Alcohol Advertising: What are the rules?

When can they advertise alcohol?

The only aspect of alcohol advertising that is currently regulated by the government is the times that alcohol advertising can appear on television (under the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice). This clause, designed to protect young people from exposure to alcohol advertising, states that alcohol advertising can be broadcast:

- During M, MA and AV programming (8.30pm to 5.00am weekdays and weekends, and 12.00noon to 3.00pm school days)
- During the live broadcast of a sporting event on weekends and public holidays

The 2005 study of alcohol advertising expenditure reported that 38% of alcohol advertisements broadcast on weekends and public holidays were during sporting telecasts – suggesting that young people who watch sport are particularly vulnerable to exposure to alcohol advertising.14

What messages can they use to advertise alcohol?

Australia, like several other countries, has a self-regulatory approach to advertising. This means that the regulation of alcohol advertising is the responsibility of the industry rather than of the government.

There are two separate codes that apply to alcohol advertisements. The Advertiser Code of Ethics, developed by the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA), applies to all forms of advertising and covers issues such as taste and decency.

The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) and Complaints Management System is the self-regulatory advertising scheme that specifically covers alcohol advertising. It was developed by the Australian alcohol beverages industry and was first introduced in 1998 and then updated in 2004.

Key Points

- Alcohol advertising is currently allowed on television during M, MA and AV programming and during live sporting telecasts
- Alcohol advertising in Australia is self-regulated by the industry

What Can I Do?

- Educate schools and community groups about the ineffective regulation of alcohol advertising

Other Fact Sheets in this Series

- ADV1: Alcohol Advertising: Alcohol Advertising Summary
- ADV2: Alcohol Advertising: What are the issues?
- ADV4: Alcohol Advertising: What is the code?
- ADV5 (Part A & B): Alcohol Advertising: How do I complain?
- ADV6: Alcohol Advertising: The AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics
- ADV7: Alcohol Advertising: The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code
- ADV8: Alcohol Advertising: Further Reading