ABOUT THIS INFOPACK

This Copyright 101 Infopack ("Infopack") provides an overview of fundamental concepts on copyright and related rights in Singapore. It is intended to serve as a basic primer for creators and users, outlining how copyright content may be created, distributed, and used in Singapore, including practical tips.

Copyright, as well as rights in performances, are types of intellectual property rights that grant their owners various exclusive rights in respect of content. Rights owners can control the use of their content and users who do not comply with copyright requirements may infringe copyright law. At the same time, copyright law provides specific exceptions to copyright infringement, so that the public can freely use content for particular recognised purposes that benefit society at large. In this way, the copyright regime provides creators with incentives to create content, creates business opportunities for rights owners, and sets out a clear framework within which users may access and use content.

The Copyright Act 2021 (the "Act") is the key source of copyright law and related rights in Singapore. For convenience, unless otherwise indicated, references to "copyright" in this Infopack refer to both copyright and rights in performances collectively, unless a particular distinction between the rights is being highlighted. References to "rights owners" therefore include both the owner of a copyright work as well as a person who is entitled to bring an action for an infringing use of a protected performance under the Act. Likewise, unless specifically distinguished, references to "creators" should be understood as including performers.

This Infopack introduces basic concepts in copyright law. If you would like to learn more about specific issues arising from the introduction of the Copyright Act 2021, such as the default ownership of commissioned works, the new moral right to be identified as a creator, and a new educational exception, please see our Copyright Act 2021 factsheets at http://go.gov.sg/copyright-resources.
The outline of this Infopack is as follows:

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This Infopack is for general information only and is not intended to be exhaustive. It is meant to serve as a primer for creators and users of copyright content, outlining how such content may be created, distributed, and used in Singapore. This document is made available on an “as is basis” and all implied warranties are disclaimed. It does not constitute, and should not be relied on as, legal advice. You should seek specific legal advice from a legal professional if you require legal advice. Please note that this Infopack does not consider matters outside Singapore.

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1. What is Copyright?

Copyright is an intellectual property right that protects original content expressed in tangible forms. The owner of copyright has certain rights to prevent others from using their content without authorisation.

As a property right, copyright can be assigned (i.e. you can transfer ownership of it to another person) or licensed (i.e. you can give permission to another person to use it). Copyright can also be used as security (e.g. as collateral for a loan).

Copyright law exists alongside other laws that may need to be observed when using content in Singapore (e.g. the Personal Data Protection Act 2012 in relation to use of personal data and defamation law in relation to defamatory content).

2. Who are the Key Players in Singapore’s Copyright Ecosystem?

Singapore’s copyright ecosystem includes the following key players:

- **Creators**
  Those who create content, such as a work or performance. The creator is often (but not always) also the rights owner. Examples are authors, artists, publishers, performers, and photographers.

- **Rights owners**
  Owners of copyright works and persons entitled to take action for infringing uses of protected performances.

- **Users**
  Those who make use of copyright content, e.g. by reproducing, performing, adapting, or communicating to the public. Creators too can be users when they use third-party content.

- **Collective Management Organisation**
  Organisations that collectively manage the use of content for different creators (e.g. singers and writers) and other rights owners (e.g. publishers), and which are appointed to administer licences and enforce copyright.
A Closer Look at CMOs

CMOs are appointed by rights owners to facilitate large-scale royalty collection and monitor usage of content, thereby reducing the transaction costs involved. This intermediary role played by CMOs can benefit users (e.g. restaurants, cinemas, and shopping malls that play music) by facilitating their use of works, as well as creators (e.g. the musician whose music is being played) by facilitating the payment of royalties to them for the use of their works.

Different CMOs manage rights over different types of content. For example, if you wish to use music (e.g. to perform a song in public), you may check if COMPASS or MRSS can grant you the relevant licences.

