



1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
2. Licensing (<https://www.gov.uk/topic/business-enterprise/licensing>)

Guidance

Entertainment Licensing

Information on whether you need approval to put on certain types of regulated entertainment.

From:

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Contents

- 1. Overview
- 2. Do I need a licence for music entertainment?
- 3. Do I need a licence to put on a play or a performance of dance?
- 4. Do I need a licence to stage an indoor sporting event?
- 5. Do I need a licence to stage boxing or wrestling?
- 6. Do I need a licence to screen a film?
- 7. Guidance

[Print this page](#)

1. Overview

Businesses, organisations and individuals who want to provide types of entertainment may require a licence or other authorisation from a licensing authority - a local council.

The types of businesses and organisations that need a licence for entertainment might include:

- nightclubs
- live music venues
- cinemas
- larger theatres
- larger street and open air festivals
- larger indoor sporting arena

In particular a licence may be required by:

- anyone that provides any entertainment between 11PM and 8AM;
- anyone that provides amplified live or recorded music to an audience of more than 500 people;
- anyone that provides recorded music to an audience on premises not licensed for the sale or supply of alcohol;

- anyone that puts on a performance of a play or a dance to an audience of more than 500 people, or an indoor sporting event to more than 1,000 spectators
- anyone that puts on boxing or wrestling
- anyone that screens a film to an audience

2. Do I need a licence for music entertainment?

Whether a licence is needed for music entertainment will depend on the circumstances. A licence is not required to stage a performance of live music, or the playing of recorded music if:

- it takes place between 8AM and 11PM; and
- it takes place at an alcohol on-licensed premises; and
- the audience is no more than 500 people

You also don't need a licence:

- to put on unamplified live music at any place between the same hours; or
- to put on amplified live music at a workplace between the same hours and provided the audience is no more than 500 people.

In other circumstances, a licence may be required. One licence application (<https://www.gov.uk/alcohol-licensing>) can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol.

There are exemptions from the need for a licence for music entertainment, in defined circumstances as set out in the Guidance, including for:

- places of public worship, village halls, church halls and other similar buildings
- schools
- hospitals
- local authority premises
- incidental music - music that is incidental to other activities that aren't classed as regulated entertainment

The Guidance also sets out the process by which a local council can review a licence where problems may occur in relation to music entertainment and noise nuisance.

3. Do I need a licence to put on a play or a performance of dance?

Whether a licence is needed for a performance of a play or a dance will depend on the circumstances. A licence is not required to stage a performance of a play or a performance of dance if:

- it takes place between 8AM and 11PM; and
- the audience is no more than 500 people.

In other circumstances, a licence may be required. One licence application can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol. A licence is always required for any activity that is sexual entertainment.

(<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100413151441/http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimereduction057a.pdf>).

4. Do I need a licence to stage an indoor sporting event?

Whether a licence is needed for an indoor sporting event will depend on the circumstances. A licence is not required to stage an indoor sporting event if:

- it takes place between 8AM and 11PM; and
- the number of spectators is not more than 1000 people.

In other circumstances, a licence may be required. One licence application (<https://www.gov.uk/alcohol-licensing>) can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol.

5. Do I need a licence to stage boxing or wrestling?

You will need a licence to stage boxing, wrestling and mixed martial arts. One licence application (<https://www.gov.uk/alcohol-licensing>) can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol.

6. Do I need a licence to screen a film?

A licence is needed to screen a film or exhibit moving pictures. One licence application (<https://www.gov.uk/alcohol-licensing>) can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol.

There are exemptions from the need for a licence for film entertainment, in defined circumstances as set out in the Guidance, including for:

- places of public worship, village halls, church halls and other similar buildings
- education
- incidental film – moving pictures that are incidental to other activities that aren't classed as regulated entertainment
- television broadcasts

In other circumstances, a licence may be required to show a film:

- In public
- or in private, if those attending are charged for entry and the intention is to make a profit, including raising money for charity.

Licensing of entertainment under the Licensing Act 2003 is entirely separate from copyright authorisation to show films in public (<https://www.gov.uk/showing-films-in-public>).

7. Guidance

Further detail is set out in Guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/explanatory-memorandum-revised-guidance-issued-under-s-182-of-licensing-act-2003>) issued under the Licensing Act 2003.

You can also contact your local council (<https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council>) for advice.

Elsewhere on gov.uk

Alcohol licensing (<https://www.gov.uk/alcohol-licensing>)

Early Post-Implementation Review of the Live Music Act

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/328503/Post-implementation_review_Impact_Assessment_of_the_Live_Music_Act_2012.pdf)

Intellectual property – guidance: Licensing bodies and collecting societies (<https://www.gov.uk/licensing-bodies-and-collecting-societies>)

Performance licences for children (<https://www.gov.uk/child-employment/performance-licences-for-children>)

Safety certificates: sports stands (<https://www.gov.uk/safety-certificates-for-regulated-stands-at-sports-grounds-e-s-w>)

Organising a street party (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-guide-to-organising-a-street-party>)

Entertainment Licensing Statistics 2014 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/entertainment-licensing-2014>)

Elsewhere on the web

Licensing Resource (<http://licensingresource.co.uk>)

British Board of film classification (<http://www.bbfc.co.uk/>)

Copyright Hub (<http://www.copyrighthub.co.uk/>)

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- Entertainment Licensing 2014 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/entertainment-licensing-2014>)
- Private clubs and associations: quick start guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-clubs-and-associations-quick-start-guide>)
- Changes to Section 72: Public showing or playing of broadcasts (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-section-72-public-showing-or-playing-of-broadcasts>)
- Club premises certificate (<https://www.gov.uk/club-premises-certificate>)

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