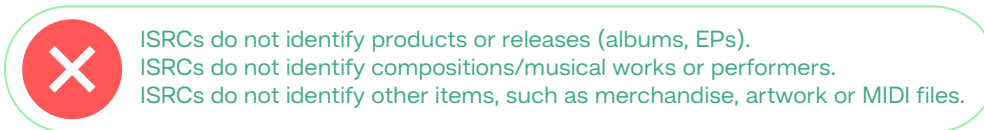


# ISRC - International Standard Recording Code

## What is an ISRC?

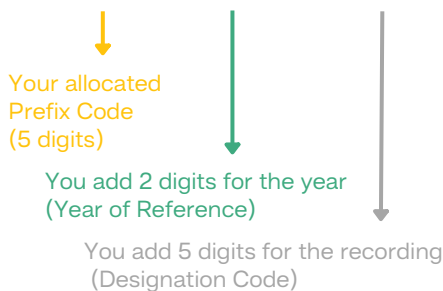
The International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) is used to uniquely identify each sound recording or music video. An ISRC identifies a recording through its entire life, and it is essential to manage your music rights across different formats, services and borders. It is used by a range of players in the supply chain, including digital platforms, collective management organisations, broadcasters, music recognition companies and others, to track how and where your music is being listened to. Without an ISRC, your song may not be properly identified, and you may lose revenues.



## What does an ISRC look like?

An ISRC consists of 12 characters (digits and letters) and looks like this:

**JMK40 23 00001**



The **Prefix Code** comprises 2 letters, followed by 3 alphanumeric characters (5 characters in total). The Prefix Code is provided by the ISRC Registration Agencies (see How are ISRCs assigned?)

The **Year of Reference** identifies the year when the ISRC is assigned to the recording. This is typically the year when the final production master of your recording is prepared.

The **Designation Code** consists of 5 digits assigned by the registrant. You should assign the codes sequentially and never reuse the same one in a single calendar year.

For more information, check out the ISRC Standard Structure site: <https://isrc.ifpi.org/en/isrc-standard/structure>

## How are ISRCs assigned?

An ISRC should be assigned to each sound recording (audio track) or music video produced. Generally, the ISRC is assigned by the **first rights owner** of the recording. You can obtain your own unique 5-character Prefix Code from your national agency.



There are 61 ISRC Registration Agencies covering 68 territories. Some of these agencies are collecting societies or industry associations, but you don't need to be a member to have Prefix Codes allocated.

Alternatively, ISRCs can be assigned by a third-party authorised representative on behalf of the rights owner – an **ISRC Manager**. Some digital aggregators or distributors provide this service as part of their offerings.

An ISRC can be assigned **retroactively** if a recording was released without an ISRC. Always ensure that the recording has no existing ISRC!

ISRC data can be looked up in the following databases: the [International ISRC Database](#), the [PPL Repertoire Search](#) and [SCPP's Sound Recordings Search](#).

Widely used formats such as CD, DVD, Blu-ray, MP3 and MP4 allow ISRCs to be **encoded** alongside the recordings. Encoding is recommended but not mandatory.

Keep a database! Whichever way you choose to assign them, ISRCs should be stored along with key metadata, such as Main Artist, Track Title, Subtitle, Duration, Content Type and Date of Publication.

## When is a new ISRC required?

Same ISRC	New ISRC
Same recording (no material change)	Music video
Same length (<10 seconds)	Material changes (live versions, remixes, instrumental versions, etc.)
Licences	Edits, clips, extended versions (>10 seconds)
Compilations	
Single/Album version	Compound recordings
Different encoding formats	
High/Standard resolution	
Remastering (equalisation, compression, digital signal processing)	Remastering (creative input)

- Each **music video** has a unique ISRC, which is not the same as that of the audio recording.
- **Identical** recordings shall be identified by the same ISRC.
- If changes are made to the track's **length** in a way that does not substantively affect the creative input and the difference is less than 10 seconds, the same ISRC should be used.
- If **material changes** are made to the audio or video, a new ISRC should be assigned. This applies to live versions, different studio takes, edited versions, covers, medleys, remixes, instrumental versions, extended versions, clips, callouts and so on.
- When a recording is **licensed** to a third party, the original ISRC shall continue to be used.
- When a recording is reused on a **compilation**, the same ISRC shall be used.
- A track released as a **single** and then included in an album shall carry the same ISRC.
- Where both the whole and the parts of a **compound recording** may be exploited separately, an ISRC shall be assigned to each part and another ISRC to the whole (e.g., individual movements of a classical work vs. the whole work).
- The same recording **encoded** with different technologies (e.g., MP3, AAC for sound recordings or H.264, VP8 for music videos) shall carry the same ISRC.
- A high-resolution (e.g., 96 kHz/24 bit) version of a recording and a standard **resolution** (e.g., 44.1 kHz/16 bit) version shall carry the same ISRC.
- A new ISRC shall not be assigned if the processes applied to a recording during **remastering** do not involve creative input (e.g., equalisation or compression applied to a whole recording without variation, digital signal processing including de-noising, de-clicking, speed or pitch correction, sample rate change, dithering, etc.).

For more information, check out the ISRC FAQ site: <https://isrc.ifpi.org/en/faq>

Switching to a new digital distributor? Supply ISRCs along with all relevant metadata.

## More questions?

IFPI is the **International ISRC Registration Authority**. For more details on how to implement ISRC, please consult the ISRC Handbook.



ISRC Handbook, 4th Edition,  
International ISRC Registration  
Authority © 2021 IFPI  
W: <https://isrc.ifpi.org/>  
E: [isrc@ifpi.org](mailto:isrc@ifpi.org)

@winformusic  
[winformusic.org](http://winformusic.org)