

# File Preparation Guidelines for Mixing

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To ensure a smooth and efficient mixing process, and to give your music the best possible treatment, please follow these guidelines carefully before sending your tracks. While it's not necessary to follow every single guideline exactly as written, properly prepared files save time (and cost) for both of us and help prevent delays or misunderstandings.

## 1. Before Exporting / Clean Up

- Reset mix settings: Set all channel fader/volume levels to Unity / 0 dB, pan controls to center, and disable/remove all plugins, effects, reverbs, delays, compressors etc. (do not just bypass them).
- Check levels for clipping: If any track is clipping, lower the level with a trim/gain plugin (preferred) or by pulling down the channel fader before exporting. Make sure no audio is distorted.
- Editing must be done (Unless discussed otherwise): Ensure crossfades, trimming silences, removing clicks/pops, tuning, and fixing transitions are completed.

## 2. Track Sync / Consolidation

- Export all tracks starting at 0:00, aligned and ready for mixing, including every instrument/part used in the song.

## 3. File Format

- File Type: WAV
- Bit Depth: 24-bit preferred (16-bit if that's what you recorded in).
- Sample Rate: 44.1 or 48 kHz (match your recording rate).
- Channel Type:
  - Mono tracks (single channel) for instruments like vocals, bass, guitar DI, kick, snare, or other elements that are naturally mono.
  - Stereo tracks (two channels) for synths, pads, or effects that use stereo imaging.

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### 4. Programmed Drums / MIDI Parts

- Export each articulation (kick, snare, hats, toms, etc.) as separate MIDI tracks, or send them as a single MIDI file with a clear MIDI map (e.g., a text file: C1 = kick, D1 = snare, etc.).
- Include rendered audio versions of individual drum parts (kick, snare, overheads, etc.) either as references or actual use in the mix.

### 5. Bass & Guitars

- Send DI signals (clean, no effects/amps).
- Include amp recordings if available.
- Send preamp/processed versions of the amp if desired.
- Apply crossfades only where necessary to clean up edits. Do not apply long fades (e.g., fading out note tails or fading in DI parts) — leave those decisions to mixing.

### 6. Keys & Virtual Instruments

- Render VST/synths/keys to audio files.
- Optionally send MIDI files for layering or editing.

### 7. Tempo Map & Time Signature Changes

- Provide BPM and time signature changes via a MIDI tempo map (preferred), or if that's not possible, a text file.
  - Example text file format:

*SONG 1:*

*BAR 1: 120 BPM 4/4*

*BAR 60: 145 BPM 4/4*

*BAR 84: 110 BPM 4/4*

*BAR 116: 80 BPM 4/4*

### 8. Labelling & Organization

- Use consistent, descriptive names and group instruments together with sequential numbers.
  - Example: 01 Kick In, ..., 03 D-Snare\_Top, ..., 13 Bass\_DI (other tracks numbered sequentially in between).
- Organize files into folders:
  - For multi-song projects: ProjectName → Song01, Song02, References & Notes.
  - For single-song projects: ProjectName → Audio Files, References & Notes.

### 9. References & Production Notes

- Send a couple of reference tracks for style/vibe.
- Include production notes or any information that would be beneficial before the mix is started (e.g., vocal placement, drum punchiness, reverb preferences).
- Highlight any standout moments in the arrangement (e.g., louder snare in pre-chorus).
- You may also include screenshots of plugin chains or rough mixes if relevant.


### 10. Sending the Files

- Send all files at once (audio, MIDI, tempo maps, notes, references).
- Zip folders for each song and use services like Dropbox, Google Drive, or WeTransfer.

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### 11. Summary Checklist

Checklist Item	Done? 
All tracks exported from 0:00, properly aligned	
Faders at unity / 0 dB, pan centered, no effects/plugins unless discussed otherwise	
No clipping; gain/trim adjusted if necessary	
Editing completed (crossfades, silence trimming, click/pop removal, tuning, transitions)	
DI / clean versions of bass and guitars included	
Amp / preamp / processed versions included if applicable	
Rendered audio for virtual instruments / MIDI files included as needed	
MIDI tempo map or text file with BPM & time signature changes included	
Tracks labeled consistently and grouped sequentially (e.g., 01 D-Kick, ..., 13 Bass_DI)	
Folder structure organized (multi-song: Song01, Song02...; single-song: Audio Files, References & Notes)	
Reference tracks for style/vibe included	
Production notes provided (vocal placement, drum punchiness, reverb, etc.)	
Standout moments highlighted (e.g., louder snare in pre-chorus)	
Optional: screenshots of plugin chains or rough mixes included	
All files zipped and sent via cloud storage or file transfer service	