



Church Copyright Guide

Simple Steps to Ensuring Your Church's Copyright Compliance



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Thank you for taking on the sometimes overwhelming project of researching and securing the proper licensing for your church's copyright compliance. This resource was designed especially for you. You may be just beginning to research the necessary copyrights for your church, or you may have extensive copyright knowledge. In any case, we want to equip you with tools and resources to assist you, as you seek to educate and inform other ministry leaders.

This "Church Copyright Guide" contains the following sections:

1. About CCS
2. Why Honoring Copyrights Is Important to Your Church
3. Common Church Copyright Needs
 - Blanket Licensing
 - Understanding Blanket Licensing Options
 - Blanket License Coverage Chart
 - Streaming License Comparison
4. Special Projects
5. Very Specific Concerns
6. CCS Licensing Cost
7. Additional Resources



1. About CCS

Christian Copyright Solutions (CCS) is a leading authority on church music copyrights, providing simple music licensing solutions and clear educational resources. Our goal is to provide churches with the “big picture” and help them develop a mosaic of licensing coverage that fits their needs. We frequently recommend resources offered by other companies, as well as our own licensing solutions.

CCS is the only Christian company to partner with ASCAP, BMI and SESAC to offer one-stop performance licenses that allow religious organizations to legally play, perform and stream over 17 million Christian and secular songs of all genres. CCS also serves as an advocate for copyright owners, offering full service administration to promote, protect and collect royalties.

2. Why Honoring Copyrights Is Important for Your Church

Honoring copyrights blesses the entire Body of Believers:

Church copyright compliance helps support and promote the creation of new music and resources for the use of the Church. Copyrighted materials we use in worship and ministry are available to us because someone was called by God to create them, took the time and care to craft them, and used their resources to share them with the world. Making sure these creative individuals are paid for their work allows them to continue in their ministries, and allows our ministries to continue to be blessed by their work!

Honoring copyrights honors the Law:

U.S Copyright Law (section 110[3]) states that churches, and any religious organization, do not have to get permission to perform or play music (or a non-dramatic literary work) during a religious service at a place of worship or other religious assembly. This is often referred to as the “Religious Service Exemption.” Beyond this exemption, however, churches MUST secure licensing for almost any activity and manner in which they use copyrighted materials:

Copyright compliance helps your church avoid lawsuits, fines and large punitive fees. Copyright non-compliance can lead to a civil lawsuit against your church or ministry; pastors, elders and others in leadership could be held personally liable. Courts can impose stiff fines, and authors and publishers could require large, retroactive fees for the unauthorized use of their works. It’s vital for church leaders to have knowledge of all the types of works that can be copyrighted, because of the increasing use of a variety of creative works and the growing risk of liabilities. Copyright infringement penalties can be severe, up to \$150,000 for each infringement.

Your church’s compliance will ensure that you avoid the many negative implications of a legal dispute over copyrights.

Honoring copyrights honors God:

Romans 13:1 instructs us that, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.” So, whether or not we feel copyright compliance should be required for the Church, once we understand that it is required by law, we should diligently work to become compliant.



3. Common Church Copyright Needs

There are several types of activities in which most churches typically use copyrighted material. For these areas, blanket licenses offer the simplest and most effective solution for broad copyright license coverage.

Blanket Licensing

Each blanket license covers a specific catalog of copyrights for specific uses for a specific period of time (usually one year). The catalogs they cover vary greatly, so it's important to consider the songs your church uses, to ensure you're getting the best coverage to meet your church's needs. The annual fees for most blanket licenses are based on the size of your congregation, which greatly facilitates budgeting.

Using blanket licenses will ensure that you have the coverage you need year-round, without requiring you to get individual permissions every time you want to use a copyrighted work.

To be fully compliant, some churches will need just one blanket license. Others will require several. The key is to consider how your church uses copyrighted music and to put together the mosaic of blanket licensing that is right for you. In our "Understanding Blanket Licensing Options" section (below) we will address the various church blanket licenses and explain what each does and does not cover.

