

2010 Guidelines for the Payment of Church Musicians

These guidelines have been prepared jointly by the
Advisory Committee on Church Music of the Irish Episcopal Commission for Liturgy
and the
Music Committee of the Church of Ireland Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough

The rates below are guidelines, not directives. The qualifications and ability of the musician, what is expected of him/her, the ability of the choir, and the amount of administrative work involved are among the matters which should be considered when applying the guidelines to the local situation. The scales are revised annually.

The suggested minimum remuneration levels for 2010 relate to amateur musicians. Here 'amateur' indicates musicians who may be professionally qualified and who earn their living principally outside the world of music. Higher rates would be appropriate for musicians who earn their living principally by performing and/or teaching music.

Usually the musician will be self-employed, that is, engaged on a 'for services' basis. To avoid misunderstanding and to protect its position, the employer should state this unambiguously in the contract / letter of appointment. In those few instances where the musician is employed on a 'contract of service' basis, the employer should note its legal responsibilities in relation to taxation, social welfare, health and safety and employer's liability insurance. The Church Music Committee can supply sample contracts, on request.

In addition to a contract, many churches will find it helpful to have a 'memorandum of understanding' agreed by clergy and musician. This could cover topics such as choosing music for the liturgy, procedures when last-minute changes are required, fees for weddings and funerals, the use of the organ for teaching, and other matters that sometimes give rise to misunderstanding and even conflict.

In some cases a local agreement exists whereby the musician either accepts no payment or donates it back. While of enormous benefit, this generosity distorts the cost of running the parish. It is suggested that in such cases the parish should pay the appropriate level of fee into a separate fund as, when the present musician leaves, it is probable that the successor will have to be paid. This procedure will establish a realistic payment level for the post and will avoid a sudden sizeable additional cost in the future.

The value of regular in-service training cannot be over-emphasised. Musicians, whether at early or mid-career, benefit from continuous professional development. They bring back to the local church fresh approaches and ideas to support their work. Clergy and parish committees should encourage and expect their musicians to avail of opportunities to attend relevant courses and should provide financial assistance towards the cost.

Church authorities should find these guidelines useful in determining an appropriate payment level. The Church Music Committee emphasises that it is essential that the value of music in the worship of the Church and the musician's training, skill and commitment be appropriately recognised in monetary terms.

MINIMUM FEES FOR CHURCH MUSICIANS - 2010

Normal weekly duties

Fee for 48 Sundays

[see (b) below]

Band A	One Service / Mass, no choir	€3,243
Band B	One Service / Mass, choir with a Sunday rehearsal	€4,323*
Band C	One Service / Mass, choir with a weekday rehearsal	€5,406*
Band D	Two Services / Masses, no choir	€5,406*
Band E	Two Services / Masses, choir with a Sunday rehearsal	€6,973*
Band F	Two Services / Masses, choir with a weekday rehearsal	€8,432*

The amounts above are the minimum suggested fees in 2010 for trained and competent church musicians who are willing to undertake appropriate in-service training.. Factors such as level of qualifications, length of service, responsibility for a junior choir and the amount of administrative work involved should also be taken into consideration.

*These fees relate to a combined organist/choir director position. Where the positions are shared between two people as choir director and organist, it is suggested that each should receive 75% of the appropriate fee with the implication that the total cost to the parish will be 50% higher than the rates above.

WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

Where a church has an appointed organist it is normal practice to pay him/her the appropriate fee when the marriage couple/family wish to engage an organist of their choice. The implementation of this principle requires flexibility so as to avoid misunderstanding and unfair criticism of musicians. It is recommended that each church should have a worked out policy in this matter, agreed in advance between clergy and musician.

Weddings

The minimum suggested fee is €212, but should be higher when the musician is required for a rehearsal or when music has to be purchased or learned.

Funerals

The minimum suggested fee is €116 for one service; €169 when music also is provided at a service in church on the eve of a funeral. Travelling expenses, 78c per km, may be paid where appropriate. (The Association of Funeral Directors has been informed of these rates.)

OTHER GUIDELINES

- (a) Fees should be reviewed annually by reference to pay inflation and national pay agreements.
- (b) Church musicians should be entitled to at least four Sundays off each year and the parish should pay the deputy for those Sundays. The responsibility for finding a deputy should be primarily that of the musician.
- (c) Musicians should be allowed two Sundays sick leave in any one year, for which period the parish will meet the cost of a deputy.
- (d) The minimum suggested rate for deputy work is €73 for the first service on any day and €50 for each subsequent service.

(e) A written contract should be entered into, outlining the terms and conditions of service and listing the duties, including the festivals other than Sundays, for which the musician is required.

(f) Additional payment should be made for duties over and above those set out in the contract.

(g) Church authorities should reimburse expenses incurred by church musicians - such as choir music, postage and stationery – within an agreed budget.

(h) Church authorities should encourage and expect musicians to attend appropriate courses (in music, liturgy, theology, etc.) in Ireland and elsewhere at least once every three years and should contribute towards the cost, recognising the benefit accruing to both the parish and the musician from continuous professional development.

(Issued in February 2010)