



## Copyright Matters

In your competition materials, you will find the certification of Copyright Clearance on the Competition Authorization form. When this form is initialed by the quartet, or by the president/team leader on behalf of the chorus, it states that to the best of your knowledge, the arrangements your group is performing are legal arrangements, either they have been cleared through the copyright process, are original works, or are songs in the public domain. Generally, when you purchase music you can assume that appropriate permissions have been obtained. However, if you are not certain, it is acceptable to ask the music provider to verify that the arrangement has cleared the copyright approval process.

Be aware that lyrics, like the music itself, are copyright protected. Legal issues typically occur only when a performer makes musical or lyrical changes to a published arrangement without permission. Altering a few words to personalize the song for the performer is usually permissible; however, if the lyrical changes involve a parody, with very few exceptions a performer must obtain permissions from the copyright holder to make such changes. Parody lyrics are defined by Jay Althouse in his book, *Copyright: The Complete Guide for Music Educators*, as follows:

“Parody lyrics are lyrics which replace the original lyrics of a vocal work or are added to an instrumental work. In general, any parody lyric or the revision of a lyric that changes the integrity (character) of the work requires authorization from the copyright owner.”

Copyright holders have the right to say no to any particular arrangement of their music, and they exercise that right frequently when it comes to parodies. Copyright holders will generally want to review the parody lyrics prior to granting approval or permission to arrange. In addition, when we obtain permission to put your performance on video, copyright holders request copies of all parody lyrics before that permission is considered. As a result, we are now requiring all competitors to attach parody lyrics to the Song Information Sheet so that we are not unduly delayed in our request for licensing. To avoid further complications, and in accordance with the policy adopted by the International Board of Directors, no parodies will be included in our international recordings without written permission from the copyright holders. Obtaining permission to arrange a piece of music with parody lyrics does not guarantee that the copyright holder will grant permission for the video recording.

Sweet Adelines International always tries to comply, to the best of its knowledge and ability, with all applicable copyright and licensing laws of the United States. Use of the certification of copyright clearance form is intended to help you protect the organization from complications resulting from the licensing restrictions. We also recognize that you, as members and performers, want to do the right thing and be in compliance with the law as well. In the future, if it is determined that a contestant has provided false information or has not appropriately obtained permission for an arrangement, and as a result the organization is subject to extraordinary expense, legal fees, or fines, that contestant may be asked to share in these costs. Putting our organization at risk may result in disqualification at international contest.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact [music@sweetadelines.com](mailto:music@sweetadelines.com). Your cooperation in this matter is most appreciated.