Why isn't there just one license that covers everything? The simple answer is: "Because one size does not fit all."

There are several types of church blanket licenses available, including:

- Performance Licensing
- Streaming Licensing
- Reproduction Licensing
- Rehearsal Licensing
- Video Licensing

Understanding Blanket Licensing Options

There is a significant amount of confusion around what is covered by the various church blanket licenses. Each of them covers very distinct rights and uses with very little overlap between them. Used in combination, they provide the mosaic of coverage churches need. The first step in determining which of these licenses to purchase is to understand what they cover and what they do not cover.

Here are the categories we will address, and the activities each covers:

- **Performance Licensing** - Required anytime copyrighted songs are publicly played or performed outside of worship services
- **Streaming Licensing** - Required to stream copyrighted songs online
- **Reproduction Licensing** - Required to print lyrics in bulletins, song sheets or for use on overhead projectors, for congregational singing
- **Rehearsal Licensing** - Required to duplicate sound recording for rehearsals and practice
- **Video Licensing** - Required to show videos in your church facilities



Performance Licensing: The Solid Foundation

When it comes to copyrights, the most foundational action your church should take towards compliance is securing performance licensing.

The U.S Copyright Law (section 110[3]) Religious Service Exemption (as stated above), specifically applies to performances that take place during a worship service, it DOES NOT exempt churches from the requirement for performance licensing outside of services.

Most churches require performance licensing for playing or performing copyrighted music in routine ministry activities, as well as special events, including:

Youth Events	Vacation Bible School
Concerts	Exercise & Dance Classes
Retreats	Music-on-Hold
Conferences & Seminars	Camps
Wedding Receptions	Music Before & After Service
Plays and Programs	Christmas Caroling
Picnics & Barbecues	Karaoke

The CCS [PERFORMmusic](#) Blanket License is the only church blanket performance license available in the U.S.



PERFORMmusic

Catalog size: 17 million Christian, secular and seasonal songs from the catalogs of ASCAP, BMI and SESAC

PERFORMmusic allows churches to legally perform and play recorded music outside of religious services.

What you CAN DO:

- Play music before or after service
- Hold concerts (no admission charge)
- Play on-hold music
- Play music in bookstores and coffee shops
- Play music in aerobics and exercise classes
- Play music in seminars and conferences
- Play music at social functions

What you CANNOT DO:

- Charge admission fees
- Retransmit performances on radio, TV or Internet



Streaming Licensing

There are two blanket Internet licenses available to churches: the CCS [WORSHIPcast License](#) and the **CCLI Church Streaming and Podcast License**. For a detailed comparison of the two, please see the “CCS Licensing Cost and Cost Comparison” section (below).



WORSHIPcast

Catalog size: 17 million Christian, secular and seasonal songs from the catalogs of ASCAP, BMI and SESAC.

What you CAN DO:

- Webcast live performances of music
- Webcast archived performances of music
- Charge for access to services

What you CANNOT DO:

- Make performances available for download
- Webcast third party recordings
- Webcast copyrighted works other than songs

CCLI Church Streaming and Podcast License

Catalog size: 300,000 Christian songs in the CCLI catalog.

The CCLI Church Streaming and Podcast License is an add-on to the CCLI Church Copyright License. This license allows churches to stream and podcast their performances of songs in the CCLI catalog.

What you CAN DO:

- Stream your performances of catalog songs in worship services only
- Podcast your performances of catalog songs in worship services only

What you CANNOT DO:

- Stream or podcast your performances other than worship services
- Stream or podcast copyrighted master recordings
- Stream or podcast songs not in catalog, including all secular songs
- Charge for access to streams or podcasts
- Use any copyrighted material besides songs



Reproduction Licensing

There are a several options available for reproduction licensing for churches. One of the key areas to consider before purchasing one or more, is the catalog each covers.

