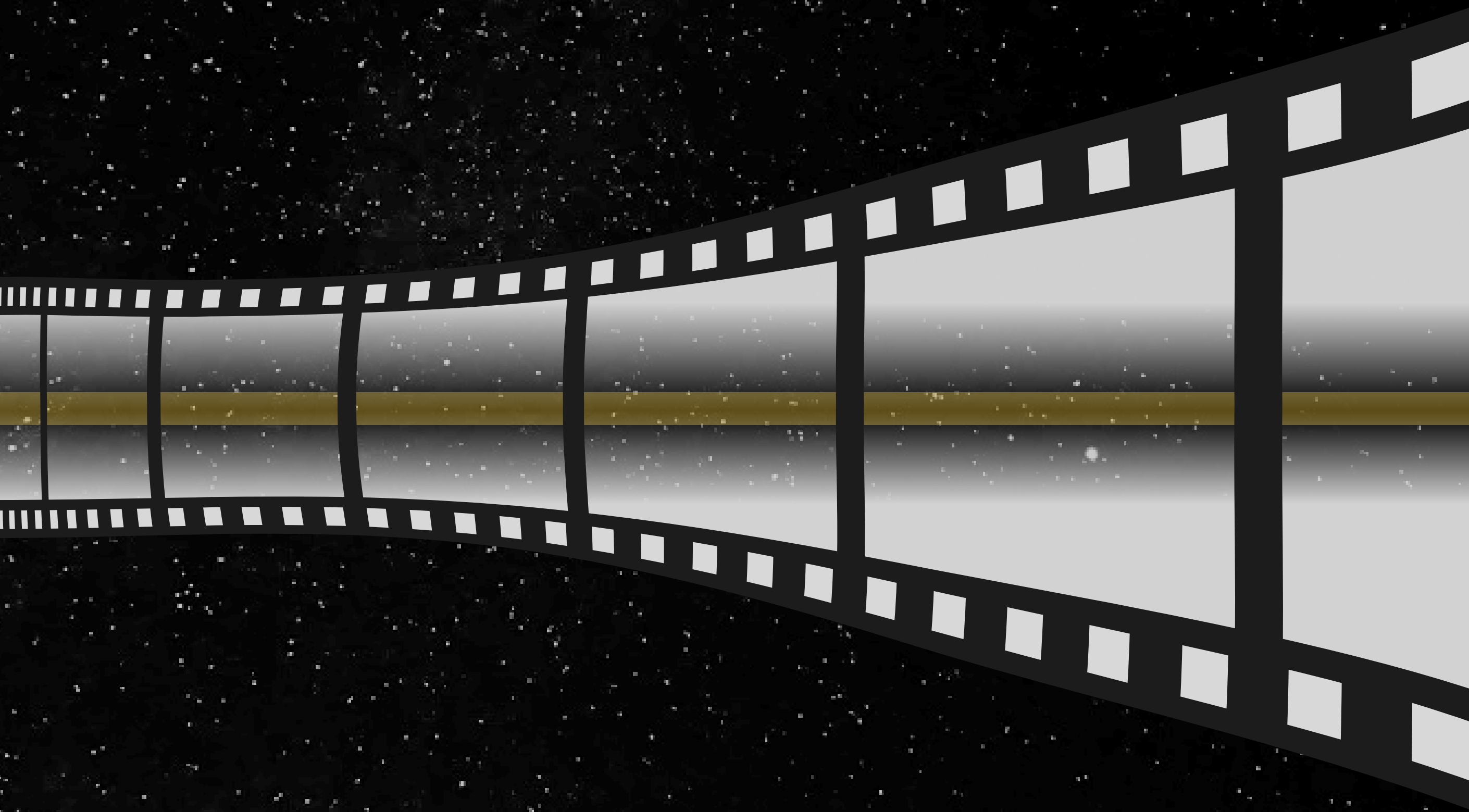




FOSAG'S

Guide to Background Brilliance



Your Comprehensive Guide, From Brief to Payment & More

by Cassandra Garofallou

FOSAC's Guide to Background Brilliance

First Edition – April 2025

Compiled by FOSAC Casting (the background champions with heart)

This is your go-to, no-nonsense, proudly South African guide to owning your space on set. Whether you're here for the hustle, the passion, or the popcorn (no judgment), this guide is here to help you shine behind the scenes like the star you are.

We'll keep updating it as the industry shifts – so stay sharp, stay booked, and stay YOU.

Let's raise the standard, one background booking at a time.

Best Read Digitally

This guide was created with phones, tablets, and laptops in mind – perfect for reading on the go or between takes in holding.

Need a printable A4 version? Just shout – we've got you covered.

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Proudly created for the South African background acting community.

"For educational and professional use by registered performers."

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WELCOME TO FOSAC'S GUIDE TO BACKGROUND BRILLANCE

Whether you're just beginning your journey in the film and television industry or looking to sharpen your knowledge as a background actor, you're in the right place. This guide has been designed with you in mind — simple, practical, and packed with essential information to help you confidently navigate the exciting world of background work.



At FOSAC (Friends of South African Comedy & Casting), we pride ourselves on professionalism, transparency, and community. We don't believe in gatekeeping knowledge — we believe in sharing it, so that every actor, no matter their experience level or background, feels empowered and informed.

FOSAC is a proud member of OSCASA (Official South African Casting Agencies Association), which promotes ethical standards and integrity in the casting industry.

We are also proud supporters of SABAG (South African Background Actors Guild), an organization created to protect and uplift background actors across the country. If you're unfamiliar with SABAG, it's a fast-growing, active guild that advocates for fair treatment, proper pay, and respect for background artists. We strongly encourage you to learn more, engage with them, and get involved.

This guide will walk you through everything from choosing the right agencies, preparing your photos, to getting paid — all in clear, manageable steps. Let's get you started on your journey the right way — professionally, confidently, and with the support of people who truly care about this industry and those in it.



"1923" - Paramount Production

GETTING STARTED

Understanding the Role of a Background Actor



Silent, sharp, and set-ready — background with Mzansi flair.

Background actors—often called extras—are the unsung heroes of the film and television industry. While they may not have speaking roles, their presence is essential in creating believable, immersive environments for the story to unfold.

From a busy shopping mall to a political rally, it's background actors who make these settings feel real and alive.

What Do Background Actors Do?

- **Create Realism:** Your job is to blend naturally into scenes so that the audience believes what they're watching is real life.
- **Support the Scene:** While the focus may be on lead actors, your presence adds energy, context, and flow to the moment.
- **Perform Consistently:** You may be asked to walk down the street, sip coffee, pretend to work at a computer, or dance at a club—whatever the scene needs.



