

Mix-Prep Guidelines

*These instructions **MUST** be followed exactly

*We mix from Pro Tools HD 7.X 24 Bit

***OBVIOUS DISCLAIMER:** OK. We do understand and can, in fact, empathize with a lot of folks, who expect professional results on a budget. However, as mixers, we've noticed a lot of emphasis and grand expectations being placed upon us, as though we are miracle workers. Of course, we don't expect all musicians/songwriters to be producers. Or all producers to be engineers. Or all engineers to be vocal tuners and editors. Or all engineers to be mixers. Conversely, we wouldn't expect most of the 'technophiles' to understand much about music either. We can use all the cliched metaphors like, not all general practitioners are neurologists. Or perhaps, the old favorite, *...you wouldn't perform your own root canal would you?* Alright...enough of that.

In today's rapidly changing recording climate, there are many steps that are often overlooked. For this we have provided the following set of guidelines. Oh and for the record-we're in your corner!!!

General Guidelines

1. We will accept Firewire hard drives and CDRs/DVDRs. We do not accept 24-track analog or 48 track digital tapes. If your project is one of these formats, **YOU MUST DO THE TRANSFER.**
2. If using any other recording software such as Nuendo, Cubase, Digital Performer, Logic, Sonar etc., please, consolidate your tracks from the beginning of session (bar 1 or 00:00.000) in 24 bit .wav or .aiff files and include the tempo of the song. *We prefer BFW files.
3. To help insure no delays on the scheduled mix day(s), it is essential that the ProTools files are received 24 hours prior to the mixing session. If they are not at 7th Level Productions (24) twenty-four hours in advance, the song(s) will not be mixed and you will be charged for that day.
4. An audio CD of the latest "Rough Mix" must be sent along with the ProTools files. If the "Rough Mix" and the ProTools files don't match exactly, a brief note should be sent along explaining the difference (i.e. "The song was re-sung" or "We redid drums"); if this is the case, please make a new "Rough Mix" CD. The reason for this is if the arrangement is different and no explanation is given, we start to question whether or not we have the correct session.

**The following instructions are to be passed along to your ProTools engineer.*

Tech guidelines

1. Managing a session: Only one session should be sent for each title. It should be labeled as "(Song title)" For MIX. No other sessions should be included. It should be notated clearly and correctly so there is no misunderstanding what a part is. PARTS THAT ARE NOT USED SHOULD BE DELETED. Not hidden, but deleted. Hidden tracks will be deleted. This also includes play-lists not being used. DELETE THEM (The number one reason for HUGE files is all the unused play-lists). It is very easy to clean out a session and then "Save Session Copy In..." checking the "All Audio Files" box to save a new session and audio files. Make sure you "Delete Unused Regions" from the session first so they don't take up disk space in the new session. Make sure that you open up this session and that there are no missing audio files (If audio files are missing, whether they are being used or not, I will question the validity of the entire session).

2. Automation and Plug-ins: Record any effects that are part of the songs integrity. For example, a guitar going through "Amp Farm" or a "Telephone Vox" effect. Label it then save the original and make sure you CLEARLY LABEL that it was unaffected sound in the note page. Once this has been done REMOVE ALL PLUG-INS.

All automation should be removed from the session. Disabling the master automation is not what we mean. Delete any and all volume moves, mutes, automated plug-ins, and act. From the individual channels.

3. Track Labeling: Since there is no standard for this, we ask you to spend some time and label the instruments so that there is no guessing what they are. I can't tell you how many times we've gotten tracks labeled in "hieroglyphics".

Vocals- Lead Vocal should be marked as such: "Ld Vox" not "John Vocal 2". The same for vocal doubles- "Ld Vox Dbl".

Instruments- Notate the main instruments as such: i.e. "Main Gtr", not "Joey SG6" (add the suffix "L" or "R" if there is a pair of them). Including the section that they play is also helpful, i.e. "Brdg Pad", not "Virus" (This is the pad that ONLY play in the bridge).

Drums- Unless there are more than one mic on any drum or room, we don't need to know what the mic is, rather what the sound is (If you must leave the mic info, put it on the note page or in the comments box).

Bass Drum- "Kick" add the suffix "Inside" or "Outside" if applicable.
Snare Drum- "Snare" add the suffix "Top" or "Btm" if applicable.

Alternate Instrumentation

We know that it's impossible to make ALL the decisions before the mix, so if there are questionable parts that you may or may not want to use, these should have "?" in front of them i.e. "Brdg Gtr Line". We will use discretion as to whether or not these will be used.

With all instruments, any note in the comment boxes is helpful.

Editing

Cleaning tracks are essential for professional results. So please try to adhere to the following procedures as close as you can.

1. Please make sure all of your tracks are click and pop free by performing cross fades on adjoining regions and fading in and out at the beginning and end of regions.
2. Please delete any extraneous noises on your tracks such as guitar amp hum before the actual part is being played, headphone bleed, throat clearing, coughing, chair squeaking in between vocal or musical phrases.
3. Any vocal tuning and or vocal/instrument aligning must be done prior to mixing.

** If you are unable, uncomfortable or choose not to do any of this editing yourself we can provide this service for an additional fee.*

Recalls and Delivery

1. After your mix is approximately 90% complete, we will send you a version of the work in progress via email/ftp. At this point you need to make a list of any changes, comments and suggestions so we can then proceed to finish your masterpiece.
2. After the changes you listed are complete we will send you another copy for your approval.
3. If you still need to make any additional tweaks you are entitled to one two-hour recall session per song. Any additional recall time will require an hourly fee.

4. After your mix is complete you will receive two 16 bit 44.1 audio CD's (so you can listen on any modern CD player) and two 24 bit master DATA CDs if you decide to have your mixes mastered. We will also be happy to create a personalized FTP page for you to access the music online.

* We can also provide different versions of your song if needed such as: *Instrumental, Show, Acapella, Vocal Up, etc.* for an hourly fee.

We very much appreciate your patience, attention to detail and cooperation. As with yourself, we all ultimately want to make incredible music!!!