The following are the main CMOs currently operating in Singapore:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMOs</th>
<th>Rights which the CMO administers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Composers and Authors Society of Singapore Ltd (COMPASS) | • Right to make a copy of musical works  
• Right to make a copy of lyrics  
• Right to perform musical works in public  
• Right to perform lyrics in public |
| Music Rights (Singapore) Public Limited (MRSS) | • Right to make a copy of karaoke videos and music videos for use on karaoke-on-demand systems in Singapore  
• Right to make a copy of sound recordings  
• Right to perform films featured in music videos and karaoke videos in public  
• Right to perform sound recordings in public |

CMO Class Licensing Scheme

To ensure that CMOs meet minimum standards of transparency, good governance, accountability, and efficiency, the Act regulates CMOs under a class licensing scheme administered by IPOS. Under this scheme, all CMOs are subject to the conditions of the licensing scheme. IPOS is empowered to impose financial penalties on, as well as issue written directions and cessation orders to, CMOs and/or their officers who breach their licence conditions or who fail to comply with IPOS’s directions. The scheme is not yet in force and will be implemented after further public consultation on the licence conditions.
3. What Content does Copyright Protect?

The Act protects a wide variety of content. Rights owners can control how their content is used and receive payment for such use. Others may need licence(s) to use such content. Rights owners often require users to agree to comply with specific conditions, such as the payment of a fee, in exchange for the licence to use the content.

Below is an overview of common types of content and when it may be necessary to obtain a licence. Literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works are often collectively referred to as “Authorial Works” because they are created by the efforts of an author:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Exclusive right of the right owner (i.e. uses for which licence(s) may be required)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making a copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Content</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary works</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(e.g. books, articles in journals or newspapers, lyrics in songs or computer program source codes)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Making a copy</th>
<th>Publishing (e.g. supplying copies through sale)</th>
<th>Performing in public (i.e. to show or play in public)</th>
<th>Communicating to the public (i.e. to transmit to the public, e.g. over the internet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dramatic works</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e.g. scripts for films or drama (as applied), choreographic scripts for shows or dance routines)²</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musical works</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. melodies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Artistic works</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. paintings, sculptures, drawings, engravings, photographs, buildings or models of buildings, works of artistic craftsmanship such as designer furniture that is not mass produced)³</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Films</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e.g. movies or videos)⁴</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sound recordings</strong></td>
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<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e.g. podcasts, music or audiobooks contained in a digital file)⁵</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

² Literary works include works of the dramatic and literary arts (including choreographic works). They may be applied to works in a tangible medium of expression (such as a film, video or digital file).
³ An artistic work is a work of literary, dramatic, musical or visual art created by an individual or collective of individuals.
⁴ In the context of Singapore law, the term "film" includes movies and video content.
⁵ The term "sound recordings" includes podcasts, music, and audiobooks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Type of Content</th>
<th>Exclusive right of the right owner</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making a copy</td>
<td>Publishing (e.g. supplying copies through sale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television and radio broadcasts</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. broadcasts by way of television or radio)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable programmes</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. programmes (visual images and sound) included in a cable programme service sent by means of a telecommunication system)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published editions of literary, dramatic, musical, or artistic works</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. typographic arrangements of a published work)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RIGHTS IN PERFORMANCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live performances by performers (such as musicians, singers or comedians) and sound</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a copy of a recording of a performance to be heard in Communicating a live performance to the public or</td>
<td>Publishing a recording of a performance to be heard in Communicating a live performance to the public or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Content

| Exclusive right of the right owner (i.e. uses for which licence(s) may be required) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| **Type of Content**             | **Making a copy**               | **Publishing** (e.g. supplying copies through sale) | **Performing in public** (i.e. to show or play in public) | **Communicating to the public** (i.e. to transmit to the public, e.g. over the internet) |
| recordings of such performances | live performance                | live performance                                  | public while it is live                                   | making a recording of it available to the public |

### What is equitable remuneration?

Owners of copyright in sound recordings have a right to collect *equitable remuneration* (i.e. to be paid a fair compensation) for public performance of the sound recordings.

Hence, users that play recorded music in a public venue (e.g. restaurants, hotels, retail shops) may need to obtain a licence for the public performance of the sound recordings, in addition to the licences for public performance of the underlying musical scores and lyrics.

### Are you fully licensed?

Certain content, such as sound recordings and films, may contain different types of content, each of which is individually protected by copyright. This means that a user of such content must obtain a licence from the rights owner of each type of content. For example, to use a recorded song, one must obtain licences from the rights owner(s) of the lyrics, the melody, and the sound recording itself.

### 4. How is Copyright Protection Obtained?

In Singapore, the content you create is automatically protected by copyright as long as you meet the below conditions. You do not need to register your copyright to obtain protection and IPOS does not administer a copyright registration system.
Conditions for copyright protection:

(a) **You must have a connection with Singapore** (i.e. a "connecting factor"). This may be established in one or more of the following ways:

(i) **Nationality** – You are a Singapore citizen.

