

Royalty Free Music License

Many people have gotten the wrong impression from the term "Royalty Free Music". It implies the music may never have a royalty payment due for any use. Some believe it means there is no cost involved whatsoever. Royalty free music means the music can be used royalty free, but only within a specified set of uses. For example, your music license may allow use on all radio broadcasts with no royalties due, but does require royalties for broadcast on TV. Music licenses vary by company on acceptable and unacceptable royalty free use.

Before [royalty-free music](#), libraries charged what is known as a "Needle-Drop" fee. Now termed limit blanket licenses or single production blanket licenses. Needle Drop, from the good old vinyl days, meant whenever the music was the producer paid a fee. If you used the music in a commercial, you paid the needle drop fee. If you then used the same music in another commercial, you paid the Needle Drop fee again. Term limit blanket licenses provided the producer with a specific amount of music which could be used in permitted productions for a set period of time, typically one year. A production blanket license allowed the producer to use as much music as needed for any one production.

After years of this type of licensing, some [music library](#) producers came up with the idea of what is now known as a royalty free music library to make their library more attractive to producers. It is also known sometimes as a buy out music library.

Now, producers could get a blanket right to use the music without additional payments for a specific use, or they could get a group of albums and use them without any restrictions at all.

There are several different kinds of royalty free music licenses offered. What is included in any one music license differs from one company to the next.

A lot of music libraries will offer an entire set of albums or music tracks for one low buy-out license. The producer can use the music for whatever they want, while never having to pay any additional fees.

Another type of [buyout music](#) license can be a blanket use license up to certain limits. So you might be able to use the music for all sorts of productions like any and all local productions on radio and TV but are restricted from national use without additional license fees.

Yet another type of license is an unlimited use of music for any one specific use. This is a hybrid of a buy out and Needle-Drop licenses. In other words, you could license music for the use in commercial broadcasts anywhere worldwide, but could not use it for anything else without additional license fees. Unlike traditional Needle Drop, each reuse for the allowed right would not mean another payment to the music library. For example, your license for use in world wide commercials typically would be for life, and would include the right to use the music again and again for other commercials projects. Unlike Needle Drop that would require license fees for each additional use of the music in other world wide broadcasts.

About the Author

SmartSound Software, Inc. is the maker of the SmartSound family of [royalty free music](#) technology and content products such as Sonicfire Pro. These unique, patented products are designed to help the visual creator unlock the true impact, emotion and reach of their visuals through the power of [stock music](#) customized to fit to their specific project.

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