CCLI Church Copyright License

Catalog size: 300,000 Christian songs

The CCLI Church Copyright License was the first church blanket license and it is the best known. Uses revolve around providing lyrics for congregational singing and limited CD and DVD production.

What you CAN DO:

- Print songs, hymns and lyrics in bulletins for congregational singing
- Create custom songbooks for congregational singing
- Create visual format for projection of lyrics for congregational singing
- Arrange, print and copy your own arrangements for songs used for congregational singing where no published version is available
- Make translations of songs used for congregational singing where no published version is available.
- Record your worship services (provided you only record live music and do not reproduce accompaniment tracks) and sell for up to \$4 each for cassette tapes and CDs and \$12 each for videotapes and DVDs. (number of copies are limited to 15% of the church's congregation size)

What you CANNOT DO:

- Photocopy or duplicate octavos, cantatas, musicals, handbell music, keyboard arrangements, vocal scores, orchestrations or other instrumental works
- Reproduce or make practice or rehearsal tracks
- Perform songs outside of worship services
- Post any songs to the Internet
- Record song performances, unless recorded live in your services
- Use songs that are not in the CCLI song catalog
- Use of any copyrighted material besides songs

LicenSing

Catalog size: 100,000 songs

The LicenSing License allows reproduction of songs for congregational singing. LicenSing has a liturgical focus.

What you CAN DO:

- Use catalog songs, hymns, lyrics for congregational singing

What you CANNOT DO:

- Record your performances
- Reproduce or copy sound recordings



- Make translations of songs
- Use songs that are not in the LicenseSing song catalog
- Use of any copyrighted material besides songs

OneLicense

Catalog size: 62 publishers

OneLicense allows churches to make copies of songs for congregational singing. OneLicense also has a liturgical focus.

What you CAN DO:

- Use catalog songs, hymns, lyrics for congregational singing
- Record worship services for the home-bound
- Podcast your performance & create practice tracks

What you CANNOT DO:

- Reproduce or copy sound recordings
- Make translations of songs
- Use songs that are not in the OneLicense song catalog
- Use of any copyrighted material besides songs

Rehearsal Licensing

CCLI Church Rehearsal License

CCLI Church Rehearsal License

Catalog size: 100+ Record Labels

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. Annual pricing is based on your church's congregation size.

What you CAN DO:

- Burn CDs from commercial CD recordings
- Digital downloads and burn to CD
- Email digital files to worship team

What you CANNOT DO:

- Record your worship service performances
- Download songs from free streaming services
- Record songs and burn to a CD

For recordings not included in the Rehearsal License, you will need to obtain individual master licenses for the recordings from the record label and mechanical licenses for the songs from the publishers.



Video Licensing

CVLI Church Video License

Catalog size: 400 producers

The CVLI license allows churches to show selected films & videos for specific uses. The catalog includes Christian and secular films and videos.

What you CAN DO:

- Show videos to illustrate sermon points
- Show videos in Sunday schools and youth groups
- Show videos for teaching and training in classes
- Host special event movie nights
- Show whole videos or select portions

What you CANNOT DO:

- Reproduce videos
- Sync video to another medium
- Charge admission or advertise titles
- Retransmit on TV or internet
- Post any songs to the Internet



Blanket License Coverage Chart

	PERFORMmusic	WORSHIPcast	LifeWay Worship Track Streaming License	COLL Church Streaming and Podcast License	COLL Church Copyright License	COLL Church Rehearsal License	CVLI Church Video License	LicenSing	OneLicense
Play music before or after service	✓								
Hold concerts (no admission charge)	✓								
Play on-hold music	✓								
Play music in bookstores and coffee shops	✓								
Play music in aerobics and exercise classes	✓								
Play music in seminars and conferences	✓								
Play music at social functions	✓								
Webcast worship services using catalog songs		✓		✓					
Webcast outside events (in addition to worship services) using catalog songs		✓							
Webcast ministry-related events (baptisms, testimonials, mission trips)		✓							✓
Stream background music on church/ ministry site		✓							
Charge for access to services		✓							
Stream song master recordings			✓						
Podcast worship services using catalog songs				✓					✓
Print songs, hymns and lyrics in bulletins for congregational singing					✓			✓	✓
Create custom songbooks for congregational singing					✓			✓	✓
Create visual format for projection of lyrics for congregational singing					✓				
Arrange, print and copy your own arrangements for songs used for congregational singing where no published version is available					✓				
Record worship services for the homebound					✓				✓
Burn CDs for rehearsal purposes						✓			✓
Email digital files						✓			
Show videos to illustrate sermon points							✓		
Show videos in Sunday schools and youth groups							✓		
Host special event movie nights							✓		
Show whole videos or select portions							✓		



