

19

Alcohol

Principle

Advertisements for alcoholic drinks should not be targeted at people under 18 years of age and should not imply, condone or encourage immoderate, irresponsible or anti-social drinking.

The spirit as well as the letter of the rules in this section applies.

Definitions

The rules in this section apply to advertisements for alcoholic drinks and advertisements that feature or refer to alcoholic drinks. Alcoholic drinks are defined as those containing at least 0.5% alcohol; for the purposes of this Code low-alcohol drinks are defined as drinks containing between 0.5% and 1.2% alcohol.

Where stated, exceptions are made for low-alcohol drinks. But, if an advertisement for a low-alcohol drink could be considered to promote a stronger alcoholic drink or if the low-alcohol content of a drink is not stated clearly in the advertisement, all the rules in this section apply.

If a soft drink is promoted as a mixer, the rules in this section apply in full.

The rules are not intended to inhibit responsible advertisements that are intended to counter problem drinking or tell consumers about alcohol-related health or safety themes. Those advertisements should not be likely to promote an alcohol product or brand.

Rules

19.1 Radio Central Copy Clearance – Radio broadcasters must ensure advertisements for alcoholic drinks are centrally cleared.

Rules that apply to all advertisements

19.2 Advertisements must not feature, imply, condone or encourage irresponsible or immoderate drinking. That applies to both the amount of drink and the way drinking is portrayed.

References to, or suggestions of, buying repeat rounds of alcoholic drinks are not acceptable. That does not prevent, for example, someone buying a drink for each member of a group. It does, however, prevent any suggestion that other members of the group will buy a round.

19.3 Advertisements must neither imply that alcohol can contribute to an individual's popularity or confidence nor imply that alcohol can enhance personal qualities.

- 19.4** Advertisements must not imply that drinking alcohol is a key component of social success or acceptance or that refusal is a sign of weakness. Advertisements must not imply that the success of a social occasion depends on the presence or consumption of alcohol.
- 19.5** Advertisements must not link alcohol with daring, toughness, aggression or unruly, irresponsible or antisocial behaviour.
- 19.6** Advertisements must not link alcohol with sexual activity, sexual success or seduction or imply that alcohol can enhance attractiveness. That does not preclude linking alcohol with romance or flirtation.
- 19.7** Advertisements must not portray alcohol as indispensable or as taking priority in life. Advertisements must not imply that drinking can overcome problems or that regular solitary drinking is acceptable.
- 19.8** Advertisements must not imply that alcohol has therapeutic qualities. Alcohol must not be portrayed as capable of changing mood, physical condition or behaviour or as a source of nourishment. Although they may refer to refreshment, advertisements must not imply that alcohol can improve any type of performance.
- 19.9** Advertisements must not link alcohol to illicit drugs.
- 19.10** Advertisements may give factual information about the alcoholic strength of a drink. They may also make a factual alcohol strength comparison with another product, but only when the comparison is with a higher strength product of a similar beverage.
- Advertisements must not imply that a drink may be preferred because of its alcohol content or intoxicating effect. There is an exception for low-alcohol drinks, which may be presented as preferable because of their low alcoholic strength.
- In the case of a drink with relatively high alcoholic strength in relation to its category, the factual information should not be given undue emphasis.
- 19.11** Advertisements may include alcohol sales promotions but must not imply, condone or encourage immoderate drinking.
- 19.12** Advertisements must not feature alcohol being handled or served irresponsibly.
- 19.13** Advertisements must not link alcohol with the use of potentially dangerous machinery or driving.
- Advertisements may feature sporting and other physical activities (subject to other rules in this section) but must not imply that those activities have been undertaken after the consumption of alcohol.
- 19.14** Advertisements must not normally show alcohol being drunk by anyone in their working environment.

Rules that apply to alcohol advertisements

19.15 **Television only** – Alcohol advertisements must not:

19.15.1 be likely to appeal strongly to people under 18, especially by reflecting or being associated with youth culture or showing adolescent or juvenile behaviour

19.15.2 include a person or character whose example is likely to be followed by those aged under 18 years or who has a strong appeal to those aged under 18.

19.16 **Radio only** – Alcohol advertisements must not:

19.16.1 be targeted at those under 18 years or use a treatment likely to be of particular appeal to them.

19.16.2 include a person or character whose example is likely to be followed by those aged under 18 years or who has a particular appeal to those aged under 18.

19.17 Alcohol advertisements must not feature in a significant role anyone who is, or seems to be, under 25 and must not feature children.

An exception is made for advertisements that feature families socialising responsibly. Here, children may be included but they should have an incidental role only and anyone who seems to be under the age of 25 must be obviously not drinking alcohol.

19.18 Advertisements for alcoholic drinks may give factual statements about product contents, including comparisons, but must not make any health claims, which include fitness or weight-control claims.

The only permitted nutrition claims are “low alcohol”, “reduced alcohol” and “reduced energy” and any claim likely to have the same meaning for the audience.