

COPYRIGHT GUIDELINES

Federal Copyright Law:

- The US Copyright Act governs the exclusive rights of copyright owners, and how copyrighted works and materials, such as music, movies, television broadcasts, and streaming content, may be used by others.
- The requirement to obtain an appropriate license(s) to exhibit copyrighted content applies to colleges, universities, public schools, day care facilities, summer camps, churches, private clubs, prisons, lodges, businesses, parks and recreation departments, etc. *regardless* of whether admission is charged, whether the institution is commercial or non-profit or whether a federal, state or local agency is involved.
- The production studios who own copyrights, and their agents, are the only parties who are authorized to license copyrighted works for exhibition. No other group or person has the right to exhibit or license exhibitions of copyrighted content.
- Neither the rental nor the purchase or lending of a videocassette, DVD, or a subscription service, carries with it the right to exhibit such content publicly outside the home, unless the site where the copyrighted content is used is properly licensed for copyright compliant exhibition.
- Furthermore, copyrighted content borrowed from other sources such as public libraries, colleges, personal collections, etc. cannot be used legally for showing in colleges or universities or in any other site which is not properly licensed unless there is a specific exception (see below).

Face to Face Teaching Exemption:

Under the “education exemption,” copyrighted content may be exhibited at RIT without a license only if the content exhibition is:

- An integral part of a class session and is of material assistance to the teaching content.
- Supervised by a teacher in a classroom.
- Attended **ONLY** by students enrolled in a REGISTERED class.
- Presented using a lawfully made production that has been legally produced and obtained through rental or purchase.

Those who violate copyright law are subject to consequences:

- RIT Student Conduct Process
- Civil and/or criminal penalties ranging between \$750 to \$30,000 for each illegal showing, a maximum sentence of up to one year in jail and/or a \$150,000 fine.

Procedures:

- All student club and organization events and activities involving the showing of a movie, television show, broadcast, documentary, or streaming event must be submitted through the RIT Events site at <https://reserve.rit.edu> for review and approval.
- Proof of license purchase will be required before events are approved.
- Vendors that can be used to purchase a license include [Swank Motion Pictures](#) and [Criterion Motion Pictures](#).

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Frequently Asked Questions:

What is considered public space on our campus?

Anything outside of an individual's housing or residence is considered public space (i.e.: classrooms, lounges, auditoriums, meeting/conference rooms, libraries, museums, recreational facilities, common areas of apartments/dormitories/and other residential communities, outdoor space, cafeterias, etc.)

If I'm not charging admission to watch the movie, television show do I still need to purchase the licensing rights?

Yes. A license is required for all public performances regardless of whether admission is charged.

If I buy a movie or television show DVD at a store, rent it from the library, have a streaming subscription service, or already own the DVD or digital download, does that count as "purchasing the rights"?

No. Stores, libraries, and streaming services sell and rent movies and television shows for "home use only" and cannot provide legal permission for use outside the home. You can only obtain licensing directly from a licensor, not from a third party.

What if I want to show an old movie from the '30s or '40s? Do I still need a license?

Yes. Copyright pertains to all movies and television shows regardless of the year it was produced, unless it falls in the "public domain" and is free for viewing. To see a list of movies in this category, visit: <http://www.openflix.com/>

What if I'm only showing the film, television show, or broadcast to a small group of friends or classmates? Do I still need a license?

If the movie, television show, or broadcast is being shown outside your home, a license needs to be obtained regardless of the number of people attending the screening.

My organization is showing a film for educational purposes. Do I still need a license?

You will need to purchase the license unless your movie or television broadcast is being shown as part of a class and is relevant to the teaching content, the movie is supervised by the course instructor, and the movie is attended ONLY by students enrolled in a REGISTERED class at RIT. Showing a movie or television broadcast outside of a classroom and holding an education discussion following the film is not part of the face-to-face teaching exemption.

What am I paying for when I purchase the rights to content?

The license fees compensate the copyright owners and the individuals who create and work on the content's production. These royalties are the way publishers, authors, composers, musicians, inventors, computer programmers and movie producers are paid for their work.

Do documentaries and independent films fall under the same rules?

Yes. However, sometimes permission can be obtained from the film maker to show the film for little or no cost. It will depend on the specific copyright owner(s).