

Student Recreation and Wellness Center FILM SHOWING POLICY

GENERAL POLICY

The Federal Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code) governs how copyrighted materials, such as films, may be used. Neither the rental nor the purchase of a DVD or streaming service carries with it the public performance rights (hereinafter, “rights”) to show a film outside the home. This legal requirement applies to all public showings* 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. Failure to adhere to the Federal Copyright Act can result in significant fines and jail sentence to the event organizers choosing to show the film.

**A public showing is defined as any screening of a film which occurs outside of the home, or at any place where people are gathered who are not family members such as in a school, library, auditorium, classroom, or meeting room.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What must I do to show a film in a Student Recreation and Wellness-Center (SRWC)-managed facility/space?

Every organization (internal or external, student organization or department) is required to provide SRWC a copy of the “rights” granted to your organization by the distributor for each unique film showing ten (10) business days prior to each showing.

How do I get the “rights?”

Contact the distributor of the film. Some common distributors are:

- SWANK Motion Pictures - www.swank.com or (800) 876-5577 (There is a list of films they distribute on their website.)
- Criterion - www.criterionpic.com or (800) 890-9494
- If you are unsure of which company distributes the film you are wanting to show, you may call the Reference Library of the Motion Picture Arts & Sciences: (310) 247-3020

Common questions they may ask are:

- Your name and the organization you are with/contact info;
- In what context are you showing the film;
- Will there be a charge to come see the film;
- Whether or not you need a copy of the film.

Another option is providing a signed letter of release from the film’s producer.

Will the “rights” cost me anything?

The distributor may charge your organization a fee for showing the film. Some common reasons for charging a fee would be:

- Your organization is charging event admission;
- You expect a large number of attendees;
- You will be getting a copy of the film from the distributor;
- You will be showing this film multiple times.

Are there any movies I can show without needing to buy or obtain rights?

Yes, anyone can use, whether for commercial or non-commercial purposes, movies that are a part of public domain. Public domain comprises the body of information and creativity considered to be a part of a common cultural and intellectual heritage. Public domain includes hundreds of movies, cartoons, and dozens of TV shows. The copyrights to many of these titles were either not properly registered or were not renewed and therefore the content is now public domain.

What if I do not follow the film showing requirements?

If complaints are received, or organizations, sponsors, guests, and/or participants are observed to be in violation of any of the above policies, SRWC may take any necessary action up to and including event shut-down. Furthermore, future requests by the individual or organization to show a film may be denied for a minimum of one (1) semester.

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