# Order live captions with Content Lab

Content updated: 06/09/2026

This article is designated for all users.

## About

You can order live captions for your scheduled events using Content Lab.

**Captions** display spoken dialogue and relevant audio information as on-screen text. They improve accessibility for viewers who are deaf or hard of hearing and support viewers who prefer to watch videos without sound.

Captions are different from **translations**. Translations convert the spoken language in a video into another language and appear as subtitles. See our article Order live translations with Content Lab for details.

## Before you start

- Your account must have Content Lab enabled
- Your account must have an active REACH profile enabled with relevant catalog item(s)
- Events must be at least 10 minutes long (600 seconds minimum).

Looking for more information about this feature? Feel free to contact your Kaltura representative.

Live captions ordering is not currently available for Kaltura Virtual Events and Webinars.

## Order live captions

1. Open **Content Lab**. For instructions, see Access Content Lab in your Kaltura application.
2. Click **Captions & Translations**.
3. Click **+ Order captions** and select **Live closed captions (CC)**.

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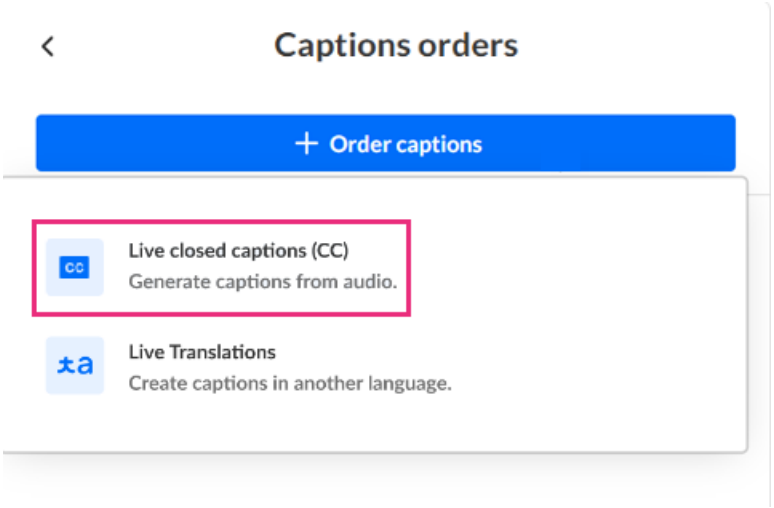
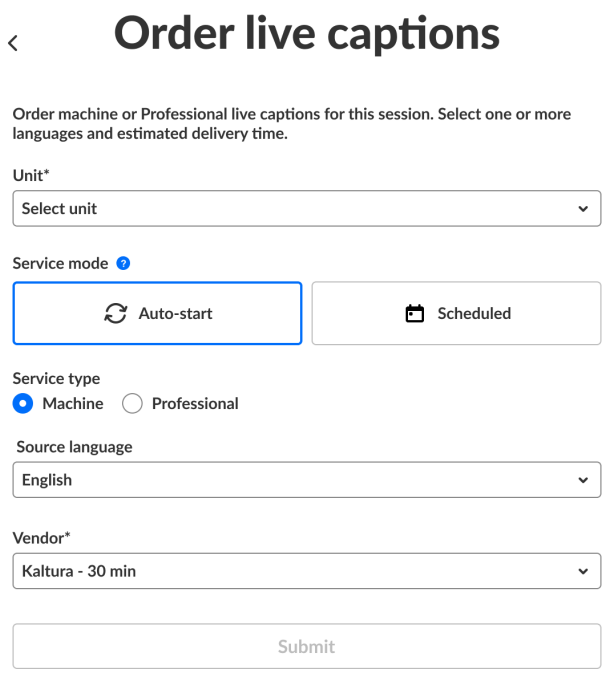



For live entries *with* recordings, two additional options display:

- **Closed captions (CC)** - Generate captions from audio
- **Translations** - Create captions in another language

For live entries *without* recordings, these options will not display (as shown in the above image).

The **Order live captions** screen displays.




