



What is a Soundcheck?

A soundcheck is a standard test that takes place before a live performance. It's purpose is to check the venue's sound system and ensure that the sound in the front of house, or FOH (for the audience), and the sound on stage (from the monitors) is clear and set at the proper volume and frequencies.

During a soundcheck, musicians set up all of the equipment that they'll be using and play through a few songs, working with the sound engineer to get the right levels for both the audience and what the musicians are hearing on stage.

Soundchecks usually take place about an hour after the PA or Backline arrives at the venue. Adequate time should always be allowed when scheduling, being sure to plan for any delays that could occur.

If there is more than one band or artist performing, the headliner will generally soundcheck first, followed by the direct support and/or lastly the band who will perform first on the night. This allows the band who are performing first to leave their equipment on stage after their soundcheck. That way the performance can start without needing any further changes.

How to get the most out of your soundcheck.

Soundcheck is NOT a rehearsal:

Soundcheck isn't the time to practice new songs you're writing or for performing your whole set. This is serious preparation time that sets the stage for the quality of your show. If you really need to practice something again, the soundcheck is the most unsuitable

situation imaginable. Its aims are settings the levels, frequencies, effects and more. If the rehearsal of a part is urgently needed you can ask the engineer whether there is still time left to do so, or ask in advance if time can be scheduled for a rehearsal section.

Be prepared:

Do your research and know what to expect prior to arriving at the venue. Before the show, send your band's stage plan and channel list to the sound engineer and promoter. If the venue is well prepared for your arrival, setting up will be much easier and less time consuming. A productive soundcheck can be done in well under an hour. Make sure to arrive early! If too much time is spent setting up, it can cut down on your soundcheck time.

Be ready to get on stage:

You know your set, so set up your equipment appropriately in advance. This might include, for example, the number of guitars needed (don't forget a spare), amplifier and effects pedal settings, drum breakables (snare, cymbals and sometimes kick pedals!). If everything is tuned and ready to go, you'll have more time to perfect your sound.

The sound engineer often knows how to get the best sound:

This is the time when the engineer can help take your music from sounding good to sounding great... if you let him/her. The engineer is often in the best position to judge the sound coming from the stage, so if they ask you to turn down the volume (a common request) or change up your sound, just remember that they've got your best interests in mind. Also, don't forget that the audience absorbs sound and rooms without people can sound boomy and bad. A good engineer will compensate for this.

Leave problematic gear at home:

A common issue which can cause delays is bringing problematic equipment on to the stage. Any backline you bring should be checked for crackling cables or faulty components. This needs to be done before the actual soundcheck, either at home or in the rehearsal room. Locating and eliminating problem sources on the day can cost a lot of unnecessary time. Time is something that neither the sound engineer nor the band have to spare as soundchecks can often be quite short.

Be attentive to the process:

Keep in mind that not all instruments can be sound checked/ EQ'd at once. While the sound engineer is focusing on one instrument, all the other performers need to be respectful and remain silent. This will help make the overall sound much greater than the sum of its parts.

Play the way you're going too when the crowd is there:

The engineer depends on real material to be played during your soundcheck. Music should be performed the same way now as it will be during the show. The vocalist for example should sing at full volume. Instrumentalists can sometimes have a distorted lead sound, for example, that is way louder than their clean tone and if not spotted early this can leap alarmingly out of the mix and cause feedback or clipping. You will usually be asked to play both the loudest and the quietest section of your set, that way the engineer can have your sound set at a happy medium between the two.

Friendliness goes a long way:

Remember that you are working with a person, not a machine. Speak to the engineer courteously and kindly. Introduce yourself to them before the soundcheck begins. Being on a first name basis always helps to get the best results.

Hands off!:

Everything is set and the band and engineers are happy with the results. Everyone has potentially had to make some compromises. The soundcheck is done, so please don't modify anything! Too many adjustments now could destroy the overall result. If you really need to make a major adjustment speak with the engineer and see what can be done.