Dailies Specs

Film acquisition dailies specs, Standard Definition NTSC:

Lab Procedure:

Develop negative only, and prep for transfer to tape (join rolls and add leader). Do not print.

Negative preparation:

Negative must be punched before transfer. Each camera roll must be punched on first and last edge number. A written log must be kept at the same time. The log will identify the camera roll number and first and last edge number. The log and negative both go to the editing company.

Sound Recording:

Sound must be recorded with timecode, preferably with Smart Slate. A minimum of 5 seconds pre-roll is requested before each take. Sound can be recorded to DAT or digital files, but must be recorded at 48k sample rate, not 44k. AIFF or WAV file formats are acceptable, but not mp3 or any other compressed audio format.

Transfer and Syncing:

Lab rolls must be transferred with continuous non-dropframe timecode. No lab roll is to be split between reels. Once transfer of a lab roll has begun, it cannot be stopped during transfer.

Lab roll transfers should be added cumulatively, in ascending timecode order according to negative preparer's log, to 60 minute DVCAM cassettes, or to Digital Betacam with DVCAM clones. Video image should be clean with no visual timecode or userbits unless specified.

Optional: only if specifically requested, please provide video dailies as follows: Visual timecode should include keycode and sync sound timecode from the production audio source (DAT, digital file, etc.) displayed onscreen outside of action safety, preferable on the lower half of the screen. Visual timecode of the address track timecode is not necessary.

Wild Track should be transferred to DVCAM with matching visual timecode regenerated from the production audio source. Simul DATs, if requested, should have matching timecode to the address track timecode of the corresponding DVCAM videocassette. Wild Track simul DAT's are not necessary provided a matching DVCAM with visual timecode has been created.

Timecode:

Each lab roll should be transferred beginning with a new and unique timecode hour. Lab roll #1 should begin at 1:00:00:00, the #2 at 2:00:00:00, etc., with each lab roll increasing one hour.

Projects requiring more than 23 timecode hours should have lab rolls transferred on the timecode hour, then on the half-hour, consecutively. For example: 1:00:00:00, then 1:30:00:00, then 2:00:00:00, then 2:30:00:00, etc.

If a lab roll contains footage requiring more than one transfer speed for separate portions of the lab roll (i.e. 24 fps for footage in the first camera roll, 30 fps for green-screen visuals on the second camera roll), then **separate transfers of the entire roll must be made, each transfer being continuous and uninterrupted**. Transferring one half of a lab roll at one speed, then the other half at another speed **is not acceptable**. Multiple transfers of the same lab roll must be slated with the frame rate speed for each transfer. Alternate transfers must include an additional 15:00 minute offset in the starting timecode from the first transfer of the same lab roll. For example: Lab roll #1 transferred at 24 fps begins at 1:00:00:00, second transfer of lab roll #1 at 30 fps begins at 1:15:00:00.

Log Files:

ALE log files can be provided on CD disc.

Film acquisition dailies specs, High Definition:

Follow all film transfer and sound specs for lab rolls as above. Determine format and framerate specs with editing company prior to transfer.

Follow transfer specs as above except as follows: transfer film to HD tape format (HDCAM, HDCAM-SR, D5, etc.) at 23.98 fps or whatever framerate has been agreed upon. Create standard definition NTSC 29.97 downconversions to digital BETACAM or DVCAM as needed. Downconversion timecode relationship must be retained so that 'A' frames match. Downconversion should be made in the aspect format that will be used in final delivery. For example, downconvert HD aspect to NTSC in letterbox format, not 4 x 3 blowup if that is the aspect for final delivery.

Tape acquisition specs, Standard Definition NTSC:

Tape management:

All tapes are to be labeled, numbered, and dated. No sticker can be placed on the flip-up tape guard area of the cassette as this will cause the tape to jam inside a player -- only apply the label sticker in the designated area of the cassette, and burnish it down completely.

Number tapes in ascending order, beginning with 101 -- do not duplicate numbers. For multiple camera shoots, 'A' camera numbers will follow the 100's series, 'B' camera follows the 200's series, 'C' camera follows the 300's series, etc. Numbering tapes is essential rather than only providing written descriptions because editing systems have limited characters for reel ID, and numeric labeling provides a better chronological reference for clip sorting.

Layoff or dub reel ID should begin with 1000 numbers, or some other agreed upon designation.

For Panasonic cameras, only use Panasonic tape stock. For all other cameras, use non-Panasonic tape stock. Coordinate with the editing company to be sure your tape size is compatible with the playback deck to be used.

Shooting guide:

All tapes are to have bars/tone recorded for 30 seconds at the head of each tape. If this is not possible due to shooting conditions, every effort should be made to record some video at the head of the tape that can serve as a leader for pre-roll. This leader also serves as a safe area in case a rewound tape becomes stuck or mangled in a camera or tape deck. The destroyed tape can be removed and the cassette reassembled without loss of critical video.

Do not rewind tapes in the camera. Finish shooting and then slide the record tab on the cassette to 'save'. Studio VTRs are better suited for tape transport, and acquisition master tapes should be used as little as possible.

