternate hires should be considered, or the action needs to be modified to ensure performer health and safety.

Example 2: The stunt action requires high level acrobatics, but the performer is recovering from knee surgery – alternate hires should be considered, or the action needs to be modified to accommodate the injured performer.

Example 3: The stunt action is an elaborate fight scene, but the performer’s reaction time may be impaired by prescription medication or other inhibitors – alternate hires are necessary. Stunts are a ‘*safety sensitive positions*’ where impairment is not acceptable.

Once performer skill and competency have been established, the next step is to consider the gender, race/ethnicity, body size, shape and then other features such as hair or facial features of the potential stunt double. The priority order of these considerations may shift depending on the situation, the characteristics of the performer being doubled, and how featured the stunt double could potentially be.

2. GENDER

- In all cases, every effort shall be made to hire female stunt performers to double female actors.
- If it is not possible to engage a qualified, experienced female stunt performer, the stunt coordinator, in consultation with production, must be able to document and explain their efforts to engage a qualified, experienced female stunt performer to UBCP/ACTRA and note the mitigating factors which resulted in their decision to hire otherwise (e.g. lack of skill set/experience requirements, performer injury, availability, scheduling conflicts or limitations, specific height/weight requirements, etc.)
- As a courtesy, any actor who is being doubled by a stunt performer of a different gender, should be made aware of the situation, and the mitigating factors for the decision, by the production and/or stunt coordinator prior to the day of filming/rehearsing.

3. RACE/ETHNICITY

- Every effort shall be made to use a qualified, experienced stunt performer of the same race/ethnicity as the actor being doubled.
 - e.g. - “African American” actor - “African American” stunt double,
 - “Latino” actor - “Latino” stunt double,
 - “Caucasian” actor - “Caucasian” stunt double,
 - “South Asian” actor - “South Asian” stunt double, etc.
- If it is not possible to use a qualified, experienced stunt performer the same race/ethnicity, preference of engagement shall go to a qualified, experienced stunt performer of **similar ethnicity and/or similar skin tone**.
- If it is not possible to use a qualified, experienced stunt performer of similar race/ethnicity and/or skin tone, the stunt coordinator, in consultation with production, must be able to document and explain their efforts to engage a qualified, experienced stunt performer of the same or similar race/ ethnicity and/or similar skin tone to UBCP/ACTRA, and the mitigating factors which resulted in their decision to hire otherwise. (e.g. lack of skill set/experience requirements, performer injury, availability, scheduling conflicts or limitations, specific height/weight requirements, etc.)
- As a courtesy, any actor who is being doubled by a stunt performer of a different race/ethnicity, should be made aware of the situation, and the mitigating factors for the decision, by the production and/or stunt coordinator prior to the day of filming/rehearsing.

4. BODY SIZE and SHAPE – Considerations:

- Height and weight measurements are the foundation for matching actors (e.g. Actor is 6'7"/175lbs or 5'2"/245lbs, etc.).
- What body type is required? Muscular, lean, thin, lanky, robust, etc.
- What is the action and how precise does the body size, type and shape need to be?
- To what extent will the costume help or hinder matching the double to the actor?
 - e.g. Using shoe lifts or paddling can be helpful to size up.
 - e.g. 'Skimpy' wardrobe (bathing suits, short shorts, tank tops, lingerie, nude scenes, etc.) potentially make body size, shape and type matching more important and wardrobe can be of little help to hide differences.

5. HAIR, FACIAL or other FEATURES – Considerations:

- Are there specific characteristics that are important for the doubling of an actor?
 - Bald head, brush cuts, hairlines, hair colour, necessity to use the double's own hair, beards, facial hair, etc.
 - Head shape (Can show more if bald, very round, long, etc. in some cases)
 - Are the stunt performer's tattoos a significant issue/impediment? Or manageable ?

Applicable Language from Union agreements and By Laws

1) BCMPA Language:

A2610 Stunt Doubling for Females and Visible Minorities

Where a Stunt Performer doubles for a role which is identifiable as female or a visible minority, and the race and/or sex of the double is/are also identifiable, every effort shall be made to cast qualified persons of the same sex and/or race involved. When the Stunt Performer is not so identifiable, the Producer shall use best efforts to increase the employment of women and visible minorities for such Stunts.

2) ACTRA Stunt Coordinators' Code of Conduct - ACTRA Constitution & By-Laws - APPENDIX F

ACTRA Stunt Coordinators are frontline ambassadors, champions and promoters of the ACTRA Stunt Community. Stunt Coordinators uphold the highest levels of safety consistent with international stunt industry standards; provide world class professional services; and encourage diversity, creativity, and the professional development of performers.

Stunt Coordinators recommend that Preference of Engagement be followed to provide Production with the most suitable ACTRA Stunt Performers, considering:

- Expertise;
- Experience; and,
- Diversity - to ensure equal opportunity to women and performers who are culturally & physically diverse.

Priority shall be given to Stunt Performers from the local area in which the Production is being produced. If local ACTRA members are not available, then Preference shall be given to suitable candidates from other ACTRA Stunt Communities, provided Performers are afforded travel, accommodation, and per diems in accordance with ACTRA's collective agreements. No Performer shall be expected to travel to a Production location at her/his own expense.

Thorough consideration of overall talent, diversity, and availability of current ACTRA Stunt Community members will be given prior to recommending the engagement of non-ACTRA members. Non-member Performers must obtain the necessary work permits from ACTRA prior to accepting work or providing services. Execution of stunt performances will be carried out by professional Stunt Performers. Ref. By-Law No. 7, Section II – Member Responsibilities, 2 f)

Stunt Coordinators defend and support all the contractual rights of ACTRA Performers to receive fair compensation for their work, including audition and cancelled days. Performance expectations and Stunt Adjustments shall be determined and communicated to the Performer prior to work. All Performers must have a fully executed ACTRA contract prior to performance, including specifying Daily and Use Fees, if applicable. Payments should be made directly to Performers in accordance with the applicable ACTRA Agreements. Ref. By-Law No. 7, Section II – Member Responsibilities, 2 g)

Stunt Coordinators will help to uphold ACTRA's Policies on preventing harassment, violence and discrimination. Stunt Coordinators will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, intimidation, or threats on set, or in the contracting of work. Ref. By-Law No. 7, Section II – Member Responsibilities, 2