



Films, DVDs, Videos & TV - Screening in Public

This information sheet gives a brief overview of copyright law as it relates to the public screening of videos, films and DVDs.

The purpose of this information sheet is to give general introductory information about copyright. If you need to know about how the law applies in a particular situation, please get advice from a lawyer.

Key points

- If you screen a film, video or DVD in a non-domestic setting, you need permission
- The fact that you own a copy of a film, video or DVD does not give you the right to screen it in public.
- For copyright purposes, screening a film, DVD or video outside the home is generally regarded as “in public”. Screenings organised by a non-profit organisation, such as a church, social club, or sporting association will also generally be “in public”, even with no fee being charged for viewing the film or video. A licence for screening a film or video in a church can be obtained from:
 - Heritage Films which handles church licensing for Roadshow, Warner Bros, Disney, Sony, Hopscotch, Icon and Hoyts Distribution and others. For more information on available options, visit www.bsml.com.au.
- Playing a pirated copy of a DVD, even if you do not need, or have received, permission for the public screening of the film, will infringe copyright (at least in the computer software on the DVD).
- If you screen a film, DVD or video in public without permission, you will infringe copyright
- Even screening a very small part of a film will involve public performance of a substantial part of the words or music of a song, for example. (For further information, see our information sheet [Quotes](#))
- In addition, a person who permits premises to be used for an unauthorised screening is liable.

A copyright owner may take legal action for infringement, generally as long as six years after the infringement has occurred. A copyright owner whose rights are infringed may seek orders from a court, including orders for financial compensation. A person who infringes copyright for commercial purposes may also be charged with criminal offences.

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