



AUTO ATTENDANT / RESEARCH & PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Hold Music Licensing for Business: A Provider Checklist

Get a business phone number with a simple auto attendant menu from Auto Attendant. A caller picks who they need and the call rings that person's own mobile, so nobody on your team has to publish a personal number.

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In this article

1. [Executive Summary](#)
 2. [Introduction and Background](#)
 3. [Call States and the Rights Register](#)
 4. [Four Practical Paths](#)
 5. [Evidence to Request](#)
 6. [United States Starting Points](#)
 7. [Canada Starting Points](#)
 8. [Switching Phone Providers and Brands](#)
 9. [Testing What Callers Actually Hear](#)
 10. [Data Analysis and Evidence](#)
 11. [Implications and Future Directions](#)
 12. [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
 13. [Conclusion](#)
-

Executive Summary

Hold music licensing for business turns on one question that a phone provider's "custom audio supported" label does not answer: who has permission for the exact recording callers hear, in each **call state**? An upload that succeeds is a technical fact, not a licence. Microsoft states that the default music it supplies in its Teams call scenarios is free of royalties, and in the same documentation it tells customers that clearing rights for their own audio is theirs to do (learn.microsoft.com). **EMAK**, a hosted phone provider, draws the same line from the other side: it covers its own library, and it says it does not review, verify or license audio that customers upload (emak.tech).

The legal starting points differ by country. In the United States, the Copyright Act separates the right to reproduce, distribute and publicly perform a work, and the **Copyright Office** says a recorded song can contain two separate works (the composition and the sound recording) that are commonly owned and licensed separately (www.copyright.gov). ASCAP's FAQ treats placing a caller on hold with music as a public performance by the business (www.ascap.com), while BMI lists a dedicated "Businesses Using **Music on Hold**" licence category (www.bmi.com). In Canada, **Entandem** lists "Music on Hold" among licences administered for **RE:SOUND** and **SOCAN**, and it tells users to read the full tariff in the **Canada Gazette** (entandemlicensing.com). The tariff documents reachable from that page cover past periods, so this report supplies no fee table.

The practical output is a **rights register** tied to call states: menu greeting, ringing or connecting, true hold, transfer, queue and voicemail. Provider documentation shows these can be configured separately: Zoom documents separate settings for personal hold music, call queues and an "Audio While Connecting" prompt, and says parked-call hold music cannot be customized (support.zoom.com), while Ooma lists Transfer Music as a separate upload (www.ooma.com).

Four paths fit a 2 to 20 person business: a documented provider default, an original voice-only message, a directly commissioned or licensed recording, or no custom audio. The lowest-maintenance suitable option is usually the one with the least third-party paperwork to keep current. Free is not a licence: Spotify limits its consumer service to personal, non-commercial use (support.spotify.com), and YouTube describes its audio library as production music to use in videos (support.google.com). No source consulted supports any claim that custom hold music raises answer rates or retention, and none is made. This report is general information, not legal advice; a qualified adviser should confirm any categorical statement.

Introduction and Background

Owners and office managers of small teams usually meet hold music as a checkbox in a phone service. The provider says it supports custom audio, the owner picks a favourite song or a stock track, and the upload works. What is missing is a record of permission. This report is written for businesses of roughly 2 to 20 people in the United States and Canada who are comparing caller audio options in a phone service and need to decide among provider-supplied audio, an original voice-only announcement, commissioned or licensed music, or no custom music at all.

The publisher of this report, autoattendant.io, sells one flat-rate business number with a one-level auto attendant menu that rings team members' own mobile phones. These are the publisher's own claims, as read on its own site on **31 October 2026**, and have not been independently verified. The price is **\$29 per month** for the whole company, with up to seven menu options and up to three phones rung in turn per option. The menu greeting is typed, and uploaded greetings, hold music or music rights management are not documented features. The service is not an answering service, an AI receptionist or a contact-centre suite. A business that needs uploaded music or per-state audio control will need a fuller phone platform, and the sections below are written so the reader can evaluate one on evidence rather than on a feature label.

Scope and method

The report draws on documentation opened on 31 October 2026: statutes and regulator pages, rights-administrator pages (ASCAP, BMI, GMR and SESAC in the United States; Entandem, SOCAN, RE:SOUND and the **Copyright Board of Canada**), and provider help pages, which are cited only for what that provider says about its own product. Every rule or licensing route is labelled with its jurisdiction, because a United States route cannot be copied into Canada. No fee tables appear, because the Canadian tariff documents found are dated and US fee schedules for telephone use were not verified.

