



What's new in the code?

- Advertisements should not be excessively noisy or strident, and licensees must try to ensure that commercials do not sound louder than adjacent programming. Free TV has prepared a technical document, Operational Practice Note on Audio Levels and Loudness for Advertisements (OP-48), in conjunction with the advertising industry, setting audio standards for television advertisements. Compliance with OP-48 will, in general, be sufficient to satisfy the code requirements.
- Commercial arrangements to feature or endorse a third party's product or services in factual programs (that is, a documentary, infotainment, or current affairs program) must be disclosed. The disclosure covers agreements between a third party and the licensee, presenter or independent producer.
- PG time zones are extended to 10.00 am – 8.30 pm on weekends, and from 7.00 pm – 8.30 pm on weeknights. Previously, PG time zones were limited to 7.30 pm – 8.30 pm on weekends and weeknights, and from 8.30 am – 4.00 pm in school holidays (this remains unchanged).
- To assist parents with the introduction of the new PG time zones, licensees are required to provide consumer advice for all PG-rated films, and for other PG programs in the new time zones that contain material of a strength or intensity that parents of young children may not expect. Special restrictions also apply to program promotions broadcast in the new PG time zones.
- Tighter measures for food and beverage advertising to children. Food and beverage advertisements directed at children should not encourage or promote an inactive lifestyle or unhealthy eating and drinking habits. The Australian Association of National Advertisers voluntary Code for Advertising to Children is also included as an appendix.
- A new children's privacy clause for news and current affairs reporting. Licensees must now exercise special care before using material relating to a child's personal or private affairs when broadcasting sensitive matter concerning the child. They must also seek parental consent before broadcasting information about, or identifying, a child unless there are exceptional circumstances or an identifiable public interest reason not to do so.

Changes to requirements for broadcasting political matter

The ABA has amended its requirements for the broadcast of political matter to ensure the 'required particulars' (or tag) are broadcast in the same language as the political matter.

The change is contained in the *Guidelines for Broadcasting Political Matter* which are designed to assist broadcasters, governments, advertisers, the general public and other interested parties in determining what is, or is not, political matter for the purposes of the Broadcasting Services Act.

The Act requires broadcasters broadcasting political matter at the request of another person to, immediately afterwards, announce the person authorising the broadcast, the person's location, and the name of every speaker.

The requirement assists the general public to identify broadcasts which are political, is not limited to election periods and extends to all who request the broadcast of political matter.

By contrast, material that deals with political issues, most notably news and current affairs programs, which is generally not broadcast at the request of another person is outside the reach of the requirements of the Act.