Key Points to Understand

No Speaking Lines: Background actors don't usually talk on camera. That's what separates background roles from featured or principal roles.

Diverse Appearances: You might be cast as a pedestrian, parent at a school, patient in a hospital, shopper, or crowd member at a concert or sports event.

Vital to the Scene: Your performance helps highlight the main actors and build the world they live in.



We make the stars shine brighter — quietly in the background.

Who Can Be a Background Actor?

Anyone! Background acting is one of the few areas in the industry where there are no physical limitations or strict casting types. We welcome:

- All ages (from babies to seniors)
- All races, cultures, and nationalities
- All body types, looks, and abilities

You don't need formal acting training to get started—just the right attitude and willingness to learn.

What You Need to Succeed as a Background Actor

Being a great background actor takes more than showing up. You need to be:

- **Reliable:** Always arrive on time (or early!) and never cancel last minute.
- **Professional:** You're on a real production set—so act like it. Be polite, dress appropriately, and avoid gossip or drama.
- **Observant:** Watch how others are behaving on set. Pay attention to your cues and blocking.
- **A Good Listener:** Follow instructions the first time. Directors and assistant directors have tight schedules and little time to repeat.
- **Respectful:** Treat crew, cast, and fellow background with kindness and courtesy.

Remember:

Even though you're in the background, you're still part of a professional production. Some of today's biggest stars started as background—so take pride in your role and always bring your best energy.



"Without background, that party scene's just two people awkwardly dancing!"

Deciding to Enter the Industry



Silent, sharp, and set-ready — background with Mzansi flair.

Embarking on a career as a background actor requires careful consideration. It's important to understand the nature of the work and set realistic expectations.

Considerations:

- **Flexibility:** Background acting often requires availability on short notice and can involve long hours on set.
- **Supplemental Income:** While it can be a source of income, background acting is typically not a full-time job.
- **Passion for the Industry:** A genuine interest in film and television can make the experience more rewarding.

"You call it background, we call it building legends — silently, stylishly, proudly!"





Meet The Khumalos - Urban Vision

INDUSTRY BASICS

Finding a Reputable Agency



- FOSAC is a proudly registered and transparent agency, but we also understand that as background actors, you may work with different agencies depending on who's running a production. That's completely okay — as long as you're working with professionals.
- Here's how to spot a reputable agency and avoid scams or exploitation:

Signs of a Reputable Agency:

- **Registered Business:** Ask if they are registered with CIPC or have a company number.
- **No Upfront Payments:** You should not be asked to pay just to join a WhatsApp group or to be cast.
- **Clear Contracts:** Reputable agents provide documentation outlining expectations, fees (if any), and commission.
- **Industry Presence:** Check if they've worked on real productions, and if they are mentioned in credits or by trusted sources. Like OSCASA
- **Communication:** They communicate clearly and respectfully, without pressure or dodgy promises.
- **References Available:** Ask around — if other background actors vouch for them, it's a good sign.
- **Check Social Media and Google:** Do they have a social media presence?

Red Flags to Watch Out For

- Agents who demand money for “z-cards” or a role.
- Agents who are vague about which productions they are working on.
- Agents who don’t credit you or don’t pay you.
- Any individual not willing to give their full name, agency name, or business registration.



"The story's heartbeat? That's background, keeping the rhythm alive."

FOSAC's Position:

We're always here for advice — even if you're not currently booked with us. If you're unsure about an agency or feel uncomfortable, reach out to us privately. We'll help you check if they're legitimate or if any complaints have been lodged.

Working with more than one reputable agent is okay — being exploited is not.

"Real stars know — it's the background that brings the sparkle!"



Understanding Agency & Background Contracts



Stepping onto a film set as a background actor? Having a contract isn't just paperwork — it's your protection and your power!

What's a Non-Exclusive Contract?

A non-exclusive contract means you're free to work with different agencies — you're not tied to just one. More freedom = more opportunities for you!

You're an Freelancer

As a background actor, you're not an employee — you're a freelancer. That means you manage your own responsibilities like transport and taxes.

Prioritising Your Agency

When you register with FOSAC, you agree to prioritise our bookings first.

If we offer you a job, you must accept or decline before taking other offers. Saying "yes" means showing up — no backing out because something "better" comes up. (With exceptions of course)

It's about mutual respect:

- We find you work.
- You honour your commitment.
- Together, we grow stronger and book more roles!

Support your agency, and your agency will support you.

Why Signing a Contract is a Power Move for You?

A contract isn't just paperwork — it's your protection and your power.

- Your Pay is Locked In: No confusion, no surprises — you know what you're earning.
- Your Rights Are Protected: Everything from your working hours to your treatment on set is covered.
- You're Taken Seriously: Having a contract shows you're a professional — not just "another extra."
- You Have Backup: If something goes wrong, you're not alone — you've got the agreement to back you up.
- More Opportunities: Agencies and productions trust performers who are professional — and contracts help build that trust.

Bottom line:

Signing a contract = taking control of your career and getting the respect you deserve.



"Professional background — silent, strong, essential."

Preparing Your Documents



Having the necessary documentation ready is crucial for a smooth process when opportunities arise.

Essential Documents:

- Certified Identification: A certified copy of your ID, not older than three months.
- Proof of Residence: A recent utility bill or official document confirming your address.
- Banking Details: A bank confirmation letter.
- Tax Information: Your SARS (South African Revenue Service) letter with your tax number. **Get it here**
- Work Permit (if applicable): Valid work permit and passport for non-South African citizens.

Note: Incomplete or outdated documents can delay payments and hinder your chances of being cast.



Getting the Right Photos



Remember you are chosen solely upon your photograph in selection; they do not know you or what you can and cannot do. So choose a photo that will represent you as a person

While professional headshots are not mandatory for background actors, submitting appropriate photos is essential.



Do's and Dont's

Do's.....

- Clear and Recent: Photos must be well-lit, in focus, and taken recently.
- Look Neat and Tidy: Present yourself in a clean, groomed way.
- Wear Plain, Flattering Clothes: Choose solid colors without logos or distracting patterns.
- Keep Makeup Natural: Keep your look simple and reflect your everyday appearance.
- Natural Hair: Wear your hair down and natural if possible.
- Stand – Don't Sit: Always take photos standing up, not seated.
- Neutral Background: Use a plain, uncluttered background.
- Use Portrait Orientation: Take photos vertically.
- Head and Shoulders + Full Body: Submit at least one headshot and one full-body photo.
- Colour Photos Only: No black & white.