Why the exact recording matters

A song heard on hold involves at least two layers of rights. The US Copyright Office says the composition and the recording of it are separate copyright-protected works, commonly owned and licensed separately (www.copyright.gov), and ASCAP's FAQ adds that the purchase of a record does not authorize its public performance (www.ascap.com). A licence for the composition therefore says nothing about the particular recording a caller hears.

Call States and the Rights Register

A taxonomy of what callers hear

Callers can hear at least six kinds of audio in one conversation with a small business, and a phone provider may generate each from a different setting or even a different system.

- **Menu greeting.** The recorded or typed prompt that offers options. **Google Voice** documents an auto attendant greeting where an admin can upload their own audio (knowledge.workspace.google.com), separately from its domain-wide Hold Audio setting (support.google.com).
- **Ringling or connecting audio.** What the caller hears while the system rings the destination. This can be a synthesized tone, not music. **Asterisk** documents that by default a call passes no audio to the caller until the called channel answers, and offers a separate option to play hold music until answer (docs.asterisk.org).
- **True hold.** What plays when a person on the team places the caller on hold. **FreeSWITCH** documentation notes that its hold music variable is evaluated at hold time and can be set per call or per user (developer.signalwire.com).
- **Transfer audio.** Ooma documents Transfer Music as its own feature, a separate audio file that can play instead of a ringtone during transfers (www.ooma.com).
- **Queue audio.** **Zoom Phone** documents call queues as using a separate Music on Hold setting from the personal hold setting, and **8x8** lists call queue greetings and ring group music alongside hold music in one audio repository (support.zoom.com) (help.8x8.com).
- **Voicemail greeting.** Zoom's help centre describes voicemail greeting and hold music as audio customized through the same library, but as distinct settings (support.zoom.com).

A ringtone is not necessarily a hold track. **RingCentral** documents a "Ring Tones" choice for hold, so callers hear a phone ringing when placed on hold (support.ringcentral.com). **CallHarbor** documents ringback as a ringing sound supplied while a caller waits in a queue, and notes that its music default is not always preferable because the customer will think they are on hold (support.callharbor.com). Whether a business wants music, a tone or silence in each state is a separate decision from whether it has the rights to the music.

Why the states matter for rights

Because states are set up separately, one permission cannot be assumed to cover all of them. Microsoft's documentation illustrates this: callers can hear audio when they call into a Cloud Call Queue or when their call is parked, and the article says those scenarios are outside what its custom music settings control (learn.microsoft.com). In Teams, custom music on hold is also unavailable for users configured for Shared Line Appearance, as Table 1 notes. Zoom's documentation says parked-call hold music cannot currently be customized (support.zoom.com).

Two further patterns affect the register. A hold source can be remote: Asterisk's sample configuration describes a playlist mode that accepts filenames or HTTP(S) URLs (github.com). And a provider may configure audio for the customer, as **Talkdesk** says it can for waiting-queue and transfer music (support.talkdesk.com), so the person who "uploads" is not necessarily the person who holds the licence.

Comparing what providers document

Table 1 below summarizes what nine providers' own help pages say about custom audio and rights, restricted to the pages opened for this report. It is not a ranking, and a missing rights statement on a help page does not mean the contract is silent. Recheck the lines on the named plan before buying.

Provider (page type)	Call states documented as separate audio settings	Rights statement on the page consulted
Microsoft Teams Phone (product documentation)	Default and custom music on hold; custom music unavailable for users on Shared Line Appearance (learn.microsoft.com)	Default music free of royalties in described scenarios; customer clears rights for custom audio (see Executive Summary)
Zoom Phone (help centre)	Personal hold music, call queue music and "Audio While Connecting" listed as distinct settings; parked calls cannot be customized (support.zoom.com)	None found on the pages opened
Ooma Office (help centre)	Music on Hold and Transfer Music as separate uploads (www.ooma.com)	Upload requires ticking a box that you have the rights to the file (www.ooma.com)
Talkdesk (help centre)	Hold music, greetings and tones as separate file types; waiting-queue and transfer music configured by Talkdesk on request (support.talkdesk.com)	Says a Music on Hold licence is needed for copyrighted music, and that it supplies some free audio files (support.talkdesk.com)
8x8 (help centre)	One audio repository for hold music, auto attendant prompts, queue greetings and ring group music (help.8x8.com)	None found on the page opened
Google Voice (Workspace admin help)	One domain-wide Hold Audio setting, separate from the auto attendant greeting (support.google.com)	None found on the pages opened
Dialpad (help centre)	Main line music, with per-individual selection on its Enterprise tier (help.dialpad.com)	None found on the page opened
Nextiva (help centre)	Custom music assigned per location; three free options offered (nextiva.com)	None found on the page opened
RingCentral (help centre)	Hold choices of ring tones, supplied music or custom upload (support.ringcentral.com)	None found on the pages opened
autoattendant.io (publisher; as read 31 October 2026)	One-level menu with a typed greeting; up to seven options, each ringing up to three team mobiles in turn; \$29 per month flat, no per-seat charge. Uploaded audio and queue audio are not documented	No music rights management is documented, so no rights evidence comes from the service. In-call hold on a team member's mobile is not documented by the service; confirm with the provider

