

Using background  
**music**

It may be background, but it's still music



**SOCAN**

Society of Composers, Authors and  
Music Publishers of Canada

Société canadienne des auteurs,  
compositeurs et éditeurs de musique

# who SOCAN is

## ABOUT SOCAN

SOCAN is a member-owned collective representing the people who create the music that is such an important part of our lives. Our members number more than 100,000 Canadian songwriters, composers, lyricists and publishers. And through our affiliations, we represent hundreds of thousands of other creators and publishers around the world.

For those who use music as part of their businesses or functions, SOCAN sells access to virtually the world's entire repertoire of copyright-protected music for public performance and telecommunication – based on tariffs set by Canada's Copyright Board.



## WHO PAYS FOR MUSIC?

SOCAN provides access to virtually the world's entire repertoire of copyright-protected music through our agreements with similar organizations around the globe. Without us, you'd have to get permission from every songwriter, composer, lyricist and music publisher for every piece of music you use. So if your business uses any recorded background music (i.e. CDs, tapes, juke-boxes, etc...), or telephone music on hold, you need a SOCAN performing rights licence. This includes restaurants, retail stores, hair salons, doctors' offices, tanning salons, manufacturing facilities – anywhere that background music is used to enhance the experience.

## WHY MUSIC ISN'T FREE

There's nothing new about this. Performing rights have existed in Canada for over 75 years. Of course, every tune played as background music was written, and published, by somebody. As in any other business, these people deserve to get paid for their work. And it is their right to get paid for use of their music in public (no, it's not included in the price of a CD). It's part of how they earn a living – and if it's worth playing, it's worth paying. All of this holds true for background music.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: What if my business is seasonal?**

**A:** You may be eligible to pay only half the annual amount (there is a minimum fee) if your business runs for six months or less each year (seasonal).

**Q: When is music not background music?**

**A:** Any music covered by another tariff cannot be eligible for the background music rates. For example, music played during public skating and via in-flight headset doesn't qualify as background music. Each has its own tariff.

**Q: What about music from SOCAN-licensed providers?**

**A:** If your business uses a licensed background music supplier, then the supplier should pay. SOCAN-licensed suppliers state in their subscriber contracts that they hold a SOCAN performing rights licence. However, if you use that music for any purpose other than background music, you pay a fee based on the applicable tariff. Example: background music from a commercial provider used to conduct exercise classes is no longer "background."

**Q: What about telephone music on hold?**

**A:** If a background music supplier provides your music on hold, then the supplier should pay. If you use music from CDs, DVDs, tapes or the radio, then your business is required to pay (under Tariff 15B). Cost is based on the number of trunk lines (lines simultaneously available for outside calls) in use. There's a base fee for the first line, then a nominal fee for each additional line.

**Let us assure you that more than 80% of all monies from fees collected by SOCAN makes its way to the creators and publishers entitled to it. It's part of their livelihood.**

## MUSIC ADDS VALUE

Music brings value to businesses. Study after study confirms that music plays a major role in setting the mood for shopping and dining, to name just a few activities (for references, see our brochure, *"Imagine your Business without Music!"*). The SOCAN music tariffs (including those for background music) take into consideration the relative value of music to a particular business. As you'll see, it's quite logical.



## WHAT'S IT WORTH?

If music is used solely as a background to your business, it's less vital to your business and you'll pay less. A dance club is highly dependent upon music. A restaurant could survive without it.

Tariff 15A, for background music, is based on the floor area which customers use. For example, in a bar/restaurant, it includes the space behind the bar and patio areas, but not kitchen or storage areas. The fee is pennies (not dollars) per square foot per year.

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

If you'd like more details about SOCAN and why you pay for music, please check us out at [www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca) or contact your local SOCAN office. We also have pamphlets on the value of music to businesses, who pays for it and why, plus more. As always, we're here to assist you and to answer any questions you might have.

### SOCAN Head Office

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Check us out at [www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca)

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what's right for music  
la musique a ses droits