

## Location Recording

### Steps to capturing the best sound on location:

- Prepare: know your recording device and its characteristics
- Understand your location. Have you had an opportunity to do a recce or visit the location beforehand?
- Think of all the recording opportunities that your location has – environments and spot sounds (like doors or a cash register opening etc).
- What will this location sound like to a listener? (for example a kitchen may sound more like a small toilet)
- If you are wanting to record in a non-public location have you got permission from the location owner?

Remember, much of the time is in setting up the interview and getting to the location. Spending a couple of extra minutes recording sounds or atmospheres will not take too much more effort, but could mean the difference between a good and an excellent recording (and less stress in post-production).

### **BEFORE you leave your office have a PLAN B**

- What if the microphone doesn't work...
- What if the batteries fail...
- What if it's raining...
- What if the interviewee doesn't turn up (do you have contact numbers?)

### **When you arrive at the location – explore and listen:**

What are the foreground and background sounds?

- Foreground sounds are key sounds that can instantly identify a situation, e.g. a cash register, door opening, dishes in a kitchen etc.
- Background sounds are general atmospheres – park sounds, street sounds etc.

Think about if you had to clearly identify where you were to a radio listener, what kind of foreground/background sounds would you record?

For example:

- In a cafe = crowd atmosphere and a coffee machine
- On a bus = bus atmosphere and tag on/tag off sound
- At a swimming pool = crowd atmosphere and water splash

Think about:

- What is the relationship between the location and your story?
- Will the sounds at your location enhance or detract from your story?
  - For example construction work, café, plumbing noises, cash registers; mobile phones (interference), computers etc
- What are sounds at your location that will paint a picture, or help transition from one voice to another?

**If you are interviewing someone it is good practice to:**

- Do a verbal identification at beginning of your recording.
- Say the date and location of the recording.
- Ask the interviewee to say their name and spell it. Getting correct spellings is really important as names can be spelt numerous ways (e.g. Evin, Sindy, Debora)
- Ask how they'd like to be identified (titles – Dr etc?, first name only?)
- You may also wish to include a permissions statement e.g. “this recording is for public broadcast, are you happy for us to continue”

### **Tips**

- Record 30-seconds atmosphere (no talking from you or your interviewee) in each location. This can become very useful in post-production, when you can layer it under narration.
- If you're recording in a non-public location talk to the owner beforehand to get their permission and see what other potential spaces are available.
- Think of gathering audio like you're filming something for TV: capture the main interview and then capture “cut-aways” to help in post-production – the sounds of entrances and exits, atmospheres etc.
- Take a photograph of the location so you can construct a studio script describing in detail the surroundings
- If you have two external microphones you can use the technique of using one microphone as a voice microphone and the second for gathering atmospheres. For example, if you were walking on a path one microphone could be used for your voice and the second microphone could be used to record your footsteps.