Table 1 supports one narrow conclusion: where a rights statement appears, it sits on the provider's side for its own library and on the customer's side for uploads. Microsoft says so explicitly, Ooma builds it into the upload form, and Talkdesk points to a licence for copyrighted music, while most other pages opened say nothing about rights. The supplier question sheet below turns that silence into a written answer. The publisher row is included because the publisher is itself a direct provider of one business number and menu, and its documented scope should be read on the same terms.

Four Practical Paths

The decision for a small team is not "music or no music." It is which path carries the least rights paperwork that someone must keep alive.

Path 1: A documented provider default

The provider supplies the audio and states in writing what it covers. Microsoft's documentation, described in the Executive Summary and again below, is a clear example of the pattern: default music is covered by the provider and custom audio is the customer's to clear. The maintenance burden is small, but it is vendor-specific. A different provider's default library needs its own written statement, and this statement should not be assumed from Microsoft's wording. **Nextiva** lists three free options that can be uploaded to an account (nextiva.com), and the page does not discuss rights, so ask where those tracks come from.

A provider's default library is also not a permission to copy the files into another service. EMAK says the audio files it licenses are not given, sold or transferred to customers (emak.tech). When the owner later moves providers, the old library's files stay behind and the new provider's default must be documented afresh.

Path 2: An original voice-only message

An original spoken message avoids the music layers but still has rights questions: who recorded it, and does any agreement allow use on the phone line and in a different system after a provider change? A message recorded by an employee or the owner raises the fewest questions, and a commissioned voice recording should come with a written statement of the permitted use. Google Voice documents that an administrator can upload their own audio for an auto attendant greeting (knowledge.workspace.google.com); the register treats that recording like any other file, with a named owner and a retained agreement.

Path 3: A directly commissioned or licensed recording

This path covers music licensed from a library or composed for the business. The evidence is a licence that names the licensee and lists telephone use. EMAK's guidance for customers who upload purchased royalty-free music is that the licence should explicitly list "on hold," "telephone" or "IVR" use, and that the customer should keep a copy of the licence for every track they upload (emak.tech).

Melody Loops, a library whose tracks EMAK's guide links to, shows what such a licence says. Its end-user licence lists phone on hold among permitted uses (www.melodyloops.com), bars reselling or redistributing the music (www.melodyloops.com), says the rights are validated by proof of purchase (www.melodyloops.com), and runs **99 years** from receipt of payment (www.melodyloops.com). That is one library's licence, not a promise about any other track, and it shows why proof of purchase belongs in the register.

Path 4: No custom audio

Choosing no custom music is a legitimate and often the lowest-maintenance outcome. The owner documents the provider's default and records the decision so later staff do not add music without a licence. Where a service rings team members' own mobiles, any in-call hold behaviour may be a function of the handset or carrier rather than of the service, so confirm that with the provider.

Evidence to Request

The rights register

Table 2 below is the reference asset of this report: an audio register with one row per call state and per file. It is a template, not a legal form. The example rows are a Hypothetical Example, written for illustration, and use placeholders instead of real licence numbers.

Field	What to record	Why it is there
Call state	Menu greeting, ringing or connecting, true hold, transfer, queue, voicemail	Providers document these as separate settings, so one row cannot cover all of them
Track or file ID	Exact title, version and file name as uploaded	A licence for a composition does not identify the recording
Composer and recording owner	The rights holders as stated by the supplier	The US and Canada both separate the composition from the recording
Licence evidence	URL or file location of the licence, certificate or purchase record	Proof of purchase is what validates a library licence
Named licensee	The business or the supplier that holds the licence	Licences can be personal to the purchaser and non-transferable
Permitted use	Wording that lists on-hold, telephone or IVR use	Scope is use-specific
Jurisdiction, territory and expiry	United States, Canada or both; term end or "none stated"	A route for one country cannot be copied into the other
Responsible person and last test	A named employee; date and handset of the last external call	Upload success does not prove playback

Example rows (Hypothetical Example): a six-person Ontario firm records "True hold; music supplied by the provider; file ID recorded for each provider; licence evidence is the provider's written statement, dated the day it was received; jurisdiction: Canada; responsible person: the office manager." Next to it a Texas firm records "Menu greeting, voice-only message, recorded by owner, no music."

