



# Live Music Venues 101



Use this guide to help you plan your way to success.

[servicelondonbusiness.ca](http://servicelondonbusiness.ca)

Service  
London





## **Are you looking to open a live music venue or add music to your existing space?**

If you've answered YES to either of these questions, this guide is for you! It has been designed to help you ask the right questions to add live music to a new or existing business.

This guide should be read as a companion to the existing Service London Business Starter Guides for Restaurants, Night Clubs and Bars, and Commercial Building Permits, available at [www.servicelondonbusiness.ca](http://www.servicelondonbusiness.ca).



## Build a Support Team

The live music business can be complex so make sure you've surrounded yourself with a strong team of professionals that are experienced in the music industry. Secure an accountant that understands your business and the intricacies of presenting live music. Bring a lawyer on board that knows entertainment law and can prevent future issues.



- **Be sure to comply with all applicable wage laws.** Visit the Canada Business Network to learn more. [www.canadabusiness.ca](http://www.canadabusiness.ca)

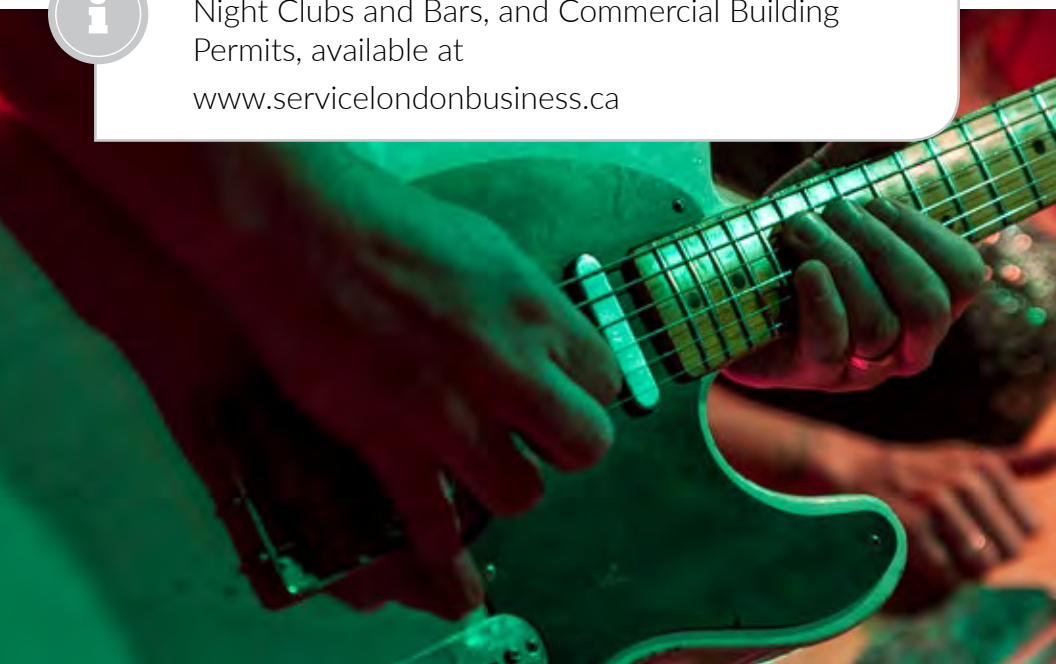


## Initial Steps

- **Create a business plan**
- **Research the insurance(s)** you'll need: Live music requires unique insurance policies.
- **Plan your space**
- **Apply for a Building Permit**
- **Apply for a Liquor License** (if you don't already have one and plan to serve alcohol)  
[www.agco.on.ca](http://www.agco.on.ca)
- **Apply for a Business Licence**



- **For more information** see the existing Service London Business Starter Guides for Restaurants, Night Clubs and Bars, and Commercial Building Permits, available at  
[www.servicelondonbusiness.ca](http://www.servicelondonbusiness.ca)




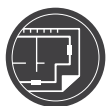


## 'Sound' Construction Advice

- Are you building a stage? You will need to show the location and structural information when applying for your building permit. **This may require a licensed professional to design and review.**
- **Limit the amount of sound escaping** the venue as patrons, musicians and equipment enter and exit.
- **Limit the number of hard surfaces in your space**, and/or add porous & absorbing materials throughout to soften sound.
- Similarly, **add acoustic dampening insulation to interior and exterior walls** and ceilings to improve interior sound quality and minimize exterior levels.

- Consider replacing **exterior doors with acoustic dampening doors**.
- **Don't point speakers toward windows and doors.**
- **Monitor the sound levels** of the performance from the exterior of your building regularly throughout your event.
- **Provide ear plugs for patrons/staff.**

- 
- **Be aware of construction overruns.** They can add time and cost to your project.
  - **Know the utility requirements for your property** (gas, electric, water, sewer) and consider the potential costs.
  - **Amplified music, whether live or recorded, draws more electricity.** Ensure your electrical panel can handle the potential increase.



## By-Laws

- **Learn about how the Music Office** is working to make the by-laws that affect your business easier to navigate and understand.

[www.londonmusicoffice.com](http://www.londonmusicoffice.com)

- **General Rules**

- It is prohibited for amplifiers, loudspeakers, public address systems, sound equipment, to be audible in a Residential Area at any time, according to the Sound & Noise By-law.
- **New:** Amplified entertainment is now allowed on commercial patios. Patio owners must obtain a 'Sound Permit' for their patio. A permit is necessary for all forms of amplified entertainment including ambient background music, live performance and televised events including live sports.
- For more details refer to insert "Obtaining a Temporary Sound Permit for Patios".