.....Don'ts

- No Selfies: Ask someone to take your photo or use a tripod.
- No Hats or Sunglasses: Your full face must be visible.
- No Group Photos: Only you should be in the photo.
- No Funny Faces or Duck Lips: Keep your expression natural and neutral.
- No Special Occasion Photos: Avoid graduation, wedding, or themed images.
- No Filters or Heavy Editing: Let your natural appearance show – avoid alterations.
- No Distracting Outfits: Avoid logos, busy prints, or clothing that takes attention away from you.

Join Casting Groups



Because someone's gotta sip fake coffee behind the drama.

Many casting calls are shared through specific platforms or groups, such as WhatsApp or Facebook.

How to Join:

- Through Your Agent: They may add you to relevant groups or mailing lists.
- Direct Applications: Some productions have open calls; ensure these are legitimate before applying.

Group Etiquette:

- Stay Active: Regularly check for updates and respond promptly if interested.
- Respect Group Rules: Follow the guidelines set by the group administrators.

Professional Communication: Use clear and polite language when interacting.



Set Life

**PREPARING
FOR YOUR
ROLE - THE
FOSAC WAY**

Apply & Accept Bookings



Because not all agencies are created equal, and this is how we roll.

Before You Accept the Booking
Before you type “available” faster than your aunty hits “Amen” on a WhatsApp chain, let’s break down how FOSAC bookings actually work. This isn’t just about being part of a WhatsApp group — it’s a professional gig, and we expect professional energy in return.

Answering a Brief the Right Way

We post all briefs first to our FOSAC-registered groups, unless it's a last-minute emergency. Being registered means you get first dibs — but it also means you’re expected to follow instructions properly.

Here’s how to reply like a pro:

- Only reply if you 100% fit the brief.
- Only apply if you’re 100% available on the dates.
- Make sure your transport is sorted before applying — we won’t be chasing you the night before.
- Send exactly what’s requested: usually your name, age, location, and a recent photo. If you don’t follow the brief, you won’t be considered. No exceptions.

If we feel you’re a fit, your details will be submitted to the production for selection.

Availability Check & COMMITMENT

If you say you're available, it's a real yes. No, maybe. No "I'll see how I feel in the morning." This industry runs on tight schedules and tighter budgets. Saying yes means you'll be there—on time, ready, reliable.

Double-Check the Details

- Date & Call Time: Can you 100% make it?
- Location: Know where you're going? How long will it take to get there in morning traffic?
- Wardrobe/Look: Are you a match for what's needed (e.g., clean-shaven, casual, fancy)? If you know the brief. This could only be given at a later stage.

Don't Double Book!

You can only be booked by one agent per production. Accepting from multiple agents creates chaos and could give you a bad rep.

You've Been Selected — What Happens Next?

If production selects you, we'll contact you to officially confirm your role and then:

- Add you to the filming group chat
- Share the booking confirmation form
- Send confirmed call time, location, and wardrobe brief

⚠ *Important: If you don't respond or join the group, we will replace you. We can't be left unsure if you're coming or not — ghosting gets you cut.*



**"Making movies
believable, one
casual coffee
sip at a time."**

Group Check-In Etiquette

Once you're in the group:

- Confirm with full name when added
- Check in again in the morning: "Up and getting ready for set"
- Post again when travelling and once you arrive on location
- After wrap, let us know you've arrived home safely

If we message and you go silent? That's how you get bumped off the list for future work.

FOSAC Booking Confirmation Form

You'll be sent a link like this one: [CLICK HERE](#).

This form confirms:

- Your most updated contact and banking details
- That you understand and accept the terms and conditions
- That your FICA documents are ready

That you agree to show up on time, ready and prepared

A Note from FOSAC

We know it might feel like a lot — all these processes, rules, confirmations, forms, updates... but here's the truth: We're not here to babysit. We're here to build a professional network of background actors who can be trusted, respected, and rebooked.

So, if you want to be part of this:

- Apply properly
- Communicate clearly
- Show up proudly
- And do your job like a boss — even if you're just "Passerby #12"

Because at FOSAC, everyone matters.

This system exists to help you:

- ✓ Show up confident and prepared
- ✓ Build your own reputation for professionalism and reliability
- ✓ Help FOSAC uphold our reputation
- ✓ Make a great impression on production (which leads to more bookings!)

At the end of the day, it benefits everyone — you as a brand, FOSAC Castings, and the production teams.

Preparing For Set



Wardrobe: Pack It Like a Pro

Get the Wardrobe Brief and Follow It
Production will often request a specific look (e.g. smart casual, business, township style, etc).

DO:

- Pack 3 options even if you're told to wear one
- Stick to plain, no branded clothing
- Iron your clothes beforehand.
You're not auditioning for "Wrinkled Wednesdays."

DON'T:

Bring clothes that are dirty, ripped (unless that's the look!)

Hair, Beards, Makeup & Nails

You were booked based on your photo — not someone else's. So if you had dreadlocks in your pic and you arrive with a fade, we've got a problem.
The Look You Submitted = The Look You Show Up With.

That goes for:

- Hair length and style
- Beards (trimmed, full, clean-shaven — whatever was in the pic)
- Hair colour (blonde in your photo? Don't rock up brunette!)
- Makeup (keep it natural unless otherwise stated)
- Nails (neat, clean, and appropriate — no bright green claws for a period drama please!)

Production booked you for a reason — and if your look changes without telling us, you risk being turned away without pay.

Be camera ready. That means:

- Hair done
- Makeup done (if applicable)
- Nails tidy
- Face fresh and ready to shine (even if you're just sipping fake coffee in the background)

We love transformation — but not mid-shoot.

Documents

Confirm Required Documents

- Certified copy of ID (no older than 3 months. HARD COPY)
- Asylum/work permit (if foreign national)
- Booking form filled out online

Pen – Yes, you still need one on set to sign forms

Travel Plans: Don't Let Transport Be the Plot Twist

You've been booked, your wardrobe's packed... now let's talk about how you're getting there (and back!)

Know where you need to be – well in advance!

That means:

- Use the pin drop/location address we send
- Check travel time the night before
- Save your call time & location somewhere easy to find
- Set multiple alarms (trust us – one alarm = danger)

Plan your transport:

- Have a reliable ride to and from set
- If you're using public transport or taxis, remember: late wraps happen, and taxis might not be running
- If that's the case, make alternate plans in advance – we cannot have last-minute cancellations because you "had no way home"

⚠ **Production is NOT responsible for your transport (unless stated otherwise)**

You need to arrive on time and leave safely – that's on you.