Do not shoot in drop-frame timecode. Shoot in non-drop-frame timecode only. Adjust the settings of your camera to shoot in "record run" unless directed otherwise. This will make the recorded tape's timecode continuous and unbroken no matter how often the camera is paused.

Do not stop the camera, power off or perform anything that will reset the timecode clock in the middle of a tape. This will cause the timecode to break into non-ascending numbers and cause digitizing problems.

Multi-camera shooting:

Ideally, multi-camera shooting should occur with a sync generator from which all cameras are slaved, where identical timecode can be recorded to all tapes. If this is not possible, you can create synchronization in the following ways: agree to have all cameras pointing to a common sync action, such as a hand clap, then from that point on, no cameras are to be stopped for any reason until the action is cut. Every subsequent take should have a similar sync action taken.

The second method involves setting all cameras to free run recording, and all cameras set to the exact same time of day. All video will then be recorded with free-running timecode according to the time of day no matter when the camera is on and recording. Multi-clip syncing in the editing system can be done according to timecode. Strictly follow tape labeling methods per above.

Special settings:

If you are shooting with a special setting, such as Panasonic's pulldown advance for the purpose of editing in 23.98 fps, you must advise the editor. Digitizing pulldown advance requires a firewire-only digitizing connection, and must be played back from a Panasonic source, such as a camera or Panasonic deck. No other brand of device will recognize the flags in the recorded data stream that will allow the pulldown frames to be removed in realtime digitizing.

Tape acquisition specs, HIGH Definition:

All format specifications must be discussed with the editor prior to shooting. HD format is very flexible and can be recorded in many ways. It is imperative that you coordinate with the editor about which frame size and frame rate you intend to shoot so that the editing system and the delivery format can be planned for accordingly. If you begin shooting in one format, you should continue to shoot in that same format for all tapes unless specified otherwise.

Shooting 23.98fps: You can shoot 23.98fps for any reason without causing a problem. However, if you shoot 29.97fps and the master will be delivered at 23.98fps, the quality of the conversion will be poor.

HDV vs. DVCProHD: Sony and Panasonic do not play nice with each other. Although they are both capable of shooting in 720 and 1080, they record with different codecs which do not mix in the editing systems. One format must be converted to the other. Also, you cannot mix Sony and Panasonic formats in one brand playback device. Sony HDV (which includes Canon and other brands) can only be played back on Sony decks. Likewise with Panasonic playback devices and recorded HD tapes. Please coordinate with the editor about formats, workflow and delivery specs. If you are working with a graphics animator, please be aware that the DVCProHD format is not natively compatible with pc systems, only Mac with the proper QuickTime codec.

HDCam/HDCam-SR/D-5: These formats require playback from their respective studio deck format in SDI connection only. Because of the high data rate of these formats, special editing systems must be prepared to digitize the video in an uncompressed format. None of these formats can be captured on standard firewire devices in uncompressed format. It is highly advisable to create an interim downconversion format, or to digitize the tape using a compressed format codec while retaining the original frame rate.

Other HD codecs (AVCHD/h.264): If you are shooting with a camcorder that acquires in AVCHD or h.264 codec, you must coordinate with the editor. AVCHD must be converted to an editable format such as DVCProHD, HDV or ProRes. This can be done by using an in-line realtime converter, or other software solutions.

Special settings: If you are shooting with Panasonic Varicam, and are shooting at alternate frame rates for an overcrank effect, you must coordinate with the editor to be sure they have the frame rate converter plugin. Then, you must provide a log sheet for which scenes are to have the effect applied.

Tapeless acquisition specs, Standard Definition or HD:

These specs are for shooting standard definition NTSC video or HD on a P2 tapeless camera system.

File management:

It is the production company's responsibility to check the integrity of the recorded data file before it is sent to the editing company. The production company is also responsible for maintaining a backup copy of the original files prior to delivering data files to the editor.

The editor should receive an exact copy of all files, exactly as they had been acquired. Do not change any aspect of the files or their directory position. Do not delete any files for any reason. Deleting any files can result in the video files being unable to be imported into a logging device or NLE system.

All shooting specs for timecode and multi-camera sync should be followed as indicated in the "tape" section of this area.

Disc drive specs:

Use drives that have a FW800 port, formatted for Mac, not PC. Format the drive for Mac prior to copying any data onto it.

It is highly recommended that data files be copied to firewire drives that are specifically designed for video post-production, such as the G-Technology line.

File import:

It is highly recommended that the production company extract their own copies of QuickTime movies from the original MXF files. That way, the file integrity can be confirmed prior to submitting the footage to the editor. I recommend using either P2 Log or Final Cut Studio 2 with FCP update 6.0.2. I have heard users say that FCP does not always import all files when doing a log and import, so please check against your import and export volumes.

Special settings:

If you are shooting with Panasonic Varicam, and are shooting at alternate frame rates for an overcrank effect, you must coordinate with the editor to be sure they have the frame rate converter plugin. Then, you must provide a log sheet for which scenes to have the effect applied.