

Television Equipment Operator interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Television Equipment Operator roles usually combine a technical conversation with practical scenarios, because employers need to know you can run equipment under live pressure and fit into a control room or outside broadcast crew.

- **Process:** Questions about how you set up, test and hand over equipment before a production, showing you follow a reliable workflow.
- **Technical:** Questions about camera matching, vision mixing, audio routing or lighting, checking your hands-on knowledge of broadcast equipment.
- **Scenario:** Live fault or deadline pressure questions, where you explain what you would do in the moment to stay on air.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about working with directors, producers and crew under tight deadlines, using real examples from your experience.
- **Safety:** Questions about risk assessments, cable management, rigging and workplace health and safety on location.

The interview typically starts with a short meet and greet, then moves to a walk-through of your recent productions and the equipment you have operated. Expect a technical discussion about camera setup, vision mixing or audio, followed by one or two scenario questions about live faults or deadline pressure. Some employers include a practical test on a studio camera or vision mixer, and you may meet a chief operator, a producer or a crew lead. It usually ends with your questions and a discussion of shift patterns, including weekends and live broadcasts.

1. Walk me through how you set up and test a studio camera chain before a live broadcast.

Why they ask

Assesses whether you know the setup workflow and can be trusted to prepare equipment before a live broadcast, not just operate it once it is running.

How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step walk-through. Start with power and signal, then lens and tripod, then intercom and tally, then vision mixer and audio checks. Finish with a final check against the director's requirements.

Example answer

"I start by checking the camera build and tripod balance, then power up and confirm the signal path to the vision mixer. I fit the lens, set back focus if needed, and connect the intercom and tally so the floor manager and director can reach me. I white balance and set exposure against a reference chart, then check the return feed on the monitor. Before rehearsal I test the microphone and confirm audio levels with the sound operator, and I make sure the camera is on the correct input on the switcher. If anything is loose or noisy, I fix it before the crew runs the first rehearsal, not during the live bulletin."

2. How do you match cameras for colour and exposure across a multi-camera studio shoot?

Why they ask

Checks technical understanding of camera matching, which is essential for multi-camera studio work and shows you can maintain consistent pictures.

How to structure your answer

Give a technical explanation in sequence. Cover white balance, black balance, paint controls, reference monitors, waveform and vectorscope, and how you confirm a match with the director or vision mixer.

Example answer

"I begin by white balancing all cameras under the same studio lighting, using a grey card and the same colour temperature setting. I set black balance next, then use the paint controls to align gain, gamma and detail so the pictures sit together on the reference monitor. I check exposure with the waveform and colour with the vectorscope, and I compare each camera against a known reference, usually the centre camera. If one camera is warmer or brighter, I adjust it at the camera or via the remote panel until the vision mixer sees a seamless cut. I keep the settings locked and note any changes so other operators can pick up the same look."

3. You are operating vision mixer during a live sports broadcast and one camera feed goes black. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests judgement under live pressure, because the ability to stay on air and communicate clearly matters more than fixing the fault yourself in the moment.

How to structure your answer

Show judgement under pressure. Stay on air first, then call the fault, switch to a backup source, and troubleshoot only when it is safe to do so. Communicate clearly with the director and crew.

Example answer

"My first priority is to stay on air, so I cut immediately to another camera or a wide shot that covers the action. I tell the director what has happened and which source I am using, and I ask the floor manager to check the camera in question. If there is a backup feed on the same position, I switch to it and confirm tally and intercom. I do not leave the mixer to fix the camera myself during a live segment. Once the broadcast is in a safe break, I trace the fault, check cables, power and camera settings, and report back to the director before the next play."

4. Tell me about a time you worked with a director under a tight deadline.

Why they ask

Looks at how you work with directors when time is short, and whether you can adapt without losing technical standards.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result. Keep it brief, focus on what you did under pressure, and finish with the outcome for the production.

Example answer

"On a community television outside broadcast, the director asked for a last-minute change to the running order because a guest arrived late. I was on camera and audio, so I quickly reset my microphone position, confirmed the new shot with the floor manager, and passed the audio check back to the control room. I kept the intercom clear and gave the director short confirmations so they knew what was ready. We went to air on time and the guest segment ran without a technical hitch. Afterwards the director asked me to stay on the crew for the next season."

5. What safety checks do you complete when rigging lighting or running cables on location?

Why they ask

Confirms you take workplace safety seriously on location, where cables, stands and power create real risks for the crew and public.

How to structure your answer

Use a safety-first checklist. Cover risk assessment, trip hazards, cable ramps and matting, working at height, power isolation and tagging, and housekeeping. Mention who you report to.

Example answer

"Before any rigging, I check the site for hazards and confirm the risk assessment with the crew lead. I use cable ramps or matting over walkways and keep runs away from audience paths where possible. For lighting stands I check the weight, locks and safety chains, and I never stand on a chair or box to reach a light. I test power boards and use tagged equipment, and I isolate power before changing a lamp or connection. At the end of a shoot I coil and store cables so the next crew does not face a trip hazard. If something does not look safe, I stop and raise it with the floor manager or safety officer."

6. How do you handle a producer who asks for a shot or audio change that is not technically possible in the moment?

Why they ask

Assesses client-facing communication, because producers and directors need clear alternatives, not a flat refusal, when a request is not technically possible.

How to structure your answer

Acknowledge the request, explain the technical constraint briefly, offer a workable alternative, and keep the relationship calm and collaborative.

Example answer

"I listen to the request and repeat it back so the producer knows I understand what they want. Then I explain the constraint in plain terms, for example that the camera cannot reach that angle without moving the tripod during a live segment, or that the audio source is already routed to a different mix. I offer the closest alternative I can do right now, such as a tighter shot from the other side or a temporary audio split. If it can be fixed after the segment, I note it and tell the producer when it will be ready. I keep my tone calm and focus on what will look and sound right on air, not on why the request is difficult."