

October 12, 2011

Distributing Legal Rehearsal CDs/Audio Files



Often, to help our instrumentalists and vocalists learn new music, we distribute audio files or CDs to our musicians so that they can listen to the music and learn it more quickly. This practice is only legal if you have purchased the same quantity of the song as you wish to distribute OR acquired the appropriate license for each song ([see previous post](#)).

For instance, if you want your musicians to learn, Our God, as performed by Chris Tomlin, and want them to have a CD or audio file of that song, you have three choices to comply with the copyright law:

1. You would need to purchase the same number of mp3s from iTunes or Amazon (or other source) for each person you wish to give the file. (usually \$0.99 – \$1.29 each)
2. You would acquire a mechanical license and a master recording license, paying royalties for the quantities of songs you wish to distribute. (mechanical license – \$0.091/song up to five minutes in length, then the master recording license, if issued, is \$0.25 – \$0.50 per song with a potential \$25-40 minimum). This process is very time involved and will probably end up costing you more as well)
3. You can acquire the new [CCLI Rehearsal License](#). CCLI has recently released a new product which will make the process easier. For ministries that expect to distribute great quantities of music, you can save some money too. Let's take a look:

The Church Rehearsal License

The [CCLI Church Rehearsal License](#) allows worship leaders and church music directors to legally copy commercial audio recordings and/or share audio files via email, flash drives or on worship planning websites. The copies are intended for rehearsal purposes only, and are not intended to remain as permanent copies for personal collections. Pricing is based on the number of copies made and/or the number of songs shared.

Frequently-Asked Questions:

Why do we need a rehearsal license? *Recording and distributing copies of a copyrighted song recording without permission is a violation of the Copyright Law, and penalties can be severe...up to \$150,000 for each infringement. For individual churches, the process of trying to get permission to make rehearsal copies for each song could quickly turn into an administrative nightmare. The Church Rehearsal License provides permission in the simplest, most cost-effective way possible.*

Does it cover burning CD copies from commercially-available CDs? *Yes, provided that the recording is covered under the Church Rehearsal License agreement.*

Does it cover recording the songs ourselves and then burning to CDs? *No. This activity would require a separate mechanical license agreement.*

Does it cover digital downloads and then burning to CDs? *Yes, as long as the recording is covered and the digital audio file was legally purchased.*

Does it cover downloading songs from a free streaming website (YouTube, for example) and then burning to CDs or sharing? *No. The source content must be legally purchased.*

Does it cover loading the songs onto personal computers, iPhones, iPads or other mobile/listening devices? *Yes, but only as temporary audio reference copies and only for rehearsal purposes. Copies are not intended for permanent personal collections.*

Does it cover emailing an audio file to worship team members? *Yes. Emailing is a distribution method that is allowed under the terms of the license agreement.*

Does it cover recording our worship rehearsals? *No. That activity is beyond the scope and intention of this license.*

Does it cover every version of a song? *The Church Rehearsal License will likely cover multiple versions of a song, but not necessarily every version. For specific songs and recordings, please check the Authorized Label List.*

Can people keep the rehearsal CDs? *Copies are not intended for permanent personal collections.*

Our worship team uses web-based Worship Planning software, and we provide streaming access to an audio file of every song we're doing each week. How does this fit within the scope of the license? *For churches that store and stream a library of audio files on web-based worship planning software, you will base your copy estimates and your reporting on the "first listen" per song for each person. So even though all your musicians and vocalists may have access to your weekly set list and audio files, and some people may listen to a specific song multiple times, you only need to count the first time that each person listens to a song as an actual "copy."*

Total Copies Per Year	Annual Fee
1-99	\$75
100-199	\$100
200-399	\$150
400-599	\$250
600-799	\$365
800-999	\$480
1,000-1,199	\$590
1,200-1,399	\$700
1,400-1,599	\$800
1,600-1,799	\$900
1,800-1,999	\$1,000
2,000-2,499	\$1,225
2,500-2,999	\$1,450
3,000-3,499	\$1,675
3,500-3,999	\$1,900
4,000-4,499	\$2,125
4,500-4,999	\$2,350

Be aware that the [CCLI Rehearsal License](#) is not intended for your people to keep the copies beyond the short term use of learning the song. It is not intended to retain for personal collections.

Other ways of getting the song to musicians at no cost:

1. You can send your musicians a link to the song on www.YouTube.com. Here you will find most current songs, many of them with lyrics displayed. As long as your musicians have internet access, then they can stream the song from their various connected devices. Here is a link to [Revelation Song](#)
2. You can send a link to www.GrooveShark.com. Here is a link to [Revelation Song](#)
3. Send them a link to iTunes or Amazon and ask them to buy the mp3. Many of your musicians will not mind this minimal investment for their audio library. Hopefully, you have selected songs that they will want to listen to for some time to come. Here are links for Revelation Song to [iTunes](#) or [AmazonMP3](#),

NOTE: Some people think online worship planning/sharing sites make it legal to share audio files. While they make the service available for sharing, they do not provide licensing for doing so. This is what PlanningCenterOnline says:

Planning Center does not include any form of copyright licensing and is not responsible for any misuse on your part. Sharing mp3s, charts or lyrics that you do not have the licenses for is illegal. If you own all the copyrights to a song, maybe for a song you have written, or you have obtained the licenses to distribute them electronically, you are free to do so.

The [CCLI license](#) covers the distribution of lyrics, charts & self-recorded (your band) audio for most worship songs.

One way to obtain licenses for the original audio files is to link directly to the song on a music store like [iTunes](#) or [AmazonMP3](#), and let your users download the songs for themselves.

What are some ways that you legally share audio files with your people? Please share your ideas.