## Apply for Your Business Licence

- When completing your Business Licence application don't forget to bring:
  - **Copy of lease or property ownership confirmation**
  - **Master Business Licence or Articles of Incorporation**
  - **Site Plan** (if you are planning to request a liquor licence for an outside patio)





- **Note:** No new license is required if you're adding live or recorded music to your venue.

## Featuring live or recorded music? You'll need to familiarize yourself with these two organizations

- **SOCAN (the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada)** is a not-for-profit organization that represents Canadian Artists.  
[www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca)
- **SOCAN collects 3%** of your gross net ticket sales and pays it to rights holders.
- **Re:Sound** is a Canadian not-for-profit music licensing company that deals with recorded music.
- Businesses are required to **pay a fee for playing recorded** music in their space.  
[www.resound.ca](http://www.resound.ca)







## Staffing

- **Security is a mandatory staffing requirement!**
- All security guards must have a **valid Security Licence** to operate in Ontario.  
www.ontario.ca (by searching “Security”)
- Things to think about regarding security include basic procedures, report writing, health and safety, emergency response, legal authority & use of force policies, etc.
- **Other Staff to Consider:**
  - Audio / Lighting Technicians
  - Door Staff
  - Promoter
  - Stage Hands
  - Runners
  - Bar Staff
  - Coach check
  - Social media staff



- **Side Note:** A minimum of 1 guard for every 100 patrons is the requirement! We suggest more to maintain a safe environment.



## Let the Music Play!

You've opened your doors and are operating your Music Venue. **Congratulations!** Plan ahead to keep things running smoothly.



• Stay in touch with the London Music Office.

@LDNMusicOffice





## Staying Open

- **Post all required permits and signs**, such as your Liquor Licence, Middlesex-London Health Unit Premises Inspection Summary, No Smoking signs, etc.
- Mark your calendar. **Schedule equipment maintenance and set reminders to renew your permits, licences, and certifications.**
- **Avoid violations and be ready for inspections.** Violations put employees at risk, and cost you time and money.
- **Be ready for inspections.** Random inspections can take place anytime throughout the year.
- **Show prices and print your business name and address on receipts.**
- Work with your accountant to **prepare your income tax return.** Visit the Canada Revenue Agency to learn more.
- **If you own your space – be prepared to pay property taxes.** Installment due dates are noted on your tax bill. Contact the City of London Tax Division to learn more. [www.london.ca/business/tax](http://www.london.ca/business/tax)
- Avoid sewer backups by **properly maintaining your grease interceptor.**
- Regularly reference the Good Neighbour Policy Guide. [londonmusicoffice.com](http://londonmusicoffice.com)
- Stay compliant with by-laws, SOCAN, and Re:Sound.



## Event Promotions / Submit Your Event



London boasts an impressive resume of hosting a wide variety of events from grassroots to major international events and everything in between. We would love to hear about your next event. Tourism London assists with marketing and event promotion. Visit [www.londontourism.ca](http://www.londontourism.ca) to have your event promoted through their portal as well as [www.londonmusicoffice.com](http://www.londonmusicoffice.com)

LondonTourism.ca will walk you through the necessary steps of creating an impactful and detailed event listing.

### Community Media

#### All Stage

 @AllstageLiveMusic

#### Interrobang

 @interrobang\_fsu

 @fsuinterrobang

#### London is On!

 @LDNENT

 @LDNENT

#### Old East Village Community Association

 @oevca

#### CHRW

 @chrwradio

 @chrwradio

 @chrwradio

#### London Fuse

 @LondonFuse

 @londonfuse

 @ldnfuse



### Indie Underground

 @indieUG

 @indieUG

 @indieug

### Snapd London

 @snapdLondon

 @snapdLondon

### Downtown London

 @Downtown\_London

 @Downtownlondon

 @downtownlondon


### London Reverb


 @LDNReverb

 @LDNReverb

 @LDNReverb

### 106.9 The X

 @1069TheX

 @1069TheX

### London Arts Council

 @LdnArtsCouncil

 @londonartscouncil

 @LondonArtsCouncil



## Ask Us – We Can Help!



### London Music Office

Music Industry Development Office  
519-661-CITY (2489) x. 7308  
londonmusicoffice.com  
Social Media @LDNMusicOffice (FB, T, Insta)



London  
CANADA

### City of London

Business Connector – Service London Business  
519-661-CITY (2489) x. 7650  
businessconnector@london.ca



### London Culture Office

[www.london.ca/about-london/culture](http://www.london.ca/about-london/culture)



### London Arts Council

[www.londonculture.ca/about/london-arts-council](http://www.londonculture.ca/about/london-arts-council)



### Tourism London

[TourismLondon.ca](http://TourismLondon.ca)



### Downtown London

Program Coordinator – Downtown London  
519-432-9816  
kathy@downtownlondon.ca



### Old East Village

519-645-7662  
[info@oldeastvillage.com](mailto:info@oldeastvillage.com)





## More Resources



**Music Ontario**

[www.music-ontario.ca](http://www.music-ontario.ca)



**Ontario Media Development Corporation**

[www.omdc.on.ca/music.htm](http://www.omdc.on.ca/music.htm)



**Ontario Arts Council**

[www.arts.on.ca](http://www.arts.on.ca)



**Music Canada**

[www.musiccanada.com](http://www.musiccanada.com)



**Music Canada Live**

[www.musiccanadalive.ca](http://www.musiccanadalive.ca)



**Canada Arts Council**

[www.canadacouncil.ca](http://www.canadacouncil.ca)



- Need assistance and looking for opportunities to employ? Try searching Canada Summer Jobs.  
[www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca)



## City of London

300 Dufferin Avenue  
London, Ontario N6A 4L9  
519-661-CITY (2489)  
[www.london.ca](http://www.london.ca)



**London**  
CANADA