

## PRODUCTION RUNNER (FILM/TELEVISION/VIDEO) Kaitonotono (Whitiahua/Pouaka Whakaata/Ripene ataata)

### Print Page

### Description

Production runners fetch, carry and do whatever small jobs need doing for the production department of a film, video or television company.



Production runner Elizabeth McGougan at work

### He Whakamarama



Mahi ai te kaitonotono ki te tiki, ki te kawē meā; me te mahi i ngā mahi pakupaku hei mahinga i roto i ngā tari whitiahua, pouaka whakaata ranei ahakoa i hea.

*"Ko te uri o Te Paki-wae-tahi"*

### Alternative Titles

- Production Runner
- Runner (Production)
- Film Production Runner
- Television Production Runner
- Location Runner

### Tasks and Duties

Production runners:

- collect things from and deliver things to offices, studios and film locations

- make coffee and run errands
- transport cast, crew and production staff between offices, studios and shoot locations
- take care of petty cash
- may hire props and help set up a location for shooting
- may make arrangements for staff on location such as booking meeting rooms or ordering food
- may transcribe production tapes.



***"The kind of work you do depends on the production being shot and what stage it's at. It also depends on how much responsibility the production manager wants to give you."***

**Elizabeth McGougan, Production runner**

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## **Personal Requirements**

### **Skills**

Production runners need to have communication, negotiation and research skills. They need to have organisational ability, skill in setting priorities and managing their time, and good telephone and driving skills.



Elizabeth McGougan and the production manager discuss a shoot

### **Knowledge**

Production runners need to know how each department in the production company or studio works, what each worker does, and what they need to function well. They also need to know where and when things might go wrong, basic accounting and how to read maps.

### **Personal Qualities**

Production runners need to be practical, efficient, adaptable and systematic. They should be friendly, supportive, positive and good at dealing with people. Being able to work well under pressure and remain calm in emergencies is also important.



Production runners need to be good at dealing with people

## ***Physical Requirements***

Production runners need to be reasonably fit, as they may be asked to do a wide range of physical tasks, especially on location shoots.

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## ***How to Enter the Job***

### ***Education***

There are no specific educational requirements for becoming a production runner. People often start out in the film/television/video industry as production runners and then move into other roles. To get into the industry, a tertiary qualification in media production, broadcasting, or film and television is helpful.

#### ***Related courses:***



[Media and Broadcasting Skills](#)  
[Media Production \(General\)](#)  
[Video and Television](#)  
[Acting, Drama and Theatre](#)

#### ***Take off to tertiary!***

[Take off to tertiary!](#) - information and advice to help with study or training decision -making.

#### ***New Zealand Qualifications Authority:***



[Electronic Media](#)  
[Film and Television](#)  
[Performance Production](#)

## **Entry Requirements**

A current, clean, full driver's licence is essential for production runners.

## **Useful Experience**

Work in the theatre or voluntary work experience with a film or television production company is useful.

## **Training on the Job**

There is no specific on-the-job training for production runners, but many new skills are gained on the job.

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## **Working Conditions**

### **Work Places and Travel**

Production runners work in offices and/or studios, and on location. They often spend a lot of time travelling to and from locations, and picking people up from places such as airports.



***"Production runners can work on shoots and assist people like the first director, or do things like help carry cable or write down shot lists. It's the ultimate assisting job."***

**Elizabeth McGougan, Production runner**

## **Equipment**

Production runners often have to use cars, vans or trucks, cellphones, maps and other film and television production equipment such as tapes and clapper boards.



Production runners deal with and use a range of equipment

## **Workplace Conditions**

Conditions vary widely for production runners and the work may be stressful at times.

## Employment Conditions

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### Hours

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Production runners work long hours, often up to six days a week during production. They may have to work nights, weekends and public holidays, and may also have to do shiftwork and be on call.

### Salary

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Salary for production runners varies, but usually starts at around \$100 per day. Many people work on short-term contracts and often do voluntary work to get started in the industry.

### Contact with People

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Production runners work under the supervision of either the producer, production manager, director and/or film crew. They have contact with a range of people including:

- staff in all departments of film and television production companies
- actors and performers
- caterers and suppliers

They may also have contact with other people, such as the general public or lawyers, depending on the subject of the production being made.



***"You need to be a real 'people person', because you have to be able to talk to a wide range of people and get what you need from them."***

**Elizabeth McGougan, Production runner**

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## Job Market

### Job Outlook

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The number of production runners (film/video/television) is expected to remain stable or grow moderately over the next two to three years. However, competition for positions is expected to be high because of growth in the number of people doing or completing tertiary courses aimed at this work.

Although there has been a rapid growth in television stations (especially regional) in New Zealand over the last few years, the film and television industry is still fairly small. Many production assistants work on contract, although there are some opportunities for full-time work in production companies. Networking with people in the industry continues to be one of the most important factors in getting work. Positions are rarely advertised and are generally obtained by word of mouth.

Government funding from the \$22 million grant to the arts may also impact on the outlook of this job by providing more money to make films and television shows. New Zealand is also being marketed as an appealing production base for overseas film and television series makers. This has the potential to increase job prospects as international production companies use New Zealand workers.

(Updated 20/02/2003)

## Current Vacancies



[Writers, Artists, Entertainers, Sports & Religious Associated Professionals](#)



[KiwiCareers Job Vacancy Links](#)

## Personal Profile

### Elizabeth McGougan



"The hardest thing about this industry is getting in. The work is hard and stressful, but getting in is even harder!"

According to Elizabeth McGougan, it's a combination of luck, timing and who you know. "The industry is really small in New Zealand, so it's really important to prove yourself as a good worker straight away and use your contacts in the industry. As part of my BBC I had a half-year internship, working in a tape library. That's basically how I got in and was able to get a foot in the door to prove myself."

For Elizabeth, proving herself at the television company she currently works for involved: "Being prompt, keeping a handle on things and not getting stressed. There's a lot of hierarchy in television, and as a production runner you have to take the pressure off the person above you by doing things for them."

Elizabeth says she had not planned to be a production runner. She had taken arts subjects at school, including photography and drama, so from there did a Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies. As part of the degree Elizabeth did some television production papers and was told by her tutor that she was good at it, which helped her decide to try and get into the industry. Elizabeth then did a Bachelor of Broadcasting degree. "I really recommend doing a course, because it gives you a good grounding in the industry, and introduces you to other people who will be in the industry throughout your career."

One aspect of the work Elizabeth loves is working with others, which she says comes naturally to her. "I decided at some stage of my life that I had to work with people, and that's one of the best parts of this job; getting to meet and talk to so many really interesting people."

Production runners generally sign fairly short-term contracts, which Elizabeth says can be nerve-racking. "You don't know whether you are going to have a paid job all the time. But in other ways I like it because I don't like nine-to-five jobs, and I don't like the concept of doing the same thing every day. I find that

unsatisfying, unmotivating and unchallenging. Also, I like to be able to work really hard for six months and then take two months off, which you can do in this industry."

## Further Information

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### Relevant Contacts

- [Film New Zealand](#)
- [NZ Film Commission](#)
- [NZ Television Broadcasters' Council](#)
- [TV3 Network Services](#)
- [TVNZ](#)
- [Women in Film and Television](#)

### Related Jobs

- [Personal Assistant](#)
- [Production Assistant \(Film/Television/Video\)](#)

### Industry Overviews

- [Motion Picture, Radio and Television Services](#)



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17/3/2004 at 18:27:32

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