The test of a good row is that it can be filled from a document. A cell that can only say "believed" or "assumed" should be marked unknown, and the supplier asked for the evidence before the file is relied on.

The **Texas Music Office** venue guide, used here only for the general habit, recommends saving agreements, invoices and contacts for licences (gov.texas.gov).

The supplier question sheet

Send the following questions to the provider or the music supplier before upload, and file the written reply with the register. Mark each answer as rights included, extra evidence required, or unknown.

- **Which recording exactly?** Ask for the track title, version and rights holder.
- **Who is the licensee?** Ask whether the licence names the provider, the business, or both.

- **Is telephone use listed?** Ask for the wording, not a summary.
- **What platform, territory and term?** Ask whether the licence is limited to one platform or one country, and when it ends.
- **Can the file be copied or moved?** A hosted library may not allow files to leave the service.
- **Which call states are covered?** Ask separately about each state in the register, including parked calls.
- **What proof can I keep?** A certificate, invoice or licence number.
- **What happens on cancellation?** Ask whether playback and permission end together.

Default library versus owner upload: two examples

Microsoft Teams (vendor-specific). Microsoft's documentation, quoted in the Executive Summary, separates default music that carries no royalties payable by the organization from custom audio that the customer must clear. It also describes streaming music from a partner as requiring a subscription with a supported partner (learn.microsoft.com). This is a three-way split between default, owner upload and partner stream, and a register row should record which of the three applies. The statement does not apply to other providers.

EMAK (vendor-specific). EMAK's guide shows an evidence pattern: separate coverage for its own library and for owner uploads, track-level certificates, and links to the underlying rights notices. It says music taken from another vendor's system is licensed for that vendor's equipment only (emak.tech). Its default tracks trace to the FreeSWITCH hold-music package, whose copyright notice says each performer contributed the works to the public domain and that Musopen published them under the **Public Domain Mark 1.0** (raw.githubusercontent.com). The same notice cautions that the work may not be free of known copyright restrictions in all jurisdictions (raw.githubusercontent.com). The lesson is to preserve the rights statement for the particular recordings, not to treat a similarly named track as covered.

Why "free" is not a licence

Free sources rarely mention telephone use, and each page below is a scope statement, not a complete analysis:

- **Pixabay:** its licence summary says the user must check whether a third party's consent is required and that only the full licence is legally binding (pixabay.com).
- **YouTube:** its help page describes its library as production music to use in videos, with no mention of telephone use (support.google.com).
- **Creative Commons:** the Attribution-NonCommercial deed says the material may not be used for commercial purposes (creativecommons.org).
- **Spotify:** its support page says the service is for personal, non-commercial use and cannot be played publicly from a business (support.spotify.com).

A file with no licence naming telephone use should be treated as unlicensed for this purpose until the supplier says otherwise in writing.

United States Starting Points

All statements in this section concern the United States. They identify where to start, and they do not settle whether a given hold track needs a licence. Anyone who needs a definite answer should ask a qualified copyright adviser who knows the actual use.

Statute

Title 17 of the US Code, as published by the Copyright Office, gives the owner exclusive rights that include reproducing the work in copies or phonorecords and distributing copies or phonorecords to the public (www.copyright.gov). The public performance right in section 106(4) is stated for literary, musical, dramatic and choreographic works (www.copyright.gov), and section 106(6) gives owners of sound recordings a public performance right limited to digital audio transmission (www.copyright.gov). The statute's definition of performing "publicly" includes transmitting a performance to the public by any device or process (www.copyright.gov). Section 114 limits the exclusive rights in a sound recording, and also says that the limits do not impair the exclusive right to perform publicly the underlying works (www.copyright.gov). Section 110 contains a list of specific performances that are not infringements of copyright (www.copyright.gov), and whether any of its clauses applies to a particular hold-music arrangement is a question for qualified review, not for this report.

The Copyright Office's guidance for musicians says trying and failing to contact a rights holder is not a substitution for permission (www.copyright.gov), and its recordation system makes recorded documents available for public inspection once indexed (www.copyright.gov).

Rights-holder and licensing contacts

Each organization's own pages say the following about music on hold:

- **ASCAP:** its FAQ says a business is publicly performing music when it places a caller on hold, that the business is responsible for ensuring it has permission, and that ASCAP does not license recording rights for songs (www.ascap.com). A licence with another organization does not remove the need for an ASCAP licence for the creators it represents (www.ascap.com).
- **BMI:** its licence forms page lists "Businesses Using Music on Hold" as a category (www.bmi.com). Its agreement defines music on hold as a telephonic transmission service whereby music is performed for telephone callers (www.bmi.com), limits that licence to one premises (www.bmi.com), and excludes a service that provides music on hold to subscribers, which has a separate service-level licence (www.bmi.com).
- **Global Music Rights (GMR):** its FAQ says music on hold is a type of public performance, and that licences from other organizations do not authorize performing its songwriters' music (globalmusicrights.com).
- **SESAC:** its FAQ says the owner or operator of an establishment where music is publicly performed is required to obtain authorization (www.sesac.com). No telephone-specific category was found on the SESAC pages retrieved.

