

Assigning ISRCs to Your Sound Recordings A Quick Guide for New Registrants in the US

The International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) is a 12 character alphanumeric code that comprises 4 sub-codes:

Country Code – Registrant Code – Year of Reference – Designation Code

The Registrant Code assigned to a record label by the RIAA will be used for the remainder of that company's lifetime. Each Registrant uses their Registrant Code to create the ISRCs for recordings they own or have been granted permission to assign ISRCs for by the copyright owner.

The Registrant Codes assigned by the RIAA will only be used with the Country Code, US, as the prefix. Registrants should use the two-digit year in which the ISRC was created for the Year of Reference. Each label is free to assign the Designation Codes in a way that guarantees uniqueness. One approach is to use a sequential numbering scheme.

The ISRCs for the first CD of new recordings in 2005 for a hypothetical US Registrant with a code of, "Z9A" would be as follows:

US-Z9A-05-0000**1**

US-Z9A-05-0000**2**

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US-Z9A-05-000**10**

The next release in 2005 would use US-Z9A-05-000**11** for the first new sound recording. In 2006 the Registrant should start over with Designation Codes of 0000**1**, 0000**2**, 0000**3**, etc. and use a Year of Reference of "06". Note that the goal is to create a globally unique identifier for your master recording.

Registrants can also use their Registrant Codes to assign ISRCs for their audiovisual assets (for example, **music videos**). Each Registrant should have a way of recognizing whether an ISRC represents a sound recording or an audiovisual recording. The RIAA recommends assigning video ISRCs with a designation code that starts with a "9". In our example, the hypothetical company's first new **music video** of 2005 would have an ISRC of, US-Z9A-05-90001. Companies with a substantial video catalog may want to request a separate Registrant Code for use with video assets.

Remember that:

Each master should have one and only one ISRC and it should be used to uniquely identify that recording forever regardless of changes in ownership or territory of exploitation.

When you reuse previously released tracks in compilations, you will continue to identify the original master recordings using the unique ISRC that you originally assigned.

Please see the ISRC Handbook at ifpi.org for more details on assigning new ISRCs in the case of remixes or substantial changes in duration.

New Registrants do not need to submit their ISRCs to the RIAA at this time. However, the RIAA recommends keeping a repertoire database of their ISRC codes and associated metadata. Registrants should provide that information to on-line music services and other business partners who should be encouraged to use the ISRCs in royalty accounting.

More information at: <http://riaa.com>