



MTV Compliance Crib

****ANY QUERIES PLEASE CONTACT YOUR TAM REP ***

When a delivery is requested with MUST be OFCOM compliant – what does this in practical terms mean?

We understand that each territory may have differing regulatory bodies with different regulations, and that culturally territories will have differing attitudes towards sex, violence and language.

MTV UK is regulated by OFCOM, which has the right to fine up to 5% of qualifying revenue – per licence – or £250,000 OR ultimately to REVOKE a licence.

This is not intended as a comprehensive guide to UK compliance – rather as an overview of the types of content and the regulatory boundaries that we in the UK need to apply, and we hope will be a useful alert to prompt questions and/or dialogue with your UK colleagues!

Language

As well as swear words, the tone and context in which swearing is used can make the difference between a programme being restricted and a programme being clean.

A clean programme, could contain some mild language e.g. ass, willy and boobs – but if the language is used in a violent or aggressive or disrespectful manner this could warrant a harsher restriction. The frequent usage of mild language may also trigger a later restriction.

All bad language needs to be properly disguised through dipping/bleeping/reversing and masking where necessary.

We have a number of timing restrictions that we adopt for programmes:

Not 4 – 7 pm (M-F); Not 9am – 12pm (Sat/Sun)

Post 19:00

Post 21:00

Post 22:00

General:

We have a number of timing restrictions that we adopt for music videos:

Not 4 – 7 pm (M-F); Not 9am – 12pm (Sat/Sun)

Post 19:00

Post 21:00

Post 22:00

Post 23:00

Post 01:00 – 04:00

Language

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Commercial References

Product placement is not allowed – this is defined as payments received for the inclusion of a commercial product within editorial.

Undue prominence – if a product is obvious within a programme – that may become an issue – if an artist was to be wearing a brand throughout an editorial piece that could be defined as unduly prominent.

There can be no promotion of a product within a programme – this includes ringtones or downloads at the beginning or end of videos.

Sponsorship credits

All sponsorship credits must be pre-approved by Broadcast Standards compliance viewing unit

Human Dignity

No content should abuse personal distress, private or personal experiences or play on the personal distress of another for editorial exploitation.

Broadcasters must be aware that the situation at that time may cause an individual to react in a manner that they would not have done in usual circumstances.

Animals

No cruelty or abuse of animals will be allowed – if using animals in production appropriate expertise would be required to be available. Cock or dog fighting are banned unless in the context of a serious documentary.

Ethnic Minorities

Similar to Human Dignity – representation or actual inclusion of ethnic minorities, or minority groups – homosexuals; religious groups etc have to afford the level of respect that would be expected.

Hypnosis

There are specific guidelines in relation to the use of hypnotists and the practice within UK programmes, e.g. people who are hypnotised should be 18+, and that there should be no full demonstration of the act to camera to avoid any viewing audience member claiming that they have been affected.

Impartiality

Balance is required in relation to any political or controversial position – representation would be required from all interested parties and their viewpoints.

News footage

As long as the material has been cleared appropriately and is not too graphic and within context this should be fine.

Occult

Paranormal demonstrations should not be broadcast pre-21:00. Paranormal programmes created for entertainment purposes are not to be broadcast during periods when large numbers of children are watching.

Religion

Respect for all religions and their practices are expected.

Suicide

No 'how to do' imagery and nothing too graphic.

Flashing Images:

Avoid flashing imagery – including camera flashes – general rule no more than 3 flashes per second of broadcast. We have a machine which checks spatial/strobing and luminance issues which are sometimes hard to spot even on things like graphics. We can always Harding check your content.

More details are available here –

http://static.mtv.co.uk/tam/Ofcom_flashing_Imagery_and_Luminance_guidance.pdf

RESTRICTION SPECIFIC GUIDANCE:

The following brief explanations should help you with identifying where your video may be slotted once it reaches us. It should also help you to minimise any objectionable content to get the lowest restriction possible for the creative you have in mind.

