



Director FAQs for Video Recording 2022 Regional Conventions

As you prepare to make your video recording of your ensemble for contest, we know that can raise a number of questions about how best to do it. We deeply appreciate and honor your desires to create “optimal” recording conditions to best showcase your chorus. However, please remember that the goal is have the opportunity to perform for feedback once again and receive education and guidance about moving forward from this new beginning. Technology is much better than we even realize and we are confident that you can make an excellent video recording without a great deal of stress or expense!

Our judges are trained throughout the International Judging Program using videos. Level-viewing prior to all contests is conducted using video recordings from multiple competition venues with varying acoustics, technology, and lighting. We are conducting specific judge training in the coming months concerning our upcoming regional contests. Our judges are extremely competent and confident judging contests via video.

We are providing our judges with video examples of choruses and quartets with the following variations:

- Video recordings made on a smart phone, a tablet and a laptop with microphone attached
- Video recordings with masks and without masks
- Video recordings with and without social distancing used
- Video recordings with overhead lights only and with additional lighting
- All of these conditions will be reviewed in these video recordings and studied with both ballads and up-tunes

You can view these examples [here](#).

In preparing and reviewing these recordings, the Judge Specialist Committee has compiled a few thoughts you’ll want to keep in mind as you prepare for recording.

Please keep the following in mind as you prepare for recording:

1. **Video and sound quality from ordinary smartphones and tablets is ample.** After reviewing all of the options, actually the videos made with a smart phone or tablet were the best recordings! These provided clear sound and visuals for us that we could judge with clarity and precision.
2. **Special lighting is not necessary.** Standard overhead lighting is sufficient. In the recordings, the additional lighting was barely noticed as long as the overhead lights were bright.
3. **Camera placement should capture the entire ensemble if possible.** To enhance sound and blend, we discovered it is best accomplished by moving the recording device further back and then use the zoom feature to bring the group into closer view. This allows the voices the space to blend better before reaching the microphone for recording.

4. **Video close-ups and panning are not necessary.** If you have someone that can do it with smooth motion, it can work if you desire. However, it can be disorienting for the viewer to have it move too quickly or jerkily and actually detracts from the ability of the judge to watch you consistently.
5. **Sound quality is only minimally impacted by mask wearing.** It was a pleasant surprise to find that there was almost NO discernable difference between recordings made with masks on or with masks off. Please feel free to use masks if that is what your area requires or if that is what helps your singers feel safe.
6. **Sound quality is only minimally impacted by social distancing.** It can be a bit disconcerting for singers to be farther away from other chorus members and to not hear them as well. So make sure to begin practicing and using the distance/placement you plan for contest in your rehearsals *now* so they have time to get used to singing confidently even when socially distanced.
7. **Sound quality is only minimally impacted by varying acoustical conditions in typical rehearsal halls.** Our recordings were made in a variety of places from large, spacious rooms to small areas. Some had tall ceilings; some low ceilings. There was little difference in the quality of the recording. Help your singers get confident with singing their best vocal production in the space that you will record in.
8. **If masked, Visual Communication judges still have ample ways to accurately judge the group.** While the Visual Communication judges may not be able to see smiles or all of the face, they can easily see bodies and lifted countenance. Even if you need a greater distance to video (a larger group) and are unable to move in closer at times, free, natural and dynamic bodies communicate a great deal! Lifted faces can often be seen even in masked groups. Performing with the song's message and emotional intent can happen with or without a mask. Keep reminding your performers to forget the mask and sing from their heart!
9. **What if some groups make more than one recording?** There really is no way we can regulate this. However, as judges, fellow directors and performers, we can tell you our experience with this. Short of something crazy happening when making the video (which might happen! If so, please re-record it!), recording the songs over and over really doesn't change the score. Often we get more tense the more times we do it, creating other issues which actually negatively impacts the score. Also, it is required that it be one continuous recording from announcement to final bow. We want you to feel confident in your performance, but be judicious about re-doing it multiple times.

There will be lots of groups recording their contest video this year! Share your experiences with one another. Help each other figure out what worked best for you. Communicate your successes as well as your questions. You have many cheerleaders and supporters as you move forward into this exciting venture!