

Code of Best Practice for Self-Tape & Zoom Auditions for Scripted Drama



CPMA
The Co-operative Personal Management Association



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This code of best practice for self-tape and Zoom auditions in scripted drama has been agreed by the Casting Directors Guild, Cooperative Personal Management Association, Equity and the Personal Managers Association.

Preamble – The CDG, CPMA, Equity and the PMA are unanimous in declaring that close cooperation and communication is essential in our industry between performers, their agents and the casting directors' community. For that purpose, these named parties have agreed the following as a guide to best practice in self-tape and Zoom auditions.¹

We understand that self-tape and Zoom auditions can present challenges to all parties involved in the process – performers, agents and casting directors. On a positive note, what has become more apparent, is how self-tapes and Zoom auditions have given opportunities to artists that may not have otherwise been seen for certain roles and to artists that might have difficulty attending physical auditions.

It is understood by all parties that these provisions will not always prove practical due to the fluid nature of our business. In circumstances where the recommendations set out are challenging to implement, the Casting Director

involved is urged to make this clear to performers and their agents, and to keep the lines of communication open.

Best Practice.

For all parties involved it is hugely beneficial to give as much information to the Artists when requesting a self-tape. We understand with NDAs ('Non-disclosure agreement) and confidentiality on projects this can sometimes prove difficult, but a sense of tone, style of piece, period etc is incredibly useful, or a more detailed creative vision – a couple of lines from the Director or Lead Creative where possible should be passed on.

In principle, it is agreed that simplicity is a key part of self-tape auditions and performers should not, except in special circumstances, be asked to provide their own props or re-arrange their home as though it were a set.

In relation to the turnaround time for self-tapes, it is agreed that casting directors should aim for a four-day minimum turnaround, with a maximum of six pages to learn in this time. Minimum turnaround for three pages or less would be three days. No artist should be asked to learn more than

¹ References to Zoom will be deemed to apply to auditions using Microsoft Teams or any other form of video conferencing. References to self-tape auditions will include Zoom/Team auditions unless otherwise specified.

six pages for a first self-tape and there must not be more than two different roles asked for in one self-tape and no more than two scenes for each role, with no more than two versions of each scene. In circumstances when an artist decides they do not wish to do a self-tape, it is incumbent on the artist and their agent to inform the Casting Director immediately in order to give other artists the opportunity to tape and to manage expectations of Director/Producers.

If a self-tape is asked for on a Friday, then it will not be due back until the following Tuesday. If the intervening Monday is a Bank Holiday, then the self-tape will not be due until the following Wednesday and no self-tape request will be sent out on a Bank Holiday Friday. Any self-tape requests sent out on a Thursday immediately prior to a Friday Bank Holiday will not be due back until the following Wednesday.

In circumstances where it is not possible to comply with these provisions, it is up to all parties to work together to find a possible compromise or agree to abandon the self-tape.

A reader² is often beneficial to a good self-tape but should not be an absolute requirement. If an actor is struggling here then please communicate to agent and Casting Director and all endeavours will be made to assist. Actors are not expected to pay for readers for their self-tapes.

Where a script needs to be translated from English into another language,

unless it involves only a couple of lines, it is the production companies' responsibility to provide the performer being auditioned with such a translation.

The Casting Directors' Guild reaffirms its commitment to Equity's Yes/No campaign and will urge its members to ensure that performers and agents are updated about casting decisions when they have been made.

Casting Directors always seek to set reasonable deadlines for self-tapes but it is accepted that unforeseen circumstances may alter such deadlines. If a deadline has to be altered, then Casting Directors will aim to use their best endeavours to organise an extension, if this is requested by the agent or performer.

Casting directors will only call for as many artists' self-tapes as they have sufficient time to consider. It is worth acknowledging that the majority of tapes will be downloaded and viewed either offline or via another platform. It is also worth noting that when a tape is downloaded and watched offline some file sharing sites (Vimeo for example) don't recognise that the tape has been viewed as a result.

Useful Links.

Equity - <https://www.equity.org.uk>

PMA - <https://thepma.com>

CPMA - <http://www.cpma.coop>

[Guide-for-Self-Taping.pdf \(thecdg.co.uk\)](http://www.thecdg.co.uk/Guide-for-Self-Taping.pdf)

² This can be virtually, via a pre-recorded app, or in person (the reader does not need to be an actor).