B&W PRODUCTIONS · CREW TRAINING · MODULE 16

Load-in, Load-out and Vehicle Packing

Most show problems start in the warehouse or on the truck, hours before doors. A missing cable trunk. A desk under a sub. A truck that arrived when the loading bay was already closed. This module is the routine that stops those: pick, pack, time it, get in, get out.

B&W Productions · Proper Planning, Prevents Poor Performance



01 The job sheet and the pick list

Load-in starts on paper. The job sheet says where, when and what. The pick list turns that into every item that must be on the truck. If it is not on the list, it does not get there.

JOB SHEET

Venue and address, contact person and number, access times, call time, doors, finish, what the client ordered.

PICK LIST

Every item by name and count. Speakers, stands, desk, every cable type, power, spares, tape, tools.

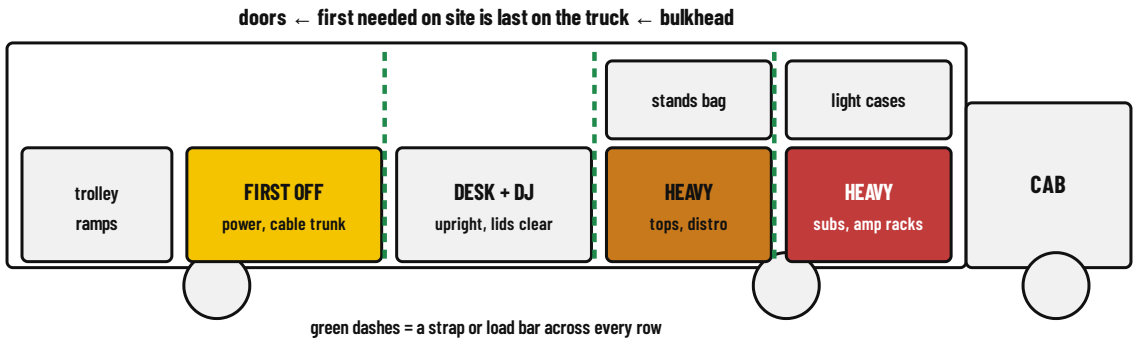
SITE NOTES

Loading bay or front door. Stairs or lift. Distance to the room. Where the power is. Parking for the truck.

- Read the job sheet the day before, not in the cab.
- Phone the venue contact if access is not clear. Ask about the lift size, the bay hours and where the truck may stand.
- Pick against the list and tick each line (Module 14).
- **Spares on every job:** two XLRs, a power lead, a multiplug, gaffer tape, batteries, a mic.

> ### FIELD RULE
> The pick list is the show in a column. Read it out loud once before the doors close on the truck.

02 Packing the truck



Heavy and low against the bulkhead. Light on top. What you need first on site goes on last, by the doors. A strap across every row.

1. **Heavy, low, forward.** Subs and amp racks on the floor against the bulkhead. Weight over or ahead of the rear axle, spread left to right.
2. **Last on, first off.** Power, the cable trunk, trolleys and ramps go on last. They come off first and everything else needs them.
3. **Tight rows.** Cases wheel to wheel with no gaps. A gap is room to gain speed.
4. **Light on heavy.** Never a sub on a desk. Nothing on a DJ case lid.
5. **Wheels locked or chocked.** Brakes on, or the case turned so the wheels are off the floor line.
6. **Loose items in a trunk.** Stands in the stand bag. Nothing rolling around the floor.

Our trucks and music buses each have a set layout. Learn the layout for the vehicle you are on, and put things back where the next crew expects them.

> **FIELD RULE**
> Pack it so the first thing you need is the first thing you see when the doors open.

03 Strap it, weigh it, drive it



A strap or load bar across each row. Tensioned, with the tail tied off.

In a hard stop, an unstrapped case keeps moving at the speed the truck was doing. A loaded sub weighs as much as a person. Strapping is not optional.

- **One strap or load bar per row**, hooked to the truck's rails or rings, not to another case.
- **Ratchet tight**, then tie off the tail so it cannot flap or unwind.
- **Check straps** for cuts and frayed edges. A damaged strap goes in the bin.
- **Do not overload.** Every vehicle has a maximum legal mass on its licence disc and data plate. Kit plus crew plus fuel must be under it.
- **Re-check after the first few kilometres** and after any rough road.
- **Drive like the load is glass.** Wide corners, early brakes, slow over speed bumps.

> **STOP**
> Nobody rides in the load bay. Ever.

> **FIELD RULE**
> If you would not stand behind it in an emergency stop, it is not strapped.

04 Work back from doors

The only fixed time is doors. Everything else is worked backwards from it: soundcheck, build, load-in, travel, loading. Add the gaps and you get the time the truck must leave.

TRY IT: WHEN MUST THE TRUCK LEAVE?

