



**Programme Classification  
on Television**



# Programme Classification on Television

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## Why do we need to classify programmes on domestic free television programme services?

Television has always exerted a very powerful influence on community, adults and children alike. In Hong Kong, domestic free television programme services reach into the homes of a great number of people of all ages as a medium for entertainment, information and education. To serve the needs of the public, programmes of different genres are provided. In view of the pervasiveness of the service, it is reasonable for the audience to expect a more stringent regulation for protection of minors. Programme classification serves to provide information to television viewers in selecting the programme they watch.

To facilitate parents in selecting programmes for the children, the Broadcasting Authority (BA) requires domestic free television programme service broadcasters, viz. ATV and TVB, to classify programmes which contain matters not generally suitable for viewing by children into either “Parental Guidance Recommended” (PG) or “Mature” (M) and schedule them outside the family viewing hours. The BA has designated the hours between 4:00 pm and 8:30 pm each day as the family viewing hours, during which time nothing unsuitable for children shall be broadcast.

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## What is “PG” ?



“PG” programmes are programmes that may contain adult themes or concepts but are nevertheless suitable for children to watch under the guidance of an adult.

“PG” programmes should be scheduled at times other than the family viewing hours.

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## *What is “M”?*

“M” programmes are programmes for viewing only by the mature audience and may only be broadcast between 11:30 pm and 6:00 am the following morning.



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## *What are the requirements governing the presentation of “PG” & “M” programmes?*

The broadcasters are required to carry aural and visual advisories on the classification of the programme before such a programme is broadcast. In addition, a symbol as approved by the BA signifying the classified category of the programme should be superimposed on the screen in the left or right corner for four seconds immediately, or as soon as possible, after every break within the programme. The broadcaster shall make reasonable efforts to carry the appropriate symbols in the promotional material for these classified programmes and to include them in the programme guide. The broadcaster is also obliged to ensure that programme promotions for “PG” or “M” programmes during family viewing hours contain nothing unsuitable for children’s viewing.

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## *Why is it necessary to provide programme content information?*

In addition to the programme classification advice, an aural and visual statement must be given at the start of the programme describing the principal elements which have contributed to the classification and indicating their intensity and/or frequency (e.g. “strong violence”, “frequent coarse language”, etc.). The information should be in a readily legible typeface so that viewers can make informed choices about what to watch and whether their children should be allowed to watch.

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## *How to make a Complaint?*

Members of the public may lodge their complaints on broadcasting to the BA by

- writing to its secretariat at the office of the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (39/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong)
- dialing the 24-hour complaints hotline at 2827 8488
- using the Complaint Form in the BA home page (website:www.hkba.hk)
- sending an e-mail to ba@tela.gov.hk, or
- sending a fax to 2507 2219

“There are many types of television programmes, but not every programme is suitable for children to watch on their own. Provide your children with guidance, share with them the joy of watching television.”