(ii) **Residence** – You were a resident of Singapore when you created your content.

(iii) **Place of publication** – You first published your content in Singapore.

Who is a "resident" of Singapore?

You are considered a "resident" of Singapore if you are ordinarily resident in Singapore, or residing in Singapore under a valid pass lawfully issued to you to enter and remain in Singapore for any purpose other than a temporary purpose.

Will my work be protected outside Singapore?

Copyright is 'territorial' in nature – i.e. copyright arising in Singapore confers protection only in Singapore. However, several international treaties now extend this protection to most other countries on the basis of reciprocity (i.e. Singapore also grants protection to copyright arising in those countries). This means that just as content created by creators from these countries will be protected in Singapore, content created by Singapore creators will be protected in these countries too.

Do note that in other countries, while registration of copyright is usually not necessary to obtain copyright protection, doing so may come with certain advantages, such as ease of proving rights ownership in the event of a dispute.

(b) In addition, for literary, dramatic, musical or an artistic works:

(i) **the expression must be original.** This means that you must apply at least some independent intellectual effort in creating the expression. Copyright does not protect facts or information. Copyright protects the particular form of expression of the information; and

(ii) **the work must be fixed in a material form.** This condition ensures certainty over what is protected. For example, a work that is in writing or stored on a
computer satisfies this requirement, whereas a speech that is only spoken but not scripted or otherwise recorded does not.

Do I need to use the © symbol?

The © symbol is often used in copyright notices accompanying published editions of content, such as "© 2022 Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS)". This indicates that the content was published in the year 2022, and that the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) claims copyright to the content. Sometimes, the terms on which the content can be used are also indicated near the symbol, e.g. "for Private Non-Commercial Use Only", or "All Rights Reserved" (where no use is allowed).

The © symbol does not actually create copyright and you do not need to use it to enjoy copyright protection. Whether copyright actually exists depends on whether the legal conditions for copyright protection are met. However, using the © symbol in a copyright notice may still be helpful for the following reasons:

- it shows that you asserted ownership of the copyright when the content was published; and

- if a work bears your name as the author or publisher, it is easier for you to establish these facts in court.

5. Who Owns Copyright?

A rights owner is the person (whether a company or an individual) who owns and can exercise the exclusive rights (i.e. the copyright) in the content. This may be different from the person who is the creator of the content, such as the "author" of authorial works (see explanation at section 1.3 above), or the "performer" of a performance.

By default (i.e. in the absence of a contract), the content creators are the rights owners, including when they are commissioned to create content. However, there is an exception: if you are an employee, your employer is the default rights owner of all types of content created by you in the course of your employment.

These default positions are generally subject to contract, i.e., you can agree in writing to change the position so that someone else will own the copyright instead.
6. When does Copyright Expire?

Copyright always expires but the exact duration of protection depends on the content in question. The table below summarises the duration of protection for each type of content.

Generally: -

- For authorial works with identified authors, copyright lasts for the life of the author plus 70 years.

- Rights owners are incentivised to monetise their copyright and make available their content to the public for societal benefit. As such, certain types of content such as sound recordings and films generally enjoy longer copyright durations if they are made available to the public within a certain period (50 years) after they are made, than if they are made available after this period or not made available at all.