CLEAN

A clean requirement means that there should be no content that would be considered as offensive to the majority of people. This includes viewers that may just happen upon our channel, and is a restriction to be used when it is expected that all content would be acceptable to view by anyone – children, your mum, your nan etc.

A programme for this slot should contain language which is considered to be non-offensive and therefore it is expected that no swearing, sex, adult content would be contained within the programme. To give you an indication of the type of the strongest language that would be acceptable for this restriction we have attached the below:

Unrestricted

- Crap
- Bloody
- Arse
- Ass
- Sod
- Willy
- Boobs
- Pillock
- Freakin
- Prat
- Life's a bitch
- Bitchy
- Bitch (non aggressive – or to oneself)

Violence:

Only the very mild forms of non graphic violence would be acceptable. No dangerous behaviour that could be imitable by kids.

Drugs/Alcohol/Cigarettes

No visuals of drug taking or glamorisation of drugs/alcohol/cigarettes

Crime

No glamorisation of criminal activity – and again nothing that encourages criminal activity. (From guns to graffiti – it all counts)

Sex

Only very mild references would be considered ok – but any nudity would gain a harsher restriction.

Not 4 – 7 PM (Mon- Fri) – Not 9 -12 pm Sat/Sun

A post 4 – 7 (Mon- Fri) is a restriction which we apply when we believe that the content should not be shown when a large number of kids are available to view our programmes.

A programme for this slot should contain language which is considered to be mild only. To give you a flavour:

Mon – Fri not 4-7pm / Sat – Sun not 9 – 12 noon : (considered mild)

- Slut
- Tart
- Horny
- Shag
- Piss/ed (aggressive use)
- Get laid

Essentially, the sort of language that you would not use in front of your kids or want your mum to hear!

Violence:

Non graphic and not extreme – no blood etc.
No dangerous behaviour that could be imitable by kids.

Drugs/Alcohol/Cigarettes

No visuals of drug taking or glamorisation of drugs/alcohol/cigarettes. Smoking would be permitted as long as it's not excessive and glamorised.

Crime

No glamorisation of criminal activity – and again nothing that encourages criminal activity (From guns to graffiti – it all counts)

Sex

Mild references would be ok – but any nudity would gain a harsher restriction.

POST 19:00

A post 19:00 restriction is intended to reflect that our audience has become more mature. It is not an adult only environment, however, it is not expected that a lot of very young children will be watching. The channel can become slightly more edgy.

This is still before the viewing watershed and therefore it is expected that content still conforms to what is called the 'Family Viewing Policy' – which means that if all of the family were gathered around the sofa and chose to watch MTV nothing should embarrass or be unexpected.

A programme for this slot could contain language which is considered to be more moderate; however, no extremely strong or offensive language would be tolerated. To give you an indication of the type of the strongest language that would be acceptable for this restriction we have attached the below:

Post-7pm: (considered moderate)

- Whore or Ho
- Bitch (aggressive use)
- Son-of-a-bitch
- Bollocks
- Shit
- Dickhead
- Bullshit
- Prick
- Balls (sexual)
- Knob Head
- Arsehole
- Tossler (Note: don't give a Toss is CLEAN)
- Slag

However, please note that frequent use of the terms above could still be an issue due to an accumulative effect language can have. The words above should only be used in isolation and where they can be editorially justified which is going to be hard to convey in a 4min video. Please bear context in mind.

Violence:

It would be acceptable to have some degree of violence contained – if you think of soap operas and the type of staged, but realistic violence, this is the level that we can expect. However, with soap operas storylines can be built up and the bad guy gets caught – in music videos there is a limited time frame to build the story and therefore, we should be considerate of how informed the viewer could be regarded.

No dangerous behaviour that could be imitable by kids, however, it is expected that the audience will be slightly older and therefore able to distinguish between reality and fantasy.

