

Region #22 Copyright Forum HANDOUT
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What I need to Know about Copyright
Guide for Choruses and Quartets

When a chorus or quartet orders an arrangement from an arranger, there is a per copy fee that goes to the copyright holder and an arranger's service fee that goes to the arranger.

The copy fee must be paid each time additional copies of the arrangement are ordered. The Arranger's service fee is not.

Accurate records need to be kept with the dates and amounts of the copy fees and the Arranger's fees.

When chorus members leave a chorus, whether resigning, transferring, becoming a dual member, etc. chorus music needs to remain with the chapter. The copies are paid for by the chapter (unless members pay for their own music). In either case, the music is not to be further copied or distributed without paying the copyright holder for additional copies.

An arrangement is sold to a specific chorus or quartet. If it is taken to another chorus or quartet, the arranger's service fee will be required (unless waived by the arranger).

When an arrangement is retired from the repertoire, it is a good idea for chorus members to return their copies to the music librarian for storage and possible future use. The copies are paid for and can be reused.

There are two "lists" of arrangements available from Sweet Adeline International headquarters.

The first is the list of arrangements published by the organization. These arrangements have all been examined for quality by Certified or Master Arrangers. Some are indicated as to difficulty and suitability for contest. Arrangements for YWIH are so noted. The copy fee for these arrangements at present is \$1.20 for Sweet Adeline members and \$1.80 for non members. Arrangements on this list are not available for preview.

The second list is the "cleared" list. When an arranger wants to create an arrangement of a certain song, he or she must first receive permission from the copyright holder. There is a fee for this which is paid by the arranger. The arrangements on this list are not examined by anyone (other than the creator) for quality. There is a disclaimer on this list that reads "These arrangements have been cleared through the copyright process. Sweet Adelines International has not

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reviewed them and makes no guarantees regarding quality or suitability for contest.” The list is divided into two sections. The first half includes arrangements available from headquarters. The second half includes arrangements available from the arrangers who have created the arrangements. The arrangements on the “contact International” portion of the list may be ordered as previews. Member requests for previews must be in writing, for up to 5 arrangements at a time. They may be kept for 30 days for review. If you decide to buy the arrangement, the copy fee from the “cleared” list is \$1.45, if ordered from headquarters.

When ordering music from an arranger directly, the copy fee may vary. Copyright holders vary the fees they charge. When ordering from International headquarters, the fee has been standardized for administrative purposes.

The arranger is not the copyright holder. When copy fees are paid to the arranger (or to International headquarters), these are passed along to the copyright holder.

You may not assume a song is in public domain if it has been published before 1923. Specific arrangements of songs in public domain can still be under copyright protection. An arrangement done prior to the song going into public domain has a full term of copyright beginning on the date it is completed. If the song is in public domain, there is no per copy fee assessed. The arranger’s service fee still applies.

Arranger’s service fees will also vary. Sometimes the time and effort required to create the arrangement will necessitate a higher service fee. The length and complexity of the arrangement may impact the fee. Contest arrangements usually cost more. And, individual arrangers may have different monetary needs that impact what they need to charge.

When ordering a learning recording, you may not ethically bypass the arranger’s service fee. There would be no learning recording if the arranger had not paid for the right to arrange the song and spent the time and talent to create the arrangement. Order the arrangement first from headquarters or the arranger and then seek out the learning recording. Check with the person making the recording to make sure they have the most current version of the arrangement. Arrangers of quality will often refine their work and make improvements.

This discussion only applies to the legal implications choruses and quartets need to know about making paper copies in order to protect the group. It does not apply to recording rights. That’s an entirely different discussion. Unless the people who make the learning tracks have paid for the right to make multiple copies of that recording, license fees for any copies you make are your responsibility.