4. Complete the following fields:

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- **Unit** – This option only appears in the event that different Reach profiles (budgets) are configured for each unit in your account. The selected unit will be charged for the captions request.
- **Service mode** - Select **Auto-start** or **Scheduled**. Auto-start live captions are enabled when the session is live. Scheduled live captions are arranged in advance. If you choose **Scheduled**, two additional configurations display - Pre- and Post-session buffers.
- **Service Type** - Select **Machine** or **Professional** (human-generated).
- **Source language** - Select the source media language from the drop-down menu. The options in the menu are dependent on your Reach plan.
- **Vendor** - Select the vendor. Items in this drop-down list appear as "Vendor Name + Turnaround time of the catalog item + Catalog item name" with available vendors based on catalog items.
- **Instructions** (Professional only) - Add notes for human editors and reviewers. For example, you can provide guidance on terminology, speaker names, formatting preferences, or accessibility requirements.

5. Click **Submit**.

A confirmation message displays.

Your captions order appears in the "In Progress" area of the **Captions orders** screen and is labeled as "Pending".
If Auto-start was selected, your live captions are enabled when the session is live. If Scheduled was selected, your live captions behave as configured.

## Pre and Post-session buffer

If you choose Service mode - **Scheduled**, you have the option of adding pre- and post-session buffers.

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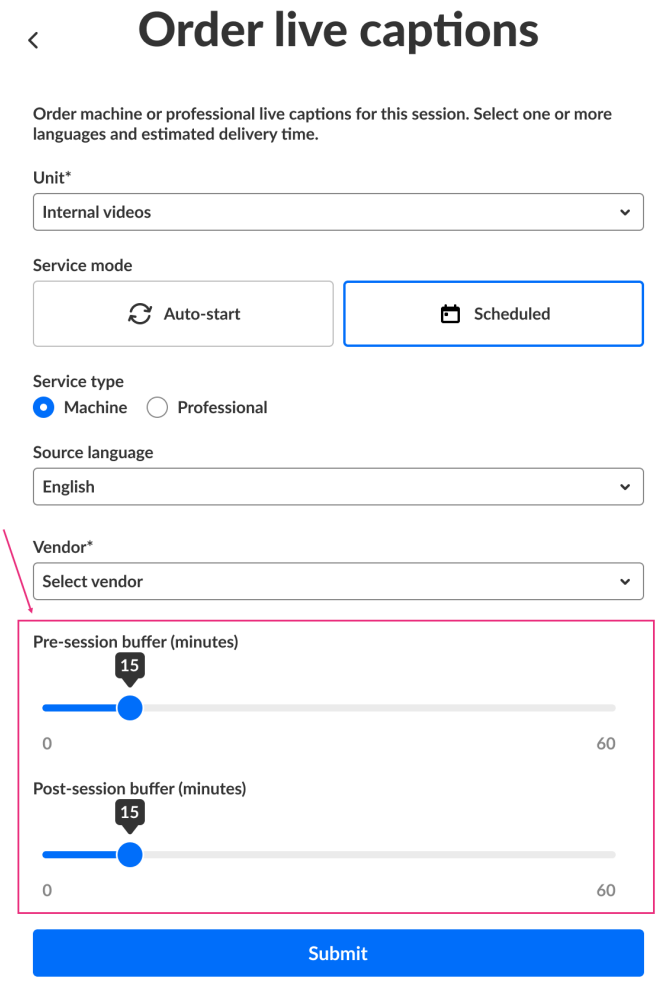


**Pre-session buffer (minutes)** - Choose when captioning should start:

- at the beginning of the event
- 15 minutes before the event starts (recommended)
- 30 minutes before the event starts
- 60 minutes before the event starts

**Post-session buffer (minutes)** - Choose how long captions should continue after the scheduled end time:

- at the end of the event
- 15 minutes after the event ends
- 30 minutes after the event ends
- 60 minutes after the event ends

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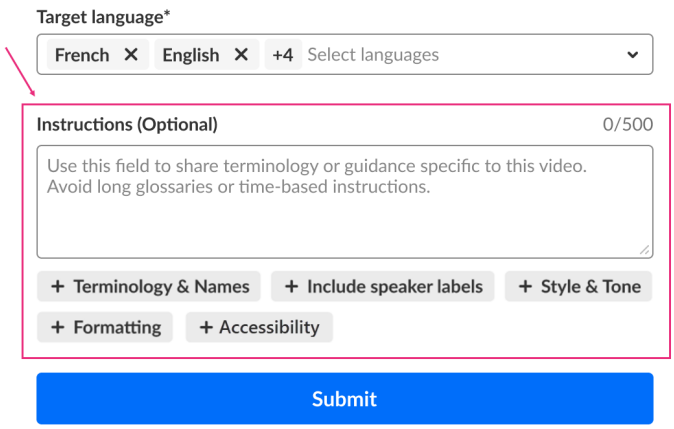
To avoid disconnects, schedule captions to start slightly before your event, and place the order at least 5 minutes in advance.

