

## **Copyright Law Primer**

Copyright law is a body of federal law that protects “original works of expression” such as songs, musical compositions, photographs, and books, etc. created by musicians, DJs, artists and authors. Copyright protection gives the creator exclusive rights to copy, distribute, and sell their creations. So, for example, if you want a copyright for music, you would seek protection under these laws. This system exists so that you, the artist, profit from the hard work you invested in your musical and artistic endeavors. Although copyright protection does not last forever, it can extend for decades or more.

Copyright law, in summary, provides six essential protections:

- The right to reproduce and copy your creation in various media formats;
- The right to adapt and change your copyrighted work;
- The right to distribute, lease, lend, or sell copies of your work for profit;
- The right to publicly perform the work;
- The right to publicly display the work;
- The right to digitally send copies of sound recordings via digital audio transmission (e.g. the internet or radio).

Copyright protection “attaches” to your work at the moment of creation, that is, if you create it, you own the copyright. Multiple people, such as groups of artists that collaborate on a project, can jointly own these rights, and split the proceeds from their sales according to a written agreement. So, once you’ve learned how to become a DJ and produce your own music, you own the copyright in your music, and may share that copyright with a fellow DJ collaborator or producer.

Most artists like to take an extra step by registering their copyrights. You begin the registration process by completing the forms you will find, among other places, at: <http://www.copyright.gov/forms/>. You must specifically define in your application what it is that you want copyrighted. This description is very important in that the U.S. Copyright Office (actually a part of the Library of Congress) could reject your application for being too vague or incomplete.

Registering your copyright puts you in a better position to defend it by placing others on notice of your rights and giving you the right to sue to defend it. These remedies fall into two general categories: damages and injunctive relief. A lawsuit for damages allows you to obtain compensation for the harm another created when they infringed upon the copyrighted work. A suit for injunctive relief asks a court to order the violator to do or not do specific things. This could include stopping the violator from selling your work. You can file a lawsuit can be for damages or injunctive relief, or both. Copyright law is federal and therefore these lawsuits are filed in federal court

Although copyright law may appear simple, protecting yourself requires careful attention to detail. Your best bet is to consult an attorney skilled in copyright law and how to protect your creation. Consult with us today to see how we can help you fully realize the economic benefits of your hard work.

Copyright law has been with us for some time, long protecting artists and their art, encouraging a creative world.

*Ari Good, JD LLM, a tax, aviation and entertainment lawyer, is the Shareholder of Good Attorneys At Law, P.A. Mr. Good received his BA, With Distinction, from the University of Michigan in 1993. He graduated from the DePaul University College of Law in 1997 and received his LL.M. in Taxation from the University of Florida. Mr. Good is published in the law of trade secrets and telecommunications law and represents entertainment clients in copyright and trademark matters.*

**[www.goodattorneysatlaw.com/entertainment](http://www.goodattorneysatlaw.com/entertainment)**

## **Additional Resources**

For additional information visit our website, at [goodattorneysatlaw.com/entertainment](http://goodattorneysatlaw.com/entertainment), or call us at [877.771.1131](tel:877.771.1131)

[Entertainment law attorney Ari Good](#)

