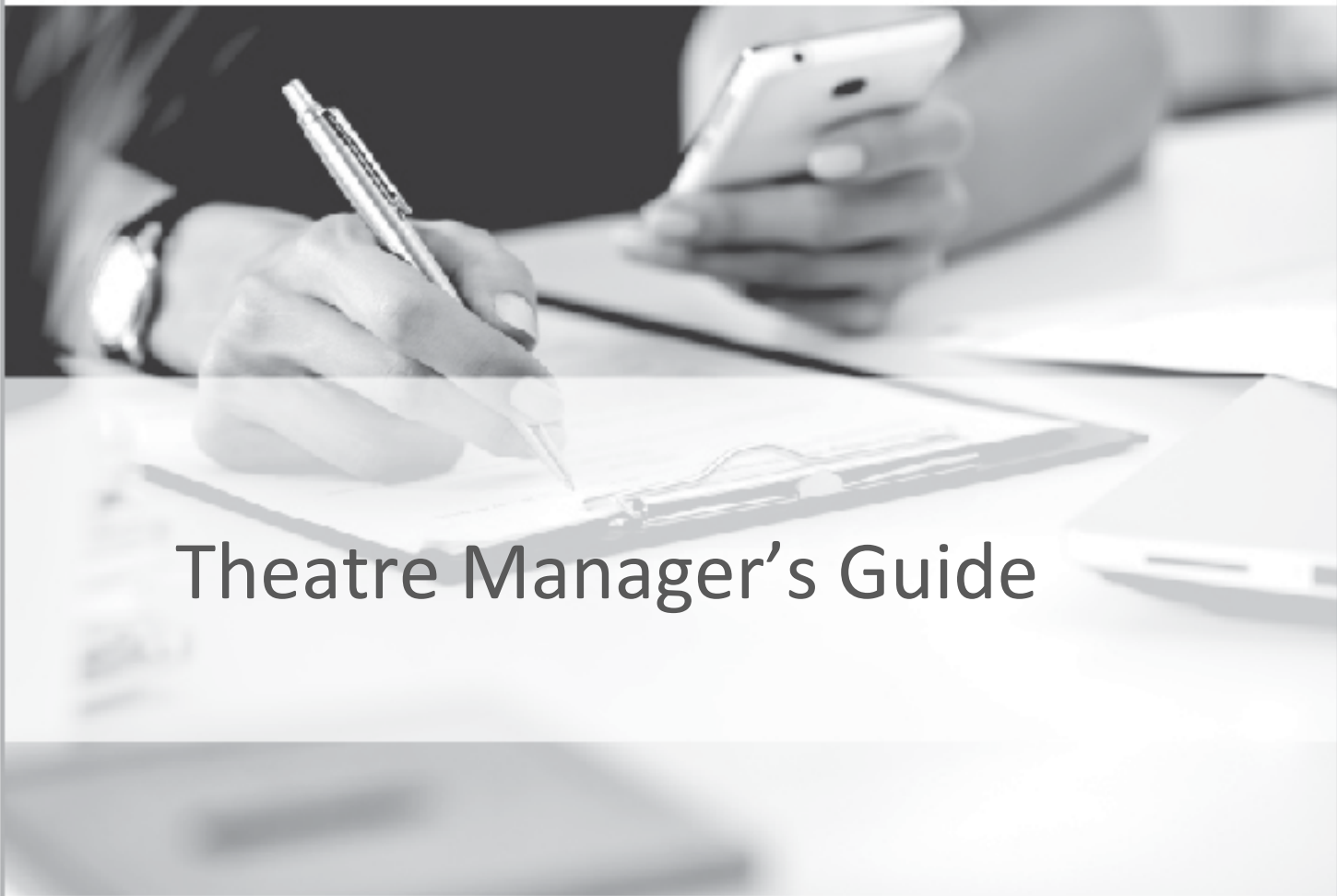


A grayscale background photograph showing a person's hands. One hand is holding a pen and writing on a document held by a clipboard. The other hand is holding a smartphone. The person is wearing a watch on their left wrist. The image is slightly blurred, focusing on the action of writing.

Theatre Manager's Guide

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Introduction

Consumer Protection BC is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the *Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act* (BPCPA), the *Cremation Interment and Funeral Services Act* (CIFSA), the *Motion Picture Act* (MPA), the *Ticket Sales Act* (TSA), and the *Motion Picture Act Regulation* (MPAR).

Together, the MPA and MPAR govern the licensing requirements and conduct of businesses and persons that exhibit motion pictures to the public in the Province of British Columbia.

This guide has been prepared to better inform and educate you on the compliance inspection process. As one of our licensed businesses, it is your responsibility to conduct yourself and operate your business in compliance with the laws and conditions on your license. We recommend you take the time needed to read this guide fully and to make sure that your managers and staff are familiar with the information contained herein.

This guide serves as a reference, so you know what to expect and how to prepare for an inspection conducted by a Consumer Protection BC Inspector.

