



Event videography

Preparation and execution guide

A practical guide for teams recording their own events — with a smartphone or a camera — so the footage arrives ready for professional editing.

1 · Preparation and setup

Understand the event

- **Detailed planning:** Obtain a layout of the venue and note the placement of stages, podiums or other focal points. Understand the timing and sequence of key moments.
- **Communication with organisers:** Stay in touch with the organisers for schedule updates and last-minute changes, and adjust the recording plan accordingly.
- **Style and tone:** Decide the desired outcome of the video: formal, informal, documentary-style or cinematic.

Equipment checklist — smartphone

- **High-end smartphone:** Use a device known for its camera (recent Apple, Samsung or Google models).
- **Gimbal or stabiliser:** Essential for moving shots and avoiding shaky footage.
- **External microphone:** Lavalier mics for interviews; shotgun mics for general audio capture.
- **Portable lighting:** Small LED lights for interviews or darker scenes.
- **Recording apps:** Apps like Filmic Pro or ProCamera give manual control over focus, exposure and white balance.

Equipment checklist — camera

- **Multiple cameras:** If possible, set up more than one angle to capture different perspectives during key moments.
- **Range of lenses:** From wide-angle for large scenes to telephoto for details from afar.
- **Filters:** ND filters to control light intake; polarisers to reduce glare outdoors.
- **External recorders:** For higher-quality audio, consider devices such as the Zoom H4n.

Scouting the location

- **Power sources:** Identify sockets for charging equipment or powering lights.
- **Wi-Fi availability:** Check venue Wi-Fi and obtain access details for live streaming or backups.
- **Environment:** Note wind, rain or excessive noise, and plan how to mitigate them.

Role allocation

- **Lead videographer:** Manages the camera setup and oversees all camera operations for consistent quality.
- **Assistant videographer:** Manages smartphone recording, assists with moving shots and acts as backup shooter.
- **Sound technician:** Focuses on audio setup, monitors levels during the event and manages recorders.

Preparing devices

- **Smartphone:** Enable battery-saving modes, close unused apps, clear storage and add an SD card if supported.
- **Camera:** Pre-set custom modes for different parts of the event (indoor, outdoor, low light) and double-check all gear the day before.

Legal and ethical considerations

- **Model releases:** Have release forms ready for anyone prominently featured in the video.
- **Notification:** Post signs at the venue notifying attendees that filming is taking place.

2 · Camera settings

Resolution and frame rate

- **High resolution:** Always record at the highest available resolution (1080p or 4K) — it allows cropping and reframing in post-production without visible quality loss.
- **24 fps:** A cinematic look, mimicking the motion blur of film.
- **30 fps:** Standard video; smooth look with manageable file sizes.
- **60 fps:** Ideal for fast action, and usable as slow motion in post-production.
- **Slow motion:** If the device supports 120 fps or more, use it for quick moments — action, dances, demonstrations.

Focus and exposure

- **Auto focus:** Useful when subjects move unpredictably; good for general coverage.
- **Manual focus:** Best when you control the scene (speeches, staged actions) — it prevents unexpected focus shifts.
- **Auto exposure:** Effective in evenly lit conditions.
- **Manual exposure:** Crucial in mixed lighting; keeps levels consistent and avoids flicker and sudden changes.

ISO, aperture and shutter speed

- **ISO:** Keep as low as possible to reduce noise; increase only in low light and watch for grain.
- **Wide aperture (e.g. f/2.8):** Shallow depth of field — focuses the subject and blurs the background. Great for interviews.
- **Narrow aperture (e.g. f/11):** Everything stays in focus — useful for wide shots where detail matters throughout.
- **Shutter speed:** Follow the 180-degree rule: shutter at twice the frame rate (e.g. 1/50 s for 25 fps) for natural motion blur; faster shutter for crisp action.

White balance and colour

- **White balance:** Set manually to match the lighting — auto settings can shift unpredictably.
- **Standard profiles:** Best if you don't plan to colour-grade afterwards.
- **Flat / log profiles:** Capture more dynamic range and give editing flexibility, but require grading.

Audio settings

- **External mic first:** Always prefer an external microphone over the built-in one.
- **Levels:** Monitor while recording: aim for -12 dB to -6 dB and never peak above 0 dB (distortion).

