



ABAC Pre-Vetting Guide

Introduction

The ABAC Responsible Alcohol Marketing Code ('the Code') sets standards for responsible alcohol marketing in Australia and regularly measures its determinations externally to ensure it is in line with community expectations. The Code regulates both the content and placement of alcohol marketing across all advertising mediums.

A key part of the scheme is the pre-vetting of alcohol marketing communications before publication to aid compliance with the Code. It is mandatory for ABAC signatories to pre-vet TV, Radio, Cinema and OOH. Pre-vetting of all other marketing communications is optional but is encouraged.

Pre-vetting marketing communications against the ABAC Code

Applications for pre-vetting of all marketing communications, including packaging, may be lodged [here](#).

For pre-vetting requests relating to an existing campaign, enter the existing application number when prompted on lodging your application, and it will be allocated to the pre-vetter handling that campaign.

No informal advice or opinions will be provided to advertisers without a pre-vetting application as this may result in an informal conversation or email being confused with clearance.

Timing

Pre-vetting will be completed within 4 working days of the submission of a complete application and marketing material. Any changes to marketing material/further requests may take an additional 4 working days to be considered. However, ABAC acknowledges the dynamic nature of the industry and where possible pre-vetter responses are provided by the next working day.

In exceptional circumstances pre-vetters may be available for urgent advice or clearance. However, it is the responsibility of the advertiser or their agency to telephone the assigned pre-vetter to discuss their timing issue and agree upon a shorter timeframe.

Social Media Submissions

Social media marketing is constantly evolving with new features and platforms emerging every day. Increasingly, pre-vetting is sought for complete social media posts, or images, videos, captions or other individual components for possible use in social media posts. To improve efficiency, consistency and cost-effectiveness in pre-vetting this material:

- Create periodic (for example monthly or quarterly) campaign calendars of posts and content and lodge a single pre-vetting request for the entire calendar.
- Submit any additional posts with immediate relevance to the pre-vetter allocated to your most recent calendar of posts and telephone the pre-vetter if urgent.
- Submit complete material with all imagery, captions and text (only interim clearance can be given for incomplete material or individual components of a post).

Guidance

ABAC has a range of resources on its [website](#) for education and training on the ABAC Code.

Pre-vetter responses

1. Advice

An alcohol marketer or their agency, may submit an application for advice at any stage of campaign development for any medium. Advice is given on the submitted material's consistency with the Code and does not constitute clearance.

2. Interim Clearance

Marketing communications may be submitted at concept or pre-production stage for assessment against the Code. For example: print layouts, video and radio scripts, storyboards and concepts for social media posts, packaging design and POS material.

Interim clearance may be communicated by email for submitted marketing materials at concept or pre-production stage (e.g., headlines or key visuals alone) within specified media. As the materials are in development, clearance at final submission stage is not guaranteed as context can alter the message resulting in a breach of the Code. All guidance and recommendations must be carefully considered during campaign finalisation.

3. Final Clearance

Final Clearance can only be given to completed marketing material that is ready for production or publication. For example: online video edits or final artwork.

An exception is where an applicant advises the pre-vetter in their application that the material will be used as a template for different products, prices or locations. In this case a Final Clearance may be given for the final and complete template but will be expressed as being conditional on change-outs being limited to product image, brand name, price, store name, store location. The Final Clearance will not cover any other changes to the marketing. A change-out that materially changes a creative element of a pre-approved template, for example to promote a competition or giveaway or copy on the attributes and benefits of a product, would need to be re-submitted to the original pre-vetter for assessment against the Code.

Final Clearance is only given for material to appear in the particular medium nominated in the pre-vetting application. If the material is to appear in a different medium, it must be re-submitted for clearance for the new medium. For example, an advertisement cleared for use in a magazine (print) will need to be re-submitted for use on a billboard (outdoor).

Final Clearance is given on the basis of the material submitted and the advertiser or agency must ensure that the material submitted is complete and re-submit any alterations (other than size).

Material changes and media selection can significantly affect communication impact and interpretation and may breach the Code.

4. Rejection

If a marketing communication is not consistent with ABAC standards, pre-vetters will advise the applicant by email and explain why the material is rejected by reference to the relevant ABAC standards. In these instances, the applicant is encouraged to work with the pre-vetter to adapt the material to meet the Code. Advertisers may seek a review of a rejection via the pre-vetting application lodgement portal [here](#).

Impact of a Public Complaint

Public complaints trigger a separate assessment process, and advice, interim clearance and final clearance does not guarantee immunity from review by the independent ABAC Adjudication Panel ('Panel') or constitute legal advice. While pre-vetting has been statistically shown to significantly reduce your risk of a Panel breach, assessment of proposed material necessarily involves a subjective judgment and as such it is possible that the Panel could have a different view and uphold a complaint against material which has been pre-vetted.

Guidance on Format of Materials for Pre-vetting Submission

DO

- Lodge pre-vetting requests and files, including ongoing assistance, via the online portal rather than via email.
- Upload files that best represent how the consumer will view the campaign in market, for example:

For Interim Clearance:

Static OOH, Print, POS, Digital: Key visuals in Landscape and Portrait

Digital or 3D OOH: Storyboard or Render

TV, Video: Final Scripts or Script + Storyboard, Draft Edits

Social Media: Caption copy, Imagery/Video, Hashtags, Emoticons

AR / Digital experiential campaigns: Customer Journey, User Experience Flow,

Packaging: Render of packaging design

Radio: Scripts

For Final Clearance:

Static OOH, Print, POS, Digital: Final Artwork in Landscape and Portrait

Digital or 3D OOH: Final Digital Files

TV, Video: Final Edit

Social Media: Complete posts only

AR / Digital experiential campaigns: Wire Frames

Packaging: Final flat artwork

Radio: Final recordings of radio ads

For Advice:

Concept descriptions, Campaign overview, Mood Board, Global work to be adapted, Draft TV/Video Scripts or Script + Storyboard, Packaging concepts

- Show contextual communication elements, such as:
 - Subheadings
 - Body Copy
 - Caption Copy
 - Emoticons, hashtags
- Upload compressed or low resolution offline files for ease of downloading and viewing
- Upload links that have permission granted for your pre-vetter

DON'T

- Upload documents that provide details that will not be viewed by the consumer, such as
 - Background strategy, Previous campaigns, or global campaigns you do not plan to run, Media Plans, Budgets
 - Whilst your pre-vetter can ignore these elements, it will cost you time and money when a pre-vetter must wade through materials irrelevant to the consumer, particularly when it is unclear what will appear in market and requires email clarification.
- Upload documents with multiple links to materials – document should be self-contained and have files embedded, or, materials should be uploaded as individual files.
- Upload Links that require permission by the pre-vetter to access – this slows down the process.
- Upload every size variation for an ad – pre-vetting clearance allows size changes. If you upload a link to 88 size variations, it will take your pre-vetter a lot of time to determine that they are resizes of the same ad. This is an unnecessary cost and time constraint.