

1700.25. LICENSEE'S DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO ARTIST – RETENTION OF FUNDS PENDING RESOLUTION OF DISPUTE:

(a) A licensee who receives any payment of funds on behalf of an artist shall immediately deposit that amount in a trust fund account maintained by him or her in a bank or other recognized depository. The funds, less the licensee's commission, shall be disbursed to the artist within 30 days after receipt. However,

notwithstanding the preceding sentence, the licensee may retain the funds beyond 30 days of receipt in either of the following circumstances:

(1) To the extent necessary to offset an obligation of the artist to the talent agency that is then due and owing.

(2) When the funds are the subject of a controversy pending before the Labor Commissioner under Section 1700.44 concerning a fee alleged to be owed by the artist to the licensee.

(b) A separate record shall be maintained of all funds received on behalf of an artist and the record shall further indicate the disposition of the funds.

(c) If disputed by the artist and the dispute is referred to the Labor Commissioner, the failure of a licensee to disburse funds to an artist within 30 days of receipt shall constitute a "controversy" within the meaning of Section 1700.44.

(d) Any funds specified in subdivision (a) that are the subject of a controversy pending before the Labor Commissioner under Section 1700.44 shall be retained in the trust fund account specified in subdivision (a) and shall not be used by the licensee for any purpose until the controversy is determined by the Labor Commissioner or settled by the parties.

(e) If the Labor Commissioner finds, in proceedings under Section 1700.44, that the licensee's failure to disburse funds to an artist within the time required by subdivision (a) was a willful violation, the Labor Commissioner may, in addition to other relief under Section 1700.44, order the following:

(1) Award reasonable attorney's fees to the prevailing artist.

(2) Award interest to the prevailing artist on the funds wrongfully withheld at the rate of 10 percent per annum during the period of the violation.

(f) Nothing in subdivision (c), (d), or (e) shall be deemed to supersede Section 1700.45 or to affect the enforceability of a contractual arbitration provision meeting the criteria of Section 1700.45.