Don't forget to let us know on the group when you're back home safely (yes, even at 2am – we care!)

And please, don't accept the role if you know you're going to struggle with transport. It's better to say no than to put the whole shoot at risk because you're a no-show or leave set early.

Professionalism starts with showing up prepared – and that includes your travel plans.



Disaster Holiday

FOSAC
“LAW” -
FIT IN OR
SHIP OUT

On-Set Etiquette and Professionalism



Set Etiquette Starts at Home

- Get enough sleep the night before – you don't want to be "Zoned Out Background Extra #3"
- Eat breakfast if your call time is after 07:00 – don't count on a full meal right away
- Arrive early – aim to be 15–30 minutes early. This shows respect and professionalism

Mental Prep

This is not "just standing in the background."

You're helping build a world, a mood, a moment. Be present, be alert, and follow direction like a pro. Don't be afraid to ask the AD (Assistant Director) if you're unsure –but don't interrupt unnecessarily either.

FOSAC On Set Code of Conduct

"If you want to be treated like a professional – act like one."

Welcome to the set – where vibes meet responsibility. Whether you're here for the first time or the fiftieth, these are the non-negotiables that help keep things smooth, safe, and stress-free. Read it. Know it. Live it.

Professionalism First

- Be Professional: Always arrive with a positive attitude, ready to work. This is a job, not a party.
- Respect the Hierarchy: The ADs run the show – follow their lead, no backchat.
- Treat Everyone Kindly: Cast, crew, security, cleaner – respect is for everyone.

Punctuality & Commitment

- Call Time is Law: Be 15–30 mins early. No fashionably late entrances.
- 12-Hour Workdays: That's standard. If you're not up for it, don't confirm.
- No Early Departures: If there's an emergency, speak Fosac first. Production must approve it.

Confidentiality

- No Spoilers, No Leaks: Scripts, plotlines, scenes — all confidential.
- No Posting: Photos/videos only with production's permission. No social media until it airs — or risk legal action.

Catering & Breaks

- Breakfast: If your call time is after 07:00, eat at home — breakfast likely won't be served.
- Lunch: Cast and crew eat first. Wait your turn.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Craft Station: Keep it clean. Don't raid it like it's a buffet.

"Background actors: silently stealing scenes since forever."



• On Set Behaviour

- Phones Off: Vibrate isn't silent. When in doubt — power off.
- Stay in Holding: Don't wander off. We're not hunting for background during rolling.
- Keep it Clean: Tidy up after yourself. This isn't your lounge.
- Noise Down: Especially during takes. No loud chatting, singing, or TikTok rehearsals.
- No Friends, Family or Pets: You're booked — not your cousin, partner, or side hustle.

• Zero Tolerance Zone

- Drugs or Alcohol = Instant Removal: And no, we don't owe you payment.
- Racism, Sexism, Discrimination? You're done.
- Harassment or Fraternising: This is a professional space. Not Tinder.

Performance & Direction

- Continuity Matters: Same action, every take, unless told otherwise.
- Don't Talk to Cast or Crew (unless they talk to you).
- Follow Instructions: If you're confused, ask — but don't argue.
- Respect Props & Gear: That's not your toys. Don't touch unless told to.

Communication & Issues

- Sign In & Out: Timesheet + ID = Payment. No sign-in, no moola.
- Let Us Know You Got Home Safe: Especially after late wraps — check in on the group.
- Problems? Speak to the Agency: Not production. We will handle it.

Final Reminder

- Represent Like a Pro: Every move you make reflects on you and FOSAC. Let's keep it golden.

Remember: If you don't take the job seriously, someone else will. Your professionalism = more bookings. Sloppiness? = Removal from our database. It's that simple.

PRO TIP:

Being prepared = being rebooked. Productions remember punctual, respectful background who follow instructions. Those are the ones who climb from background to featured, and beyond.



Respect the Industry

Being on set isn't just about your role — it's about being part of a team. Every action (or lack of action) affects everyone: the cast, the crew, the production, and your fellow background performers.



Call Time is Law – Not a Suggestion

The time we give you is not “ish.” If your call time is 5:30 AM, you are ready to work at 5:30 AM.

Call time is your contract with the industry — miss it, and you're breaking that contract.

What's the Big Deal?

When you're late, you don't just make yourself look bad — you throw the whole production off.

- The AD is stressed and checking their watch.
- The director is adjusting the shot.
- The crew is now rushing.
- And your fellow background actors? They're covering your spot and possibly your next booking too.

All because you hit snooze one too many times.

Here's the Rule:

If your call time is 6:00AM, your mission is to be on set no later than 5:45AM.

Early = professional. On time = late. Late = fined or replaced.

Because when you respect the call time, everyone can do their job — and the production keeps moving smoothly.

Continuity Matters – your absence ruins scenes!

So, you think skipping Day 2 of filming isn't a biggie because "it's just background"? WRONG. Welcome to the magical world of continuity, where you not showing up ruins the whole vibe – and possibly the entire scene. Let's break it down, FOSAC style:

What Is Continuity Anyway?

Continuity means keeping things consistent in every single shot of a scene – clothes, props, lighting, and yes, YOU. If you were sipping a Coke in your left hand during Take 1, and it magically ends up in your right hand in Take 5 – guess what? That's a continuity error. And eagle-eyed viewers (and the director!) will notice.

Now imagine YOU were sitting at Table 4 during Scene 6 of a fancy restaurant shoot on Monday but on Tuesday, you're gone. Table 4 is empty. BOOM. Continuity destroyed. Scene ruined. Hours wasted. Money lost. Director furious.

All because you thought, *"Ah shame, I'm just background, they won't miss me."*

Why It's a Big Deal:

- Scene Consistency: When you vanish mid-scene, it creates noticeable gaps. One minute you're at the bar, next minute you've evaporated.
- Realism: Background actors make the world feel real. If the same people aren't in the background across takes, it looks like a glitch in the Matrix.
- Story Support: You help shape the environment the lead characters move through – your presence (or lack of it) matters.
- Professionalism: When you show up consistently, productions remember that. And trust us, they also remember when you flake.

You WILL NOT Get Paid!

Let's be real – if you confirmed continuity dates and then don't pitch, we won't just be disappointed. We won't pay you for the days you did show up either. Yebo, that's how serious this is.

Why?

Because your disappearance costs the production. Scenes need to be reworked. Everyone's schedules get messed up. And our agency – the one that trusted you – now looks bad.



Real Talk:

The film industry is not a hobby. It's not "just vibes." It's a business. With tight budgets and tighter schedules. When you agree to a continuity booking, it's a commitment. Not a suggestion.

