



Festival-Ready DCP Checklist (2025)

A comprehensive, print-ready checklist for indie filmmakers to deliver reliable, standards-compliant Digital Cinema Packages (DCPs) to festivals and theaters.

Project Details

Film Title:	_____	Director:	_____
Runtime (mm:ss):	_____	Aspect Ratio:	_____
Resolution:	2K ☐ 4K ☐	Frame Rate:	24 ☐ 23.98→24 ☐ 25 ☐ 30 ☐
Audio:	Stereo ☐ 5.1 ☐ 7.1 ☐	Languages:	_____
Encryption:	Unencrypted ☐ Encrypted ☐ (KDMs)	Delivery:	Digital ☐ CRU/Drive ☐

1) Pre-Export Master Checks

- ☐ Picture lock confirmed; no offline/placeholder shots.
- ☐ Master file codec: Apple ProRes 422 HQ ☐ or 4444 ☐ (avoid H.264/H.265 for masters).
- ☐ Final framing/aspect verified (e.g., 1.85, 2.39, 2.00, 2.20); letter/pillarboxing resolved.
- ☐ Final color space noted (Rec.709 / P3-D65); LUTs baked only if intended.
- ☐ Final audio layout confirmed (Stereo / 5.1 / 7.1) with correct channel order.
- ☐ Head/tail leaders present: 2-pop or slate timecode (optional but recommended).

2) Picture Specifications

- ☐ Target resolution selected: 2K (2048×1080) ☐ or 4K (4096×2160) ☐.
- ☐ Frame rate: 24 fps ☐ (or permitted 25/30 fps; verify with festival).
- ☐ Color transform to XYZ configured (from Rec.709/P3) with gamma handled correctly.
- ☐ Bit rate and JPEG2000 quality settings appropriate for length (avoid excessive compression).
- ☐ Letterboxing handled via proper container (no unexpected windowboxing).
- ☐ Subtitle burn-in disabled unless required.

3) Audio Specifications

- ☐ Sample rate 48 kHz (or 96 kHz) and 24-bit WAVs.
- ☐ Channel mapping conforms to SMPTE order (5.1: L, R, C, LFE, Ls, Rs).
- ☐ No clipping; integrated loudness consistent (dialogue ~-27 to -23 LKFS typical).
- ☐ Stereo fold-down checked (if delivering both stereo and 5.1).
- ☐ Sync confirmed at head/tail after any 23.976→24 conversion.

4) Subtitles & Captions

- Subtitle type chosen: Open/Burn-in ■ or Closed/SMPTE XML ■.
- Font, size, and safe-title margins verified; high-contrast color.
- Timing & line breaks reviewed; proofread by native reader when applicable.
- SMPTE XML validated; file encodings (UTF-8) and language tags correct.
- Subtitles tested against final DCP in a player (or cinema, if possible).

5) DCP Packaging & Structure

- CPL/MXF assets generated correctly (video MXF, audio MXF, subtitle XML if applicable).
- InterOp vs SMPTE chosen (SMPTE preferred unless venue specifies InterOp).
- CPL/PKL/ASSETMAP and VOLINDEX present and valid.
- Reel structure verified (single-reel for shorts recommended).
- Naming follows ISDCF convention (territory, language, resolution, audio, date).

6) Encryption & KDMs (if required)

- Encrypted DCP generated only if venue confirms KDM acceptance and server details provided.
- KDMs created per screen/device with accurate certificate (*.crt) and valid time window.
- Time window includes setup/rehearsal and multiple time zones where relevant.
- Backup unencrypted DCP available if festival permits (reduces risk of key issues).

7) Quality Control (QC) Tests

- Playback tested in a DCP player (e.g., DCP-o-matic Player, easyDCP Player).
- Visual QC: color shifts, gamma, banding, artifact checks across dark/mid/high lights.
- Audio QC: pops, phase issues, channel mapping, LFE management.
- Subtitles: language selection (if closed), timing, overlaps, no missing lines.
- End-to-end ingest test at a cinema or with a projection partner (ideal).

8) Delivery & Submission

- Digital delivery preferred: secure link provided; checksum (MD5/SHA-256) included.
- If shipping CRU/drive: EXT2/3 or NTFS as requested; powered, labeled drive; include checksum files.
- Include README with contact, runtime, audio layout, subtitle languages, encryption/KDM notes.
- Confirm festival ingest deadline, booth contact, and test window.

ISDCF-Style Name (example):

Title_FTR_S_EN-XX_US_51_2K_20250901_OV

9) Festival-Specific Requirements

Record any special specs provided by the festival (e.g., unique frame rates, delivery portals, on-site tests).

Festival:	_____	Screen/Server:	_____
Delivery Method:	_____	Ingest Deadline:	_____

Tech Contact:	_____	Email/Phone:	_____
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Final Sign-Off

QC Lead:	_____	Date:	_____
Notes:	_____		

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