ATOMI

Crew Budget Checklist

A simple guide for first-time filmmakers

Your crew are the people who make your film. This is their job, so plan their pay, food, travel and safety first. Tick each box as you go.

1 Talk to every person first

- [ ] Write a list of everyone you need: before the shoot, during the shoot, after the shoot.
- [ ] Next to each name, write how they will be paid:
  - **Per day:** a fixed amount for each shoot day
  - **One fixed amount:** for the whole job
  - **Favour:** only if they really said yes, and you still give food, travel and credit
- [ ] Agree on the number of working hours in a day, and what happens if the day runs long.
- [ ] Put the deal in writing. A message is fine. Write the role, the dates, the amount and the day you will pay.

2 Who do you need?

Not every film needs everyone. Start here and remove what you don't need.

- [ ] **Direction:** director, assistant director
- [ ] **Production:** producer, production manager, helpers on set
- [ ] **Camera:** cinematographer, camera assistant
- [ ] **Light:** gaffer, electricians
- [ ] **Sound:** sound recordist, boom person
- [ ] **Art and costume:** art team, costume, make-up
- [ ] **After the shoot:** editor, colour, music and sound mix, titles
- [ ] **On set:** driver, cook or food helper, security

If you cut a role, ask who will quietly do that work for free. If the answer is "someone from the crew", put that role and pay back in.

3 Never cut safety

If your film has any of these, pay for the right person first.

- [ ] Fights, falls, fire or vehicles: **stunt coordinator**
- [ ] Any weapon, even a prop gun: **armourer**
- [ ] Smoke, fire or sparks: **effects expert**
- [ ] Heights or water: **safety gear and riders**
- [ ] Lights and generators: **a qualified electrician**
- [ ] **First-aid kit** and a plan to reach a hospital fast
- [ ] **Rehearsal time** for any risky shot

If the money is short, change the scene. Never cut safety.

4 Costs people forget

- [ ] **Food and water,** every person, every day
- [ ] **Travel** to set and home, including late nights and early calls
- [ ] **Daily allowance (batta)** and stay if you shoot out of town
- [ ] **Overtime:** decide the rule before the shoot
- [ ] Days **before and after** the shoot: recce, rehearsal, return of gear
- [ ] **Crew-owned gear:** pay rent for it, apart from their fee
- [ ] **Insurance** for equipment and for people
- [ ] **Permission and permits** for locations
- [ ] **Toilets, shade, a place to rest**
- [ ] **Taxes** on payments: ask an accountant
- [ ] **Extra money for surprises.** Something always goes wrong.

5 Treat your crew fairly

- [ ] Pay on the day you promised.
- [ ] Never say "I'll pay after release" unless you have agreed a date in writing.
- [ ] Set a call time, a wrap time and meal breaks.
- [ ] Give credit and spell names correctly.
- [ ] Keep a record of what you promised and what you paid.
- [ ] Not sure about contracts or overtime rules? Ask a film union or a lawyer.

6 Last check before you lock the budget

- [ ] Every role has a name, a payment type and a pay date
- [ ] Safety is included and paid for
- [ ] Food, travel and overtime are planned
- [ ] Extra money for surprises is set aside
- [ ] Everyone has their deal in writing

A general guide, not legal or financial advice. Pay rates change with the city and the craft, so ask your crew and your film union.

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