

CODE OF BEST PRACTICE FOR SELF-TAPE & ZOOM AUDITIONS FOR COMMERCIALS



EQUITY

CPMA
The Co-operative Personal Management Association

Code of Best Practice for Self-Tape & Zoom Auditions for Commercials

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

Preamble – the CDA, CDG, CPMA, Equity and the PMA are unanimous in declaring that close cooperation and communication is essential in our industry between Equity, performers and 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 for Commercials. 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 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 provide relevant information to the artists when requesting a self-tape. We understand with NDAs (Non-disclosure agreements) 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. Performers should not be *required* to provide their own props or re-arrange their home as though it were a set. Any requests for such

¹ References to Zoom will be deemed to apply also 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.

arrangements should be minor or incidental and it is at the artist's discretion whether they choose to or are able to provide any such extras.

For an initial casting, performers can be asked to provide a basic package of information which could include e.g. headshot, short slate. Additional material can be requested at the recall stage; this should be reasonable, relevant to the role and not excessive.

When an artist is aware they will not be submitting a self-tape, they will inform their agent and their agent will inform the Casting Director immediately in order to give other artists the opportunity to tape and to manage expectations of directors/producers.

Casting directors will aim to give deadlines for self-tapes to be completed and returned within a minimum of 2 days and within normal working days and hours i.e. to avoid bank holidays and weekends.

In circumstances where these provisions are not possible to comply with, it is up to all the 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 with this, they should communicate with the agent and casting director and all endeavours will be made to assist. Actors are not expected to pay for readers for their self-tapes.

Casting directors will adhere to the clauses relating to pencils in the [Equity-IPA Agreed Document 2019 \(Section 5.8\)](#). All parties will use best endeavours to communicate speedily and effectively on pencils.

Casting Directors will always push their clients to pay the recall audition fee agreed by the IPA and Equity, whether the recall is to a live audition or one on Zoom.

Where a script needs to be translated from English into another language, unless it involves only a couple of lines, it is the Casting Director's responsibility to provide the performer being auditioned with such a translation.

The Casting Directors' Association and the Casting Directors' Guild reaffirm their commitment to Equity's Yes/No campaign and will urge their members to ensure that performers and agents are updated about

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

casting decisions as soon as possible after they have been made, using best endeavours to ensure clients are informed speedily, either through a reliable online system or by email/phone call.

Under no circumstances should any actor be asked to self-tape fully nude or partially nude. Nor should an actor be asked to send fully or partially nude photographs to a CD or Producer at any point during the auditioning process.

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 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) do not recognise that the tape has been viewed as a result. All parties will abide by current legislation regarding management of artists' personal data, including self-tapes.

Artists making self-tapes should note that they will only be judged on their performance and not on the quality of equipment which is available to them. Artists are advised to make use of reputable sources of guidance on making self-tapes (see Useful Links).

A parent or chaperone should always be in the same room when a juvenile performer is making a self-tape and they should make themselves known to the CD when a child is auditioning via Zoom.

Useful Links.

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

PMA - <https://thepma.com/>

CPMA – <http://cpma.coop/>

CDA – <https://www.castingdirectorsassociation.com/>

CDG - <https://www.thecdg.co.uk/>

[Guide-for-Self-Taping.pdf \(thecdg.co.uk\)](#)