

Responsible advertising

Channel 4 transmits hundreds of thousands of ads every year and the sale of airtime is our main revenue source, so maintaining public confidence in the type of advertising we accept and the way we schedule our ad breaks is central to our responsibility as an organisation.

In common with other broadcasters, Channel 4 is subject to stringent regulation of its advertising output. We comply with all regulation designed to ensure the content and scheduling of advertising is appropriate and doesn't harm or mislead viewers, and we have an experienced team of schedulers ensuring that we can and do comply with all guidelines.

How TV advertising is regulated

The main regulations are the *BCAP Television Advertising Standards (TAS) Code and Rules on the Scheduling of Television Advertisements*, the *Ofcom Broadcasting Code*, and *Ofcom Rules on the Amount and Distribution of Advertising*. These rules are framed to ensure that advertisements are 'legal, decent, honest and truthful' and do not mislead, cause harm or serious or widespread offence to viewers.

A condition of Channel 4's licence is that we ensure all the advertising we transmit complies with the Ofcom Code, and that we have procedures in place to enable us to do so. Should we or other broadcasters fail to have adequate procedures in place to pre-vet advertising, Ofcom can impose sanctions, from financial penalties to, in extreme cases, curtailment or rescinding of the broadcaster's licence. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the body which investigates and adjudicates on complaints about the content and scheduling of all forms of broadcast advertising, acting on behalf of Ofcom.

The amount and frequency of advertising is regulated by Ofcom and the origin of many of the rules in this area is the European Television Without Frontiers directive. Ofcom licences limit the amount of advertising channels can broadcast and the length of commercial breaks. The Code also regulates the separation of editorial and advertising material, sponsorship, and the presence of, or references to, products or brands in programmes.

To fulfil the conditions of our licence, as well as providing a service to advertisers and advertising agencies, we and other commercial broadcasters contribute to running the *Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre (BACC)*. BACC examines pre-production scripts, and all finished ads on Channel 4 are viewed and cleared by them prior to transmission, to ensure they meet the requirements of the TAS Code, and will not cause offence to viewers.