

When Are You Required to Have a Commercial MySQL License?

MySQL has a dual-licensing model. You can get the source under the [GPL version 2](#), or you can buy a commercial license.

When are you required to buy a commercial license? It's very simple: **when you want to do something with MySQL that the GPL doesn't permit.**

Here are some things the GPL allows:

- The GPL allows you to run a for-profit business on MySQL.
- The GPL allows you to modify the MySQL source code in any way you want.
- The GPL allows you to sell MySQL.
- The GPL allows you to redistribute MySQL.
- The GPL allows you to redistribute your modifications of MySQL.

And you **don't have to ask anyone's permission or pay anyone** for the right to do this.

The above come with some restrictions, but those restrictions are (broadly speaking) only to prevent you from making the software less Free. So, for example, if you sell or redistribute, you have to do it under the GPL too. You cannot strip the GPL or encumber part of the software and then pass on a less-Free version of the software to others.

Here are some things the GPL does *not* require:

- The GPL doesn't require you to redistribute your modifications to MySQL.
- The GPL doesn't require you to GPL-license any software that merely connects to MySQL.
- The GPL doesn't require you to GPL-license all the software in your company.

So if you have to buy a commercial license for things the GPL doesn't permit, what are those? Here are a couple of scenarios as sample.

- You need a commercial license if you want to modify MySQL and redistribute the result as non-Free software.
- You need a commercial license if you want to embed MySQL within your non-Free program. Note that *embed* is not the same as "make a connection to."

Since these things are not permitted under the GPL, you need to buy the right to use the MySQL source code under a non-GPL license. That's where the dual-licensing comes in.

For examples and demonstrative text that will help clarify the GPL further, you should read the [GPL FAQ](#).