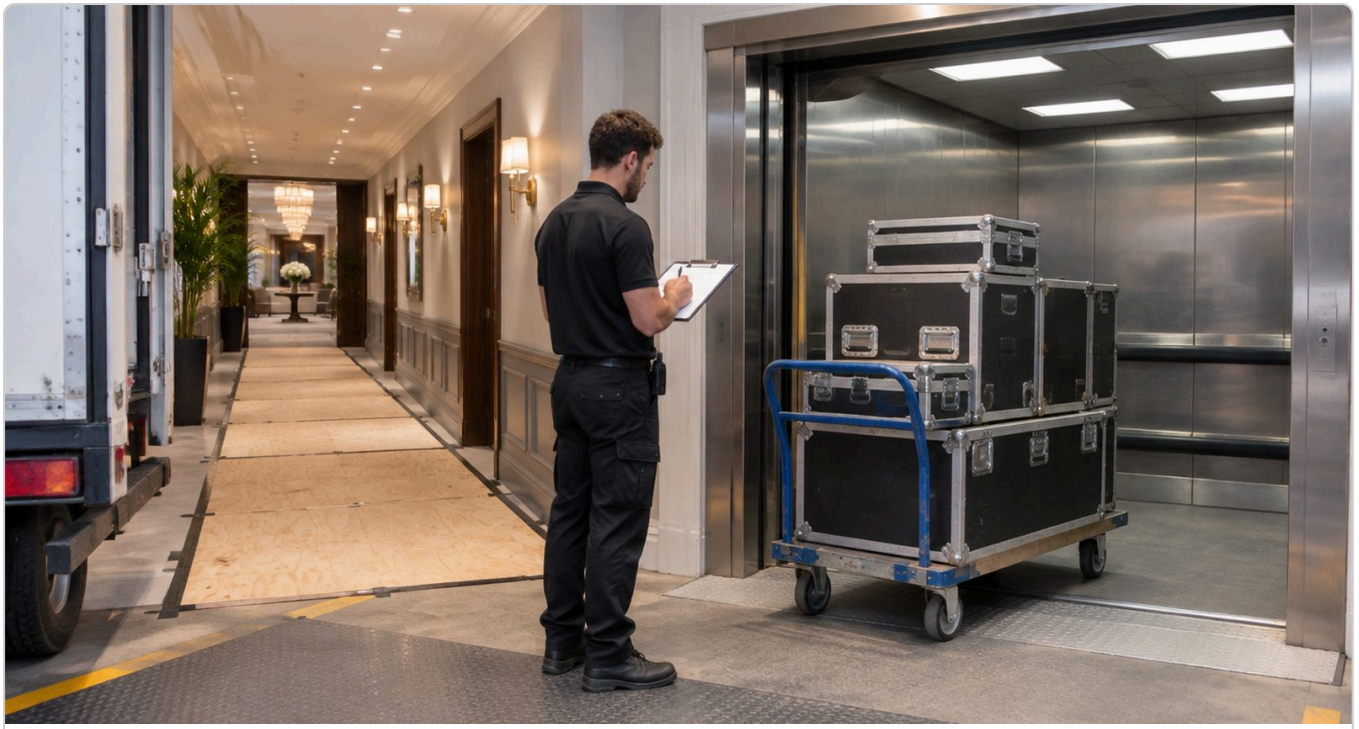
Set the doors time and how long each stage takes. The tool works backwards.

STEP	TIME
Doors open	18:00
Ready, room tidy	17:00
Soundcheck starts	16:15
Build starts (kit in the room)	14:15
Arrive, start load-in	13:30
Leave the warehouse	12:00
Start loading the truck	11:15

- **Ready before doors** means finished, tidy and quiet. The client walks the room in that hour.
- **Buffer the travel.** Friday afternoon traffic, a truck stop, a wrong gate.
- **Check venue access.** If the bay opens at 14:00, an earlier arrival only means waiting in the sun.
- **Tell the crew chief early** if you are running late. Fifteen minutes of warning is worth more than an apology.

> **FIELD RULE**
> Late is decided at the warehouse, not at the venue.

05 Arriving and getting in



Find the contact, walk the route, then move the first case.

1. **Report first.** Find the venue contact or duty manager. Sign in. Ask where the truck may stand and for how long.
2. **Walk the route** from the truck to the room before moving a case. Doors, lift size, stairs, slopes, carpets, fire doors.
3. **Protect the venue.** Boards over thresholds and soft floors. Corner guards if they ask. No dragging cases on wood or marble.
4. **Find the power** and the room layout before the kit comes in (Module 8).
5. **Keep fire exits and corridors clear.** Empty cases go where the venue says, not in an escape route.
6. **One person stays with the truck** while it is open.

> **FIELD RULE**
> Five minutes walking the route saves an hour of carrying the wrong way.

06 Load-in order and the dead-case plan

Bring the kit in the order it gets built. Otherwise the room fills with cases and nobody can work.



Power first, then the big pieces to their positions, then control, then cabling. Empty cases leave the room before soundcheck.

- **Place, do not dump.** Each case goes to where its contents will live. Speakers to the speaker positions, desk case to front of house.
- **Lift properly** (Module 13). Two people for subs and racks. Use the trolley and the ramps.
- **Dead cases** are empty cases. Stack them neatly in the store room the venue gives you, lids on, in the order you will need them back.
- **Keep the lids with the cases.** A lost lid is a damaged desk on the way home.
- **Sweep the room** for tape, cable ties and packaging before the client arrives.