Streaming License Comparison

The only area of overlap between CCS's Blanket Licenses and those of another company is in the area of Church Streaming Licensing. Here is a comparison of the **CCS WORSHIPcast LICENSE** vs. the **CCLI STREAMING LICENSE**.

Many churches and ministries have questions about how CCS's WORSHIPcast License compares to the CCLI Church Streaming License. Let's take a look.

Catalog

The most critical area to evaluate is the song catalogs covered by the respective licenses.

- The WORSHIPcast License covers more than 17 million songs from ASCAP, BMI and SESAC and represents Christian and secular songs from all genres.
- The CCLI License covers their catalog of 300,000 Christian songs.
- The WORSHIPcast License covers songs in the CCLI program, plus 16.7 million other songs.

What is the impact of the catalog size? Well, if the song that you want to use is not in license program, you can't webcast it without getting additional licensing from the song's owner. Getting this additional permission can take weeks and cost additional money. Scrimping on catalog size might save a small amount of money upfront, but it will also limit what songs you can include in your webcast, or require you to spend additional time and money to use songs that are not in the catalog.

SCORECARD: The WORSHIPcast catalog is over 50 times the size of the CCLI catalog (which is also limited to only certain Christian music).

Uses

The two licenses are different in what they allow the licensee to do.

- The WORSHIPcast License does not cover podcasting, but it does cover internet performance rights for any of your live or archived performances that you wish to webcast, including concerts, fundraisers and produced videos.
- The CCLI License allows podcasting and streaming, but is limited only to worship services.

SCORECARD: WORSHIPcast does not cover podcasting but allows far more uses. CCLI allows podcasting but is limited to only worship services.

Reporting

- The WORSHIPcast License requires simple reporting for all licensees.
- CCLI states that there is no reporting required for their license. However, you must have a basic CCLI license to get the streaming license. Every basic CCLI license requires detailed reporting, so every CCLI Streaming License does, in effect, require reporting.

SCORECARD: Both licenses require all license holders to report their song usage.



Charging for Viewing

- The WORSHIPcast License allows churches to derive up to \$20,000 per year in revenue from streaming music on their sites, which provides a unique fundraising opportunity.
- The CCLI License does not allow you to charge for access to streamed services.

SCORECARD: WORSHIPcast does allow license holders to charge for viewing streams. The CCLI license does not provide that option.

Price

Finally, let's look at price.

- The WORSHIPcast License begins at \$225 for churches with an average weekly attendance of 199 or less and goes up to \$1,750 , for churches of 15,000+. Churches in the top two tiers are able to cover three URLs with one license.
- The CCLI License starts at \$50 for churches with congregations of less than 25 and goes up to \$750, for churches 50,000-99,999. This covers only one website, for churches in all tier levels.

SCORECARD: For smaller churches with only one website, the CCLI License has lower annual fees. For churches of 6,000+ with multiple websites, the CCS annual fee could be about the same as, or less than, purchasing multiple licenses with CCLI.

Summary

The Christian community is blessed to have two great options for legally streaming music. The WORSHIPcast License has higher annual fees but covers much more and, therefore, may be the most cost-effective option for your church. The CCLI License is cheaper, but provides far less coverage, which may lead to additional licensing expenses.



