

Loudness Compliance Cheat Sheet

The 2026 per-platform targets, the gain formula, and the two traps - on one page.

2026 per-platform targets (target | ceiling | behaviour)

Spotify / YouTube / TIDAL / Amazon / SoundCloud	-14 LUFS	-1 dBTP	Normalized at playback
Apple Music (Sound Check)	-16 LUFS	-1 dBTP	Normalized; turns down only
Deezer	-15 LUFS	-1 dBTP	Normalized at playback
Podcast - stereo / mono	-16 / -19 LUFS	-1 dBTP	Recommendation
AES streaming - music / speech	-16 / -18 LUFS	-1 dBTP	AES TD1008 recommendation
EBU R128 broadcast	-23 LUFS (+/-0.5)	-1 dBTP	Hard delivery spec
ATSC A/85 (US)	-24 LKFS	-2 dBTP	Hard spec; CALM Act for ads
Netflix (cinematic)	-27 LKFS dialog-gated	-2 dBTP	Hard spec; dialogue-only
TikTok / Instagram / Meta	no published target	-1 dBTP	Adaptive (xHE-AAC); ~-14 seen

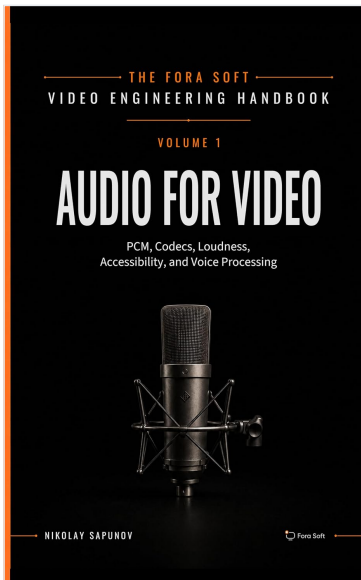
The one calculation the tool runs

Playback gain = your loudness - platform target. Example: -9 LUFS - (-14 LUFS) = -5 dB, turned down 5 dB.

Pass when |your loudness - target| ≤ tolerance AND your true peak ≤ the ceiling.

Remember

- ☐ Streaming normalizes at playback - you cannot out-loud it; mastering hot only loses dynamic range.
- ☐ Broadcast and cinema are pass-or-fail delivery specs - an off-target file is rejected.
- ☐ Gain the platform applies = your loudness - the target. e.g. -9 - (-14) = -5 dB (turned down).
- ☐ Mono lands ~3 LU louder than stereo at the same LUFS: a -19 mono file matches a -16 stereo one.
- ☐ Netflix -27 LKFS is dialogue-only - never compare it to a whole-programme LUFS number.
- ☐ LUFS and LKFS are the same unit (Europe vs US broadcast). True peak needs an oversampling meter.
- ☐ YouTube and Apple Sound Check only turn down - a quiet master plays weak, never boosted.
- ☐ Hold true peak at -1 dBTP (-2 for broadcast/Netflix); lower at low bitrate, encoders overshoot.



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This cheat sheet lists 2026 loudness targets per platform, the gain formula and the traps that fail a delivery. Volume 4 covers loudness in depth: LUFS and LKFS, BS.1770 measurement, EBU R128 and ATSC A/85, true peak, and how codecs and normalization change what listeners hear.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE

- LUFS, LKFS and BS.1770 measurement
- True peak and limiting before encoding
- EBU R128 and ATSC A/85 targets
- Platform normalization and its effects

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