If you're not ready to commit for ALL required days — don't accept the booking.

No hard feelings. We'd rather you be honest than disappear and wreck the shoot

Final Word on Continuity:

- It's not just the wardrobe and props that need to match from scene to scene — it's YOU too.
- Want to build a reputation as someone who's reliable and professional? Then show up.
- Want to never get booked again? Flake on a continuity job.

Let's keep it real, keep it professional, and keep the magic flowing onscreen.



Excuses? We've Heard Them All

Once you accept a booking, that's it — you're part of the production machine. There are no maybes, no "I'll try." It's either YES or NO. And if it's YES — we expect results, not excuses.

Common Excuses (And Why We Don't Buy Them):

- "Traffic" — It's Rush Hour. There's always traffic. Leave earlier.
- "I got lost" — Use the location pin the night before. GPS!
- "Forgot my ID" — That's like a DJ forgetting their USB.
- "Transport issues" — Sort it before confirming.
- "My phone died" — But you're alive and can still show up.

Emergencies Do Happen

We get it — life throws curveballs. But tell us ASAP so we can try to save the day. Ghosting us? Not cool. It hurts the production, the agency, and future opportunities.

Last-Minute Cancellations: Why They Hurt EVERYONE

You might think cancelling last minute only affects you, but here's what really goes down when you ghost or drop out hours before call time.

The Fallout:

- The scene looks weird — meant to be a full party, but now it looks like a braai no one came to.
- Crew and directors scramble — they've gotta reblock the whole scene, shoot tighter, and rethink the vibe.
- Other background actors suffer — more movement, more coverage, more pressure.
- It costs the production money — and your agent? Probably now crying into their coffee.
- The agent has to scramble to find a last-minute replacement — which is stressful and not always possible.
- Someone else could've taken that spot — someone reliable, excited, ready to work. But you said yes, so they missed out.

Real Example:

We booked 15 background for a bar scene.

Only 10 showed up.

The director had to toss out wide shots and shoot it like it was the world's saddest pub.

Vibes? Ruined.

Time? Wasted.

Stress level? HIGH.

All because 5 people went MIA without a word.

Think Before You Cancel:

Ask yourself: Is it a real emergency? (We mean real — illness, accident, tragedy)

Cancel the Right Way:

- Don't just drop a text and go ghost.
- Speak to your Agent as soon as possible.
- "I forgot" or "I overslept" doesn't cut it — you had one job. Show up.



Bottom Line

This isn't about drama. This isn't about being too strict.

This is about RESPECT.

Respect for the crew, the production, your fellow background actors, and your agent.

At FOSAC, we're building a reputation — one that gets us invited back to productions over and over. If you keep letting us down, we can't take you with us.

So please:

- Only take bookings if you're 100% sure.
- No-shows, Late for Call Time = no future bookings with us.
- Let's do this right — for yourself, for us, for the whole set.





Behind The Scenes

BEHIND THE SCENES

Payment Terms & Following Up (FOSAC Style)



Let's be real—you didn't wake up at 4am, rehearse your "walking casually" moves, and freeze your toes off on set for free. But getting paid through FOSAC Castings takes a little patience, paperwork, and professionalism. This is how we do it—other agencies may differ, but this is the FOSAC flow.

Before Filming: Lock It In

Submit Your Docs Early

- Make sure your certified ID, valid work permit (if needed), and your FOSAC Booking Form are submitted before you step on set.
- No paperwork = no pay. Don't say we didn't warn you.

After Filming: Know the Timeline

Here's how payments typically work:

- Telenovelas: Paid by the first week of the following month, if you worked before the 15th.
- Movies & Series: Can take up to 6 weeks.
- Commercials: Expect a wait of up to 3 months—those ad budgets take time to clear.

⚠ These timelines reflect industry standards. Unless FOSAC tells you otherwise, please be patient and plan ahead.

"Background acting: the art of being seen without being seen."



FOSAC's Role in Your Payment

Let's clear this up:

- FOSAC is not your employer—we're the middle link between talent and production.
- We don't hold your money. We process your payment once the production pays us.
- No advances will be made—sorry fam, we're not a bank.
- If there's a delay, we do follow up with production to keep things moving on your behalf. Do not contact production, always contact the agent. If no joy from the agent then and only then may you contact production.

Your Personal Casting Log = Power

If you're booked more than a taxi rank on payday, keep track of your gigs:

- ✓ Date worked
- ✓ Production name
- ✓ Role played (yes, even if it was "Angry Neighbour #6")
- ✓ Call & wrap times
- ✓ Agent

This helps us help you if there's a payment issue later on.

Following Up (The FOSAC Way)

So, you've waited the standard time and still no money? Here's how to follow up like a pro:

Stay Cool, Stay Kind:

- Contact FOSAC, not the production team.
- Keep it respectful and use writing (WhatsApp or email) for clear records.
- Avoid angry rants—no one gets paid faster from ALL CAPS.

Sample follow-up:

"Hi FOSAC, just checking in on payment for my role as [Role] on [Production Name], filmed on [Date]. Any updates? Thanks so much!"

Still unresolved? If you've waited, followed up professionally, and it's still radio silence—you can escalate through SABAG (South African Background Actors Guild). But use that route only after FOSAC's internal process is followed.

"Props, sets, costumes... and US. That's how you build a world."



Commission Clarified

What you're quoted = what you take home.
FOSAC's commission is already deducted upfront.

TAX Time: Keep It Legit

- FOSAC is not your employer, so we don't deduct PAYE.
- If the production does not deduct PAYE either, it's your responsibility to declare your freelance income to SARS.

You are only taxed if your rate is R500 or above, so dont let scam agents fool you.

FOSAC Real Talk:

Getting paid means:

- Handling your business before AND after the shoot
- Communicating like a pro
- Trusting the process while keeping your own records tidy

We want to pay you. Help us help you—and we'll all keep winning, together.

Staying Informed and Continue Learning



Being a great Background is a great start — but don't stop there. This industry changes faster than TikTok trends, and staying in the loop is what levels you up.

While some background are happy to be background (which is great, just be the best background you can be) others want to move to speaking roles. Upskilling in background and acting is always encouraged by FOSAC

FOSAC's Reminder: We're not just booking you — we're backing you. We want to see you thrive, not just show up. So stay ready. Keep training. Keep learning.

Stay Plugged In

Check Your Phone Often

Missed calls = missed chances. Charge your phone, keep it close, and reply fast — bookings can disappear in minutes.

