2026

SOCAN

Simplified Distribution Rules

Making $ and ¢ of Your Performing Right Royalties

November 2026

SOCAN's Simplified Distribution Rules

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Simplified Distribution Rules

Making $ and ¢ of Your Royalties

SOCAN administers the public performance right in our members' musical works. What does that mean exactly? It means that whenever a copyrighted piece of music is played publicly, such as on the radio, in concert, or on television, the writers and copyright owners of that piece of music are legally entitled to a "performance royalty".

Where does the money for that performance royalty come from? Music users pay license fees to SOCAN through a series of "tariffs" designed for a variety of unique music uses. A tariff is essentially a rate set by the Copyright Board of Canada, which determines the license fee payable to SOCAN for the public use of live or recorded music. Our job as Canada's performing rights society is to collect on these tariffs and put the resulting royalties in the hands of the writers and publishers whose musical works have been publicly performed.

SOCAN has reciprocal agreements with societies around the world, meaning we also collect and distribute royalties to international performing right societies for the performance of their musical works in Canada, and they, in turn, collect for SOCAN's repertoire in their respective territories. Through these agreements, SOCAN is able to collect our members' performances all over the world.

This all amounts to an enormous amount of data: the entire world's catalogue of musical works, performed in a myriad of different ways, all needing to be tracked and paid. While the process by which these royalties are calculated and distributed can initially appear daunting, it's your right as our member to understand where your royalties are coming from and why they are calculated in the way that they are.

This document is intended as a basic, easy-to-understand outline of why, when, and how we pay royalties to you, our member, and what your responsibilities are as a SOCAN member to make sure that we have all the information we need in order to help you maximize your performance income. We hope that you find it helpful.

Earning Royalties in Canada

When will I receive my royalties?

SOCAN has a set distribution schedule by which we calculate and distribute royalties to our members. There is a lot of information to process between the date of the performance and when the royalties for that performance are distributed. Typically, assuming we have all of the data, you can expect your royalties to be paid based on the following schedule:

SOCAN's DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE	
PERFORMANCE PERIOD	**DISTRIBUTION DATE**
January—March	November 15 this year
April—June	February 15 of the following year
July—September	May 15 of the following year
October—December	August 15 of the following year

Please note that, at this time, Satellite Radio, Internet, Internet Audiovisual and YouTube performances are paid a quarter behind SOCAN's regular distribution schedule.

Getting Paid for Radio and Pay Audio Performances

SOCAN collects license fees from radio stations as well as venues, sporting events, background music suppliers and theme parks to create the pools from which radio performances are paid. These pools are the **CBC Pool**, **Survey Radio Pool** and **Census Radio Pool**. In addition to radio performances, members also receive royalties for **Pay Audio** performances.

What we need from you:

- Register your works online
- Include any alternative names (akas) for the title in the registration

Radio (Tariffs 1A, 1B & 1C)

SOCAN distributes royalties on radio performances across Canada. To determine how much a radio performance is worth, musical works are first given a duration credit depending on their length.

Duration of work	Credit
Less than 1 minute	1 credit
1:00 to 6:59	4 credits
7:00 or longer	1 credit per additional minute

The credit value of a radio performance is determined by dividing the total payable credits for the quarter into the total amount of money available in the pool. As there are three radio pools, credit values vary depending on which pool a performance is paid.

Some of the attributes associated with the royalty calculation at a work level include: credit, station weight, unit value, use, usage duration, and # of performances.

For Census and Survey Radio, the station the work is performed on impacts the amount of royalties. This is called "**Station Weight**". Station Weight is in direct proportion to the license fees received from each station. Each quarter, the total number of credits (Total Payable Credits) for each pool is calculated and divided into the total amount of money in each pool to give a Credit Value.

Exception: Commercial messages, advertisements, program promos and public service announcements of one-minute duration or less are not eligible for radio distribution at this time.

Census Radio Pool (Commercial & Non-Commercial Radio):

Commercial radio stations (privately owned) that are monitored by Muzooka are paid on a census basis. For a work to be captured in the census, it must be registered with Muzooka.

Survey Radio Pool (Commercial & Non-Commercial Radio):

Commercial radio stations not monitored by Muzooka are required to provide programming each quarter to SOCAN.

CBC Pool:

All CBC radio performances are paid from a dedicated CBC Pool. Network and regional CBC radio performances are tracked on a census basis, while local CBC radio performances are sampled across the country and weighted according to the population in each locality.

Pay Audio:

Digital Pay Audio service providers allow satellite and cable television subscribers to access commercial-free, announcer-free, digital sound quality, and pre-packaged music.