These organizations license musical works in their own repertoires. The Texas Music Office guide says a licence typically covers public performance of the musical works in that organization's catalog, that each organization represents different catalogs, and that buying or streaming a song typically gives only the right to listen privately (gov.texas.gov). It is a venue guide, not a telephone-specific licence, and it is cited here only for those general scope statements. Repertoire coverage is not a blanket guarantee: BMI itself states that each organization licenses a unique repertoire (www.bmi.com). None of the US administrators' pages reviewed describes a licence for the sound recording copy that gets uploaded into a phone system, so the register should record the recording owner separately.

Canada Starting Points

All statements in this section concern Canada, and they differ from the United States. Canada's route runs through the Copyright Board of Canada's tariffs and the administrator Entandem, and a US licence does not substitute for it.

Who administers what

The **Copyright Act of Canada** gives the owner of a work the sole right to perform it in public (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca), and for a published sound recording gives the performer and maker a right to equitable remuneration for performance in public or communication to the public by telecommunication (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). Entandem's FAQ explains the practical split: SOCAN licences are granted with respect to musical works, and RE:SOUND licences apply to public performances of sound recordings of musical works (entandemlicensing.com). Entandem says it was created by the two collectives to provide a single point of contact for licences common to both (entandemlicensing.com), and that it administers RE:SOUND and SOCAN tariffs and licences (entandemlicensing.com). Its forms page lists "Music on Hold" as a licence row under both RE:SOUND and SOCAN and tells users that without a licence they would need individual permissions from each music creator (entandemlicensing.com). The page asks users to read the full tariff in the Canada Gazette (entandemlicensing.com).

What the tariff documents say, and their dates

Entandem notes that licence costs are approved through the Copyright Board's tariff-setting process (entandemlicensing.com), and the Board's mandate page adds that users and collectives can agree privately on royalties and related terms (cb-cda.gc.ca). This is why no fee table is supplied.

The documents reachable from Entandem's "Music on Hold" row are dated. The RE:SOUND link leads to the Copyright Board's certified **Tariff 3.B** for background music, which sets royalties for the years 2016 to 2020 (decisions.cb-cda.gc.ca). That tariff counts fees by "**trunk line**", defined as a telephone line (decisions.cb-cda.gc.ca). A later RE:SOUND proposal for 2023 to 2026 repeats the telephone-on-hold wording, but a proposal is not a certified tariff (cb-cda.gc.ca), and a Board case page shows the 2021 to 2026 background music tariff in proceedings in 2025 (decisions.cb-cda.gc.ca). On the SOCAN side, the link on Entandem's page leads to a Gazette supplement for **Tariff 15.B**, Telephone Music on Hold, covering 2009 to 2011 (www.socan.com). A Canada Gazette supplement of 8 November 2025 published SOCAN's Tariff 15.B for 2012 to 2019, again a past period (gazette.gc.ca). That text provides that where royalties are paid under Tariff

16 (the tariff for background music suppliers), no fees are payable under Tariff 15 ([gazette.gc.ca](https://www.gazette.gc.ca)). The Board's pending-tariffs page lists later periods as proposals whose proceedings have yet to be initiated (www.cb-cda.gc.ca).

The consequence for a buyer: do not rely on a remembered fee or on the Entandem page alone. Ask Entandem, in writing, which tariff currently applies to the specific use, whether the licence covers both musical works and sound recordings for the files in the register, and whether it covers the provider's hosting of the files. RE:SOUND states that businesses must pay a licensing fee when broadcasting or communicating recorded music (www.resound.ca).

Switching Phone Providers and Brands

A business changes providers more often than it changes music, and the audio is usually forgotten. The key question for each register row is whether the permission can move.

Migration checklist

- **Export allowed?** A hosted library may not allow files to leave the service, as the EMAK example above shows.
- **New platform allowed?** A licence may name the platform, as in the "that vendor's equipment only" example above.
- **Same brand or licensee?** Melody Loops' end-user licence says the licensee shall not assign, sublicense or otherwise transfer the music (www.melodyloops.com). If the business is renamed or sold, confirm that the named licensee still matches.
- **Geographic expansion?** A licence read for one country should not be assumed to cover another. BMI's agreement limits its music-on-hold grant to a single premises (www.bmi.com).
- **Playback after cancellation?** Ask whether the old provider stops playing the audio when the account ends, and keep the proof.
- **Replacement verified?** Place an external test call to every state in the register after the cutover.