## Add instructions for professional captions

The **Instructions** field and preset tags are available for **Professional** (human-generated) translations only. They aren't available for **Machine** (AI) translations.

You can:

- **Type your own instructions** in the **Instructions** field.
- **Click a preset tag** to populate the **Instructions** field, then select one of the suggested completions.
- **Click a preset tag** to populate the **Instructions** field, then edit or complete the text manually instead of selecting a suggested completion.




## Preset tags

Preset tags (available for human-generated translations only) are grouped into the following categories:

- **Terminology & names** – Define acronyms, speaker names, proper names, and preferred terminology.
- **Include speaker labels** – Request speaker labels where multiple speakers are present.
- **Style & tone** – Preserve wording, simplify phrasing, remove filler words, or maintain a consistent tone.
- **Formatting** – Improve punctuation, readability, and sentence casing.
- **Accessibility** – Include non-speech elements and clarify speaker identity.

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If you reschedule the event, the original order won't update automatically. Cancel it and place a new order.

## Best practices for live captioning

- Start streaming a few minutes early to ensure full caption coverage.
- Order machine captions at least 15 minutes before the event
- You can cancel machine orders anytime before the event.
- Captions apply to the primary stream only - backup streams aren’t supported.
- Events must be at least 10 minutes long (600 seconds minimum).
- Captions can run up to 8 hours per session.

## View captions orders and perform additional tasks

Navigate back to the Content Lab's main menu. The number of requests are displayed in the Captions & Translations box.

### View status

Click on the Captions & Translations box to open the **Captions orders** screen.

In our example below, there are three existing captions orders - one is an auto-start order that will be enabled when the session is live, one is in Pending status, and one is in Ready status.

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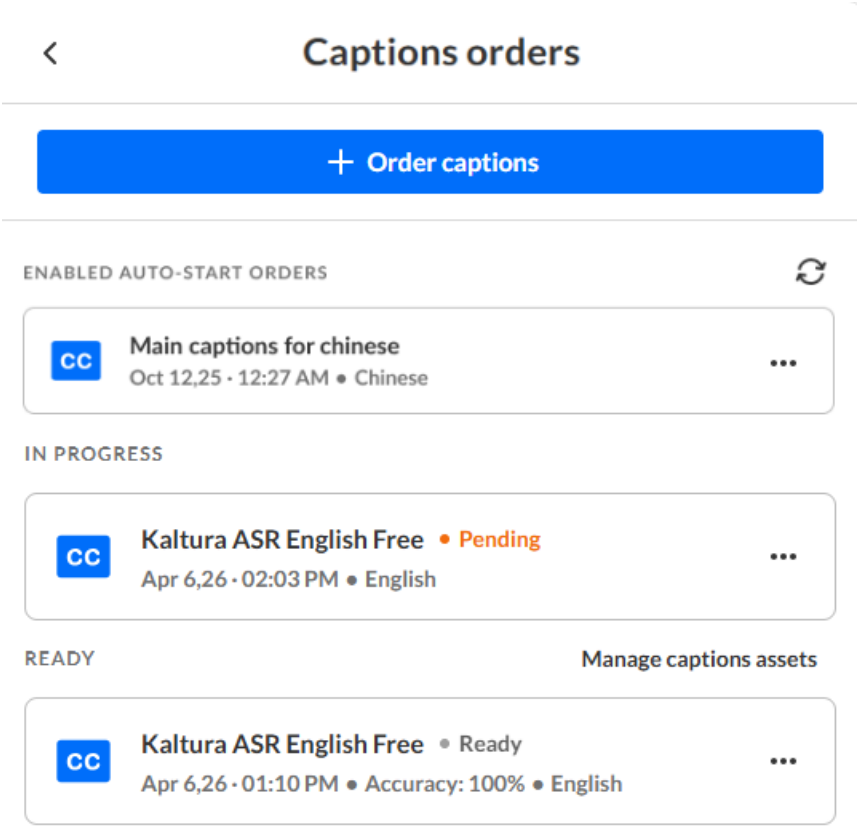


## Status types

The following statuses are available for captions requests:

- **Pending** - when generating new request
- **Pending for Moderation** - requests in approval queue
- **Rejected** - requests that were rejected on moderation. This status must include reject reason.
- **Processing** - sent to the vendor and vendor received request (you cannot cancel a request when the status is Processing)
- **Ready** - captioning service is configured and ready for the event
- **Error** - an error was sent from the vendor
- **Aborted**

Start streaming only when all caption orders show *Ready*. If the status is *Pending*, wait and refresh the list.