Join Casting Groups

Get into WhatsApp groups where FOSAC and other trusted sources share job updates, tips, and last-minute castings. Stay where the info drops.

Follow the Right Pages

- FOSAC on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

This is where the action happens. Don't rely on word-of-mouth when the industry is literally posting opportunities daily.

"Wherever there's action, there's background — making it believable."



Learn While You Earn

Let's be real — being background can look like just standing around... but if you pay attention, you'll realize:
Every set is a school.

Observe Everything

- How do lead actors move?
- How do the crew set up lights, block a shot, fix continuity?
- What happens during a "reset"? What's a "mark"?

Ask Questions (Respectfully)

Don't interrupt scenes, but if the AD or crew has a moment — ask. The more you understand, the more confident (and useful) you'll be.

Use Every Scene as Training

Be present. Be alert. The background actor who listens, adapts, and hits their mark without being told twice? That's who gets bumped up.

Ready to Level Up?

Want to go from "Person at Taxi Rank" to "Featured Close-Up" or speaking roles one day? Then treat this like a stepping stone, not a holding cell.

Free Resources to Up Your Game

- YouTube – Acting tips, set life breakdowns, and character-building exercises
- Behind-the-Scenes Videos – Watch how real productions operate
- Blogs & Articles – FOSAC shares real-world advice on [castings.fosac.co.za](https://www.fosac.co.za/castings)
- Social Lives & Webinars – Many local industry pros go live with gems — show up, ask questions, take notes

Workshops – Some are free, others affordable. Do them. Every time.

The Informed Background Actor is the Booked Background Actor

Being informed helps you:

- Act professionally on set
- Avoid scams and sketchy agents
- Connect with legit industry people
- Move from the background... to the spotlight (if that is what you want)

Knowing Your Worth



Whether you're walking past the camera or holding a pose in the heat for hours — your time, effort, and presence matter. But knowing your worth isn't just about money — it's also about respecting yourself and how you show up in this industry.

You are not “just” Background, You're helping create the vibe, fill the world, and sell the reality of a scene. That matters. Don't let anyone downplay your contribution — not even yourself.

Don't tolerate disrespect from crew, production, or other background. Speak to us. Be kind, yes — but not invisible.

Carry yourself with confidence. A pro mindset gets you rebooked faster than fancy wardrobe.

Understand What You're Paid For

Your rate covers more than just your “5 seconds of fame.”

You're being paid for:

- Your time (early call times, late wraps)
- Your look (sometimes booked for a specific vibe)
- Your professionalism (showing up ready, following direction, holding positions for hours)
- Your compliance (following wardrobe, NDAs, Timesheets, etc.)

"Background isn't extra — it's essential."



Speak Up — But Stay Professional

If you're uncomfortable, unsafe, or treated unfairly, you *can* speak up. Do it the right way:

- First, speak to your AD/agency contact — not just random crew.
- Keep your tone calm and clear — no shouting matches.
- If there's ongoing mistreatment, **SABAG** (South African Background Actors Guild) is your backup.

What *not* to do:

- Vent loudly on set
- Blast productions online
- Create drama in the WhatsApp group

It's a small industry. Word travels. Protect your rep.

Know When to Grow

Been doing this for a while? Ready to move beyond background?

Consider these next steps:

- Ask your agent if you can be put forward for featured or speaking roles
- Create a simple acting resume with productions you've worked on
- Take acting classes or get a monologue showreel
- Start networking with other talent — build your tribe

Your worth doesn't just sit at a rate. It's in how seriously you take your journey.



Final Word on Worth

Respect your time. Respect others. And know when to demand respect in return.

The moment you start treating your background work like a real job — others will too. And that's how you climb the ladder, one call sheet at a time.



Various Productions

**STAY SAFE,
STAY
SMART**

Know Your Rights



Staying Safe, Smart, and Streetwise in the Industry!

Being in the background doesn't mean you stay in the dark. Whether you're on a big series, a local telenovela, or a slick music video — you deserve respect, safety, and to be treated like a professional. That means knowing your rights and knowing when to run for the hills!

So, before you step onto set, know what you're entitled to — because being informed is your first line of protection.

Your Body, Your Boundaries

Even in “party scenes” or “romantic crowd shots,” you have the right to say no to:

- Kissing, touching, or physical contact not mentioned before booking.
- Wearing revealing or inappropriate clothing not agreed on beforehand.
- Being filmed in compromising positions that weren't clearly explained.

Speak to your agent or the AD immediately if this happens.

If you are ever uncomfortable on set, speak up.

Know What You're Signing

Some actors sign things without reading them properly — Contracts, NDA's or release forms etc.

- Ask what the form is for before signing.
- Never sign something that includes clauses about usage or exclusivity without understanding it and without asking us.
- If unsure, take a photo of the document and ask us to explain before signing.

"You might not see us... but you'd miss us if we weren't there."

Don't Let Anyone Withhold Your Pay

Don't Let Anyone Withhold Your Pay – Fosac will never withhold your payment without a reason.

No one — not even an agent — has the right to withhold your payment unfairly.

Here's what you should know:

- If you worked and your documents were in order, you're entitled to payment.
- If you didn't get paid, and no valid reason was given (e.g., no-show, bad behaviour), follow up respectfully with your agent.

Still nothing? Contact SABAG if your rights are being ignored.

Speak Up: Your Safety Matters

At FOSAC, we're not just about getting you on set — we're about making sure that set is safe, respectful, and professional.

You have the right to feel safe and respected at work.

If you ever face intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment, or abuse — from anyone on set — you are not alone, and you are not overreacting. It is never okay, and it must be reported.

What should you do?

- Speak to the Assistant Director (AD) or Background Coordinator if something happens on set.
- Report it to your agency (FOSAC will support you fully).
- If you need more help, reach out to the South African Background Actors Guild (SABAG).

SABAG offers direct support, guidance, and a formal way to report and escalate serious issues.

 Report it here:

<https://sabackgroundactorsguild.co.za/services/>

We take these reports seriously. Your safety is more important than any booking.

You deserve to work in peace. You deserve respect. Always.

“We fill the frame so stars can shine.”

Protect Yourself



The industry is full of amazing opportunities — but also a few dodgy chancers.

This section is all about giving you street smarts: how to spot red flags, avoid scams, and handle yourself like the pro you are.

From contracts to creepy castings — we've got your back so you can have your best foot forward.

Spotting Scams & Industry Red Flags

Protecting your craft, your wallet, and your future.

The entertainment world is exciting — but not everyone in it plays fair. Here's how to spot the shady, the sketchy, and the downright scammy.