4. Special Projects

Special projects, such as the creation of a CD or DVD, are very individualized and, therefore, are not covered by any blanket license. Depending on the project, you will need to obtain master recording licenses, mechanical licenses, synchronization licenses and/or other special licenses. These licenses can take 4-12 weeks to obtain, so you'll want to start early. To begin the project, you'll need to compile the following information for each song you will use:

- Names of songs(s)
- Names of writer(s), author(s) and/or producer(s)
- Who is performing the song version you are using (your praise team, the original artist, or someone else)
- How you are using the song (video, CD, etc.)
- Where you are distributing the song (website, live presentations, etc.)

Once you have compiled all of the information for your project, you need to contact each individual copyright owner for each song you want to use. Each song may have more than one copyright owner so it's important to do thorough research. Also, be aware that it is up to the copyright owner(s) as to whether permission for each song use is granted, or not.

If you need licenses for songs and sound recordings owned by CCS INDIEadmin clients (like Bethel and Brooklyn Tabernacle), visit [INDIEadmin](#), scroll down the page and click on the license holder's logo in order to submit a license request online. For others' copyrights, visit the [PERMISSIONSplus](#) page on our website where you will find helpful links, fact sheets and other resources to assist you in securing the permissions you need for your special projects.

5. Very Specific Concerns

More complex copyright issues may require consultation with an attorney specializing in copyright law.



6. CCS Licensing Costs

Performance Licensing



PERFORMmusic

The [PERFORMmusic](#) Church Performance License allows churches to legally play and perform over 17 million Christian, secular and seasonal songs from the catalogs of ASCAP, BMI and SESAC, outside of worship services.

Total Weekly Attendance	Annual Fee
1-199	\$199
200-499	\$280
500-1,999	\$520
2,000-5,999	\$810
6,000 - 14,999	\$1,899
15,000+	\$2,100

Internet Performance Licensing



WORSHIPcast

The [WORSHIPcast](#) Church Streaming License allows churches to legally stream their worship services and events, covering over 17 million Christian, secular and seasonal songs from the catalogs of ASCAP, BMI and SESAC.

Total Weekly Attendance	Annual Fee	One Time Set up Fee
1-199	\$225	\$25
200-499	\$350	\$30
500-1,999	\$695	\$70
2,000-5,999	\$925	\$90
6,000-14,999	\$1,200	\$90
15,000+	\$1,750	\$90

Coverage is immediate for all CCS blanket licenses. Get the coverage you need TODAY!

Use **promo code CRGUIDE** and save **10% off** new PERFORMmusic and WORSHIPcast Licenses!



7. Additional Resources

CCS offers the following additional resources to answer questions and simplify the copyright process:

CCS Copyright Compliance Report Card

- A quick quiz for a good snapshot of your church's copyright compliance "grade", with recommendations for improvement, if needed
- www.christiancopyrightsolutions.com/reportcard/

The Difference Between CCS and CCLI

- CCS and CCLI offer blanket licenses that cover very different things. For most churches both types of licensing are needed. This document explains why
- www.christiancopyrightsolutions.com/docs/factsheets/FactSheet-DifferenceBetweenCCLIandCCS.pdf

Copyrights 101

- This document addresses basic copyright concepts
- www.christiancopyrightsolutions.com/docs/factsheets/FactSheet-Copyrights101.pdf

Copyright Issues for Webcasting Religious Services

- This document tells you what you need to know about webcasting
- www.christiancopyrightsolutions.com/docs/factsheets/FactSheet-WebcastingServices.pdf

Creating Legal CDs and DVDs

- This document helps you navigate the process of creating special CD and DVD projects
- www.christiancopyrightsolutions.com/docs/factsheets/FactSheet-CreateLegalCDsDVDs.pdf

*This document provides information and not legal advice. You can find CCS at www.ChristianCopyrightSolutions.com. To save 10% on new [PERFORMmusic](#) and [WORSHIPcast](#) Licenses, use **promo code CRGUIDE**.*