## Manage captions assets

Click **Manage captions assets.**

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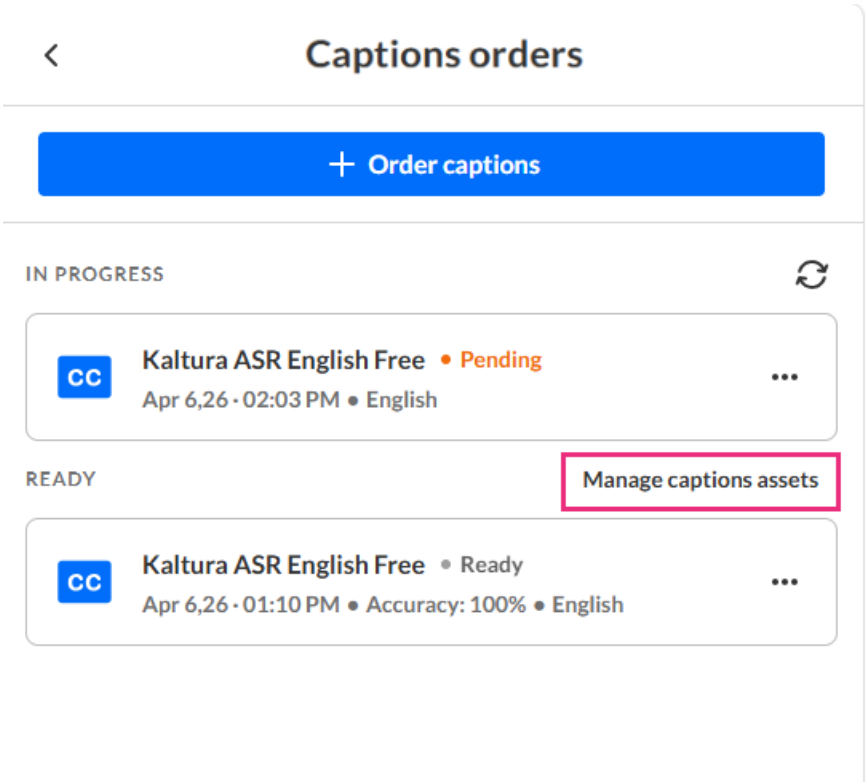
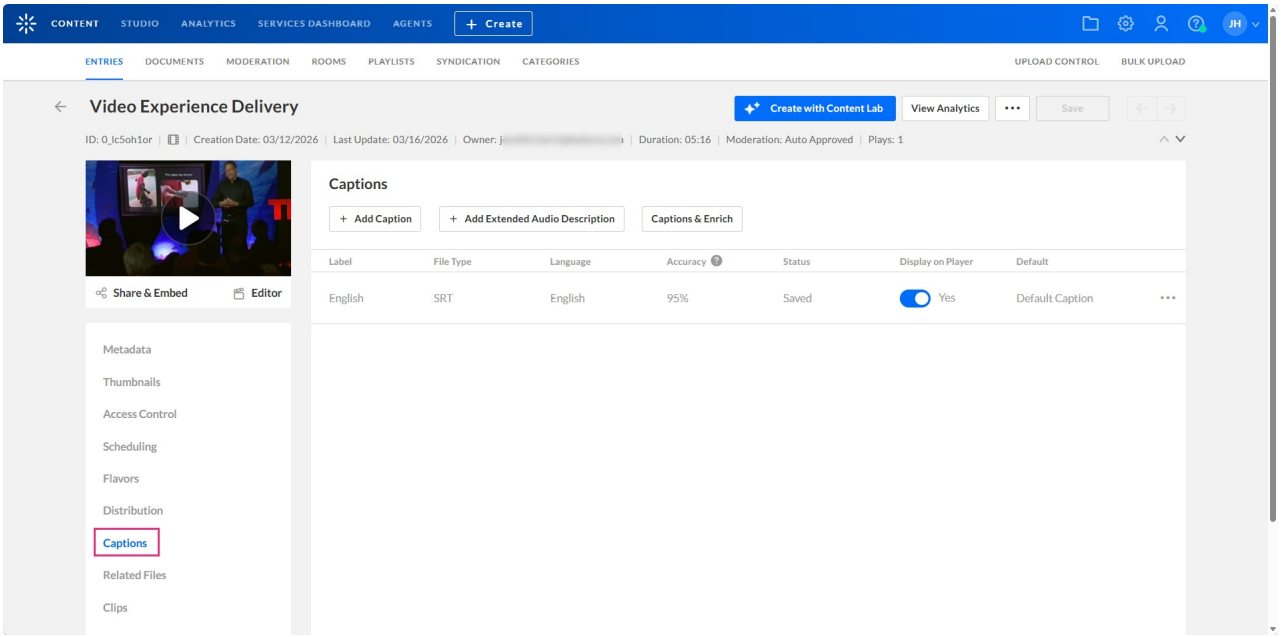