> **FIELD RULE**
> A case touches the floor twice: once coming in, once going out.

07 Load-out: fast, but in order



Power down, cables first, cases closed, counted at the venue.

Load-out is when kit gets broken and left behind. Everyone is tired, it is late, and the venue wants the room. Go in order.

1. **Wait for the room.** No strike while guests are still in the room unless the client asks for it.
2. **Power down in order.** Speakers and amps off first, then processing, then the desk (Module 2).
3. **Batteries out, mics cased** before anything else moves.
4. **Cables first.** Unplug, coil over-under, tie, into the trunk (Module 12).
5. **Kit into its own case**, lid on, latched. Never a loose item in someone else's case.
6. **Count back at the venue** against the pick list (Module 14).
7. **Walk the room last.** Under tables, behind curtains, on window sills, at the bar. Look for chargers, adaptors and gaffer tape rolls.
8. **Pack the truck to the layout**, strap it, and sign out with the venue.

> **FIELD RULE**
> The last thing you do in the room is look at it empty.

08 Back at the warehouse

The job is not finished when the truck parks. It is finished when the kit is ready for the next crew.

1 ☐ **UNLOAD THE SAME NIGHT OR FIRST THING**
Kit left on a truck overnight is at risk and holds up the next job.

2 ☐ **COUNT IN AGAINST THE PICK LIST**
Anything missing is reported with where it was last seen.

3 ☐ **FAULTY KIT RED-TAGGED**
In the repair area with a note in the repair log. Not back on the shelf.

4 ☐ **BATTERIES ON CHARGE**
Rechargeables on the charger, used alkalines in the used box.

5 ☐ **WET OR DIRTY KIT DRIED AND WIPED**
Open the cases. Never close a damp case.

6 ☐ **TRUCK SWEPT, FUELLED AND REPORTED**
Straps back on the rail. Any knock, noise or warning light told to the fleet person.

7 ☐ **JOB SHEET HANDED IN**
With times, problems and anything the client said.

> **FIELD RULE**
> Leave the truck the way you want to find it at five in the morning.

09 Check what you learnt

Ten questions. Circle one answer for each. The answer key is on the last page. Pass mark: 8 out of 10.

1. Where do subs and amp racks go on the truck?

- ○ **A** On top of the light cases
- ○ **B** By the doors
- ○ **C** On the floor against the bulkhead
- ○ **D** Wherever there is a gap

2. Which kit goes on the truck last?

- ○ **A** Subs
- ○ **B** Power, the cable trunk, trolleys and ramps
- ○ **C** The desk
- ○ **D** Empty cases

3. What is a strap hooked to?

- ○ **A** Another case
- ○ **B** The truck's rails or rings
- ○ **C** The door handle
- ○ **D** Nothing, friction holds it

4. **What is the one fixed time you plan backwards from?**

- ○ **A** When the crew wakes up
- ○ **B** Doors
- ○ **C** Lunch
- ○ **D** When the truck is free

5. **You arrive at the venue. What do you do first?**

- ○ **A** Start unloading
- ○ **B** Find the venue contact, sign in and walk the route
- ○ **C** Plug in the speakers
- ○ **D** Park in the fire lane

6. **What comes into the room first?**

- ○ **A** The DJ booth
- ○ **B** Power
- ○ **C** Empty cases
- ○ **D** Microphones

7. **What are dead cases?**

- ○ **A** Broken cases
- ○ **B** Empty cases, stored neatly out of the room
- ○ **C** Cases of spare kit
- ○ **D** Cases left at the warehouse

8. **Guests are still in the room at the end. What do you do?**

- ○ **A** Start pulling cables
- ○ **B** Wait, unless the client asks you to start
- ○ **C** Turn the lights on full
- ○ **D** Wheel cases through them

9. **What is the last thing you do in the venue room?**

- ○ **A** Switch off the desk
- ○ **B** Walk the empty room and look for anything left behind
- ○ **C** Eat
- ○ **D** Stack chairs

10. **A case got wet at an outdoor job. What happens at the warehouse?**

- ○ **A** Close it and shelve it
- ○ **B** Open it, dry and wipe the kit
- ○ **C** Leave it on the truck
- ○ **D** Tape it shut

Answer key

1. **C**. Heavy, low and forward, against the bulkhead.
2. **B**. What you need first on site goes on last, so it comes off first.
3. **B**. Straps go to the vehicle's rails or rings, tensioned, with the tail tied off.
4. **B**. Doors is fixed. Everything else is worked back from it.
5. **B**. Report, then walk the route from the truck to the room before moving kit.
6. **B**. Power first, then big kit, control, cabling. Dead cases out.
7. **B**. Dead cases are the empties. They leave the room before soundcheck.
8. **B**. No strike while guests are in the room unless the client asks.
9. **B**. Walk the room last: under tables, behind curtains, at the bar.
10. **B**. Never close a damp case. Open, dry and wipe before storing.

Photos: scene photographs are AI-generated illustrations and do not show B&W Productions equipment or events. This module is crew training, not a substitute for the manufacturer's manual, the venue's rules or the event safety officer's instructions.