Pay Audio performances are paid from a sample of programming information, consisting of 21 days each distribution period. The pay audio service providers give the programming information to SOCAN.

Think you haven't been paid?

- Check to see if SOCAN has distributed the quarter in which the performance aired
- Check to see if the works are registered with SOCAN
- If the above has been completed, contact SOCAN Membership at members@socan.com or 1.866.307.6226
    - Please provide a Station ID or station name, so we can check our radio logs
    - Please note, as mentioned above, some stations pay for a sample, which can mean that your song did air on that station, but was not captured for distribution
- You can claim royalties going back **three years from the date SOCAN received the distribution** covering the performance period. The applicable policy may vary by territory, but three years is the standard set by CISAC. Submit your claim as soon as possible, including the work title, performer, performance date, and radio/TV station details.

Getting Paid for Satellite Radio

Satellite radio providers are licensed by SOCAN under Tariff 25. Satellite radio royalties are distributed from the **Satellite Radio Pool** and are based on a sample of programming information for 21 days each distribution period. These performance logs are reported by the satellite providers transmitting in Canada.

Royalties for Satellite performances are paid one full quarter behind SOCAN's regular distribution period.

SOCAN's SATELLITE DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE	
PERFORMANCE PERIOD	**DISTRIBUTION DATE**
January—March	February 15 of the following year
April—June	May 15 of the following year
July—September	August 15 of the following year
October—December	November 15 of the following year

Think you haven't been paid?

- Check to see if SOCAN has distributed the quarter in which the performance aired
- Check to see if the works are registered with SOCAN
- If the above has been completed, contact SOCAN Membership at members@socan.com or 1.866.307.6226
- You can claim royalties going back **three years from the date SOCAN received the distribution** covering the performance period. The applicable policy may vary by territory, but three years is the standard set by CISAC. Submit your claim as soon as possible, including the work title, performer, performance date, and radio/TV station details.

Getting Paid for Concert Performances

SOCAN collects license fees from venues and promoters for live and online performances. A concert is defined as a presentation of musical works at a concert hall, auditorium, theatre or similar place of musical entertainment or online platform at which individuals attend for the primary purpose of hearing the live performance of musical works "in concert". Tariffs on concert performances include:

3A Live Music—Annual fee
4A1 Popular Music Concerts (Per Event License)
4A2 Popular Music Concerts (Annual License)
4B1 Classical Music Concerts (Per Concert or Event License)
4B2 Annual License for Orchestras
4B3 Classical Music Concerts (Annual License)
5B Concerts at Exhibitions and Fairs
Online Music Concert Popular
Online Music Concert Classical

What we need from you:

- Work Registrations for all works performed
- For Domestic Concerts, please complete an online Notification of Live Music Performance (NLMP) and include the following:
  - Proof (poster, flyer, contracts)
  - For club shows (3A) proof there was a cover charge of $10 or more (ticket stub, poster, flyer, contracts)
  - Set List
- For Domestic New Classical/Serious Music Concerts, a program from the performance is required
- All programming must be reported to SOCAN no later than 12 months after the performance occurred for live concert and no later than 3 months after the performance occurred for online concert

Concert royalties are distributed based on the license fees received and the duration of the works performed. These royalties are then paid out to the writer(s) and publisher(s), based on the works performed.

Concerts licensed under 3A (Club show) will receive a total distribution of $75 maximum. Concerts licensed under 4A, 4B, 5B and online concerts will receive a minimum distribution of $75 on the performance, with the amount increasing based on the license fee collected.

For a concert where the license fee received is $500 or more and there are two or more musical acts, royalties shall be allocated and distributed in the following manner:

- One Headline Act and One Support Act: 80% Headline 20% Support
- One Headline Act and Two or Three Support Acts: 70% Headline 30% Support

- Two or More Headline Acts has 3 possible scenarios:
    a) Two Headline Acts, One Support Act: 80% Headline 20% Support
    b) Three Headline Acts, One Support Act: 80% Headline 20% Support
    c) Four Headline Acts, No Support: Allocated equally based on duration of works
- More than Four Musical Acts: Allocated equally based on duration of works

Exceptions: Not all concerts are distributable. SOCAN must first collect the license fee from either the venue or promoter before we can distribute royalties. In addition, concerts that are deemed charitable, educational or religious that are exempt from license fees do not qualify for distribution. For performances in a bar or club, if the cover charge is less than $10, the performance is ineligible for concert royalties.

