

# Complete Guide 2022

for booking  
digi-techs  
and  
light-techs

by **first digi**

# Intro

The stills industry is changing rapidly. The days of “photo assistants“ are long gone where an assistant had to do light, digi, driving and everything else for 150€ per day without overtime.

The terms „Digi-Tech“ and „Light-Tech“ have developed into a profession. They are specialists in their field and should be treated, and of course paid like so.

This guide is regarding professionals with years in experience and a wide spectrum of knowledge about cameras, digital- and lighting equipment, lighting techniques and a great understanding of their own skills, responsibilities and behavior on and off set as well as pre- and post-production.

Every digi-tech and light-tech started somewhere: As an intern, at university or straight to assisting. Young assistants are assistants, not professionals. With this in mind a young photo assistant can charge way less than an experienced tech. And that’s ok. Professionals as well as young assistants, both have their right to work in the industry. It does not mean that clients and photographers have the right to exploit young assistants and push them towards crazy low day rates or even working for free.

Female techs have the same skills than their male colleagues. There is no reason to believe or act like women are less experienced or capable of working as digi-techs or light-techs. Female light-techs are able to carry heavy equipment and create awesome light setups. As digi-techs they are just as much nerds than guys and there is absolute no reason to think otherwise.

**To help photographers, production companies, clients and agents to better understand how day-rates and overtime are calculated, we put together this guide.**

Since the market is different in every country, this guide is written for the German industry but we hope that it can help the in other parts of the world as well.

# Digi-Tech

## Day rates for digi-techs:

- Professional digi-techs in Germany charge an average of 500€ for a 10h day.
- Depending on the size and importance of the production this can go to up to 650€ or more per day. Equipment not included.
- For small editorials, mini-jobs or test shoots some digi-techs offer deals where they charge lower day-rates. These are exceptions and must be discussed individually.
- Prep days and recce count as a full work day.
- Travel days and off days get charged with 50% of day-rate.

## Overtime:

- How overtime is calculated varies greatly. To give photographers, clients and also digi-techs a reference, First Digi charges overtime as follows:  

after 10h (including lunch)      ->    +15% of day-rate per hour
- Every digi-tech calculates his/her overtime differently. Calculations, counting steps and percentage vary a lot. We suggest always discussing overtime before production.
- Work time starts with call time for the digi-tech and ends after loading equipment into the van.
- Transportation between home and set or rent, before and after production usually is not counted as work time, but transportation cost might be charged or is already included in the package price some digis offer.

# Digi-Tech

## Equipment:

- Professional digi-techs mostly use their own equipment on set. This ensures the best possible workflow and minimizes situations like connection issues, full hard-drives or slow computers.
- Every digi-tech has his/her own prices for their equipment. A good price reference can be the rental services and their prices in each city.
- Keep in mind that digi-tech equipment prices can be higher than rental prices as they bring a lot of accessories with their equipment like clamps, extra batteries, cables etc. which are usually not included in rental equipment. Computers have all the software already installed and configured which helps boost efficiency and workflow on set.
- Some photographers insist on using their own laptop or equipment for the production. It is up to the digi-tech if he/she is willing to work with a photographers computer or insists on using his/her own equipment. This must be discussed individually and best case before production.
- First Digi offers different packages from a small location setup to a full studio setup with multiple screens. These packages can be configured individually for every production adding cameras, lenses, extra screens, printers etc.. They come with a professional digi-tech and archive backup.

# Light-Tech

## Day-rates for light-techs:

- Professional light-techs in Germany charge an average of 450€ for a 10h day.
- Depending on the size and importance of the production this can go to up to 650€ or more per day.
- For small editorials, mini-jobs or test shoots some light-techs can offer deals where they charge lower day-rates. These are exceptions and must be discussed individually.
- Prep days and recce count as a full work day.
- Travel days and off days get charged with 50% of day-rate.

## Overtime:

- How overtime is calculated varies greatly. To give photographers, clients and also light-techs a reference, First Digi charges overtime as follows:  

after 10h (including lunch)      ->    +15% of day-rate per hour
- Every light-tech calculates his/her overtime differently. Calculations, counting steps and percentage vary a lot. We suggest always discussing overtime before production.
- Work time starts with call time for the light-tech or picking up the equipment from the rental service and ends with a packed lighting truck and/or delivering the equipment back to the rental service.
- Transportation between home and set or rent, before and after production usually is not counted as work time, except transportation of equipment to and from rental services.

# Summary

**This guide is based on our experience with the German market. We are aware that some countries and cities have different rules/regulations/prices. If you feel like something is completely off in this guide, we invite you to reach out to us.**

## Digi-Tech

Average Day-rate:  $\approx 500\text{€}$   
Prep Day, Recce: 100% day-rate.  
Travel, Off-day: 50% of day-rate.  
Overtime: Varies a lot. Please discuss rates before production, not after.  
Suggestion: 15% of day-rate per hour.

Work-time start: Call-time (location/studio within reasonable distance).  
or picking up equipment from rent.  
Work-time stop: Finish packing equipment.  
or finish delivering equipment back to rental service.

## Light-Tech

Average Day-rate:  $\approx 450\text{€}$   
Prep Day, Recce: 100% day-rate.  
Travel, Off-day: 50% of day-rate.  
Overtime: Varies a lot. Please discuss rates before production, not after.  
Suggestion: 15% of day-rate per hour.

Work-time start: Call-time (location/studio within reasonable distance)  
or picking up equipment from rent.  
Work-time stop: Finish packing equipment.  
or finish delivering equipment back to rental service.

# Thank you!

We hope that this guide was helpful to you.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this guide, we invite you to reach out to us.

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