

LICENSED INDUSTRY OVERVIEW: MOTION PICTURES & CLASSIFICATION IN BC

OVERVIEW

Consumer Protection BC enforces BC’s consumer protection laws including the *Motion Picture Act* (MPA). We are responsible for motion picture classification, licensing, education, compliance, and enforcement.

Any person or business that distributes or publicly exhibits motion pictures in BC requires a licence from us. This includes distributors, video and motion picture retailers and theatres. Learn more about [who needs a licence](#) on our website.

Distributors must submit their movies and trailers to us to be classified (rated) before distributing them to theatres for exhibition. BC theatres must only show movies and trailers on their screens that have been rated by our office.

MOTION PICTURE CLASSIFICATION IN BC

In BC, all motion pictures must be classified (rated) before being shown in theatres.

We use six categories to rate motion pictures in BC: General (G), Parental Guidance (PG), 14 Accompaniment (14A), 18 Accompaniment (18A), Restricted (R), and Adult (A). We also use advisories to highlight the key reasons why a movie got a certain rating. Find out [what the ratings mean](#) on our website.

2020 - 2022: BY THE NUMBERS

Licensed places, activities and occupations:

Number of BC-licensed motion picture and video retailers, distributors and theatres (licensed theatre businesses, not screens)	2020	2021	2022
	1,181	806	799

Consumer inquiries:

- In 2020¹: There were 65 inquiries about the motion picture and classification sector, representing 0.4% of all calls and emails (15,423). Topics of interest included:
 - General questions (32% of motion picture sector-related inquiries)
 - Quality of service/product (18% of motion picture sector-related inquiries)

¹ In 2020, 15% of motion picture sector-related inquiries were recorded in our database as allegations of price gouging, however these tended to be inquiries about the cost of items sold at businesses that were also licensed video retailers such as department stores. For this reason, they have not been included in the top topics of interest for that year.

- In 2021: There were 60 inquiries about the motion picture and classification sector, representing 0.5% of all calls and emails (10,923). Topics of interest included:
 - Return/refund (30% of motion picture sector-related inquiries)
 - General questions (27% of motion picture sector-related inquiries)
 - Licence inquiry (15% of motion picture sector-related inquiries)

- In 2022: There were 20 inquiries about the motion picture and classification sector, representing 0.2% of all calls and emails (9,314). Topics of interest included:
 - Licence inquiry (25% of motion picture sector-related inquiries)
 - Return/refund (20% of motion picture sector-related inquiries)
 - General questions (20% of motion picture sector-related inquiries)

Number of compliance inspections of licensed motion picture and video retailers, distributors and theatres ²	2020	2021	2022
TOTAL	20	22	6
Motion picture distributors	0	0	0
Theatres	0	0	1
Video retailers	20	22	5

Motion picture classification:

General release exhibition trailers and motion pictures viewed	2020	2021	2022
	683	675	1,218

General release exhibition trailers and motion pictures additional approvals	2020	2021	2022
	14,875	19,548	37,738

Investigations:

*These statistics represent complaint files that were opened about motion picture and video retailers, distributors, and theaters.

- 2020: There were a total of 4 motion-picture related investigation files. Of those, all the files concluded with an outcome; 2 with voluntary compliance and 2 with a licence being obtained.
- 2021: There were a total of 2 motion-picture related investigation files. Of those, both files concluded with the outcome of voluntary compliance.
- 2022: There were a total of 6 motion-picture related investigation files. Of those, all the files concluded with an outcome, 4 files with voluntary compliance and 2 with a warning letter being issued.

No enforcement actions were taken in any of these instances.

² Inspections fluctuate year-over-year within each of our licensed industries depending on where evidence of non-compliance is identified.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

To maintain the integrity of our processes, we do not share detailed information about open files. Visit the [Enforcement Actions section of our website](#) to explore our recent licensing and enforcement actions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Explore www.consumerprotectionbc.ca for more information for both consumers and regulated businesses. Additional statistical information is also available in our [Annual Reports](#). We also share information and consumer tips on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and in [our corporate blog](#).