

AC bag

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AC Bag

An Assistant Camera's (AC) kit bag is a personalized and essential collection of tools that ensures the smooth operation of the camera department on any film set. The contents can vary based on the specific role (1st AC vs. 2nd AC), the type of production (film vs. digital), and personal preference, but a core set of tools is universally required 4.

Here is a detailed breakdown of what to include, categorized for clarity.

1. The Bag Itself

The foundation of your kit is a durable, well-organized bag. A popular industry standard is the **CineBags CB11 Production Bag** or similar models. Key features to look for include:

- **Multiple Removable Pouches:** For organizing small tools and expendables 5.
- **Durable and Waterproof Material:** To protect expensive equipment from the elements 5.
- **Adequate Size:** The CB11, for example, has exterior dimensions of 22" x 13.5" x 9" (approx. 56 x 34 x 23 cm), providing ample space for tools and accessories 5.
- **Comfortable Straps:** Including a center carry strap and a removable shoulder strap for ease of transport 5.

2. Core Essential Tools (The "Must-Haves")

These are the absolute non-negotiable items you will use on nearly every shoot 14.

- **Screwdrivers:** A comprehensive set including Phillips, Flathead, and Torx drivers in various sizes 1.
- **Pliers & Grips:** Including standard pliers and RoboGrips (or similar) for gripping and tightening bolts and camera components 1.
- **Wrenches:** A set of Allen wrenches (both metric and standard) and a torque wrench for precise tightening 14.
- **Scissors:** A sturdy pair for cutting tape, fabric, and other materials.
- **Flashlight/Headlamp:** For working in dark conditions, checking camera gates, or cleaning sensors.
- **Measuring Tools:**
 - A **soft tape measure** (e.g., FatMax for stability) for measuring subject distances 1.
 - A **laser measure** (e.g., Hilti PD-E with a built-in scope) for highly accurate long-distance measurements 1.
- **Marking Tools:** Sharpies, dry-erase markers, and grease pencils for marking lenses and actor positions 4.

3. Focus Pulling Essentials

Primarily for the **1st AC**, these tools are critical for achieving sharp focus.

- **Tape Measure:** As listed above, this is a focus puller's primary tool.
- **Laser Measure:** For ultimate accuracy at long distances 1.
- **Marker Tags:** For placing precise marks on the follow focus or lens.

4. Cleaning & Maintenance

Keeping the camera and lenses pristine is a top priority to avoid dust spots and damage 14.

- **Lens Cleaning Fluid & Tissue:** For smudges and fingerprints on lenses.
- **Compressed Air or Blower:** A rocket blower or canned air for safely removing dust from the camera sensor and body without touching it 1.
- **Microfiber Cloths:** Chem-wipes and other lint-free cloths for general cleaning 1.

5. Expendables

These are consumable items that need frequent restocking. It's wise to carry your own supply.

- **Camera Tape:** 1" and 2" cloth tape (typically black or white). The most used item on set for marking and labeling.
- **Velcro & Dual Lock:** Heavy-duty hook-and-loop fasteners for securing batteries, monitors, and other accessories to the camera. Dual Lock is a stronger alternative to standard Velcro 1.
- **Butyl Tape:** A clean, residue-free adhesive tape for securely attaching filters to matte boxes 1.
- **Zip Ties:** For neat and secure cable management.
- **Lens Gaffer Tape:** For securing lens gears or other delicate tasks.

6. 2nd AC & Data Management Tools

These items are more associated with the **2nd AC's** duties of slating, managing media, and paperwork.

- **Slate (Clapperboard):** A timecode slate is ideal for sync sound.
- **SD Cards & Card Reader:** For offloading and backing up footage if required.
- **Script Copies & Camera Reports:** Pens, paperwork, and a way to organize them.
- **Label Maker:** A Brother P-Touch or similar for clean, professional labels on media cases and equipment 4.

7. Electronics & Power

- **Multimeter:** For troubleshooting power issues and checking battery voltage.
- **Spare Cables:** A variety of common video (BNC, HDMI) and power (DTAP, P-Tap) cables.
- **Battery Tester:** A simple device to check the charge of onboard batteries.

8. Personal & Comfort Items

A well-prepared AC also takes care of themselves and their team.

- **Work Gloves:** For handling hot lights or rough equipment 4.

- **Advil/Pain Relievers:** Long days are physically demanding 4.
- **Water & Snacks:** Staying hydrated and energized is crucial.
- **Knee Pads:** For those low-angle shots or long setups on the ground.

AC Kit Essentials Summary Table

Category	Key Items	Primary User	Purpose
Core Tools	Screwdrivers, Pliers, Wrenches, Scissors, Flashlight	1st & 2nd AC	Camera assembly, maintenance, and repairs
Focus Pulling	Tape Measure, Laser Measure, Marker Tags	1st AC	Achieving and maintaining accurate focus
Cleaning	Lens Fluid/Tissue, Compressed Air, Microfiber Cloths	1st AC	Keeping lenses and camera sensor clean
Expendables	Camera Tape, Velcro/Dual Lock, Butyl Tape, Zip Ties	1st & 2nd AC	Securing gear, labeling, and consumable tasks
2nd AC Tools	Slate, Card Reader, Reports, Label Maker	2nd AC	Slating shots, data management, organization
Electronics	Multimeter, Spare Cables, Battery Tester	1st AC	Troubleshooting power and signal issues
Personal	Work Gloves, Pain Relievers, Water, Knee Pads	1st & 2nd AC	Personal comfort and safety on set

Key Considerations When Building Your Kit:

1. **Role Specificity:** A **1st AC** is generally expected to have a nearly complete kit that covers both their own and the 2nd's needs, especially on smaller productions. A **2nd AC** can often build their kit more slowly, supplementing with the 1st's tools initially 4.
2. **Camera Format:** The tools for **film** and **digital** cameras can differ. Film cameras require tools for checking the film gate, while digital cameras require more sensor cleaning tools and specific electronic accessories 4.
3. **Personalization & DIY:** The best kits are highly personalized. Don't be afraid to modify tools or create your own DIY solutions (e.g., custom tape dispensers) to improve your efficiency 4.
4. **Traveling with Your Kit:** If flying, your AC kit is your livelihood. It should be a **carry-on** to avoid loss or damage. Check airline size/weight restrictions (e.g., Air Canada's standard article is 21.5" x 9" x 15.5") and be prepared to explain the professional nature of the equipment 26.

Ultimately, your AC kit is a reflection of your professionalism and preparedness. It evolves with your experience, growing to meet the challenges of each new production. Start with the core essentials and expand based on the specific demands of your jobs 14.