This is a general overview of the inspection process. This guide is not intended to provide legal advice and it is not an exhaustive review of the legislative provisions affecting you or the operation of your licensed business. We recommend that you get copies of the legislation and review it in detail. You can order from Crown Publications at www.crownpub.bc.ca.

For more general information, visit our corporate website at www.consumerprotectionbc.ca. To learn more about your licensing requirements and legal obligations, visit the [Get & Keep your Licence](#) section of our website. To find out how best to contact us, please [visit the Contact Us](#) page of our website.

Theatre manager responsibilities

As a theatre manager, you have **five key responsibilities** with regards to the MPA. If you rent your theatre on occasion to another group, the following responsibilities still apply.

1. **Classification:** You are responsible for ensuring that all your feature films and advertising trailers have been classified by us. You can do this by checking our website at www.consumerprotectionbc.ca. Our website is the official form of approval. If you find your film or trailer on the website, you may proceed with exhibition. You do not need to have a paper certificate.
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. cars, cell phones, 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 point-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 as www.consumerprotectionbc.ca.

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

Frequently asked questions

Who are we?

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 have been responsible for administering the MPA through an agreement with the BC Government.

We classify films before they are publicly exhibited and post our decisions on our [website](#). We license 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 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 or email us at classadmin@consumerprotectionbc.ca.

What can I expect during an inspection?

Our 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 point-of-sale
- you are exhibiting your advertising trailers appropriately
- children are appropriately accompanied by an adult in 14A or 18A exhibitions

Would I have to show an inspector a paper certificate to prove that my film has been classified?

No. We don't require that you have a paper certificate. Our website is the official form of approval. If your film is listed on the website, it is approved for exhibition.

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

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

What are the classification categories?

Section 3 of the MPAR 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 MPA, and may contain explicit sexual scenes, violence or scenes referred to in Section 5(3) of the MPA, 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.

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

Please use your best judgment. You could move them to another safe location within your building where you can monitor them. You may wish to try and contact their caregiver 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 the adult must be a 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 film’s classification category, we include a short list of depiction that is most relevant to our decision. Common examples include violence, nudity and sexually suggestive scenes. 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 have 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 at <http://www.ic.gc.ca/app/opic-cipo/cpyrghts/dsplySrch.do?lang=eng>,
- the United States Copyright Office (<http://www.copyright.gov/records/>)

Why is a 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. Currently, we have agreements in place with Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario under which they accept our classifications.

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 us.

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 operas, plays, concerts, etc. are "pre-recorded" and must be classified regardless of whether 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 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 authority.

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 authority.

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 not regulated by the Act. If you are interested in selling alcohol, you are encouraged to contact the Province of British Columbia's Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB).

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 special conditions?

The MPA 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, but we may also add it to a refreshed version of this guide.

Call us at 1.888.564.9963 or email us at classadmin@consumerprotectionbc.ca.

Appendix – Inspection Checklist

The following are the types of things that the inspector is checking during an inspection of your business. This is not a comprehensive list and not all items on this list are inspected during each inspection.

 CONSUMER PROTECTION BC		Licence #: _____ Date of inspection: _____		
Question	THEATRE INSPECTION REPORT	Y	N	N/A
GENERAL INFORMATION				
1	Are all licensing conditions, if any, being complied with?	☐	☐	☐
LICENCED LOCATION				
2	MPA s. 8(1) - Are all locations where the licensee carries on business licensed?	☐	☐	☐
PROHIBITED PRACTICES				
3	MPA s. 2(3) - Did the licensee ensure they did not exhibit in a theatre a motion picture (including a feature film, trailer, or showtime advertising) or a copy of it unless the motion picture has been approved by the Director and, if the approval is subject to conditions, in accordance with those conditions?	☐	☐	☐
	Conditions include that the film classification and film advisory be placed on all advertising material at both the licensee's box office and at automated ticket machines on the premises of the theatre.			
4	MPA s. 2(3) - Did the licensee ensure they did not exhibit special permissions (SP) trailers to audiences in theatres when exhibiting "General" & "Parental Guidance" rated motion pictures?	☐	☐	☐
5	MPA s. 6(1) - Has the licensee ensured no minors were permitted to view a motion picture subject to a condition that a minor be prohibited from viewing that motion picture?	☐	☐	☐
6	MPAR s. 4(1) - If applicable, has the licensee ensured that no advertisements for adult films were placed, posted or exhibited on the premises of the theatre holding a license permitting the exhibition of films classified as "Restricted" or "Adult" such that they were visible to members of the public from outside of the premises of the theatre?	☐	☐	☐

7	MPAR s. 5(5) - Has the licensee ensured that no minor was employed at any time when a motion picture that has been classified as "Restricted" or "Adult" is being exhibited?	☐	☐	☐
SEIZURES				
8	List how many motion pictures were seized.			
9	If a seizure was performed, was a receipt, that included notice of the reconsideration process, provided to the licensee?	☐	☐	☐

For more information about your obligations as a licensed business, our processes and our organization, please visit www.consumerprotectionbc.ca.