Red Flags to Watch For:

- **Agents Asking for Upfront Fees:** Legit casting agents do not charge you upfront to be on their books. If someone says “Pay R500 to be added to our WhatsApp group,” run.
- **Promises of Guaranteed Roles or Fame:** Nobody can guarantee you a spot in a show or film. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- **Unclear or Fake Production Names:** Always ask for the real name of the production and do a quick search. Real productions have call sheets, NDAs, and proper paperwork.
- **Being Asked to Send Inappropriate Photos or Videos:** You never need to send anything unprofessional. If someone asks you to send a video that makes you uncomfortable, report it.
- **Requests to “Audition” in Private Locations:** Always audition at verified venues. If someone wants to meet you “in a hotel room” or “at their flat,” it's a hard no.

How to Stay Safe:

- Work through reputable agencies (use OSCASA to check).
- Keep records of all bookings, messages, and payments.
- Trust your gut — if something feels off, it probably is.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or contact SABAG for help.

Always Double Check

- All conversations with agents and coordinators
- Call sheets and booking forms
- Payment receipts or proof of work



Keep Records

- Who is paying you? If not through FOSAC
- Who booked you? If not through FOSAC
- Where are you going, and is it a verified location?
- What are you signing and what will it be used for?

Stand Up for Others

Sometimes it's easier to spot abuse happening to someone else.

If you see:

- Harassment
- Racism
- Bullying
- Dangerous conditions

Support your fellow background actors. Report it to your agent or AD/ coordinator. Your silence = their suffering.

Report Everything to Us (Even if the AD Handled It)

FOSAC wants to know if something happens — even if it was “sorted out” on set. We'll follow up and make sure it doesn't happen again.





Blood Legacy

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

From Background to Beyond



So you're loving set life, hey? Maybe you're ready to step out from the crowd and move toward bigger roles. Here's what you need to know:

Understanding the Different Roles

- Background Actor: Helps create the world of the story (restaurants, parties, streets).
- Featured Background: Still non-speaking but you're seen clearly or interact visually (e.g., handing a file, reacting strongly).
- Bit Part / Featured Extra: Small speaking line or action moment — a step closer to full acting roles!

Support/Lead Roles: Full characters with lines, story arcs, and screen time — booked through auditions and often require agency representation

Important: Background = Background

- If you're booked as background, you stay background — unless production officially upgrades you.
- Please don't try to pitch yourself for lines or extra scenes on set — your hard work, attitude, and professionalism will speak louder than anything else!
- If production gives you real lines (not just chanting in a protest or shouting at a football match!), you must let us know immediately.
- We'll help make sure you get credited and paid properly for your upgraded role.

Mastering Your Self-Tape



Some background actors are happy staying in the background — and that's awesome!

There's no shame in chilling, earning, and enjoying the magic of set life without chasing the spotlight.

But if you're feeling the itch to move up — maybe to a bit part, featured role, or even lead — then you need to know how to deliver a self-tape or monologue audition.

In this industry, opportunity moves fast — and if you can't send a quick, professional self-tape, you could miss your shot.

Lucky for you, we've made it simple!

Tips for Self-Tape

Self-tapes are your moment to shine — no travel, no nerves in the waiting room, and the chance to perfect your performance before anyone even sees it. That also means casting directors expect professional-level tapes.

Follow these key guidelines to make yours stand out for the right reasons:

General Setup

- Orientation: Always film in landscape (horizontal) mode. Portrait = no-go.
- Lighting & Sound: Natural light or soft, even lighting. Your face should be clearly visible, and your audio clean (no barking dogs or humming fridges!).
- Background: Use a plain, uncluttered background. A blank wall or neutral curtain works perfectly.
- Framing: Medium close-up (head and shoulders) unless otherwise requested. Keep the camera at eye level. Don't look directly into the lens unless the brief asks you to.
- Reader: If someone is reading lines for other characters, keep them off-camera. Their voice should support you, not steal the scene.
- Wardrobe: Dress to suggest the character — not full costume. Keep it simple, clean, and aligned with the role.
- Preparation: Know your lines. Breathe. Perform with intention.
- Deadlines: Always submit your tape on time. Late = missed opportunity. No one has time for “Sorry, I just saw this now.”

How to Slate Like a Pro (Before Your Audition or Monologue)

Before you dive into your amazing performance, you must slate — it's your first impression!

The slate gives the casting director a glimpse of who you are, not just what you can act.

(And please, don't be a zombie or a circus clown — be natural, real, and confident!)

Step-by-Step Slate:

- **Step 1:** Introduce Yourself Say clearly and with energy (not a whisper, not a scream!): Hi, my name is [Your Full Name], I am [Your Age], and I am auditioning for the role of [Character Name]."
- **Step 2:** Profiles and Hands
Turn to your right (side profile)
Turn to your left
Show your hands — front and back
Smile and show your teeth (no forced grins — just a nice, natural smile!)
- **Step 3:** Perform Your Script or Monologue
Using the tips we have given you
- **Step 4:** Wrap It Up Professionally End with a short, polite:
"Thank you for watching my audition."

Self-Tape Monologues

A monologue can be your greatest weapon. It shows off your range, presence, and how well you handle a character's journey.

Monologue Tips:

- Length: 60 to 90 seconds (unless otherwise specified)

Choose wisely: Pick something with an emotional arc — something that starts one way and ends differently. Show your layers.

Self-Tape Monologues – You choose

Self Tape Audition – Sides (script) given



**FINAL
MESSAGE
FROM
FOSAC**

We Have Got You!



Not Registered with FOSAC Yet?

We're always looking for dedicated, passionate, and professional background talent! If you're reading this and not officially part of the FOSAC Casting family yet, here's how to join us:

- Visit: castings.fosac.co.za
- Join the Groups: After registering, you'll be invited to our WhatsApp groups.
- Stay Ready: Opportunities can pop up at any time — keep your phone charged and your wardrobe prepped!

Final Message

To every background performer, featured face, and future lead:

You are the heartbeat of every scene. You turn empty space into a world we believe in. You make magic happen — often without a single word spoken.

Being a background actor isn't "less than." It's a craft, and when done right, it can open doors you didn't even know were there.

So be proud. Be present. Be the kind of talent people want to work with again and again.

From your first booking to your fiftieth — FOSAC is with you every step of the way.

Cassandra Garofallou

Founder & Director Fosac Castings



Set Life

YOUR TOOLBOX

KEY RESOURCES & LINKS

From finding vetted agents to understanding your taxes, from legal support to training platforms – these links are your plug for staying informed, safe, and ahead of the game. Bookmark them, share them, use them. Because when you know more, you grow more.

