

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, including where a soft drink is promoted as a mixer. For the purposes of applying these rules, alcoholic drinks are defined as drinks containing more than 0.5% alcohol; low-alcohol drinks are defined as drinks containing more than 0.5% and up to 1.2% alcohol. Where an ad for a drink at or below 0.5% has the effect of promoting an alcoholic drink, these rules 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.

For the purposes of the rules in this section, the word 'drink(s)' refers to drinks with a strength above 0.5% ABV.

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. However, low-alcohol drinks may be presented as preferable because of their low alcoholic strength, provided that the alcohol content of the drink is stated clearly in the advertisement.
- 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 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.

Alcohol alternatives

Alcohol alternatives are non-alcoholic drinks (for the purposes of the BCAP Code, those at or under 0.5% ABV) that are intended to replace alcoholic drinks in contexts where they would normally be consumed, such as non-alcoholic beer. An advertisement for a non-alcoholic drink will be subject to the below rules if it is likely to be understood by the audience as an ad specifically for an alternative to alcohol, whether in general or as a non-alcoholic version of a particular alcoholic drink. Where an ad for a drink at or below 0.5% has the effect of promoting an alcoholic drink, the Alcohol rules apply in full.

19.19 If an advertisement for an alcohol alternative refers to or depicts alcohol, those references or depictions must comply with the rules relating to responsible portrayal of alcohol consumption, which are 19.2-19.9 and 19.11-19.14.

Where an advertisement is for an alcohol alternative that shares the same brand as an alcoholic drink then this rule will not apply to references to or depictions of the brand name, provided that the primary effect of the advertisement is to promote the alcohol alternative. References to the shared brand name, in any part of the advertisement, without a reference to the alcohol alternative, are likely to be understood as references to alcohol.

19.20 Advertisements for alcohol alternatives must include a prominent statement of their ABV. Advertisements for alcohol alternatives are not prohibited from making a feature of their ABV or from making preference claims on this basis.

19.21 Advertisements for alcohol alternatives may depict the product in circumstances where consumption of alcoholic drinks would be inappropriate or unsafe – such as prior to driving or daring physical activities – if it is clear the product is an alcohol alternative. Advertisements must not encourage or condone consumption of alcohol in the same circumstances or imply the product is alcoholic. Resemblance to an alcoholic drink (as in rule 19.19) is acceptable as long as the ad makes explicitly clear the product featured is an alcohol alternative.

19.22 Advertisements for alcohol alternatives must not contain content likely to disparage sobriety, or condone or encourage heavy, problematic, or otherwise higher-risk alcohol consumption as desirable. They must not present alcohol alternatives as a way to increase alcohol consumption beyond responsible levels.

19.23 Television only – Alcohol alternatives advertisements must not:

- 19.23.1 be likely to appeal strongly to people under 18, especially by reflecting or being associated with youth culture or showing adolescent or juvenile behaviour.
- 19.23.2 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.

19.24 Radio only – Alcohol alternatives advertisements must not:

- 19.24.1 be targeted at those under 18 years or use a treatment likely to be of particular appeal to them.
- 19.24.2 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.

19.25 Alcohol alternatives 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 or alcohol alternatives.