- As part of the transition from the previous copyright legislation to the Act (which came into effect on 21 November 2021), there are exceptions to the general duration of protection of certain types of content. A work that is first published or made available to the public on or before the cut-off date of 31 December 2022 may be subject to these exceptions. Refer to the table for more details.
## DURATION OF PROTECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Scenario</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expiry of Copyright</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Expire of Copyright</strong> <em>(may depend on whether work is published or made available to the public, and if so, when)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary works</td>
<td>70 years after death of the author.</td>
<td>A posthumous work <em>(where the author died before 21 November 2021)</em> first made available to the public on or before 31 December 2022.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical works</td>
<td>70 years after death of the author.</td>
<td>Made or first published on or before 31 December 2022 by or under the direction or control of the Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic works</td>
<td>70 years after death of the author.</td>
<td>70 years after making available to the public.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engravings</td>
<td></td>
<td>70 years after first publication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artistic works <em>(except photographs and engravings)</em></td>
<td>70 years after death of the author.</td>
<td>Made by or under the direction or control of the Government before 21 November 2021.</td>
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<td>70 years after the making of the work.</td>
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</table>
### DURATION OF PROTECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Exceptions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scenario</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expiry of Copyright</strong> (may depend on whether work is published or made available to the public, and if so, when)*</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Photographs</td>
<td><strong>70 years</strong> after death of the author.</td>
<td>First published on or before 31 December 2022.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Authorial works (if author is not identified)</td>
<td>First published within 50 years after the making of the work.</td>
<td><strong>70 years</strong> after first publication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Films</td>
<td>First published more than 50 years after the making of the work, but the work is made available to the public (other than by publication) within those 50 years.</td>
<td>First published on or before 31 December 2022.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENT</td>
<td>DURATION OF PROTECTION(^{16})</td>
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<td></td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Exceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scenario</td>
<td>Scenario</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All other scenarios (including</td>
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<td></td>
<td>where the work is not published</td>
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<td>at all)</td>
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<td>70 years after the making of the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sound recording</td>
<td>First published within 50 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>after the making of the work.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>70 years after first publication.</td>
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<td>First published on or before 31</td>
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<td></td>
<td>December 2022.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>70 years after first publication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Published edition of</td>
<td>25 years from the end of the year</td>
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<tr>
<td>an authorial work</td>
<td>in which the edition is first</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>published.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 years after first publication.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENT</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Exceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expire of Copyright (may depend on whether work is published or made available to the public, and if so, when)*</td>
<td>Scenario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcast</td>
<td>50 years from the end of the year of making the broadcast.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable programme</td>
<td>50 years from the end of the year of including the cable programme in the cable programme service.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>70 years from the end of the year in which the performance is given</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Publication generally entails the supply of copies to the public (e.g. by way of sale). Content can also be made available to the public other than by publication (e.g. by way of public performance or communication to the public).17
Illustration of transitional exception

BookCo, a publishing company, owns an unpublished manuscript which was made by Samuel, an author who died in 1940.

- If BookCo either does not publish the manuscript, or publishes it only after the cut-off date (31 December 2022), copyright would have expired in 2010 (i.e. 70 years after Samuel’s death).

- If BookCo publishes the manuscript in 2022, before the cut-off date, copyright will expire in 2092 (i.e. 70 years after publication).

7. When is Copyright Infringed and What Are The Exceptions?

In general, copyright is infringed when content is used without its right owner’s authorisation and in the absence of any exceptions to infringement. Copyright may be infringed by:-

- **Primary infringement**, i.e. doing an act that falls within a right owner’s exclusive rights.\(^{18}\)

- **Authorising infringement**, i.e. authorising the doing of an act that falls within a right owner’s exclusive rights.\(^{19}\)

- **Secondary or other types of infringement**, such as commercial dealings in infringing articles. Commercial dealings refer to selling; letting for hire; by way of trade, offering or exposing for sale or hire; distributing for the purpose of trade; or, by way of trade, exhibiting in public.\(^{20}\)

New type of infringement in the Act\(^{21}\)

To respond to the evolving means by which infringing content is consumed in the digital environment, the Act introduced new provisions creating both civil and criminal liability for commercial dealings in hardware devices, software applications and services that facilitate access to unauthorised content, including illicit streaming devices and set-top boxes.
Exceptions to infringement are known as “permitted uses” in the Act. An unauthorised use of third-party content will not infringe copyright if the use falls within a particular permitted use and satisfies the relevant conditions of that permitted use.\textsuperscript{22} The Act recognises different categories of permitted uses in circumstances where it would be the public benefit to allow content to be used without infringing copyright, such as:\textsuperscript{23}

- fair use;
- educational uses;
- uses for computational data analysis and machine learning;
- uses by persons with print or intellectual disabilities; and
- uses by cultural and heritage institutions.

"Fair use" is important as it is a general exception that allows content to be used for \textit{any purpose}, so long as the use is fair. Whether the use is fair is decided by the courts (in the event of litigation) based on factors in the Act.\textsuperscript{24} If a certain use does not fall within one of the more specific categories of permitted uses, it could still be non-infringing if it falls within fair use.