Ticketed livestream concerts must be licensed and receive a minimum of 1,000 total views within 90 days to qualify. Un-ticketed livestream concerts may qualify under level 1 if the same criteria are met.

Major League Sports Events (Tariff 9) with set lists can qualify for concert distributions. Where setlists are not received, revenue is allocated between Internet and Radio distribution pools.

Think you haven't been paid?

- Check to see that you have completed the Notification of Live Music Performance (NLMP) and provided the required supporting documents (i.e., set lists, proof or contract, etc.)
- Check SOCAN's "Concerts with no set list" found under SOCAN PERFORMANCES AND REPERTOIRE after logging into your online SOCAN account. You can search by Performer, date or city to see if we are just missing the set list.
- If you have submitted the required documents, contact SOCAN Membership at members@socan.com or 1.866.307.6226. SOCAN may be waiting for payment of the license fee from the venue or promoter

Getting Paid for Audiovisual Performances

SOCAN collects tariffs from television stations (**Tariff 2** & **Tariff 17A**) and cinemas (**Tariff 6**) for the public performance of music contained within the programs and films they exhibit.

What we need from you:

- Cue Sheets
  - Make sure all the information requested on the cue sheet is provided (actors, producer, director, instrumental/vocal, etc.).
  - Make sure the cue sheet is signed by the producer
  - Identify which US Society will be representing you for this production (SOCAN/ASCAP, SOCAN/BMI, SOCAN/SESAC)
  - Make sure your publisher has the same US affiliation as you.
- Make sure all interpolated works (songs) are registered with SOCAN

Television (Tariffs 2 & 17A):

SOCAN distributes royalties for all broadcast (terrestrial) and non-broadcast (cable & specialty) television in Canada. All money received from the Broadcast TV stations and Cable stations is placed into three separate pools: the **Broadcast Television Pool, Non-Broadcast (Cable) Pool and Television Commercial**.

To distribute on the **Broadcast Television and Non-Broadcast (Cable)** pools, SOCAN receives domestic programming information from Gracenote (now known as Neilsen), a company that tracks content that airs on TV and cable, and SOCAN matches it to cue sheet information in SOCAN's database. If there is no cue sheet in the database, the performance(s) remains unidentified, and a cue sheet is requested from the production company, the foreign society or the station that aired the programming. For Worldwide productions, SOCAN receives cue sheets through an interface with CISNET's AVR process.

For the **Television Commercial pool**, SOCAN has partnered with global music data specialist, BMAT, to monitor, track and match commercial performances to audio files for the 30 Canadian television and cable stations paid under this pool. The BMAT portal allows for the viewing of TV commercials where SOCAN and BMAT have identified music usage for payment, as well as the opportunity to review all unclaimed music uses. Members and affiliated societies can gain access to the portal upon request by emailing their Account Executive or members@socan.com. Publishers can send requests to publishersfeedback@socan.com

A credit system is used to determine the amount of royalties for a specific use of music. One credit is given for each second of duration. The type of music use indicated on the cue sheet will impact the number of credits received:

- Theme music (both opening and closing) - 100%.
- Feature/source music - 100%.

- Background/score music - 60%.
- Logo music - 5%.
- Television commercial - 5%

The time of day the program is shown also impacts the number of credits granted. The performance of music in television and cable (broadcast and non-broadcast stations) between 2:00 A.M. and 5:59 A.M. receives 5% of the credit it would normally receive if broadcast was at another time. This applies only for series, not films.

Some of the attributes associated with the royalty calculation at a work/cue level include: unit value, station weight, usage, work/cue duration, and # of performances.

The station the program is exhibited on also impacts the amount of royalties. This is called "**Station Weight**". For Broadcast TV and Cable TV, the Station Weight is in direct proportion to the license fees received from each station.

Each quarter, the total number of credits (**Total Payable Credits**) for each pool is calculated and divided into the total amount of money in each pool to give a Unit Value.

Cinema (Tariff 6):

SOCAN pays royalties for music used in movies that are shown in cinemas across Canada. Cinemas pay license fees according to how many seats they contain, and the money collected goes into a pool. As with television, cue sheets are used, and credits are determined according to the same use types (theme, feature, background, and logo).

One movie being shown for one week on one screen counts for one cinema performance (based on Fridays airings). This differs from television and cable, in that every exhibition of a performance counts in the royalty calculation.

Some of the attributes associated with the royalty calculation at a work/cue level include: unit value, station weight, usage, work/cue duration, and # of performances.

Exception: Unlike with television and cable, cinema commercials and trailers are not subject to any distribution in Canada but may be subject to royalties in other territories.

Think you haven't been paid?