Drugs/Alcohol/Cigarettes

Mild visuals of drugs/alcohol/cigarettes would be acceptable. Still nothing to be included that would suggest how to use drugs, and nothing that would glamorise drugs, alcohol or cigarettes.

Crime

No glamorisation of criminal activity – and again nothing that encourages criminal activity. (From guns to graffiti – it all counts)

Sex

Only mild references would be considered ok – but any nudity would gain a harsher restriction.

POST 21:00

A post 21:00 restriction is intended to reflect that our audience is now expected to have chosen to watch MTV and is aware of the type of content that we broadcast. It is not an adult only environment, however, it is not expected that a lot of children will be watching, and that post 21:00 the responsibility for viewing choice now becomes as much of a parental choice as it does a broadcasters.

This is the beginning of the watershed and therefore it's expected that strong content will not be broadcast immediately at 21:00 – rather that the viewers have a chance to adjust to the change of expectations.

A programme for this slot can contain language which is considered to be a bit adult; however, no extremely strong or offensive language would be tolerated. To give you an indication of the type of the strongest language that would be acceptable for this restriction we have attached the below:

From 9pm onwards: (considered strong)

- Fuck
- Jism
- Cum
- Jerking off
- Whacking off
- Wanker
- Dick (sexual context)
- Cock (as insult or sexual)
- Clitoris (would only be in sexual context)
- Twat
- Hand gesture swearing – middle finger, V sign (when it means fuck off)
- Spunk (sexual)
- Friggin (means masturbation/another word for 'fucking')
- Pussy (sexual context)
- Arse munch
- Arse licker
- Bastard (unless used in literal meaning – born out of wedlock)

Violence:

Violence is now ok – however, the degree of violence contained – will affect the scheduling time of the programme. The more graphic the depiction - the later the schedule time.

The audience is expected to be largely adult and therefore it is assumed that viewers will have made a conscious decision to view the channel and will know the level of content to anticipate.

Drugs/Alcohol/Cigarettes

Moderate visuals of drugs/alcohol/cigarettes within videos, but within editorial pieces where the storylines can be developed it would be acceptable to have stronger content.

Crime

Moderate visuals of criminal activity would be acceptable. Again as above within editorial pieces it would be acceptable to have stronger content

Sex

Post 21:00 it is ok to have degrees of nudity – full frontal nudity would not be anticipated at 9pm, however, it is not acceptable to have content of a strong sexual nature.

Graphic depictions would attract a later restriction.

POST 22:00

A post 22:00 restriction is the second harshest restriction that content can warrant. Therefore, if a programme is requested for this time slot, it is expected to have been made for an adult only audience.

It would be expected that stronger content will be included and that viewers will be aware of the type of content that they could be exposed to.

A programme for this slot can contain language which is considered to be adult. To give you an indication of the type of the strongest language that would be acceptable for this restriction we have attached the below:

From 10pm onwards: coarse (stronger sexual swearwords are described as 'coarse')

- Motherfucker
- Cunt
- Rasclaat
- Bloodclaat

Violence:

Violence is now ok. The more graphic violence would be expected to attract a post 22:00 restriction.

Drugs/Alcohol/Cigarettes

Strong and graphic depictions of drugs, alcohol etc will be reserved for a post 22:00 transmission.

Crime

Graphic depictions of criminal activity will be reserved for post 22:00 transmission.

Sex

Post 22:00 it is ok to have sexual content. Within the UK, graphic sexual content is still not acceptable on television broadcasts except on specialist services, therefore it will not be acceptable for any beyond mild to moderate pornographic content at this timeslot.

POST 01:00

A post 01:00 is essentially a specialist restriction – due to the limited time for broadcast it would be expected that content that warrants this degree of restriction is bordering upon an unacceptable classification.

Therefore, if a programme is requested for this time slot, it is expected to have been made for an adult only audience.

In this instance it would be expected that there is a strong editorial justification for maintaining the strength of the content.

It is recommended that the producers and Broadcast Standards would work hand in hand on these projects.

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<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/bcode/>