

Step 1: Determine how and why your video was blocked

First you need to figure out how and why your video was blocked, which is important to know in deciding what to do about it. YouTube generally removes videos for one of three reasons:

1. **Community Guidelines Violation**
2. **Content ID Match**
3. **DMCA Takedown Notice/Copyright Strike**

How to tell why a video was blocked:

1. The easiest way to tell why your video was blocked is often just to go to your [Video Manager](#) panel and click on the link to the video, which will then bring up an error message which will say why it was blocked. You may also have gotten an email from YouTube telling you why the video was blocked.

2. You should also check the [account status](#) section of your account settings. This page will say whether you are in "good standing" in three categories:

community guidelines

,
copyright strikes

, and

Content ID claims

. After three "strikes" under any of these categories, your account may be terminated (though I have been unable to verify if this is the case with Content ID strikes). Regular copyright strikes result from a DMCA takedown notice being sent against one of your videos. You can also be in "bad standing" from Content ID claims which result in a global block on a video rather than merely monetizing it or blocking it in a few specific countries. This may result in a 15 minute limit being imposed on the length of newly uploaded videos and the disabling of other features like unlisted videos and Creative Commons licenses--penalties which also result from DMCA copyright strikes.

3. Go to your [My Videos](#) panel and check under [Content ID Matches](#) . This will be the main way to identify videos that were blocked by YouTube's automated filter rather than a DMCA notice.

What you can do about it:

1. **Community Guidelines Violations** - Because YouTube is a private website run by a private corporation, they are not obligated to allow all forms of speech protected by the 1st Amendment, and can block any video which in their opinion violates the site's rules. Videos are usually removed for Community Guidelines violations when they are violent, pornographic, or

"hate speech." This results in a "strike" on your account which is separate from copyright strikes. [According to YouTube](#) , "The first strike on an account is considered a warning. If an account receives two strikes within a six month period, the ability to post new content to YouTube from that account is disabled for two weeks. If there are no further issues, full privileges are restored automatically after the two week period. If an account receives a third Community Guidelines strike within six months (before the first strike has expired) the account is terminated." While these types of removals are not the focus of this tutorial, there is an

appeal process

if you believe your video was removed in error. You can find more information about that process

[here](#)

2. **Content ID Match** - YouTube's Content ID system automatically scans videos as they are uploaded for copyrighted material and blocks access to videos containing material which copyright owners have told YouTube to block. This system may either block access to a video entirely, or merely mute the audio (depending on whether there is a video or audio match), in which case the video will still be playable but with no sound. Alternatively, Content ID may "monetize" videos, in which case ads will play next to the video and the copyright owner will get a share of the ad revenue. Monetized videos are also often blocked from viewing on mobile devices and sometimes blocked from being embedded on other websites. Because this system blocks all uses of copyrighted content indiscriminately, there is a high chance it will block material that is in fact "fair use" under U.S. copyright law, and you can easily get your video restored by

disputing the content ID match. The copyright claimant is then given the chance to "confirm" or "reinstate" their claim, which you can then appeal using a second dispute process. If the copyright claimant still disagrees with your dispute, they can then file a DMCA notice against your video, invoking the DMCA notice and counter-notice process described below.

3. **DMCA Takedown Notice/Copyright Strike** - This is where copyright owners have filed a formal demand with YouTube that your specific video be taken down because it infringes their copyright. While content ID matches are entirely automatic and are also restored automatically, if a video was blocked by a DMCA notice it (at least usually) means that an actual person has looked at your video and decided it is infringing. Contesting these is thus somewhat more likely to result in a lawsuit if the copyright owner is really serious about keeping your video off YouTube. However as mentioned above, no regular YouTube user has ever been sued over a video. The process for getting a video restored that was blocked by this method is considerably more complicated, since you have to file a formal

DMCA Counter-notice.

The copyright owner then has 10-14 business days to notify YouTube that they intend to sue you to seek an injunction against your video; otherwise they will restore the video. Unless you file a counter-notice, DMCA notices result in a copyright strike on your account. While these usually expire after six months, if you get three copyright strikes within that time, your account will be terminated. As long as there is an active strike on your account, you may be unable to upload videos longer than 15 minutes, post unlisted or Creative Commons licensed videos, or

appeal reinstated Content ID claims.