- Check to see if SOCAN has distributed the quarter in which the performance occurred.
- Check to see if the cue sheet has been filed with SOCAN
- Check to see that any interpolated works (songs) are registered with SOCAN.
- If the above has been completed, contact SOCAN Membership at members@socan.com or 1.866.307.6226.
    - Please provide the program/film/advertisement name, air date, & TV station.
    - Please note, as mentioned above, cinema pays for a sample, which can mean that your song or cue was exhibited but was not captured for distribution. However, if you provide us with evidence of exhibition (i.e., a film festival program), the license fee has been paid, and we have a cue sheet for the film, we will distribute it.
- You can claim royalties going back **three years from the date SOCAN received the distribution** covering the performance period. The applicable policy may vary by territory, but three years is the standard set by CISAC. Submit your claim as soon as possible, including the work title, performer, performance date, and radio/TV station details.

Getting Paid for Internet Performances

For Internet performances, SOCAN pays on streams and views originating in Canada. For streams and views outside of Canada, SOCAN receives royalties through our reciprocal agreements with affiliated Performing Rights Organizations, depending on their distribution rules and regulations in their territory. All money received from Internet service providers is placed into three separate pools: **Internet, Internet Audiovisual and YouTube**. Royalties for Internet, Internet Audiovisual and YouTube performances are paid one full quarter behind SOCAN's regular distribution period.

SOCAN's INTERNET DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE	
PERFORMANCE PERIOD	**DISTRIBUTION DATE**
January—March	February 15 of the following year
April—June	May 15 of the following year
July—September	August 15 of the following year
October—December	November 15 of the following year

SOCAN collects license fees from Internet services under Tariff 22 (A-G) as outlined below:

22A – Online Music Services

22B – Commercial Radio

22C – Non-Commercial Radio

22D – Commercial Television, Non-Broadcast Television (Cable), Pay Audio Services, Satellite Radio

22D1 – Online Audiovisual Services

22D2 – User-Generated Content

22E – CBC, Ontario Education Communications Authority and Société de télédiffusion du Québec

22F – Audio Websites (e.g., Internet radio)

22G – Game Sites (e.g., sites accessed online to play games)

Revenues for the Internet tariffs are allocated as follows:

Internet Pool – revenues received from online music sites, from audio websites, and from game sites

Internet Audiovisual Pool – revenues received from audiovisual online service providers (i.e., Amazon, Disney + and Netflix)

YouTube Pool – revenues received from YouTube for online musical works performances

Television/Cable Pools – revenues received from broadcast and non-broadcast television and cable licensees for online audiovisual services

Cinema Pool – revenues from video on demand YouTube

Radio Pools – revenues from the websites of commercial radio stations, non-commercial radio stations and CBC Radio go to the corresponding Radio pools.

Pay Audio Pool – revenues from pay audio services for online content go to the Pay Audio pool

Satellite Radio Pool – revenues from online satellite radio services go to the Satellite Radio pool.

Please note that, aside from the Internet Pool, the Internet Audiovisual Pool and YouTube Pool, all other Internet performances will be paid based on the existing distribution rules surrounding that pool.

Live online performances and concerts are distributed under the Concert Pool.

Online Music Services (22A), Audio Websites (22F), and Game Sites (22G):

All monies in the Internet pool will be distributed based on information received from the licensed Internet services for their online music streams for each distribution period. These services provide SOCAN with their full usage data. Where information from some licensees is missing or incomplete, money will be distributed based on programming received from other licensees for that same quarter.

Through thorough analysis of the available usage data and estimated pool amounts, SOCAN was able to derive that 100 performances Internet services would result in an earnings amount that is distributable. The threshold of 100 performances is reset to zero every quarter, and the 100 performances must originate from Canada.

Please note that for streams on sites like YouTube, SOCAN only pays on views that originated in Canada. Sites like YouTube may list all streams from around the world.

Some of the attributes associated with the royalty calculation at a work level include: station weight, unit value, work credit, and # of performances.

Online Audiovisual Services (22D1):

All monies in the Internet audiovisual pool will be distributed based on all the available and received information. Performances are paid out based on cue sheet information in SOCAN's database.

Netflix and Disney+ have a threshold of 1000 performances. For other services, SOCAN reviews each service individually to see what threshold makes the most sense for processing the files. We look at how much $ was received vs. how many streams. Then, we look and determine if the ratio of value per stream results in pennies per stream. If so, we will revisit the threshold to make sure the per stream makes sense when we are looking at having to pay out on an entire cue sheet, which is different than a per stream value on a work. As an example, 1000 Netflix performances will be represented by 1 performance on the member statement.

