Sanctuary Mix

Sunday cards

Four cards for the sound desk, in the guide's own words. Print them for the desk, or read them on your phone before the service.

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Each card says where to read more. "Both guides" means Sanctuary Mix (the full guide) and Sanctuary Mix Essentials.

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Before this Sunday

New to the desk

1. **Power up in order: the desk and stage boxes first, amplifiers and powered speakers last, once the desk has finished starting up.** Load the right scene, and do a full line check before anyone arrives to play.

   In both guides: the line check, a printable checklist.

2. **Ask the musician to play or sing at the loudest level they'll use on Sunday, not a gentle warm-up.** Adjust the gain until the loudest parts reach the target on the meter.

   The target on the meter: on a digital desk, the loudest parts peak around –18 to –12. On an analogue desk, around 0, never red. Some digital desks, Allen & Heath's among them, draw an analogue-style scale: on those, the target reads 0 to +6.

   In both guides: Chapter 4, "Reading your meters" and "Setting gain, step by step".

3. **Almost every channel benefits from a high-pass filter.** Kick, bass and low keys are the exceptions: they get only a very low one, around 30–40 Hz (a five-string bass: about 30 Hz), or none. To set it, raise the frequency until the sound starts to thin out, then back off a little.

In both guides: Chapter 5, "The high-pass filter: your best friend", and the EQ cheat sheet.

4. **When something sounds wrong, look for what to take away before adding anything.** Cutting removes a problem. Boosting adds level, raises the risk of feedback and quickly makes a mix harsh and loud.

In both guides: Chapter 5, "Cut before you boost".

5. **Speech gets no reverb and no delay, ever.** Speech mics send nothing to the effects. Bring the effects DCA down (on a desk without DCAs, the effect return faders) between songs, during prayers and whenever someone speaks, so spoken words are dry and clear.

In both guides: Chapter 6, "Effects in worship".

6. **Most feedback starts just after a fader goes up.** Pull down the fader you last moved. If you can't tell which mic it is, bring the main fader down a few dB, fast.

In both guides: the feedback flowchart.

7. **No sound? Don't guess.** Look at the channel meter. Moving: the mic, cable and gain work, so look after it: the mute, fader, DCA and routing. Flat: look before it: the source, the cable, the patch, the gain and phantom power.

In both guides: the no-sound flowchart.

When things go wrong. Something will go wrong eventually. A battery dies, a cable fails, a mic squeals. It happens to every engineer at every church. What matters is how you respond: stay calm, fix what you can quickly, and don't let your face tell the room there's a problem.

In both guides: Before this Sunday, at the front.

Line check

Before the service

A line check proves every input and output reaches the right place. With a band, do it the day before, or during the week if your gear stays set up; with none, before the doors open (Chapter 9).

Inputs

- [ ] Speak into every mic and check it arrives on the right channel, saying its name as you go. No tapping or blowing.
- [ ] Every DI, with its instrument or a phone playing music.
- [ ] Fresh (or fully charged) batteries in every wireless pack, each receiver showing full. Walk the stage with every one and listen for dropouts.
- [ ] If you use tracks, play them. Tracks reach the house. Click and cues reach the in-ears only, on no DCA (analogue: main and group buttons off): with the tracks DCA down, push their faders up and the main and stream meters stay still.
- [ ] Ambient mics reach the in-ears (and the stream), never the house.

- [ ] Talkback reaches the band, and not the house or the stream.

Outputs

- [ ] Every in-ear mix reaches the right musician.
- [ ] Main speakers, subs, fills and delay speakers all working. Play a familiar song and walk the room.
- [ ] Stream mix: speech and music present; click, cues and talkback absent.

Speech and backups

- [ ] Speech mics in their real positions, at service level (someone talks at sermon level while you listen from the seats), with no ringing and no effects sends.
- [ ] Backup mic unmuted and tested, then muted again, with its fader at the level you found.
- [ ] Backup playback plays on its own channel.
- [ ] Show file saved to the desk and to a USB stick (analogue: the desk photo up to date).

In both guides: the line check, a printable checklist.

Sunday first aid

Keep at the desk

1. **No sound at all.** Tell the service leader with your agreed signal, and keep your hands calm. Look at the main meter. Flat: check the main fader, the main mute, and any mute group or DCA. Moving, but the room is silent: the problem is after the desk, at the amplifiers or speakers.
   In both guides: No-sound flowchart.

2. **One mic is silent.** Look at its channel meter. Moving: look after it, at its mute, fader, DCA and routing. Flat: look before it, at the pack's own mute switch, its battery, the cable and phantom power.
   In both guides: No-sound flowchart.

3. **A ring or a howl.** Pull down the fader you last moved. If you can't tell which mic it is, bring the main fader down a few dB, fast. Once it's quiet, bring it back up gently.
   In both guides: Feedback flowchart.

4. **A wireless mic dies or crackles, even the pastor's.** Switch to the spare straight away: unmute the spare's channel while the person you agreed hands it over, then mute the dead channel, so it can't crackle back in. Find the cause after the service.
   In the full guide: Wireless flowchart.

5. **The power goes.** Stay calm and tell the service leader. Follow your team's changeover steps. A digital desk that restarts can take a minute or more: wait for it, then check the stage box is on too.
   In the full guide: Power cuts (Chapter 9).

Afterwards. Write it in the problem log, however small, and change the system so it can't happen the same way again. Close the gap in the system, not the person.

In both guides: Sunday first aid, at the front.

When feedback happens

The first move

1. Pull down the fader you last moved. Most feedback starts just after a fader goes up.
2. If you can't tell which mic it is, bring the main fader down a few dB, fast. A moment of quieter sound is far better than a howl.
3. Look for the cause: a mic pointed at a speaker, a singer holding the mic low, someone walking in front of the speakers, a pack left on, an ambient mic sent to the house.
4. Once it's quiet, bring the level back up gently, to a little below where it rang.

5. Fix the cause properly after the service. Don't grab the EQ while it's howling: it usually cuts the wrong thing. If the same note keeps coming back once it's quiet, one small narrow cut (about 3 dB) on that mic's channel is fine, if you've practised ringing out. Ring that spot out properly at the next rehearsal.

In the full guide: Chapter 9, When feedback happens.