



COMMERCIALS DEPARTMENT TIPS & TOOLS

IMPROVISING & AD-LIBBING AT AUDITIONS

The Union has received many queries about improv and ad-lib at auditions so we thought it would be a good idea to provide a quick refresher. Here are some points to remember:

- Schedule A., Section I.2 of the 2013 SAG-AFTRA Commercials Contract covers Improvs and Ad-Libs (also referred to as “creative session calls”). A definition of what constitutes a creative session is provided as follows:

Definition: Ad Lib or Creative Session Call. Any request of a principal performer to devise dialogue shall be deemed an ad lib or creative session call. Where no dialogue is involved, the session shall be deemed an ad lib or creative session call when principal performer is requested to devise action not provided by the script, storyboard or by specific direction.

- If a performer is asked to create their own dialogue at an audition they need to be paid for it. Currently, the rate for improv at auditions is \$251.10 for the first hour and \$125.55 for each additional half-hour.
- A casting director should give clear and concise verbal and written instructions to the talent (set the tone and describe the overall scene the performer is auditioning for), so the performer is clear on what the expectations of the role are. For example: This is a commercial for Velveeta Cheese. You will be sitting on the sofa about to eat your pesto cheese Panini, when your teenage son swipes your gooey sandwich from you. Show us your reaction.
- The casting director may tell performers that if they feel like adding their own words or actions to the scene (in essence make it their own/own the scene) in order to have a comfortable audition, that is acceptable and will not trigger payment to the performer. For example: We’re doing a commercial for waterproof rain boots. You’ll be splashing about and jumping in puddles to demonstrate how well your feet stay dry. Go ahead and show us what you’ve got to convey that message. [Performer then whistles *Singing in the Rain* and jumps around, kicking up water like Gene Kelly]

If you have any questions about weather permitting calls, please contact us at 323.549.6858 in Los Angeles or 212.827.1454 in New York.