Please note that SOCAN distributes on streams that originated in Canada for online audiovisual services.

Some of the attributes associated with the royalty calculation at a work/cue level include: station weight, unit value, usage, work/cue duration, and # of performances.

Think you haven't been paid?

- Check to see if the works are registered with SOCAN.
- For Internet Audiovisual Services, please make sure the cue sheet has been filed with SOCAN.
- If the above is complete, contact SOCAN Membership at members@socan.com or 1.866.307.6226.
- You can claim royalties going back **three years from the date SOCAN received the distribution** covering the performance period. The applicable policy may vary by territory, but three years is the standard set by CISAC. Submit your claim as soon as possible, including the work title, performer, performance date, and radio/TV station details.

Earning Royalties Around the World

SOCAN is passionate about ensuring that we collect and distribute the maximum available revenue to you, our members. Through our reciprocal agreements with affiliated Music Rights Organizations (MROs), we are able to distribute royalties for performances that occur outside Canada.

When will I get paid?

SOCAN distributes international royalties to its members on a quarterly basis, coinciding with its distribution of royalties from domestic performances. In some cases, payments will include performances from the previous year, however, in other cases, royalties may be applicable to performances dating back two, three, or four-plus years, depending on the territories and distribution practices of the foreign MROs.

Who does what?

Each MRO has its own unique survey methodologies, its own distribution rules and procedures, and is bound by the copyright laws of its own country - sometimes influenced by social, political, and economic conditions. In some cases, tariffs covering certain types of music usage have been approved in certain territories, but not in Canada and vice versa. In effect, each territory is an island unto itself, while still obligated to follow certain prescribed policies and standards as signatories to international copyright conventions, and as members of the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC), the Paris-based umbrella organization whose members include MROs such as SOCAN.

How do we do it?

SOCAN enjoys excellent working relationships with its international affiliate MROs. We send notifications of performances to foreign territories and pursue claims on behalf of SOCAN members. We also manage and maintain international agreements involving our members to ensure that the correct publishers and sub-publishers are compensated.

What we need from you:

International Radio Performances

- Register your work(s) online
- Include any alternative names (AKAs) or translations of the title in the registration
- Advise us of date(s) of performance, work(s) performed, country, station name and type, plus any other pertinent information

International Concert Performances

- Work registrations for all songs performed
- A Notification of Live Music Performance and/or a show contract, as well as a set list, for each date performed, venue information
- For New Classical/Serious Music Concerts, a program from the performance will suffice

International Audiovisual Performances

- Cue Sheet
  - Make sure to complete all the required information
  - Make sure the cue sheet is signed by the producer
  - Make sure you have identified whether the cues are instrumental or vocal
  - Identify which US society will be representing you for this production (SOCAN/ASCAP, SOCAN/BMI, SOCAN/SESAC)
  - Make sure that your publisher has the same US affiliation
- Any broadcast/airplay information
- Any foreign title translations (film, series, episode)

Think you haven't been paid?

- Please note: all distributions from international societies are subject to their own distribution rules
- Check to see if SOCAN has distributed on the quarter in which the performance aired. Note that most payments from international societies are a quarter or more behind SOCAN's distribution schedule.

International Radio Performances

- Check to see if the works are registered with SOCAN
- If the above is completed, contact SOCAN Membership at members@socan.com or 1.866.307.6226
    - Please provide the date(s) of performance, song(s) played, country, station name & type, plus any other information that may be pertinent.
    - Please note that if the relevant society pays on a sample basis for the radio performance type in question, your song may have aired on that station, but was not captured for distribution

International Concert Performances

- Check to see if the works are registered with SOCAN
- Make sure you have completed the Notification of Live Music Performance (NLMP) and provided the required supporting documents (i.e., set lists, proof or contract, venue information, etc.)
- If the above is completed, contact SOCAN Membership at members@socan.com or 1.866.307.6226. It may be that the relevant society does not pay for this type of concert performance, is still in the process of collecting license fees for the performance, or that we have not yet received their distribution containing those royalties.

International Audiovisual Performances

- If the above has been completed, contact SOCAN Membership at members@socan.com or 1.866.307.6226
  SOCAN requires the following information to make a claim on international performances that haven't been paid:
    - Country/Territory where the performance aired
    - Release/License Date of the production
    - Station ID or Film Festival that aired the production
    - Air Date of the Performance

If you still have questions about SOCAN's Distribution Rules, please contact the Membership Department at members@socan.com or 1.866.307.6226.