The **Captions** tab of the Entry details page in Rich Media CMS displays.




For complete information on this tab, see Upload and manage captions in Rich Media CMS.

## Additional tasks

Click on the **three dots** to the right of the request and choose from the available options depending on status type:

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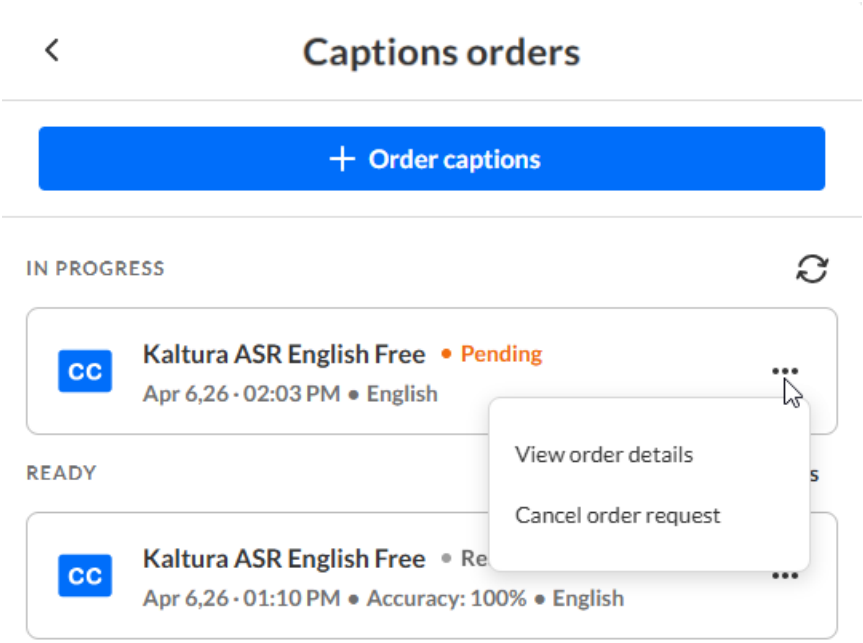
**View order details** - available for all statuses