3 · Filming techniques

Composition and framing

- **Rule of thirds:** Divide the frame in a 3×3 grid and place subjects at the intersections — e.g. position a conference speaker along these lines.
- **Leading lines:** Use rows of chairs, building edges or tables to lead the eye toward the subject.

- **Headroom and lead room:** Leave space above the head, and more space in front of moving subjects than behind them.

Camera movements

- **Pan and tilt:** A slow pan across a crowd, or a tilt from the ceiling down to a speaker, adds context and variety.
- **Dolly / tracking:** Move alongside a subject; a gimbal stabilises smartphone footage.
- **Zoom:** Use sparingly; prefer optical over digital zoom. Zoom in for facial expressions at key moments.

Shot types

- **Establishing shot:** Open with a wide shot of the venue to set the scene.
- **Medium shot:** For interviews and interactions — expressions plus some context.
- **Close-up:** Faces and details that carry the emotion of the story.
- **Over-the-shoulder:** Creates presence in conversations, e.g. an attendee talking with a speaker.

Combining these shot types is what gives the editor real material to work with.

Lighting techniques

- **Three-point lighting:** Key light on the subject, fill light to soften shadows, backlight to separate subject from background.
- **Natural light:** Position subjects so daylight illuminates faces — sun behind the camera, or windows as source indoors.
- **Diffusers and reflectors:** Soften harsh sunlight outdoors and brighten shadows indoors without artificial lights.

B-roll footage

- **Coverage:** Shoot plenty of B-roll: crowd reactions, hands clapping, ambient activity — it gives options in editing.
- **Cutaways:** Environment close-ups or skyline shots to transition between scenes and cover edits.

Advanced filming scenarios

- **Interview setups:** Quiet, visually appealing corner; background that adds context without distracting.
- **Dynamic action:** High shutter speed to freeze movement, or slow motion for fluid detail.
- **Challenging light:** Widest available aperture, careful shutter, judicious ISO — add lighting only if necessary.

Practical examples

- **Conferences:** Mix wide shots of panels with close-ups of speakers; pan the audience for reactions; include slides and screens.
- **Celebrations and ceremonies:** Prioritise emotional close-ups, dynamic shots of the key moments and details of the venue; interviews or voiceover add a personal layer.

4 · Advanced techniques

Advanced lighting

- **Diffusers and reflectors:** Manage harsh conditions: diffuse direct sunlight, bounce light into dim areas.
- **Artificial setups:** Three-point lighting for interviews and presentations gives depth and dimension.
- **Creative effects:** Coloured lights or gobos project patterns for performances or themed moments.

Sophisticated audio management

- **The right microphone:** Shotgun for directional sound at distance, lavalier for interviews, handheld for audience questions.
- **Audio mixers:** With multiple sources (e.g. a panel), a mixer balances levels in real time.
- **Noise reduction:** Windshields outdoors; software clean-up of background noise in post-production.

Interview techniques

- **Setting the scene:** Relevant, quiet, well-lit background that supports the subject's role.
- **Two cameras:** One on the interviewer, one on the interviewee — allows dynamic editing between angles.
- **Guiding the conversation:** Prepare questions that provoke detailed answers; leave room for natural follow-ups.

Camera tools and accessories

- **Gimbals and stabilisers:** Keep the camera steady in walking or following shots.
- **Drones:** For large outdoor events: aerial shots that show scale and unique perspectives.
- **Filters:** ND filters manage exposure in bright settings; polarisers reduce glare and enhance colour.

Post-production

- **Colour grading:** Adjust balance and tone to create a consistent mood for the piece.
- **Sound design:** Layer ambient sound and music — with rights cleared if the piece will be published.
- **Editing for storytelling:** Organise clips into a coherent narrative; use cuts and transitions to keep the flow.

Advanced problem-solving

- **Backup systems:** Extra batteries, memory cards and — if possible — a spare camera.
- **Low light:** Fast lenses, careful shutter, judicious ISO; discreet extra lighting only when needed.
- **Dynamic range:** Log or flat profiles capture the most range for flexible post-production.

Questions before your event? Write to us — we're happy to review your recording plan.