FOSAC Links

Website & Blog (*Tips, Guides & Castings*)

[🔗 https://castings.fosac.co.za](https://castings.fosac.co.za)

Facebook

[🔗 https://www.facebook.com/FOSACCASTING](https://www.facebook.com/FOSACCASTING)

Instagram

[🔗 https://www.instagram.com/fosac_castings](https://www.instagram.com/fosac_castings)

YouTube Channel (*Behind the scenes, tips, interviews*)

[🔗 https://www.youtube.com/@fosacentertainment.southafrica](https://www.youtube.com/@fosacentertainment.southafrica)

WhatsApp Groups

Links are provided after registering with Fosac Castings.

Industry Links

SABAG – South African Background Actors Guild

🛡️ Know your rights & report issues (incl. sexual harassment)

[🔗 https://sabackgroundactorsguild.co.za/services/](https://sabackgroundactorsguild.co.za/services/)

OSCASA – Official South African Casting Agents Association

For Vetted, Legit Casting Agencies

[🔗 https://www.oscasa.co.za](https://www.oscasa.co.za)

SWIFT – Sisters Working in Film & Television

Empowering women in film

[🔗 https://www.swiftsa.org.za](https://www.swiftsa.org.za)

KZN Film Commission

[🔗 https://www.kznfilm.co.za](https://www.kznfilm.co.za)

Gauteng Film Commission

[🔗 https://www.gautengfilm.org.za](https://www.gautengfilm.org.za)

Other Useful Links

SARS – Tax Registration

Get a SARS tax number & register

[🔗 https://www.sars.gov.za](https://www.sars.gov.za)

FOSAC “DAY ON SET” CHECKLIST

Your ultimate prep list to slay your shoot day like a pro! From the night before to wrap time, this checklist makes sure you show up prepped, professional, and ready to shine. Tick it off, show up, show respect — and get rebooked!

The Night Before:

- ☐ Confirm on the Booking WhatsApp Group
- ☐ Comment with: Your Full ID Name + Confirmed
- ☐ Make sure you’ve completed Fosac Booking Confirmation Form online’
- ☐ Booking info saved and confirmed
- ☐ Check exactly where location is on Google Maps
- ☐ Set Alarms

.Essential Set Bag Items

- ☐ Pen & certified copy of ID
- ☐ Water bottle & light snacks
- ☐ Mini sewing kit or safety pins
- ☐ Face cloth / wet wipes
- ☐ Headphones/Book (for waiting time, not shooting!)
- ☐ Wardrobe packed and prepped
- ☐ Hair tools, grooming kit ready
- ☐ Phone fully charged (+ pack a power bank!)
- ☐ Name and Contact Details in Bag incase misplaced

On the Morning Of:

- ☐ Keep your phone on and close
- ☐ Check in on the Booking WhatsApp Group:
 - ☐ • “Up and getting ready for set”
 - ☐ • “On the way to location”
 - ☐ • “On location”
- ☐ Arrive 15–30 minutes early
- ☐ Arrive with a respectful attitude & team mindset

FINAL CHECKS:

- ☐ HAVE FUN – but stay professional!
- ☐ WRAP TIME – do not forget to sign out
- ☐ Let us know you are safely a home!

CASTING LOG

MONTH:

[illegible]

FILM TERMINOLOGY 101

A Glossary for Background Actors (aka Set Ninjas)

Whether you're fresh on set or already a seasoned pro, this will help you decode the lingo and walk the walk like a true industry insider.

ACTION – The director's cue for the scene to begin. Background actors should already be in motion unless told otherwise.

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS (ADs) – The team who manage the flow on set. They coordinate departments, give instructions to background actors, and ensure scenes run smoothly.

BACKGROUND ACTION – Your cue to begin moving/performing as a background actor. Often comes right after "Action!"

CALLSHEET – A document listing who's needed, what scenes are filming, call times, locations, and more.

CHECK THE GATE – A call from the director to inspect the last shot to make sure there were no issues (e.g. camera smudges or unwanted movement).

CLAPPER BOARD – That iconic board snapped at the start of a take. It helps sync audio and visuals in post-production.

CONFIRMED BOOKING – You are officially selected and committed to work. Don't change your appearance (hair, facial hair, etc.) without approval.

CONTINUITY – Keeping wardrobe, movement, and appearance consistent between shots or filming days.

DOUBLE – A person who stands in for a lead actor for specific shots (like hands, feet, or back-of-head angles).

FINAL CHECKS – The last chance for hair, makeup, and wardrobe to ensure everything's perfect before shooting.

FIRST POSITIONS – The position where you start at the beginning of a scene. Also called "number ones."

FROM THE TOP – Start the scene from the beginning.

HOLDING AREA – The waiting area where background actors stay when not on set.

LINE-UP – After getting into costume, actors form a line to be checked for continuity and wardrobe approval.

MARK – A specific place you're told to stand or hit during the scene. Usually marked with tape.

PENCILLED BOOKING – A tentative booking, not yet confirmed.

PICK-UP – A small scene or part of a scene that’s being re-shot.

PROP – An item given to you as part of your role. Treat it with care—you’re responsible for it during the shoot.

PROSTHETIC – Special effects makeup to alter your appearance (e.g. scars, wounds).

REHEARSAL – A practice run of the scene before filming.

RESET – Returning to first positions for another take.

RHUBARB – What background actors pretend to say in group scenes. Mouth “rhubarb” repeatedly to mimic conversation.

RUNNER / PA – A crew member who assists the AD team by fetching, delivering, and helping with set logistics.

SECOND UNIT – A smaller crew that films inserts, stunts, or shots that don’t need the main cast.

STAND-BY – Get ready—filming is about to begin.

STAND-IN – A person used in place of the main actor for lighting or camera setup. Usually matches the actor’s height, build, and skin tone.

UNIT BASE / BASE CAMP – The home base for the crew and talent, where you check in.

WRAP – The end of the shoot day. It stands for "Wind, Reel, And Print."

Bonus Terms You Might Hear:

BLOCKING – Rehearsing actor movement and positions within the scene.

FEATURED BACKGROUND – A background actor who is visible and/or interacts directly with the principal cast.

CONTINUITY PHOTOS – Photos taken of your look to maintain consistency in future scenes.

SPLIT CALL – When actors arrive at different times based on their scenes.

STRIKE – Taking down the set after filming is done.

Save this, print it, and keep it in your set bag—you’ll thank yourself later. Knowledge is power, and professionalism gets you rehired!