**Cancel order request** - only available for Pending




**Launch editor** - only available for Ready

**Download** - only available for Ready

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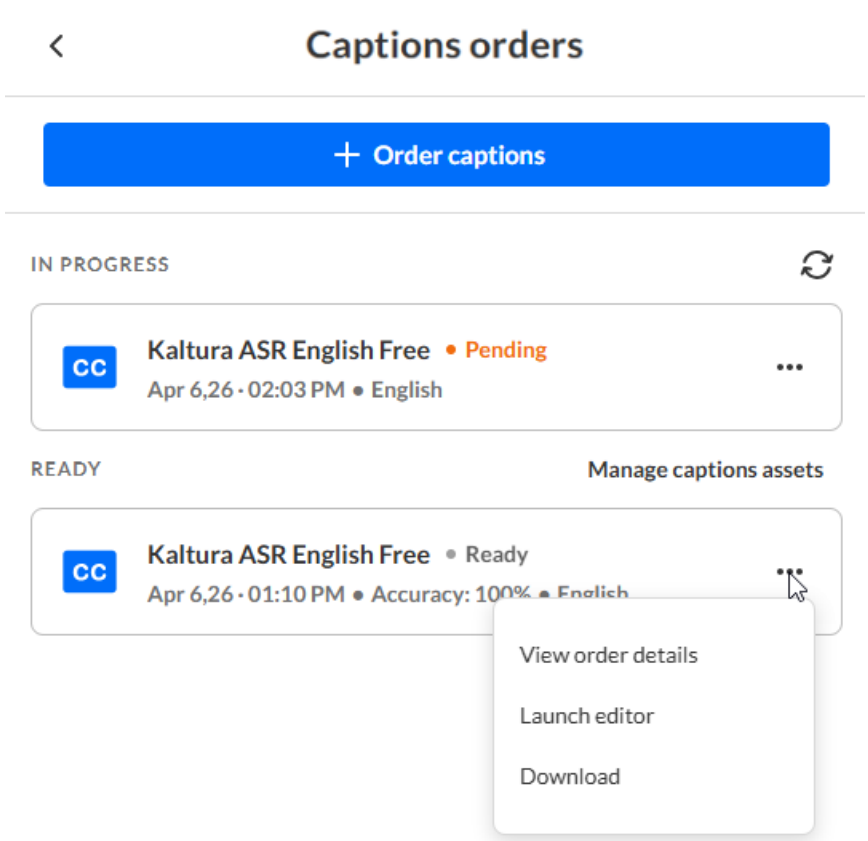
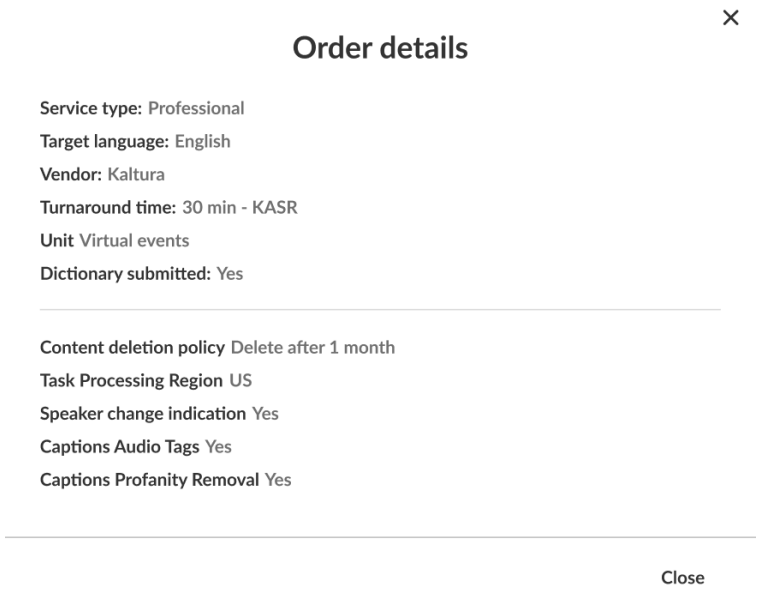



## View order details

Click **View order details**.

The Order details screen displays.

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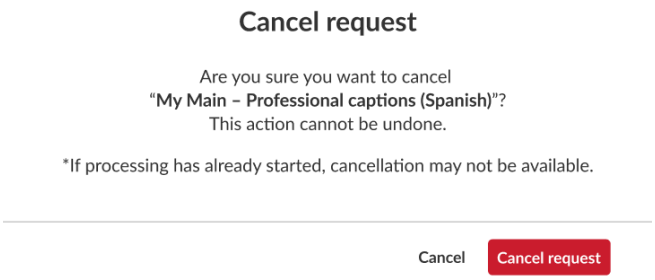
## Cancel order request

Canceling professional captions is not possible if they have been requested already and are in the status Processing.

1. Click **Cancel order request**. Note, any action items associated with the request will be canceled. A confirmation message displays.




2. Click **Cancel request**.
   If you try to cancel a request that's already in progress, a message displays: *The request is already in progress, therefore cannot be canceled.*

## Launch editor

See our article Use the captions editor in Content Lab for details.

## Download

Click **Download**. The captions file is downloaded to your machine.

To learn more about how captions display on the player, visit our articles Captions and Audio Tracks and Accessibility.

You can resubmit REACH orders in certain cases, such as for updated media content or new profile settings. For details on how and when to use the resubmissions feature, see our article Resubmissions for REACH services.

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