

Showing a movie to your club or organization¹

This document is intended to guide individuals and organizations who are interested in showing a movie (DVD/VHS) outside of a private home.

Why do I need a public performance license to show a movie?

According to the Federal Copyright Act—Title 17 of the U.S. Code, taverns, restaurants, **private clubs**, prisons, lodges, factories, summer camps, public libraries, daycare facilities, parks and recreation departments, churches and **non-classroom use at schools and universities** are all examples of situations where a public performance license must be obtained. This legal requirement applies regardless of whether an admission fee is charged, whether the institution or organization is commercial or non-profit, or whether a federal or state agency is involved

When do I need permission to show a movie on-campus?

- If you are showing the movie in any public university space, i.e. conference room, class room, residence hall common areas
- If you have used publicity to invite your audience to a showing. Examples include but are not limited to emails, evites, and flyers.
- If you are charging admission for the showing or event in conjunction

How does one obtain a Public Performance License?

Obtaining a public performance license is relatively easy for most mainstream movies. If you are looking to show an international film, it might be a little more trickier. It is common that there is a fee associated with showing the movie. Fees are determined by such factors as the number of times a particular movie is going to be shown, how large the audience will be and so forth. While fees vary, they are generally inexpensive for smaller performances. Most licensing fees are based on a particular performance or set of performances for specified films. The major firms that handle these licenses include²:

- SWANK Motion Pictures, Incorporated – the web site for this company is www.swank.com, and the phone number is 1-800-876-5577. The list of films they distribute is on their web page, but they add new films everyday.
- Criterion –They are the other big distributor. Their web site is www.criterionpic.com, and their phone number is 1-800-890-9494.
- Conduct a web search – a good place to start is www.imdb.com, the Internet Movie Database. Simply go to the site, type your film in the search area on the left, and choose the correct film out of the results. Once you choose your film, go to the “Company Credits” and look up “distribution.”

¹ This information is taken from the Motion Picture Association of America website, www.mpa.org/Public_Performance

² Kansas State Website: <http://www.k-state.edu/osas/moviepolicy.htm>

- If you STILL can't find out who distributes the film, you can call (310) 247-3020, to the Reference Library of the Motion Picture Academy.