



**CONSUMER  
PROTECTION BC**

## **Theatre Manager's Guide**

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## THEATRE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

As a theatre manager, you have **five key responsibilities** with regards to the *Motion Picture Act*. Please note that if you rent your theatre on occasion to another group, the following responsibilities still apply.

- 1. Classification:** You are responsible for ensuring that all of your films and advertising trailers have been classified by Consumer Protection BC. You can do this by checking our website at [www.consumerprotectionbc.ca](http://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca)
- 2. Age Restrictions & Accompaniment:** General and Parental Guidance films do not have any age restrictions. Otherwise, you are responsible for ensuring:
  - 14A, people under 14 years of age are accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age.
  - 18A, people under 18 years of age are accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age.
  - Restricted, no one under the age of 18 attends under any circumstances.
- 3. Trailers:** Whether they are advertising feature films or other products (e.g. automobiles, telecommunications, beverages, etc.) all trailers must be classified.

You are responsible for exhibiting all advertising trailers appropriately.



Approved trailers may be exhibited with any feature.



Special Permission trailers may be exhibited with only 14A or 18A features.

Occasionally we classify a trailer Restricted; these may be exhibited with only Restricted features.

- 4. Information:** alongside a list of your currently exhibited titles, you are responsible for posting our classifications, including categories and advisories, at your theatre.

Post this information where it is easily accessible to consumers such as the box office, automated ticket machines, or other points-of-sale where customers can get tickets.

Remove any ratings from other jurisdictions on posters or advertising material.

The classification and advisory information that you post in your theatre should refer to Consumer Protection BC and display our website address, which is [www.consumerprotectionbc.ca](http://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca).

- 5. Licence:** you are responsible for ensuring that you have a valid Consumer Protection BC licence for each of your screens.

## FAQs

### What is Consumer Protection BC?

We are an administrative authority with delegated responsibilities from the Government of BC. We are responsible for regulating several industries in the province. Since 2007, we been responsible for administering the [Motion Picture Act](#) (Act) through an agreement with the BC Government.

We classify films before they are publicly exhibited and post our decisions on our website. We licence theatres and distributors.

It is our job to ensure theatres are in compliance with the legislation; this guide is designed to help you achieve that goal.

### Who do I contact for more information?

Our website has lots of useful information including all of the feature films and advertising trailers we have classified.

If you can't find the information you need on our website, please call us at 1.888.564.9963 ext 1914 or email us at [classadmin@consumerprotectionbc.ca](mailto:classadmin@consumerprotectionbc.ca).

### What can I expect during an inspection?

Our compliance inspectors conduct routine unannounced theatre inspections throughout the year. Their goal is to help you understand your responsibilities such as:

- your films and trailers have been classified,
- you have a valid licence,
- you have our classification information posted at any ticket points-of-sale,
- you are exhibiting your advertising trailers appropriately, and
- children are appropriately accompanied by an adult in 14A or 18A exhibitions.

### Can I do something that is stricter than my basic responsibilities?

Yes. Although a consistent approach throughout the industry is ideal, the Act does not prevent you from implementing more restrictive policies or procedures. Please contact us if you have any specific questions.

### What should I do if a customer complains about a classification?

Please share our contact information. Consumer feedback is valuable for us and we are happy to answer their questions.

We have rack cards with helpful information that may answer some of your customers' questions. Please contact us and we'll send some to you.

## What are the category definitions?

[Section 3 of the Motion Picture Act Regulations](#) defines the categories as follows:

### General



Suitable for viewing by persons of all ages. Occasional violence, swearing and coarse language, and the most innocent of sexually suggestive scenes and nudity, are permitted in this category.

### Parental Guidance



Parental guidance advised. Theme or content may not be suitable for all children although there is no age restriction. Motion pictures in this category may contain less subtle sexually suggestive scenes and nudity and a more realistic portrayal of violence than in the General category; coarse language may occur more often than in the General category.

### 14 Accompaniment



Suitable for persons 14 years of age or older. Persons under 14 years of age must view these motion pictures accompanied by an adult. Motion pictures in this category may contain violence, coarse language or sexually suggestive scenes, or any combination of them.

### 18 Accompaniment



Persons under 18 years of age must view these motion pictures accompanied by an adult. Motion pictures in this category will contain horror, explicit violence, frequent coarse language or scenes that are more sexually suggestive than in the 14A category, or any combination of them.

### Restricted



Restricted to persons 18 years of age and over. Persons under 18 years of age are not permitted to attend under any circumstances. These motion pictures are “adult motion pictures”, as defined in the Act, and may contain explicit sexual scenes, violence or scenes referred to in Section 5(3) of the Act, or any combination of them. The director will assign this classification to motion pictures if the director considers that the theme, subject matter or plot of the adult motion picture is artistic, historical, political, educational or scientific.

## What does the ‘A’ stand for in the 14A and 18A categories?

‘Accompaniment.’ An adult is required to accompany any children in their care for the full duration of the screening.