When users access or use content, they are sometimes required by rights owners to agree to certain contractual terms and conditions. Some of these terms may seek to prevent users from benefiting from one or more permitted uses by excluding or restricting these permitted uses. Such terms are potentially unenforceable under the contractual restrictions provisions in the Act.

**Important!**

Whether a copyright claim or defence is valid depends on the facts and circumstances of each case. This may involve complicated issues of law. Do seek legal advice if you are unsure of whether you have a valid claim or defence to copyright infringement at [https://go.gov.sg/ip-clinics](https://go.gov.sg/ip-clinics).

8. What Remedies are Available for Infringement?

Copyright infringement can result in civil and/or criminal liability.

**Civil Infringement**

Legal action for infringement may be taken by a rights owner. In most cases, a rights owner’s exclusive licensee may also take action.
The court may grant various remedies such as:

- **injunctions** (to stop someone from doing something) – e.g. an order against the infringer to stop infringing activities;

- **damages** (monetary compensation);

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**Actual damages**

Compensation for the actual loss suffered by the rights owner.

**Statutory damages**

Compensation for the loss suffered by the rights owner. This is capped at S$10,000 for each copyright work in an action, subject to a maximum of S$200,000 for all the works in the action.

**Additional damages**

Additional amounts paid by the infringer in certain situations (e.g. flagrant infringement or benefit gained by the defendant because of the infringement).

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### How Are "Actual Damages" Different From "Statutory Damages"?

A right owner may choose whether to claim actual damages or statutory damages. To claim actual damages, the actual losses from the infringement must be proven, e.g. lost licence fees. In contrast, “statutory damages” may be chosen where there is difficulty proving actual losses. In general, statutory damages cannot be claimed in addition to other types of damages.

The amount of statutory damages is determined by the court, taking into account various factors such as the nature and purpose of the infringing act (including whether it was commercial in nature) and the need to deter similar instances of infringement.

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- **account of profits** – an order against the infringer to pay the rights owner the profits the infringer received as a result of its use of the owner's copyright; and

- **order to delivery / order for disposal** – orders against the infringer to surrender all infringing articles to the rights owner, or to dispose of them.
What if the infringement was innocent?

The infringer may not need to pay damages for an innocent infringement, i.e. if when doing the infringing act, the infringer did not know (and could not reasonably have known) that the act was infringing. However, the infringer remains liable for any other remedy, such as an account of profits.

Any legal action must be brought within 6 years of the infringement.\(^{27}\)

If you believe that your copyright has been infringed, you may wish to seek legal advice on available remedies or enforcement actions. Depending on the circumstances, you may wish to discuss with your legal advisor whether alternative methods, such as negotiation or mediation to resolve your copyright dispute, are appropriate.

Criminal Offences

There are also criminal offences relating to copyright in content. In most cases, for an offence to apply, it must be proved that the infringing party knows or ought reasonably to know that the copies are infringing the rights in content.

Offences with commercial elements are subject to more severe punishments, and corporate offenders (e.g. companies) are subject to twice the maximum fines compared to individuals.

The table below summaries some key offences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offences with commercial elements (e.g. making an infringing copy of a work for sale)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Punishable by a fine (up to S$200,000) and/or imprisonment for up to 5 years, depending on the offence in question.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offence of commercial dealings in infringing copies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offence of infringement for commercial advantage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence of making or possessing article capable of making infringing copies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Offences without commercial element
(e.g. distributing an infringing copy of a work for non-commercial purposes)

**Examples**
- Offence of distribution of infringing copies of works
- Offence of wilful and significant rights infringement
- Offence of causing certain works or performances to be performed, seen, or heard in public for private profit
- Offence of advertisement for supply of infringing copies of works

Punishable by a fine (up to S$40,000) and/or imprisonment for up to 2 years, depending on the offence in question.

Infringements relating to electronic rights management

In addition to liability for copyright infringement of the content itself, there may also be liability for failing to observe the technological means by the right owner uses to control the content and ensure it is properly used.

“Electronic rights management” refers to right owners’ use of these technological means in respect of digital content and includes the following:

- **Technological Measures**
  Used by rights owners to prevent unauthorised access or use of their content.
  - Access Control Measures
    Any technology, device or component that controls access to the content.
    Examples include passwords, encryption or paywalls.
  - Protection Measures
    Any technology, device or component that prevents or limits acts that infringe copyright in the content.
    Examples include read-only versions (i.e. content that cannot be edited by the user) or restrictions on printing or downloading.