Keeping the number while changing the audio

Number porting is a separate process from audio migration, and both are jurisdiction-specific. In the United States, the **FCC's** consumer guide tells customers to contact the new company to start porting (www.fcc.gov) and not to terminate service with the existing company before initiating new service (www.fcc.gov). In Canada, the **CRTC's** consumer page (an archived copy, last modified 2022-07-06) says not to cancel service before switching (web.archive.org) and lists transfers involving Voice over IP among cases where a customer might need a new number, so the provider should confirm in writing (web.archive.org). No porting completion date can be promised here, and the live CRTC and FCC pages should be rechecked.

An interconnected voice-over-IP provider in the United States must also provide 911 service as a standard feature, per the FCC's consumer guide (www.fcc.gov), and the rule text makes E911 a condition of providing service to a consumer (www.law.cornell.edu). When comparing providers, audio is one of several decisions, and 911 and number porting belong on the same checklist.

Testing What Callers Actually Hear

An audio file that uploads is not an audio file that plays well, because phone audio is narrow. RingCentral notes that if the caller's codec is narrowband (G.711), playback happens at 8 kHz (www.ringcentral.com), and FreeSWITCH documents raw G.711 u-law as an 8 kHz format and picks its hold-music directory from the call's negotiated codec rate (developer.signalwire.com).

A test plan for a small team:

- **From a mobile phone.** Call the business number from a cell phone on a carrier network and note what the caller hears in each state.
- **During a transfer.** Transfer the call and listen for gaps, repeated prompts or ringback instead of music.
- **During true hold.** Place the caller on hold and verify the track starts where expected. 8x8 documents that hold music plays from the beginning of the file, but not continuously (help.8x8.com).
- **After hours.** Call outside business hours to hear the closed greeting and voicemail prompt.
- **Log it.** Record the date, handset and result in the register.

Data Analysis and Evidence

No controlled study of caller behaviour was located, so no answer-rate or retention claim is made. The quantitative evidence available is documentary: upload limits, tariff periods and licence terms.

Table 3 below collects the documented upload limits for the providers opened. The values are what each page stated on 31 October 2026, and some pages give only part of the specification.

Provider	Documented format and size limit	Source note
Microsoft Teams	WAV, WMA (mono only) and MP3; the audio file content cannot be more than 5MB (learn.microsoft.com)	PowerShell cmdlet documentation
Zoom Phone	MP3 or WAV under 10MB; up to 100 files in a personal audio library (support.zoom.com)	Help centre, undated on the page
Talkdesk	MP3 for hold music and tones; advises staying under 10 MB (support.talkdesk.com)	Help centre
Dialpad	MP3 only, not exceeding 10MB (help.dialpad.com)	Help centre
Nextiva	.wav, 8000Hz mono PCMU, no larger than 2MB (nextiva.com)	Help centre
8x8	AU, WAV, VOX and MP3; 10 MB or smaller (help.8x8.com)	Help centre
3CX	WAV PCM, 8 kHz, 16 bit, mono; 10MB; up to 10 distinct hold files (www.3cx.com)	System manual
Ooma Office	One .wav or .mp3 file of up to 5 MB for each of Music on Hold and Transfer Music (www.ooma.com)	Help centre
Vonage Business	.wav or .mp3 hold music; size cannot exceed 8MB (businesssupport.vonage.com)	Help centre

Provider	Documented format and size limit	Source note
Yeastar P-Series	PCM, 8KHz, 16bit, 128kbps among accepted formats (help.yeastar.com)	Administrator guide

Table 3 shows that practical limits cluster between 2 MB and 10 MB and that specifications differ: some platforms accept compressed files, others want narrowband WAV. A 3CX converter page also states a 50 MB, 15 minute, 8 channel limit for its online conversion tool (www.3cx.com). Uploading a track to a phone system, or converting it to fit a platform, makes a copy, which implicates the reproduction right in the statute (www.copyright.gov), and a licence that allows playback may not mention conversion.

The licensing evidence is similarly dated and scoped. The RE:SOUND Tariff 3.B reached from Entandem is for 2016 to 2020 (decisions.cb-cda.gc.ca), SOCAN's Tariff 15.B published in November 2025 is for 2012 to 2019 (gazette.gc.ca), and the older SOCAN document is for 2009 to 2011 (www.socan.com). No current fee number is given, because none verified for the current period was found. A budget worksheet should keep its inputs blank until named current quotes exist: quoted one-off production or licence costs, plus recurring provider and licensing costs, plus maintenance hours multiplied by the owner's own hourly assumption.