## Why do G rated films sometimes have advisories?

It comes as a surprise to many people that the legislation’s definition of “General” includes coarse language, violence, nudity and sexually suggestive scenes. When any of these depictions are present in a General film, we include them in the advisory to notify consumers.

### **What should I do if I find unaccompanied children watching a 14A or 18A film?**

Please use your best judgment. You could safely move them to the lobby or a G/PG screening, and contact their parents if possible. The best thing to do is prevent them from entering a 14A/18A screening ahead of time.

### **How many children can one adult accompany in a 14A or 18A film?**

Sometimes an adult can have a large group of children with them (e.g. birthday party). Please use your best judgment when considering whether the adult can control and stay with the children, in other words 'accompany' them.

### **Does the adult who is accompanying a child need to be a parent?**

The legislation does not specify whether or not the adult must be parent. Please use your best judgment to determine if the adult is responsible and able to safely and appropriately accompany the child.

### **Can the adult give me their consent for the child to see a particular film and then leave them unattended at the theatre?**

No. The legislation requires that the adult accompany the child during the exhibition.

### **What kind of ID is acceptable for verifying a child's age?**

The legislation does not specify. Please use your best judgment when determining if a child's ID is valid or not.

### **Are infants allowed into 14A or 18A screenings?**

Yes. The legislation does not prevent adults from bringing infants to these screenings.

### **What is an advisory?**

Alongside a particular film's classification category, we include a short list of depictions that were most relevant to our decision. Common examples include violence, nudity, sexually suggestive scenes and nudity. Advisories provide consumers with valuable information.

### **When do you post your classification information on your website?**

Usually the same day we review the film or trailer. We try our best to accommodate the distributors' schedules. Please contact us if you don't find a title you're looking for.

### **What about short films and cartoons?**

These require classification. Please contact us if you can't find a particular title on our website.

### Can I exhibit a DVD I bought?

Check our website to see if we've classified it. Its content must be identical to the version we classified. If it is not on our website, contact us for more information.

You may wish to consult the following sites for copyright ownership information:

- the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) Canadian Copyrights Database
- the United States Copyright Office

### Why is a particular film classified differently in another province?

Each jurisdiction operates under unique legislation, personnel, mandates, systems, policies, procedures and governments. Each program responds to different feedback from their own stakeholders and consumers. And, although some of the category names may be the same (G, PG, 14A, 18A), the definitions vary.

### Why isn't there a national classification system?

Classification has always been administered under provincial governments and legislation. We do have an agreement in place with Saskatchewan under which they accept our classifications. And we continue to work with other provinces for potential partnership opportunities.

The benefits of a provincial system include our accessibility to you and your customers. We are able to react quickly to local issues, questions or concerns.

### What about the American MPAA system?

MPAA ratings are not valid in BC. The MPAA utilizes a significantly different system. For example, we do not have a PG13 category in BC. And the BC Restricted category is much different than the MPAA's.

A BC Restricted film may contain explicit sex. Admission is limited to persons 18 years of age and over. We usually classify only a couple of these films a year. If you exhibit a Restricted film you may need a different licence from Consumer Protection BC.

Unfortunately consumers are inundated with the American ratings via television advertising; you can assist in minimizing confusion by posting our information clearly at your theatre and removing any visible MPAA ratings.

### What about simultaneous feeds?

Films that are not pre-recorded, such as simultaneous broadcasts of sporting events, do not require classification.

"Encore events" such as of operas, plays, concerts, etc are "pre-recorded" and must be classified regardless of whether or not they have been performed with "live" audiences.

### Do “Word of Mouth” screenings require classification?

Yes. “Word of Mouth” screenings, where passes are distributed for promotional purposes, are required to be classified prior to exhibition.

Exhibitions not exhibited to the general public (private screenings) do not require classification. This is the case when all of the following apply:

- no ticket sales,
- no advertisements or information online, in print or on a phone line,
- admittance is restricted to a pre-determined list of people who are invited to attend.

Industry-only or press screenings are typically private and outside of our scope.

### Why don't you regulate general release home video or broadcast?

The Act does not include them. General release home video and films available through television, broadcast, VOD, internet, etc are outside of our mandated scope.

### What about film festivals?

When film festivals meet several criteria prescribed by the Act, they may be exempt from classification requirements. If you are hosting a film festival, this may mean that the films have not been classified. We typically provide film festivals with correspondence which they may share with you. Please contact us if you have any questions.

### What about liquor sales?

The sale of liquor is outside the scope of the Act. If you are interested in selling alcohol, you are encouraged to contact the Ministry of Justice’s Liquor Control and Licensing Branch.

### Is Consumer Protection BC’s information available via social media?

Yes. We update our [Twitter](#) page daily with feature film and trailer classifications. We also have a [Facebook page](#) for more general consumer information.

### What are special conditions?

The Act empowers us to apply special conditions when appropriate. We will post them clearly on our website if applied.

### I have a question that you haven't included here. What should I do?

Please contact us. Not only will we be happy to answer it, we may add it to a refreshed version of this guide.

Call us at 1.888.564.9963 ext 1914 or email us at [classadmin@consumerprotectionbc.ca](mailto:classadmin@consumerprotectionbc.ca).