- **Rights Management Information**
  Used by rights owners to safeguard the integrity of information associated with the content and help them better manage their rights.
  Examples include electronic watermarks and other types of metadata containing information such as the identity of the right owner or the creator.
Infringements relating to electronic rights management can give rise to civil liability.

- In respect of technological measures, rights owners may take action against persons who circumvent technological measures or deal in devices or services that enable such circumvention.
- In respect of rights management information, rights owners may take action against persons who remove, alter, or otherwise deal with rights management information in certain wrongful ways. There may also be criminal liability if the infringement is wilful and done to obtain a commercial advantage or private financial gain.

9. What do the Copyright Tribunals do?29

The Copyright Tribunals hear licensing disputes and review whether a CMO’s tariff schemes are reasonable. It does not however, hear matters of infringement – such matters are heard by the courts, and only the courts can order remedies such as damages or an injunction. The Copyright Tribunals are intended to be a cost-effective and quick way of resolving licensing disputes within an informal setting where parties do not need to be represented by lawyers.

Illustration on when to refer a dispute to copyright tribunals:

Emma is a freelance creator who regularly uses third-party musical works when creating her content. She wishes to use a certain musical work that is managed by a CMO.

Dispute heard by the courts: Emma assesses that she does not need a licence from the CMO because her use is covered by an exception and hence would not infringe copyright. She proceeds to use the work without obtaining a licence. The CMO may refer the dispute to the court and sue Emma for copyright infringement. The court will determine whether Emma’s use was infringing and, if so, what remedies to award the CMO.

Dispute heard by the Copyright Tribunal: Emma assesses that she needs a licence to use the work but she and the CMO cannot agree on the amount of fees to be paid. Emma or the CMO can refer that dispute to the copyright tribunals to determine a reasonable licence fee.

10. What are Moral Rights?30

In addition to economic rights to commercially exploit content, creators also have certain personal rights. These personal rights are meant to protect a content creator’s personality and reputation as reflected in the content (as opposed to the content’s monetary value) and are known as “moral rights”.
In Singapore, two categories of creators have moral rights – authors of literary, dramatic, musical or artistic works, and performers. Only human beings (as opposed to corporate entities) are granted moral rights and these rights cannot be transferred. The moral rights regime comes with its own set of rights, exceptions and remedies. Moral rights expire at the same time as copyright.

The Act introduced a moral right for authors and performers to be identified when their work is used in public (e.g. publication of an authorial work). There are exceptions to this right, such as if an author consents to not being identified. Where the right is infringed, the court considers certain factors that are specific to moral rights when deciding on the appropriate remedy, such as the infringer’s awareness of the author’s moral rights.

**Moral rights are separate from and in addition to copyright.** This means that you must respect both copyright (e.g. getting a licence to make someone else’s content available to the public online) and moral rights (e.g. by correctly identifying the content creator when the same content is made available to the public).

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1. Section 13 of the Act.
2. Section 15 of the Act.
3. Section 20 of the Act.
4. Section 24 of the Act.
5. Section 21 of the Act.
7. Sections 34 and 35 of the Act.
11. The following treaties are some examples: (a) the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). A list of countries party to it may be found at the WIPO

12 Sections 109, and 110-111 of the Act.

13 Sections 133-136 of the Act.

14 Where journalists create certain content to be published for their respective employers (e.g. in a newspaper or magazine), the employer owns the right in respect of such publication, and the right to make a copy for the purpose of such publication. Nevertheless, the journalist will retain ownership of any remaining rights in the collection of exclusive rights in the copyright of the content.

15 Sections 133-136 of the Act.


17 See Sections 53-60 of the Act (on Publication) and Section 116 (for interpretation of “making available to public”, as used in the copyright duration provisions).

18 Section 146 of the Act

19 Section 146 of the Act

20 Sections 147-151 of the Act

21 Section 150 of the Act

22 Section 183 of the Act

23 Sections 195-205, 211-214, 217-220, 221-236, and 243-244 of the Act

24 Sections 190-194 of the Act

25 Section 307 of the Act

26 Section 308 of the Act

27 E.g. Section 154 of the Act

28 Sections 411-413 of the Act

29 Part 10 of the Act

30 Part 7 of the Act