

The following should be not be construed as legal advice. However, it gives you an idea of what response you might get.

Someone recently sent this e-mail to BMI.

This year, I will have an animated, outdoor Christmas light display, similar to the one seen on TV last year. My Christmas lights will be computer controlled to do different things, in sync to Christmas music that is copyrighted. The music will be transmitted from a unlicensed (license not required by FCC) low power FM transmitter. The maximum distance the transmitter is capable of transmitting is approximately 200 - 300 feet. People will be able to watch the lights and hear the music while sitting or driving by in their cars. Do I have to license the Christmas music I will be using to be able to do that? I thought about putting a donations box outside to collect funds for a local charity. if I do that, would I have to license the Christmas music? NONE, ZERO of the monies collected would be kept by me.

This is the response they received.

No, a BMI performance agreement would not be required. BMI does not have a license in place for this type of music use. Thank you for your interest in BMI. Robert BMI Nashville, TN

Please remember you should not take this as fact. It's simply one e-mail conversation shared with you here. If you are running a commercial display, then you should completely ignore this answer, as it most likely does not concern you.