



# INTERACTIVE **STRIKE** DATE SET 10.21

#performancematters

## WHY WE STRIKE

SAG-AFTRA tried for more than 19 months to negotiate a new deal with employers in the video game industry. Meanwhile, performers have been governed by the more than two-decade old contract still in place. That has left voice actors without the protections necessary to work in the modern video game industry.

"SAG-AFTRA has gone to the negotiations table with serious concerns affecting voiceover and stunt performers," said SAG-AFTRA Chief Contracts Officer Ray Rodriguez. "It's time for video game employers to take our concerns seriously and negotiate a modern contract based on actor safety, industry precedent and best practices."

"SAG-AFTRA doesn't want to strike, who does? But we cannot stand by and watch our members suffer serious injury and put their careers at risk in the current environment," said Keythe Farley, a voice actor, casting director, and voice director who chairs SAG-AFTRA's Interactive Committee. "The time is now for a new contract for our members."

## HONOR THE STRIKE

Make sure that every actor you know — whether they are in the union or not — understands the importance of the issues and honors the strike.

## WHO/WHAT GAMES ARE BEING STRUCK?

Unless you hear differently from us, effective October 21 at 12:01 a.m., SAG-AFTRA will be striking the following video game employers with regard to all games that went into production after Feb. 17, 2015:

- Activision Publishing Inc.
- Blindlight, LLC
- Corps of Discovery Films
- Disney Character Voices, Inc.
- Electronic Arts Productions, Inc.
- Formosa Interactive, LLC
- Insomniac Games, Inc.
- Interactive Associates, Inc.
- Take 2 Interactive Software
- VoiceWorks Productions, Inc. and
- WB Games, Inc.

#performancematters

[sagaftra.org/interactive](http://sagaftra.org/interactive)

## WHAT DOES A STRIKE MEAN TO YOU?

A strike means withholding your services from employers who are not willing to agree to terms and conditions that you and your fellow members are insisting upon. It is this ultimate show of solidarity that allows us to achieve difficult gains in your contract. You may continue to work in other non-struck areas, but your membership obligates you not to render services on struck games. The success of a strike will depend not only on members honoring the strike order, but also on showing their support, so please see the “What Can You Do Now” section below.

## WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

### ● Secondary Compensation

**Unlike many other SAG-AFTRA contracts, there is currently NOT a secondary compensation structure on any video games.**

We’re asking for a reasonable performance bonus for every 2 million copies, or downloads sold, or 2 million unique subscribers to online-only games, with a cap at 8 million units/subscribers. That shakes out, potentially, to FOUR session payments per principal performer for the most successful games: 2 million, 4 million, 6 million and 8 million copies.

### ● Safety on the Set

**Unlike other entertainment industry employers, video game employers often do not hire the required stunt coordinator on set, which puts performance capture and stunt performers at safety risks.**

Many actors feel unsafe without a stunt coordinator because they are often asked to do things that could potentially be dangerous to themselves or others. For example, once, without a stunt coordinator on set, a video game developer tried to do a wire pull — which means he basically made himself jerk really hard and fast across a room — without someone on set to monitor his safety. He, of course, got hurt and couldn’t go back to work for a long while. This is just one instance among many.

### ● Producers Hide Important Information

**Transparency is lacking in the video game industry.**

Actors need to know more about the projects that they are working on. SAG-AFTRA has proposed that the actual title of the project and the role being hired for should be made available before signing a contract. Video game employers routinely engage performers without identifying the role or even the game that the performer is being engaged to work on. Moreover, they refuse to provide basic information about the nature of the performance that will be expected of them. This deprives the performer of the ability to make a meaningful decision about whether to accept a role or to negotiate appropriate compensation, if they do. We have also heard stories of actors coming into a session and being asked, without prior consent, to do content such as simulated sex scenes and racial slurs. Precedent is on our side here. You wouldn’t work on a TV show, commercial or film without knowing what part you’re playing and how it fits into the story, yet we are asked over and over again to do just that in interactive media.

### ● Voice Actors Face Debilitating Injury

**Vocal safety is a growing concern. An increasing number of SAG-AFTRA voiceover artists report experiencing medical disorders of the vocal cords resulting from their work in video games due to the intensity of the vocal demands.**

Voiceover actors are being asked to perform many challenging vocal tasks, such as simulating painful deaths, creature voices, battle sounds, and screams and shrieks, with significant force and explosive vibration. Actors are reporting that they are fainting in sessions, tasting blood, vomiting, losing their voice for a day up to several weeks, permanently losing their vocal range, et cetera. Our proposal is that vocally stressful sessions be reduced from the current four-hour session to a two-hour session without a loss of pay.

### ● Employers Are Not Taking You Seriously

**The employers have said no to most of SAG-AFTRA’s proposals and haven’t taken these negotiations seriously.**

For instance, in response to our concerns about vocal safety, they offered to put more tea and water in the booths for the actors — something they already do and this doesn’t resolve the issue or protect the actors.

## ● Now is the Time To Act

**The SAG-AFTRA Interactive Contract was originally written in 1994.**

Now, over 20 years later, the video game industry has evolved to the point where successful video games generate more revenue than the biggest blockbuster, yet, the same contract that was negotiated in 1994 hasn't changed to reflect the industry today. SAG-AFTRA is committed to bringing the Interactive contract into the 21st Century with the protections and compensation that our members deserve. We wish our partners across the table felt the same way, but they seem more interested in "winning" this round of negotiations than cooperating with our members to create a contract based on precedent and best practices.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO GET AT DEAL?

**Feb. 3-4, 2015:** First negotiation date. Members deliver to employers a statement of support signed by more than 300 of the union's top performers.

**June 23, 2015:** Second meeting with employers, attended by more than 50 members who work the video game contract, ends after just a few hours.

**September 23, 2015:** SAG-AFTRA members tweet their support for voiceover actors using the hashtag #performancematters, which trends all afternoon and into the evening.

**September 15-October 6, 2015:** SAG-AFTRA holds strike authorization vote. 96.55 percent of members voted yes for a strike authorization.

**May 4, 2016:** Prominent SAG-AFTRA members appear in a YouTube video stating they support the interactive negotiations. The video gets thousands of views.

**May 4-5, 2016:** Negotiations continued without progress.

**May 25, 2016:** SAG-AFTRA sends letter sent to California's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) asking for an investigation into unsafe vocal recording sessions held by video game employers.

**July 25-26, 2016:** Negotiations continue with little to no progress.

**Oct 17-19, 2016:** The final round of negotiations are scheduled before a possible strike.

**Oct 21, 2016:** The date set for SAG-AFTRA members to strike the interactive video game industry.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

**Sign up to be part of our strike task force at [sagaftra.org/interactive](http://sagaftra.org/interactive).**



**AND, MAKE SURE THAT EVERY ACTOR YOU KNOW, WHETHER THEY ARE IN THE UNION OR NOT, UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUES AND HONORS THE STRIKE.**

#performancematters

[sagaftra.org/interactive](http://sagaftra.org/interactive)