Implications and Future Directions

For buyers, the main implication is that evidence ownership should be assigned before the audio is chosen. A provider that documents its default library in writing makes the register easy to complete; one whose documentation is silent on rights leaves the question to the buyer.

For advisers and onboarding teams, the register is meant to be edited: extended with support case numbers and sign-off dates, or reduced to a single row for a business with no custom audio.

Several uncertainties remain open. Canadian tariff positions may change as the Copyright Board processes pending proposals (www.cb-cda.gc.ca), provider help pages are revised without notice, and hosted-library contracts were not available for review. This report records what each source says on its face, with its scope, and is not a legal opinion.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Can I use copyrighted music for on hold, and do I need a license for music on hold?

Only with permission covering that use. ASCAP's FAQ treats placing a caller on hold with music as a public performance by the business (www.ascap.com), and Talkdesk's help article says a Music on Hold licence is needed to play copyrighted music for callers (support.talkdesk.com). In the United States the starting contacts are the licensing organizations above, and in Canada they are Entandem, RE:SOUND and SOCAN. A licence for the composition does not necessarily cover the recording. A voice-only message you recorded yourself, or no custom audio, avoids the music question.

Is royalty free hold music for a business phone safe?

Not automatically. "Royalty-free" describes payment terms, not permitted uses, and a free library's stated scope may be videos only (support.google.com). A purchased licence should list on-hold, telephone or IVR use and name the business, as noted earlier.

What does music on hold copyright law say?

In the United States, Title 17 separates reproduction, distribution and public performance rights (www.copyright.gov). In Canada, the Copyright Act gives the owner the sole right to perform a work in public (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). Neither page is a guide to telephone systems.

What business phone system hold music options and auto attendant greeting requirements exist?

The four paths are a documented provider default, an original voice-only message, a commissioned or licensed recording, and no custom audio. There is no single technical requirement: each platform sets its own file format, size and call-state options, as Table 3 shows, and a typed or spoken greeting needs no music rights at all.

How do I choose a business phone provider, and record a custom on hold message?

Compare the documented call states, file limits, written rights statements, export and cancellation terms, and the basics for the country such as number porting and 911 service. For a custom message, record the script yourself or commission a voice talent under a written agreement that names the permitted use and the business, then save the recording, the agreement and the test-call date in the register.

Conclusion

The reliable answer to hold music licensing for business is a document, not a feature. A phone provider that accepts a file has told the owner only that the file plays, not who may play that recording to callers. The register ties each call state to a file, a rights holder, a licensee, a permitted use, a jurisdiction, an expiry date, a responsible person and a test date, and the supplier question sheet turns each unknown into a written answer.

For most 2 to 20 person businesses, the lowest-maintenance suitable option is the one that leaves the least third-party paperwork to renew: a documented provider default, an original voice-only message, or no custom audio. Commissioned or licensed music is a sound choice only when the licence names the business, lists telephone use, covers the platform and the country, and sits in the register with proof of purchase. In the United States, start from the licensing organizations and the Copyright Office; in Canada, start from Entandem and the current Copyright Board tariffs. Whichever path is chosen, a business that needs uploaded music or per-state audio control should compare a fuller phone platform on this evidence, and should have a qualified adviser in the relevant country confirm any categorical statement.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/music-on-hold>
2. <https://emak.tech/support/music-on-hold-licensing>
3. <https://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.html>
4. <https://www.ascap.com/help/ascap-licensing>
5. <https://www.bmi.com/licensing/forms>
6. <https://entandemlicensing.com/resources/faq>
7. https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0070171
8. <https://www.ooma.com/small-business-phone-systems/features-support/hold-and-transfer-music-overview>
9. <https://support.spotify.com/us/article/spotify-public-commercial-use>
10. <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/3376882?hl=en>
11. <https://www.copyright.gov/engage/musicians>
12. <https://knowledge.workspace.google.com/admin/voice/set-up-a-voice-automated-attendant-for-your-organization>
13. <https://support.google.com/a/answer/15603188>
14. https://docs.asterisk.org/Latest_API/API_Documentation/Dialplan_Applications/Dial
15. <https://developer.signalwire.com/freeswitch/media-and-codecs/audio-files>
16. <https://help.8x8.com/documentation/docs/set-up-music-on-hold>
17. https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0068791
18. https://support.ringcentral.com/article-v2/1798.html?brand=RingCentral&product=RingEX&language=en_US
19. <https://support.callharbor.com/kb/article/37-ringback-vs-music-on-hold>
20. <https://github.com/asterisk/asterisk/blob/master/configs/samples/musiconhold.conf.sample>
21. <https://support.talkdesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/200981215-How-do-I-configure-the-waiting-queue-or-transfer-music>
22. <https://www.ooma.com/small-business-phone-systems/features-support/how-to-set-up-music-on-hold>
23. <https://support.talkdesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/200587609-Which-audio-files-are-supported-for-greetings-and-hold-music>
24. <https://support.talkdesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/207856306-Can-I-use-my-favorite-song-as-custom-hold-music>
25. <https://help.dialpad.com/docs/hold-music-faqs>
26. <https://nextiva.com/support?p=503>
27. <https://www.melodyloops.com/support/full-license>
28. https://gov.texas.gov/music/page/music_in_venues
29. <https://raw.githubusercontent.com/traviscross/freeswitch-sounds/master/debian/freeswitch-music-default.copyright.tmpl>
30. <https://pixabay.com/service/license-summary>
31. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>
32. <https://www.copyright.gov/recording>
33. <https://www.bmi.com/legal/entry/bmi-music-performance-license-agreement>
34. <https://globalmusicrights.com/faq>
35. <https://www.sesac.com/frequently-asked-questions>
36. <https://www.bmi.com/licensing/faqs>
37. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-42/page-2.html>

38. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-42/page-4.html>
39. <https://entandemlicensing.com/about-us>
40. <https://entandemlicensing.com/resources/music-licensing-forms>
41. <https://cb-cda.gc.ca/en/about-us/mandate-jurisdiction-role>
42. <https://decisions.cb-cda.gc.ca/cb-cda/certified-homologues/en/514116/1/document.do>
43. https://cb-cda.gc.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/COMPPROTAR%20-%202021-10-14%20ReSound%20Tariff%203.B%202023-2026%20-%20EN_0.pdf
44. <https://decisions.cb-cda.gc.ca/cb-cda/case-details/en/522242/1/document.do>
45. <https://www.socan.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Tariff-15.B-GAZETTE-2009-2011-CONDENSED.pdf>
46. <https://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2025/2025-11-08/html/sup3-eng.html>
47. <https://www.cb-cda.gc.ca/en/cases-tariffs/ongoing-cases/pending>
48. <https://www.resound.ca/music-users>
49. https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/porting_-_keeping_your_phone_number_when_you_change_providers.pdf
50. <https://web.archive.org/web/20250219164840/https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/mobile/num.htm>
51. https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/voip_and_911_service.pdf
52. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/47/9.11>
53. <https://www.ringcentral.com/office/features/professionally-recorded-greetings/overview.html>
54. <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/powershell/module/teams/import-csonlineaudiofile>
55. https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0069545
56. <https://www.3cx.com/docs/manual/system>
57. <https://businesssupport.vonage.com/articles/answer/PBX-Settings-1115>
58. <https://help.yeastar.com/en/p-series-software-edition/administrator-guide/audio-files-requirements.html>
59. <https://www.3cx.com/docs/convertng-wav-file>

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About Auto Attendant

Auto Attendant gives a small business one phone number and a recorded menu that sends each caller to the right person. The call rings the mobile that person already carries, using their normal dialler and their normal mobile plan. Pricing is a single flat monthly fee for the whole company rather than a charge for each user, and there is no app, desk phone or hardware to install.

One number, one menu, the phones you already own

A caller dials the business number, hears a short greeting and chooses an option. Each option can ring one mobile, ring several at once so whoever is free answers first, or try people one after another in a set order. There is no limit on how many people sit on the receiving end, because nobody is billed per seat. Setup is done by the owner in a few minutes: pick a number, write the greeting, and point each option at a mobile.

What it deliberately is not

An auto attendant routes a call; it does not answer one. Nobody at Auto Attendant speaks to callers, and no AI stands in for a receptionist. A business that wants its calls handled, messages taken and appointments booked wants an answering service, which is a different product at a different price. A business that needs call recording, queues, agent dashboards or CRM integration wants a contact centre platform. Auto Attendant is for the case where the call should simply reach the right pocket.

Keeping personal numbers off the internet

The business number is the only number a caller ever sees. Personal mobile numbers are never displayed and never given out, which is what lets an owner put a number on a website, an invoice, a van or a Google Business Profile without handing a personal line to everyone who finds it. An existing advertised number can be ported across and kept, and the old line keeps working while the port is in progress.

Work with Auto Attendant

Visit [Auto Attendant](#) to see [how it works](#), [how it compares](#) to a personal mobile, Google Voice and a full phone platform, and the current [pricing](#).

Telephone number portability, emergency calling and caller-ID rules differ by country and change over time. Articles published here describe general practice and cite primary regulator and carrier sources; they are not a guarantee of any timeline, and they are not legal or regulatory advice for a specific business.

Website: <https://autoattendant.io>

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